



uOttawa

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

2018-2019 Annual Report

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

November 2019

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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 2018-2019.

Over the past year, the Committee members have contributed to the thought process initiated by the special advisor on the Francophonie in preparing the *Action Plan for the Francophonie*. The Committee expressed its support for the action plan presented to the Senate and Board of Governors, which is in keeping with the fundamental mission of the University of Ottawa, namely to promote the development and vitality of the Francophonie in Ontario, in Canada, and around the world.

Moreover, the members reviewed the application of Section 18 of the *Regulation on Bilingualism*, which concerns the language used to write assignments and exams, and ways to raise awareness of this regulation among professors and students. The members also discussed efforts made, and progress to date, to increase the number of science and engineering courses offered in French. They also looked at how to recruit more Francophone and Francophile students, both in Canada and internationally, and the importance of such measures in achieving linguistic balance and in projecting a vision of the Francophonie on campus. In the same vein, they discussed the challenges faced by international students enrolled in the teacher training program, and how to support these students in overcoming these challenges. They also discussed the issue around courses coded as bilingual and examined a new model developed by the working group assigned to look into this issue. Finally, they received an update on the evaluation of the quality of language appearing on the University's websites and the approaches proposed by Language Services to better monitor language quality.

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. On behalf of the Standing Committee co-chairs who preceded me, 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. Here are the members for 2018-2019:

Name	Categories
David Graham*	Co-Chair, Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs
Marc Joyal*	Co-Chair, Vice-President, Resources
Jérémie Séror	Representative or member, Board of Governors
Claire Turenne-Sjolander	Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Aline Germain-Rutherford	Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs
Richard Barwell*	Dean, Faculty of Education
Marie-Claude Thifault	Research Chair in Canadian Francophonie
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
Maryse Piché Bénard*	Undergraduate student
Pamela Twagirayezu*	Undergraduate student
Cécile Planchon	Faculty member, Humanities
Daniel Hubert	Support staff member

*These individuals completed their term in 2019.

Resource persons

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 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. The Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs, co-chair
2. The 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 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

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

4. Summary of Activities

The following pages summarize the activities undertaken over the past year, namely from September 2018 to June 2019. The Standing Committee held five regular meetings during this period, namely on: October 4, 2018, December 13, 2018, February 5, 2019, April 11, 2019 and June 6, 2019.

4.1 Action Plan for the Francophonie at the University of Ottawa

Professor Linda Cardinal, the President's special advisor on the Francophonie, met with the members of the Standing Committee twice during the fall of 2018. In October, she presented her mandate to design an action plan for the Francophonie. To assist her, she established a working group comprising professors, administrative staff members and students. The working group examined the governance of Francophone affairs, proposed actions to strengthen the Francophone presence on campus, and set out measures to better inform various stakeholders of the University's Francophone mission. In December 2018, Professor Cardinal presented the conclusions of her report to the Committee. The action plan proposes to implement a series of structuring and specific measures over a three-year timeline. Members discussed the recommendations of the report and submitted comments and suggestions.

4.2 Choice of language for exams

The Committee reviewed the issue of students using their official language of choice to write exams and assignments, regardless of the language in which the course is given. It was noted that several students and professors were not fully aware of this right, which is specified in Section 18 of the University's *Regulation on Bilingualism*. In response to this situation, the vice-provost, academic affairs consulted the vice-deans responsible for undergraduate and graduate studies in the faculties to identify ways of better informing professors and students. In light of this consultation, she asked that course syllabus include a statement that clearly reflects this section of the *Regulation*. Members also suggested that professors and students be reminded of the section annually by including it in exam schedules, online announcements, and University newsletters aimed at students and professors.

4.3 Programs in French at the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering

Dean Louis Barriault of the Faculty of Science summarized the extent to which programs and courses are offered in French in his faculty. He presented these facts to the Committee members in response to Recommendation 9 of the Standing Committee's 2015-2020 action plan, which deals with the number of undergraduate courses offered in French in the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering. The dean stated that all undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science could currently take all programs in either language up until third year. He described the financial and HR challenges and opportunities involved in providing all undergraduate programs entirely in French. The Committee members encouraged the dean to continue his efforts and suggested that he remind students that they can submit their assignments and write their exams in the official language of their choice.

Similarly, Dean Jacques Beauvais of the Faculty of Engineering presented a description of the programs and courses offered in French in his faculty. This presentation was in response to Recommendation 9 of the Standing Committee's 2015-2020 action plan, which dealt with the number of undergraduate courses offered in French in the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering. The dean noted that from 2015 to 2018, the Faculty saw a

slight increase in the number of Francophone undergraduate students and a slight decrease in the number of Francophone graduate students. He noted that programs in computer, electrical, software and biomedical engineering were increasingly popular with Francophones. He also described activities held in local high schools by his Faculty to raise awareness about engineering. The Committee members encouraged the dean to continue his efforts and suggested that he remind students that they can submit their assignments and write their exams in the official language of their choice.

4.4 Enrolment management and Francophone student recruitment

The Standing Committee continued to monitor efforts by Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) to recruit Francophone and Francophile students. Senior Director, Enrolment Management Alain Mallette provided a broad overview of the situation and updated the members on the activities proposed in light of Recommendation 10 of the Standing Committee's 2015-2020 Action Plan, which deals with recruiting Francophone graduate students. In terms of undergraduate enrolment, he noted a significant increase over the past 10 years in students enrolling in immersion programs along with a marked increase in international student enrolment. However, over the same period, he noted a decrease in Canadian student enrolment. Although Francophone and Francophile new student enrolment increased to 2961 undergraduates in 2018, the increase in Anglophone new student enrolment was greater, resulting in a slight decrease in the proportion of Francophone students enrolled, which in 2018 was 29.9% for undergraduate and graduate students combined. SEM will continue its efforts to increase the geographic range and diversity of its recruiting, particularly in Francophone areas of Africa. Moreover, in collaboration with the International Office, SEM intends to increase its international partnerships that favour bridging and dual degree programs.

4.5 Courses coded as bilingual

The Committee members turned their attention again to the issue of courses that are coded as bilingual. The Committee received a few reports of some of these courses, which even though they are advertised as bilingual, are more often than not conducted in English. Aline Germain-Rutherford, who is vice-provost academic affairs, presented the initiatives proposed by the working group studying bilingual coded courses. The working group had established a common definition, along with a model of incremental skills in the second official language. Moreover, the working group suggested the items to include in a bilingual course's description to properly describe its learning objectives and how it would be run. The next step will be to consult the faculties to implement these recommendations.

4.6 Monitoring of the quality of French on University websites

In its 2015-2020 Action Plan, the Committee adopted Recommendation 15, which states "that the Communications Directorate develop and implement a mechanism to monitor language quality on University webpages." To follow up on this recommendation, Marie-Cine Renaud, who is chief of staff for the Office of the Vice-President, External Relations, presented an update of the project conducted by Language Services. She reminded the members of the evaluation criteria established in 2017 in consultation with the Standing Committee members, and explained that the websites selected for monitoring were chosen in a non-random manner, namely by prioritizing the most-visited websites and those containing other forms of content. She noted that the University hosts 280 websites and over 1.8 million webpages under the uOttawa.ca domain. The number of visitors remains constant at about 1 million per month. Language Services will produce a quarterly monitoring report aimed at academic units and services, and present an annual progress report to the Standing Committee.

4.7 Language and culture in professional training

Professor Phyllis Dalley, of the Faculty of Education, presented an analysis of institutional data on how language and culture affect professional teacher training in French. Nearly all the international students at the Faculty of Education are enrolled in the Francophone section of the program. A significant number of these students have failed their teacher practicums in French-language schools due to academic and cultural challenges. Among these challenges, the researcher identified differences in culture, identity and language, along with varying needs in terms of learning and internship guidance. Professor Dalley presented several options for potential solutions and further research, including training for teaching staff at schools that host practicums to help staff meet the cross-cultural and academic needs of these teachers-in-training. The Committee member intend to closely follow the results of Professor Dalley's research.

4.8 Comments and suggestions on language-of-service

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) 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. The process also provides for the Standing Committee to become involved in more complex cases.

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

Comments and suggestions received in 2018-2019

Between May 1, 2018, and April 30, 2019, a total of 117 language-of-service complaints and comments were received. This is a significant increase over the previous year, which can be explained by: a more active promotion of the complaint mechanism; the launch of uoSatisfaction as a comment mechanism; and the increased visibility of consultations about, and the announcement of, a new action plan for the Francophonie. These complaints and comments can be categorized in the following ways:

Complaints by subject of complaint	
Bilingualism	67
Quality of language	17
Courses offered	14
Teaching	7
Pedagogical resources	5
Exams and assignments (choice of language)	2
Bilingual courses	1
Various requests for information	4

Complaint by type of service generating the complaint	
In person	42
Email	36
Poster	11
Online tool	11
Website	8
Social media	4
Telephone call	1

Complaint per section or faculty (≥ 3)	
Information Technology	12
Food services and businesses	11
Faculty of Arts	10
Research areas	7
Telfer School of Management	5
Housing Service	4
Sports Services	4
Faculty of Social Sciences	4
Health Services Clinic	3
Campus Store (bookstore)	3
Community Life	3
Student Academic Success Service	3
Faculty of Health Sciences	3

Complaint by type of complainant	
Student	56
Professor	51
Support staff member	5
Member of the public	5

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 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.

With regard to systemic issues, the senior language policy officer discussed the issue with the offices involved in order to more fully understand the problem and identify possible solutions. This was notably the case for two complaints involving a misunderstanding of the University's language policies, namely comments received about the language of service used by certain businesses on campus and about the bilingualism of some internal emails sent to employee groups by other employees. An analysis of these complaints revealed that several of these situations involved new employees, which highlighted the need to better inform them of the University's language policies as soon as they start their jobs. Discussions are underway with Human Resources on the idea of developing mandatory online training.

A second systemic issue identified among the comments received, again this year, dealt with the bilingual nature of new IT tools offered online to students, professors, or support staff. On this front, Information Technology, Human Resources, and the Office of the Registrar have worked proactively to make the changes requested, and in certain cases, have reconsidered their systems to provide a French online environment.

5. Other activities in support of the Francophonie

During 2018-2019, the following activities in support of the Francophonie were sponsored by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Affairs and by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs:

5.1 French-language teaching materials

To improve the availability of French-language teaching materials, professors were invited to submit projects that would help them enrich the Francophone content of their courses. This year, we funded 18 projects, for an investment of over \$140,000. These projects produced French-language teaching materials for the faculties of Arts, Law (Common Law Section), Education, Engineering, Medicine, Science, Health Sciences and Social Sciences. This teaching material includes lab manuals, case studies, videos and other teaching tools in French that can be used in the classroom.

5.2 Promotion and educational activities

During the fall of 2018 and winter of 2019, two newsletters on activities aimed at the Francophone community were sent to members of the University-Community Round Table, and to a hundred other partner organizations. Moreover, promotional messages about the Francophonie and bilingualism, and about the complaint and suggestion mechanism, were posted onto uoZone, the student portal, twice in each term (fall, winter and spring). Community Life organized several cultural activities in French over the course of the year, ranging from Franco-Ontarian celebrations in September to the *Mois de la francophonie* activities in March, along with other events aimed at Francophones and Francophiles.

5.3 Low-enrolment courses

We supported 151 low-enrolment courses (with 12 students or fewer) in the University's direct entry and professional faculties to bolster the number of courses offered in French. As such, we supported: 60 low-enrolment courses in the Faculty of Arts; 7 in the Faculty of Engineering; 33 in the Faculty of Social Sciences; 2 in the Faculty of Health Sciences; 29 in the Faculty of Science; 10 in the Civil Law and 8 in the Common Law sections of the Faculty of Law; and 2 at the Telfer School of Management.

5.4 Outreach activities with Francophone high schools

The University hosted several outreach activities at local Francophone high schools to raise awareness and encourage their students to pursue a post-secondary education in French. The faculties of Arts, Engineering, Medicine, Health Sciences, Science, Social Sciences and the Telfer School of Management conducted 16 targeted projects, at a cost of \$170,000, aimed at Francophone high school students. They met with students in their high schools or invited them on campus to introduce them to the various programs and career paths. As such, several hundred students met our support or academic staff members and received a first look at 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 followed up on and implemented the recommendations it presented to the Senate and Board of Governors in 2015. The Committee also kept abreast of new issues and emerging opportunities for the Francophonie and bilingualism on campus, most notably with regard to welcoming and supporting the international students who renew and enrich our University community.

With an eye to the future, the Committee members contributed their ideas to preparing the 2019-2022 Action Plan for the Francophonie at the University of Ottawa. The consultations and planning conducted as part of these activities will build on the Committee's past efforts and breathe new life into it to ensure the sustainability and development of programs and services in French on campus, as well as its bilingualism. In the coming year, the Committee will support the implementation of the Action Plan recommendations, continue to see to the development of programs and services in French, and support our efforts to promote bilingualism.