

**NO! to EPAG Motion to discontinue Russian language major by academic year 2005-06.**

1. Part of the original rationale for curricular restructuring was to **support small programs**. Instead we have been placed into an **adversarial position** and continue to spend time on defending our existence. The **rhetoric of threat** evident already when Rachel was not replaced, has taken a toll on **faculty morale and commitment to running the department**: one faculty has decided on a different career and another is actively on the job market for a "real" job, while the third has postponed her sabbatical for two years in a row. The only threat to Russian that we've had to defend in this round is low enrollments. So let me start there. First, we've shown that the Macalester Russian enrollments, together with those in our field in general are showing an upswing. The timing of this motion to delete Russian **now** is simply bad.
2. Second, our current enrollments are **comparable** to those in 1987-88 when the college decided to expand Russian from 1 to 3 tenure-track positions and **better** than they were in 1992 when we made the third **tenure-track hire--Rachel**. Then we had **191 students**—this year we have **204 students**. The third **t-t hire** was approved for slightly **lower** enrollments while this motion denies us even a **term-position** with **higher** enrollments. We are asking for the **lesser** commitment precisely because we understand that our budget is more strapped now than in 92.
3. Third, when we hired Hilde we were given a **three-year "grace period"** to prove ourselves enrollment-wise. Memos from EPAG's predecessor, FAC (memo 5/29-01 and 5/1-03) justified the lesser allocation as a means for us to "take stock, make plans to address these problems, and take concrete steps to increase enrollment." We understand the need to plan hires before the three years are up, but we **have** addressed enrollments **in half the allotted time**: this year's enrollments are **more than double of last year's**: 109 students in 2002-03 versus 204 as of today for 2003-04—we've lifted registration ceilings on four of this year's courses. If enrollments are indeed the crux of the matter, then **please look at them!**
4. Another condition stipulated by the provost for renewing the lost t-t position was an **external review** (memo 5/25-01). Granted, we're NOT asking for a tenure-track position, but we are asked to make an **even more important decision without an external review**—while recent searches in e.g. German Studies and French were **held up** for external reviews to take place.
5. What will we **gain** by voting **for** the motion? **All we really gain is one term position**—unless of course we chose to fire Jim and me. **We are NOT asking for new positions, nor even to recapture our lost third tenure-track position**. We're asking to **keep** our 2 t-t positions and renew the full-time term position. This will qualify us as a disciplinary department according to the new rules.
6. What will we **lose** by voting **for** the motion? The college would **lose more than Russian language courses**. There **IS no Russian language major** at Mac. By discontinuing a Russian major we would lose Russian language, literature, and culture from our curriculum as well as Russian Central and East European Studies—linked to the ACTC; IS would lose one of its cores in the Humanities track and one language to

fulfill their 3-year language requirement; other interdisciplinary departments such as HSCT would lose several cross-listed courses.

7. One of the reasons for discontinuing Russian cited by the Provost was to enable the college to do **"new and exciting things."** Russian **is** doing new and exciting things—just in the last two years we have introduced a course on Russian film, a successful experimental first-year seminar on *War and Peace*, and a senior seminar on web resources! The **market** for talented young energetic Russianists is fabulous. We have just recently hired a **specialist on Eastern Europe in IS**, a **Shostakovich specialist in Music**, and the Drama department is in the midst of interviewing a candidate with **Russian drama expertise**. All of these hires are supported curricularly by a vigorous Russian department, which we are now proposing to **close!**
8. The Russian dilemma might be addressed by creating a new **2 FTE interdisciplinary Russian Studies department**. EPAG asked us for such a proposal, but their only response was that "there was a lack of enthusiasm" because "it is not interdisciplinary enough," but what interdisciplinarity is, they cannot tell us. We proposed involving Russian, Econ, History, IS, and Music—five disciplines, two of which involve the **recent hires** I just mentioned. The proposal was further considered too centered on **language**: we asked for 2 t-t positions in Russian to scale down language offerings and continue offering courses in literature, and culture as well. This proposal, should in our opinion, at the very least be discussed in the contexts of other **similar proposals for interdisciplinary departments with languages** as a central component, e.g. Latin-American Studies or Asian Studies, both of which include **two** languages.
9. Voting for the motion would make Macalester the only one **among 15 comparison schools**, and among **all schools ranked above us by the US News and World Report** that does not recognize the **centrality of Russian** language, literature, and culture to the liberal arts with an internationalist emphasis.
10. Voting for discontinuing the major **by 2005-06** would mean that our current **first-years and sophomores cannot complete their Russian majors**. We're engaging in false advertising. Voting for the motion would also support EPAG's point that **"nobody came"** and thereby ignore our superb **alumni, among them Rhodes, Watson and Fulbright scholars, honors students, students taking our courses, and of course our current majors** who rightly insist on studying what they came here to do.

Let me end with some Indian wisdom from Pulitzer prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri's new novel set in India and the US, called *The Namesake*. To prepare his son for a rich life a father Mr Ganguli, named him Gogol after the great Russian writer. His advise was: "Read the great Russians—and then read them again." The son didn't and he made a mess of his life—I'd like us to avoid his fate.