



uOttawa

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

2017-2018 Annual Report

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

February 2019

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## 1. Message from the co-chairs

To the Senate and the Board of Governors:

We are pleased to present a summary of the activities of the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages for 2017-2018.

During this academic year, the Committee members reviewed the strategic directions of the Francophonie and bilingualism at the University of Ottawa and worked on several ways to advance these issues. Most notably, they closely examined the question of creating a French-language university in Ontario and opportunities for collaboration in several areas. They also reviewed the preliminary results of a survey of University of Ottawa professors who teach in their second language. They prepared a multi-year report on the language-of-service complaints received since 2013. They discussed problems related to the University's bilingual courses and attended presentations of the French Immersion program and on a mentorship and support program offered by the Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement.

The variety of issues reviewed by the Standing Committee reflects the dynamic and enriching nature of Francophone and bilingual projects that take place on campus, in which members of the Standing Committee participate. Moreover, this summary underscores the commitment and efforts of the various members of the University community who have helped us meet our institutional objectives and fulfill our mission with regard to the Francophonie and official languages.

We sincerely thank all the members of the Standing Committee, who shared their expertise to advance and champion Francophone issues and bilingualism at the University of Ottawa. We appreciate their exemplary dedication and their valuable advice.

David Graham  
Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs

Marc Joyal  
Vice President, Resources

## 2. Members

The Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages comprises 19 members. Here are the members for 2017-2018:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Categories</b>
David Graham	Co-Chair, Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs
Marc Joyal	Co-Chair, Vice-President, Resources
Linda Cardinal*	Representative or member, Board of Governors
Claire Turenne-Sjolander	Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Linda Pietrantonio*	Associate Vice-President, Programs
Richard Barwell	Dean, Faculty of Education
Marie-Claude Thifault	Research Chair in Canadian Francophonie
François Chapleau	Faculty member, Science
Guy Drouin	Faculty member, Science
François Charbonneau*	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
Maryse Piché Bénard	Undergraduate student
Pamela Twagirayezu	Undergraduate student
Cécile Planchon	Faculty member, Humanities
Vacant	Support staff member

\*These individuals completed their term in 2018.

**Resource persons**

Marie-Claude Lanouette	Senior Language Policy Officer
Roger Farley	Executive-in-residence, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute
Rachel Ouellette	Chief of Staff, Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost

### 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 at the University of Ottawa 1974* is communicated, monitored and applied fully and consistently; to annually evaluate how well this regulation is applied in 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 practical, clinical and CO-OP placements 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 well faculties and services comply with bilingualism and quality control measures that govern written communications.

#### Members

1. Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs, as co-chair
2. Vice-President Resources, as co-chair

3. Associate Vice-President, Programs
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 Vice-President, Academic and Provost 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 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**

Secretarial services are provided by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

## 4. Summary of activities

The following pages summarize the activities undertaken over the past year, namely from September 2017 to June 2018. The Standing Committee met four times during this period: for a special meeting on September 5, 2017, and for three regular meetings on October 12, 2017, February 8, 2018, and May 17, 2018.

### 4.1 Creation of a French-language university in Ontario

The Standing Committee members reviewed a report issued by the French-language University Planning Board, entitled *From Local Innovation to Global Excellence: Proposal for a French-Language University in Ontario*. The Standing Committee members agreed with the University of Ottawa's position, namely to support the creation of a French-language university in Toronto and to assist it, as required, in implementing its administration and other academic fields. Moreover, the Standing Committee members stressed that the University of Ottawa must pursue its efforts to continually improve and develop the many French-language services and programs that it provides to Francophone communities in Ontario, Canada and elsewhere.

### 4.2 Bilingual courses

The members reviewed a report on the courses coded as bilingual and on the challenges of offering such courses. This presentation was in response to the Standing Committee's 2015-2020 action plan, which recommended a review of bilingual courses. The report states that some 100 bilingual graduate courses, and 300 undergraduate courses, are offered, which is a relatively small proportion of the total number of courses offered on campus. Some faculties do not offer any bilingual courses and no graduate-level bilingual courses have been created in the past 2.5 years. The main challenge is that these so-called bilingual courses are often offered primarily in English. The relevance and educational value of bilingual courses were also called into question. A working group, chaired by the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, was established to analyse this issue. The working group will report its findings and recommendations to the Committee once available.

### 4.3 Survey of University of Ottawa professors teaching in their second language

The Coordinator, Second Language Training for Teaching Staff and the Director, Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute presented the preliminary results of this survey to the Standing Committee members. This presentation was made in response to the Standing Committee's 2015-2020 action plan, which recommended the promotion of the importance of language proficiency among faculty members who teach. The study examines how professors experience teaching in their second language in order to better understand their needs and propose measures adapted to these needs. It identified the following points to consider:

- The importance of better defining bilingualism and ensuring that all stakeholders have the same understanding of the term;
- A need to standardize how bilingualism is determined;
- Work to provide ways to better retain current active and passive language skills
- Value and highlight efforts by professors to become and remain bilingual.

The Standing Committee members requested additional information on the sampling and distribution of the professors surveyed, by faculty, and invited the researchers to return to the Standing Committee once their analysis of the data was complete.



#### **4.4 Youth engagement support and mentorship program**

The director of the Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement presented the Standing Committee with a report on the Centre's purpose and, particularly, on the various activities of a mentorship program conducted in partnership with the Patro d'Ottawa to support local Francophone teens. The project aims to raise the teens' awareness of the role they can play in their community to improve the quality of life of their fellow citizens and to implement positive changes. It promotes community engagement among 20 or so Francophone high school students, enrolled in Grades 11 and 12, from the Lowertown, Vanier and Overbrook neighbourhoods. The Patro d'Ottawa recruited these teenagers from participating schools to provide them with leadership training and help in designing and implementing community engagement initiatives in their schools. During the planning and implementation of their projects, these participants are paired with University of Ottawa students, who volunteer as mentors, which becomes an enriching experiential learning opportunity for the uOttawa students. This mentorship model could eventually be expanded to include other schools in the National Capital Region.

#### **4.5 French Immersion**

The interim director of French Immersion at uOttawa presented a broad overview of the program to the Standing Committee members. This program is considered a competitive advantage in terms of bilingualism, one that sets uOttawa apart from other universities. This presentation was made in response to an item in the Standing Committee 2015-2020 action plan, which recommended measures to encourage Anglophone students to explore the French language and Francophone culture. French Immersion has grown since its founding in 2006; it is now available in 86 programs in six faculties. Participants have access to language learning support, the French Studies bursary, mentorship, and various activities. Enrollment increased greatly and then leveled off to some 2079 offers of admission in 2016. After a decade of existence, the program intends to build on its success and renew its efforts to increase participant retention, promote linguistic and cultural contacts, and increase its visibility. To this end, the interim director will prepare an action plan that she will refer to the members of the Standing Committee for validation, when available.

#### **4.6 Complaints and comments related to the language of service**

The Senior Language Policy Officer presented a multi-year report of complaints received from 2013 to 2018, which describes the 412 complaints received during this period, an annual average of 69 complaints. An increase was noted in 2014 and 2015, mainly concerning internal communications and the quality of French. Note that the number of individuals filing a complaint or comment is small compared to the campus population, which includes professors, students and employees. The data shows that professors filed most of the complaints and that these dealt mainly with internal communications. It is noteworthy that few complaints dealt with course offerings or teaching material in French.

##### Current mechanism

In October 2003, 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) 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 provides for 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. Such interventions, however, are very rare. The process also provides for the Standing Committee to become involved in more complex cases, but this has not been necessary to date.

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

#### Complaints and comments received in 2017-2018

Between May 1, 2017, and April 30, 2018, the University received 63 language-of-service complaints and comments, which can be categorized in the following way:

Communications	17
Computer tools	17
Quality of French communications	9
Service provided in English only	13
Website navigation	2
English-only standardized admission exam	1
Other	3
Inadmissible	1

Below is a brief description of the types of comments and complaints received in each of these categories:

#### **Communications**

Most of the cases involved internal unilingual English messages sent between employees or from a faculty or service to employees or professors.

#### **Computer tools**

Complaints of this nature involved incomplete or absent translations of certain computer functions, as well as English-only error messages.

**Quality of French communications**

Complaints in this category were typically about grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and Anglicisms.

**Service provided in English only**

The complaints in this category related to services provided by third parties, the lack of services in French, or a lack of active offer of service.

**Website navigation**

The complaints received were related to difficulties navigating the University's website, the quality of French on certain pages, and hyperlinks to pages in English rather than in French.

**Measures taken**

In response to the language-of-service comments and suggestions received from the University community through the comments and suggestions mechanism, the Senior Language Policy Officer 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.

With regard to systemic or recurring issues, the Senior Language Policy Officer discussed the issue with the offices involved in order to more fully understand the issue and identify possible solutions. This was notably the case for comments regarding the quality of French on the University's website. To this end, the Communications Directorate has implemented a pilot project to audit the website. A second systemic issue concerns the accessibility of various IT tools in French. This problem was discussed with the IT sector and the Teaching and Learning Support Service to find solutions. For example, during the implementation of Brightspace, the new teaching platform, changes were made to the French version of this tool.

## 5. Other activities in support of the Francophonie

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the following activities were sponsored by the Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost and by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs:

### 5.1 French-language teaching materials

Ten projects were funded this year, at a total cost of \$155,000, which produced French-language teaching material in engineering, the sciences, health sciences and social sciences. We also funded the translation of a few documents in sciences that were only available in English and that are used by a large number of students.

### 5.2 Advocacy and educational activities

On September 25, 2017, in celebration of Franco-Ontario Day, the president launched *Francophonie and Bilingualism*, a new website that provides the entire University community with one-stop access to information on the services and enrichment that the University's Francophone and bilingual identity offers. This site presents the foundations and values of the Francophonie on campus and expresses its vitality in both university and community settings. Over the course of the year, the Senior Language Policy Officer conducted information briefings to new employees and, upon request, to certain administrative sectors. She also presented an update on the new designation under the *French Language Services Act* to CAOs. A newsletter on the University's activities in the field of the Francophonie was distributed during the winter of 2018 to all members of the University-Community Round Table. Publicity about the Francophonie and bilingualism was posted on the uoZone student portal twice during the fall, twice during the winter, and twice in the spring.

### 5.3 One-day forum on Francophone immigration

On March 15, 2018, the University of Ottawa, in partnership with the Centre for Immigration Policy Evaluation at Concordia University, organized a round table forum on Francophone immigration to Canada, funded in part by the Quebec government's Office of Canadian Relations. The panel included university researchers and civil society stakeholders, including representatives from government agencies and Francophone immigrant communities. The researchers shared the results of their studies on the issues of racism and discrimination that Francophone immigrants face. This allowed the participants to understand the various perceptions that Francophone immigrants have of Canadian society and their different experiences.

### 5.4 Online certificate in French translation

The Ontario government awarded \$150,000 to the University to digitize the optional courses of a new online certificate in translation program. This would allow these students to complete the entire program in French, since the mandatory courses have already been digitized.

### 5.5 Low-enrolment courses

We supported the offer of 160 low-enrolment courses in direct-entry and professional faculties at the University. These low-enrolment courses can be broken down as follows: 55 low-enrolment courses in the Faculty of Arts, 11 in the Faculty of Engineering, 34 in the Faculty of Social Sciences, 7 in the Faculty of Health Sciences, 34 in the Faculty of Science, 3 in the Faculty of Law-Civil Law Section, 14 in the Faculty of Law-Common Law Section, and 2 at the Telfer School of Management.

## **5.6** Networking activities with Francophone high schools

The University held several networking activities with local Francophone high schools. The faculties of Arts, Engineering, Health Sciences, Science, and Social Science, as well as the Telfer School of Management, conducted 18 such projects in total, at a cost of \$275,000, with Francophone high school students.

## 6. Conclusion

Over the past year, the Standing Committee on Francophone Affairs and Official Languages has worked on several issues and has provided the expert advice needed to move them forward. During the coming year, the Committee will continue its efforts to direct language policies and monitor their implementation in the areas of services, teaching, research, and the student experience.

The recommendations of the report mandated by the president and written by Professor Linda Cardinal will certainly influence the Standing Committee's work in the coming years. The *Imagine 2030* strategic plan will also guide the Committee's work. The Francophonie and bilingualism will continue to be priorities and values for our institution and we are proud to champion their progress.