

EPAG's RussianArgument:

1. **History:**

Russian dept at 1 fte in early 1980s as Gitta Hammarberg is hired.
Replacing previous faculty

1988 JVonGeldern is hired bringing Russian up to 2 FTE.

Early 1990s, Rachel May joins the department rounding out the Russian major.

Spring 2001, Rachel May resigns. Allocations decides Russian is a 2 tenure track department, plus one 3 year non-tenure track position. The Spring 2001 decision clearly signaling doubts about the future of Russian languages.

Fall 2003: JVG requests to be moved to IS to allow him to utilize his newly obtained skills in International Law.

Why Now?

As of 2001, Russian became 2 full-time Tenure Track, 1 3yr non-tenure track department. EPAG has made a commitment to not allow programs to die out of benign neglect. In Spring of 2004, Allocations will need to consider Russian program as non-tenure line will be up for consideration. If EPAG chooses not to re-new that line then Russian program is in effect terminated as a department.

Why October, not February? If we wait until Feb to begin this discussion then will be hard to decide on allocation - must have a couple of months of discussion on future of Russian FIRST then allocation decision - so Feb-Mar on Russian Program then April-May on allocation. We'd like to spend more time in spring on overall curricular renewal program and since we MUST make a decision on the future of Russian this year then why wait?

So, there is no escaping the fact the College must consider the status of the Russian program sometime in the AY 2003/04. EPAG considers it appropriate to begin this discussion sooner rather than later.

The Question:

1. Curricular:

The curricular case in favor of Russian is exceptionally strong. Russian adds much to the curriculum in the Humanities, Fine Arts and Social Sciences .

Russia boasts an exceptionally durable and rich literary and artistic tradition.

Additionally, Russia sits at the crossroads of Europe/Asia and the middle-east. Russia is neither fully European, nor Asian nor middle-eastern, yet is simultaneously all three.

Russia's economic transition, legacy of Soviet empire and colonialism makes it an exceptional laboratory to study an exceptional array of questions in the social sciences and history. Our colleagues in the Russian department make an exceptionally strong curricular argument and I encourage all the faculty to read their discussion paper.

EPAG does not dispute the curricular value of Russian. All valuable things; however must be weighed against their costs. In the case of Macalester, Russian language costs the college 3FTE that might be utilized more beneficially elsewhere. The more tangible benefits are evident in the Numbers:

2. Numbers

1. Russian Enrollments, 29 4 year rank, 27 10 year rank. (of 30) Lowest of the full departments in the college.
2. Number of Graduates rank 31 10 yr, 31 4yr, of 39 possible.
3. Russian ranks lowest in Major per FTE with approximately 2.5 majors per FTE versus several programs in which major FTE > 10
4. average class size is near the very bottom.
5. Russian enrollments per FTE are the lowest in the College, both on a 10 year rank and a 4 year average.
6. Despite the investment in Russian there is no discernable trend upwards

By any measure the numeric case for Russian is not strong. Russian attracts few major and few students, yet consumes 3 FTE..

The central question is I versus II. Can we **afford the luxury** of a 3 FTE Russian language department while the numbers are low, show no signs of improvement and do not appear to promise improvement in the future? In short, we built an excellent Russian department, staffed it, funded it and they did not come.

Options:

- a.. continue to support the Russian major at 3 FTE;
- b.. find ways to continue offering significant Russian language and/or literature courses at a reduced level of FTE;
- c.. discontinue the study of Russian language and literature at

Macalester.

Tradeoffs:

If we decide to eliminate Russian what would be the benefits? Assuming we cut FTE the decision tree would look something like the following:

1. Bank the FTE and increase the salary pool.
2. Re-deploy FTE into existing program, which is in some sense understaffed.
3. Re-deploy new FTE into new program.

Option 1 has the benefit of increasing compensation per faculty member, this would get us to our peer group more quickly than we might otherwise.

Option 2:

As we can see from the numbers there is tremendous disparity in workload across campus. Biology, Economics, Political Science and Psychology continuously serve in excess of 10 majors per FTE. Spanish, Art, Physics/Astronomy and English enroll sizeable numbers of students.

Option 3: Re-deploy.

Environmental studies is currently sidelined as a program that can offer a major, an additional FTE would get them up to sustainable staffing levels.

We have few offerings in important new areas of the curriculum. Chinese language, Arabic, other middle eastern studies.