SURVEY OF FRENCH DEPARTMENTS IN US COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

SNAPSHOT OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS, PARTNERSHIPS, CURRICULA, AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

DECEMBER 2020

143 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY RESPONDENTS

- 41% SMALL INSTITUTIONS (<5,000 UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT)
- 25% MID-SIZED INSTITUTIONS (5,000-15,000)
- 34% LARGE INSTITUTIONS (>15,000)

5 OUT OF 10 DEPARTMENTS REPORT THAT THEIR CURRICULUM BALANCED FOCUS BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE REST OF THE FRANCOPHONE WORLD

- 54% of French departments concentrate on French language courses, while 46% have an even distribution of language courses, and courses on history, culture, and civilization.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TAKING CLASSES IN THE FRENCH DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT SIZE OF REPORTING INSTITUTIONS

- 60% of departments offer courses in French for professional purposes.

5 OUT OF 10 DEPARTMENTS SEEK SUPPORT TO SHARE INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS (IN THE US OR IN FRANCE)

- 33% SEEK SUPPORT TO ORGANIZE FRENCH LANGUAGE 200 PAIRS (ON-SITE OR ONLINE)

- 18% SEEK TO BETTER COORDINATE THE TARIFF PROGRAM WITH CURRICULUM

INSIGHTS

DEPARTMENTAL NEEDS

- 50% OF DEPARTMENTS SEEK SUPPORT TO SHARE INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS (IN THE US OR IN FRANCE)

- 36% SEEK SUPPORT TO ORGANIZE CULTURAL EVENTS RELATED TO FRANCE OR THE FRANCOPHONE WORLD

- 18% SEEK SUPPORT TO DEVELOP STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

- 17% SEEK SUPPORT TO FACILITATE DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAMS WITH FRENCH INSTITUTIONS
IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 ON FRENCH DEPARTMENTS IN US COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

INSTITUTIONS WITH SMALL FRENCH DEPARTMENTS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED BY COVID-19

- 48% of departments overall report a hiring freeze during COVID-19
- 13% of departments overall, and 21% of small departments (fewer than 100 students taking courses) report job cuts
- 7% of departments overall report a French Major program closure (of the 10 program closures reported, 9 were in small departments)

COVID-19 IMPACT ON INSTRUCTION

% institutions reporting evolutions in instruction due to COVID-19

- Balanced online and in person: 19%
- Majority of + in person only: 16%
- Majority online only: 65%

80% of large French departments (500 students or more) offered majority online or online only courses, while around 54% of small departments (100 students or less) did so. Small departments were more likely to maintain mostly in-person courses or maintain a balance between online and in-person courses.

19% of French departments overall were unable to offer all the classes they would have in a typical year while 25% of small departments were unable to offer classes vs 13% of large departments.

25% OF DEPARTMENTS OVERALL REPORT THAT FRENCH HAS BEEN MORE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY COVID-19 THAN OTHER LANGUAGES IN THE INSTITUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIVE DEGREES PROMOTE RESILIENCE OF FRENCH AT SMALL INSTITUTIONS

While small departments disproportionately report that French is under threat, small institutions offering collaborative interdisciplinary degrees in partnership with other departments were 20% less likely to report that French was more negatively impacted by COVID-19 than other languages as compared to institutions without collaborative degrees.

INSIGHTS

BEST PRACTICES TO STRENGTHEN FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE STUDIES PROGRAMS

- Collaborate with high schools to reach students pre-college
- Offer gateway courses with no language proficiency requirement
- Actively recruit French minors
- Promote study abroad opportunities in Francophone countries, offer scholarships
- Offer French for professional purposes courses
- Offer 1-credit pop-up courses in interesting topics
- Cultivate partnerships with educational and cultural institutions in Francophone countries
- Foster an active French club and French national honor society
- Promote professional post-graduation opportunities, assist students with applications to grad school, fellowships, Peace Corps, TAPIF, etc.
- Seek interdisciplinary collaboration and design double majors with global and international studies