



uOttawa

**Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs  
and Official Languages**

2019-2020 Annual Report

Presented to the Senate and the Board of Governors  
of the University of Ottawa

June 2020

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## 1. Introduction

To the Senate and the Board of Governors:

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages for 2019-2020.

Over the past year, Committee members have followed with great interest the laying of the foundations for the implementation of the new action plan for the Francophonie. The announcement of the new position of Vice-President International and Francophonie and the launching of *Transformation 2030*, the University's new strategic framework, are two important building blocks that will strengthen our efforts in favour of the Francophonie and bilingualism on campus. The Committee has continued to work enthusiastically to support the next steps in the implementation of the action plan, while paying close attention to emerging issues, particularly those involving internationalization and diversity.

In this environment, Committee members eagerly examined the opportunities and challenges faced in recruiting Francophone and Francophile students, both in Canada and abroad. They also discussed how the internationalization strategy intersects with the Francophonie and agreed to hold a day of reflection on the issues that Francophone students from cultural communities face in professional internships. In addition, the Committee initiated the development of a mandatory online training program for support staff and faculty members on language policies. This initiative will encourage the sharing of best practices in bilingualism and strengthen the gains already made on campus in terms of the Francophonie. The Committee also reviewed the efforts made to improve the quality of French on University websites, and looked at the issue of the language of the learning materials used in the classroom. Committee members received an update on the French Immersion stream and on strategies for improving it. They also heard a report on the growing interest in bilingual programs and options for recognizing students' bilingualism, which gives students a tremendous advantage in their education and in their future. Lastly, they discussed the active offer of services in both official languages on campus and began preparing a guide on this subject for businesses and services on campus.

This report records the commitment and efforts of the various members of our University community who have helped us pursue our institutional goals and our mission of supporting the Francophonie and bilingualism. I would like to sincerely thank all members of the Standing Committee who have shared their expertise over the past year and who have advanced Francophone issues and bilingualism at the University of Ottawa. Thank you for your exemplary dedication and your valuable advice.

Jill Scott  
Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs

## 2. Members

The Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages comprises 19 members. The members for 2019–2020 are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Categories</b>
Jill Scott	Chair; Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs
Vacant	Co-Chair
Jérémie Séror	Member or representative of the Board of Governors
Claire Turenne-Sjolander	Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Aline Germain-Rutherford	Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs
Lucie Thibault	Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences
Marie-Claude Thifault	Canadian Francophonie Research Chair
François Chapleau	Faculty member, Science
Guy Drouin	Faculty member, Science
Isaac Nizigama	Faculty member, Humanities
Sophie Letouzé	Support staff member
Wilbrod Leclerc	Retired staff member or alumni
Michel Prévost	Retired staff member or alumni
Mathieu Laflamme	Graduate student
Raphaëlle Robidoux	Graduate student
Vacant	Undergraduate student
Vacant	Undergraduate student
Cécile Planchon	Faculty member, Humanities
Daniel Hubert	Support staff member
<b>Resource persons</b>	
Jean-François Venne	Senior Language Policy Officer
Roger Farley	Executive in Residence, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute
Rachel Ouellette	Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs

### 3. Mandate

#### Creation

The Senate established the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages on February 4, 2008, by Senate resolution 2007-2008.50. The Senate amended the Committee's terms of reference on April 12, 2010 (2009-2010.42) and on January 18, 2016 (2015-2016.25).

#### Status

The Committee is an advisory committee of the Senate. It is mandated to oversee the planning and implementation of initiatives that will help the University fulfill its mission and its commitment to developing and promoting French-language culture in Ontario. The Standing Committee is also mandated to foster the development of the University community in both official languages.

#### Terms of Reference

1. To ensure that the recommendations in the Senate-approved development plan for programs and services in French are implemented, to evaluate their results on an annual basis, and to produce the next five-year plan for Francophone affairs.
2. To establish, implement, and coordinate a mechanism for receiving and processing complaints on the use of official languages in the University's programs and services.
3. To ensure that the *Regulation on Bilingualism* is communicated, monitored, and applied fully and consistently at the University of Ottawa; to annually evaluate how well this regulation is applied in the various programs and services.
4. To develop and implement an ongoing action plan for improving linguistic balance within the student population.
5. To work closely with faculties to design and implement an action plan that aims to increase the number of mandatory courses offered in French and expand the range of elective courses offered in French.
6. To review and help implement faculty plans that aim to increase opportunities for practicums, clinical placements and CO-OP positions in French-language or bilingual settings.
7. To evaluate annual faculty action plans that aim to develop French-language teaching materials and to recommend appropriate resource allocation.
8. To establish a University-Community Round Table and to regularly solicit the opinions of its members.
9. To monitor how faculties and services apply quality control and bilingualism measures that govern written communications.

#### Members

1. Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs, Co-Chair
2. Vice-President Resources, Co-Chair

3. Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs
4. Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
5. One member, appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors
6. Four faculty members, including two from the sciences and two from the humanities, appointed by the Senate
7. One dean or director of an academic unit, appointed by the Senate
8. Four full-time students, including at least one graduate student and one undergraduate, appointed by the Senate
9. Two support staff members, appointed by the Senate
10. Two alumni or retired staff members who are active in the community, appointed by the Senate
11. One Francophonie research chair holder, appointed by the Executive Committee of the Senate.

Terms are renewable. To ensure continuity within the Standing Committee, terms will be renewed for a period of one or two years.

#### **Officers**

1. Co-Chairs: the Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs; and the Vice-President, Resources
2. Secretary: Senior Language Policy Officer

#### **Meetings**

The Committee meets at least four (4) times a year, when convened by the co-chairs.

#### **Meeting attendance**

Any member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings will lose their seat on the Standing Committee; the Committee will fill the position on an interim basis for the balance of the term.

#### **Contact**

The Committee reports regularly to the Senate.

#### **Quorum**

Quorum is set at a majority of members.

#### **Secretarial services**

The Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs provides secretarial services.

## 4. Summary of Activities

The following pages summarize the activities undertaken over the past year, namely from September 2019 to June 2020. The Standing Committee held five regular meetings during this period, on October 28, 2019, December 5, 2019, February 20, 2020, April 23, 2020, and June 11, 2020.

### 4.1 Enrolment management and Francophone student recruitment

The Committee continued to monitor the University's efforts to recruit Francophone and Francophile students. The Senior Director, Enrolment Management and his team made a presentation to the Committee on the opportunities and challenges involved in recruitment in Canadian and international markets. They pointed out that although recruiting Canadian Francophone students remains a challenge due to demographic decline, the University has maintained its market share. Efforts are underway to address the specific issues related to recruiting Francophones from Quebec, particularly the establishment of equivalencies and customized course sequences that enable students to graduate in three years. Internationally, the strong growth in the Francophonie in Africa has resulted in these students' increased interest in the University. Our undergraduates are the main recruitment pool for Francophone enrolment in master's programs. A working group has been established to explore ways of boosting the recruitment of Francophone graduate students from other provinces and abroad.

### 4.2 Staff training on language policies

The Office of the Provost made a presentation to the Committee on its plans for a mandatory online training program for all employees on the University's language policies. This initiative stems from the recommendations made in the Francophonie action plan. The project, carried out in collaboration with Human Resources, will help staff and faculty members improve their knowledge of language policies through practical learning and roleplaying in situations involving the language of service and programs. Committee members provided advice on the instructional approaches to be favoured and the contents of the training program.

### 4.3 Bilingual programs

The Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs shared with Committee members the results of a study on the added value of bilingualism to students choosing the University of Ottawa. Avenues for improving French Immersion at uOttawa and the possibility of creating bilingual programs were examined. In addition, the Committee discussed the data on students taking courses in their second language and ways of recognizing their bilingualism.

### 4.4 Monitoring the quality of French on University websites

The Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, updated Committee members on the progress made and the next steps in monitoring the quality of French on University websites. Language Services, which is carrying out the project, reviewed the language quality indicators based on the comments made by Committee members. The most-visited websites are the priority in terms of implementation, and support is being provided to faculties and services. This project is being conducted in parallel with the transformation of the University's website.

#### **4.5 Language and culture in professional training**

Given the Committee members' interest in Professor Phyllis Dalley's research on issues of language and culture that arise in the French-language teacher education program (*Programme de formation à l'enseignement*), a day of reflection on this topic was proposed. The purpose of the event is to discuss the needs of students from cultural communities undertaking professional internships in a Francophone environment. Participants would include researchers, public administrators, students and community stakeholders.

#### **4.6 Active offer of service in both official languages**

The Committee heard the latest data on University community member comments on the language of service used by the new businesses brought on campus to improve food offerings. To supplement the language standards included in the contractual clauses for these new businesses, it was agreed that these businesses should be provided with a guide to support and inform managers and employees of best practices for the active offer of service to customers in both official languages.

#### **4.7 Office of the Vice-President, International and Francophonie**

Following the announcement in December 2019 of the creation of a new position, Vice-President International and Francophonie, Committee members provided advice on the essential skills needed for this position and the priority issues involved. These consultations were carried out virtually by the Office of the President, which received comments from members individually.

#### **4.8 French Immersion**

The incoming and outgoing directors of the French Immersion stream at uOttawa provided the Committee with an update on the French Immersion program, noting its attractiveness to prospective students. Nearly 2,050 students enrolled in the French Immersion stream in 2019-2020, in 86 programs in six faculties. The directors explained that they are considering various options to improve student retention in the program, particularly the possibility of expanding it to include new undergraduate programs, exploring avenues at the graduate level and examining the feasibility of an English Immersion stream. In addition, second language certification for two years of immersion studies was established in 2019. Committee members expressed their support for the French Immersion stream and outlined its benefits in professional programs targeting Francophone minority communities.

#### **4.9 Language of course teaching materials**

Committee members discussed issues involving the language of teaching materials used by professors in courses. The Vice-President Academic Affairs recounted her meeting with the Students' Union, which relayed the concerns of students who sometimes received primary documents in English in courses taught in French. In cooperation with the vice-deans, undergraduate studies, it was agreed that the academic regulations on courses would be amended to make it clear that primary documents produced by professors must be available in the language in which the course is given.



#### **4.10 Internationalization and the Francophonie**

The Chief Internationalization Officer made a presentation to the Committee on his efforts to promote the University's internationalization, outlining the main directions of the internationalization strategy and its impact on the promotion of the University's Francophone and bilingual character. He described the importance of the Francophonie in the development of international partnerships and in providing access to scientific knowledge, as well as the role of the International Office, which works in tandem with other academic services, in welcoming international students and supporting their success in both official languages. Committee members were also informed about the international partnerships behind dual degrees and student mobility agreements, with their strong emphasis on the Francophonie and bilingualism.

#### **4.11 Bilingual courses**

The Vice-Provost Academic Affairs informed members about the recommendations made by the working group on bilingual courses. This included proposed best practices, which were presented to the University community via the Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS) website. A skills model and course description parameters were developed. The implementation of these recommendations is being monitored in consultation with the vice-deans, undergraduate studies.

#### **4.12 Comments and suggestions on language of service**

A reminder on the current mechanism:

In October 2008, the University established a mechanism for handling language-of-service complaints and comments. This process is confidential. Comments can be submitted by email, regular mail, or telephone. Here are the main steps in the complaint process:

- 1) The complaint or comment is received.
- 2) An acknowledgement of receipt is sent within two business days.
- 3) The person responsible at the service in question is contacted, notified of the problem, and asked to correct it.
- 4) Follow-up with the person or supervisor responsible at the service continues until the problem has been corrected.
- 5) If necessary, the person who submitted the complaint or comment is contacted to inform them of the corrective actions taken.

The process also empowers the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages to intervene directly in more complex cases that remain unresolved after this complaint process has been followed. The Standing Committee may also be asked to intervene in more complex cases.

Status reports are regularly submitted to the members of the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages.

### Comments and suggestions lodged in 2019-2020

Between May 1, 2019, and April 30, 2020, a total of 261 complaints and comments on language-of-service were received, compared with 117 in the previous year. This significant increase can be explained in part by: the more active promotion of the complaint handling mechanism; the use of uoSatisfaction as a comment mechanism; and the increased visibility of the new Francophonie action plan. These complaints and comments can be categorized in the following ways:

Complaints by subject of complaint	
Bilingualism of services	138
Language of work	58
Courses offered	29
Quality of language	12
Precedence given to French	10
Pedagogical resources	7
Teaching	3
Exams and assignments (choice of language)	3
Bilingual courses	1

Complaints by type of service received	
In person	95
Signage	62
Online tool	38
Email	29
Social media	17
Website	13
Language of meetings	4
Telephone call	3

Complaints by service or faculty ( ≥ 5 )	
Food Services and businesses	27
Facilities	22
Faculty of Social Sciences	19
Faculty of Arts	17
Research	12
Health Services Clinic	11
Office of the Registrar	11
Faculty of Science	10
Telfer School of Management	9
Information Technology	9
Faculty of Engineering	9
Faculty of Health Sciences	8
Human Resources	8
Housing Service	7

External organizations (associations, unions, etc.)	7
Sports Services	6
Faculty of Education	6
Campus Store (bookstore)	5
Communications	5
Faculty of Law (Common Law Section)	5

Complaints by type of complainant	
Undergraduate students	128
Professors	101
Graduate students	15
Support staff	12
Members of the public	5

### **Analyses and measures taken**

In response to the comments and suggestions received from the University community, the Senior Language Policy Officer and the Chief of Staff for the Office of the Provost conducted the follow-up needed for one-time issues and identified those issues that were systemic or recurring. Most of the one-time issues were resolved by contacting the administrative service or academic unit concerned to implement corrective measures. For systemic or recurring issues, discussions were held with the services or units involved in order to more fully understand the issues and identify possible solutions.

In terms of data collection and analysis, over the past year, the Senior Language Policy Officer has overseen the digitization of the complaint handling procedure and a database is now being used to create digital files and categorize complaints. According to the first table above, which provides a breakdown of complaints by subject, most complaints (138) involved the bilingualism of services. To address this issue, the Office of the Provost has continued to work with Human Resources to develop a mandatory online training program on language policies, as recommended in the Francophonie action plan. An analysis will be conducted on issues involving the language of work (58) and courses offered (29) in order to identify causes and explore solutions, and the results will be presented to the Committee. In addition, as stated in the previous section, a study is underway to amend the academic regulations in order to specify the language of learning materials (7) to be used in courses.

In terms of the type of service generating the complaint, complaints about in-person service (95) mainly involved the issues of bilingual services and course offerings mentioned earlier. With regard to signage (62), discussions are underway with the Communications Directorate in order to harmonize standards on bilingual signage with the various faculties and services. The number of comments received on online tools (38) can be explained in part by the expanded range of IT tools offered to the University community. Since most corrective measures were of a one-time nature, they were implemented by the services concerned. In many cases, complaints about the language of emails (29) involved internal messages between employees. This number should decrease in the

future owing to mandatory training for employees on language policies. In addition, a guide to best practices in bilingualism for IT tools is being prepared and will address the issue of online tools and emails.

Concerning the main services targeted by complaints, the increase in services provided by third parties, particularly in new buildings, has transformed Food Services and on-campus businesses (27) in recent years. In collaboration with its partners, the Office of the Provost is currently preparing a guide on the active offer of service in both official languages aimed at the managers of these businesses and services. The second-most-frequent target of complaints was Facilities (22); the complaints mainly involving the signage in new buildings, and Facilities is updating these signs. Lastly, in terms of the type of complainant, students (143) are the main users of the comment mechanism and that efforts to promote this feature have been successful.

## 5. Other activities in support of the Francophonie

During 2019-2020, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs and the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic Affairs sponsored a number of activities in support of the Francophonie, which are described below.

### 5.1 French-language teaching materials

To improve the availability of French-language textbooks and teaching materials, professors were invited to submit projects to help enrich the Francophone content of their courses. This year, 13 projects were funded, representing a total investment of over \$121,000. They resulted in the production of French-language teaching materials for the faculties of Arts, Engineering, Medicine, Science, Health Sciences and Social Sciences. These materials included lab manuals, case studies, videos, and other teaching tools used in class.

### 5.2 Advocacy and educational activities

During the fall of 2019 and winter of 2020, two newsletters on activities for the Francophone community were sent to members of the University-Community Round Table and to roughly one hundred other partner organizations. In addition, promotional messages on the Francophonie and bilingualism, and about the complaint and comment mechanism, were posted on uoZone, the student portal, twice each term (fall, winter, and spring). Community Life organized a number of cultural activities in French over the course of the year, ranging from Franco-Ontarian celebrations to *Mois de la francophonie* (Francophonie Month) activities and other events aimed at Francophones and Francophiles.

### 5.3 Low-enrolment courses

We supported 141 low-enrolment courses (12 students or fewer) given in French in the University's direct entry and professional faculties to bolster the number of courses offered in French. These courses included 59 low-enrolment courses in the Faculty of Arts; 7 in the Faculty of Engineering; 23 in the Faculty of Social Sciences; 5 in the Faculty of Health Sciences; 22 in the Faculty of Science; 9 in the Civil Law and 8 in the Common Law sections of the Faculty of Law; and 3 at the Telfer School of Management.

### 5.4 Networking activities with Francophone high schools

The University hosted a number of networking activities at local Francophone high schools to raise awareness and encourage students to pursue a post-secondary education in French. These projects, carried out by the faculties, cost a total of \$214,000 in 2019-2020. The projects allowed faculty members to meet with students in their high schools or to invite them to campus to introduce them to their programs and career paths. The Faculty of Arts hosted a Student for a Day program, a Professor-Ambassadors Program, a drama workshop held in partnership with the Théâtre français de Toronto, and the *Action en milieu scolaire* initiative. The Faculty of Engineering supported the development of French-language content in its recruiting activities, the *GÉNIales les filles* (Go Eng Girl) program and an extracurricular and immersion program. The Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Health Sciences organized a mini-course to introduce students to the study of medicine and health, while the Faculty of Science held awareness activities. The Faculty of Social Sciences offered introductory social science courses, a career day and the Spend your PD Day at the Faculty of Social Sciences program. The Telfer School of Management organized initiatives for young entrepreneurs and the *Place à la jeunesse* competition. These activities enabled several hundred students to meet professors or staff members and get a sneak peak of the possibilities and advantages of studying in French at the University of Ottawa.

## 6. Conclusion

Over the past year, the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages has enthusiastically supported the implementation of the new action plan for the Francophonie. Committee members believe that the creation of the new position of Vice-President International and Francophonie will foster the adoption of a Francophone perspective in all University activities and will sustainably expand the reach and influence of the Francophonie on campus, in Ontario, across Canada and around the world.

With an eye to the future, the Committee members examined the new challenges and emerging opportunities for the Francophonie and bilingualism on campus, in terms of the diversification of the student body, the renewal of teaching programs, and the new methods of providing services to students. In the coming year, the Committee will support the arrival of the person who will lead the reflection on, and actions in support of, the Francophonie on campus, while continuing to oversee the promotion and development of the French language and bilingualism.