



Department of French Studies
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To: Rebecca Lindsey, Secretary of the Board of Trustees
College Hall 30

Re: Strategic planning initiatives
Proposal from the department of French Studies

October 16, 2006

In response to the Strategic Initiatives invitations for proposals, the department of French Studies would like to present an alternate proposal to the one that has been orally agreed upon by the College and the Sorbonne representatives who came to campus last spring. Indeed, we believe strongly that the oral agreement reached last May during the campus visit of two Sorbonne officials from the Sorbonne to continue with two exchange students no longer meets the needs of our students or the best interest of Smith.

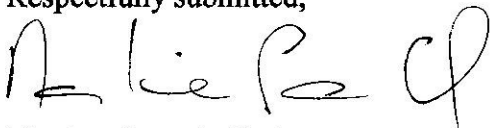
According to our current agreement, which will remain into effect until July 2008, the JYA in Paris program can send up to twenty students to the Sorbonne; in exchange, Smith offers full board and tuition to one student from the Sorbonne. In keeping with a general trend at French universities, however, the Sorbonne is asking for greater parity and to change the ratio. They ask now to be able to send one student to Smith for every ten students studying at the Sorbonne. The oral agreement that was discussed last May between Adrian Beaulieu, Associate Dean of International Study, and the Sorbonne representatives regarding the years 2008 to 2011, indeed, invites two students from the Sorbonne to campus each academic year.

The strategic initiatives, however, give us a unique chance to rethink our JYA programs, especially in view of the growing interest among Smith students for the sciences and the social sciences. As a result, we suggest continuing to receive only one student from the Sorbonne but offer the opportunity of a full exchange with another, more science- or social science-oriented, university in Paris. This would open up a new range of curricular options currently unavailable to our students studying at the Sorbonne, which focuses exclusively on the Humanities. In particular, Smith students in the sciences or the social sciences would have the opportunity to take classes in their primary field of study while on a Junior Year Abroad program in Paris. The universities of Paris VI or Paris VII would be the ideal institutions with which to establish the exchange since they offer courses in the sciences and in social sciences, as well as in cultural studies, East Asian studies, and women's studies. An affiliation with two universities in Paris for an

American Junior Year Abroad program is by no means an eccentricity. In fact, it would bring us on par with the programs with which we compete in Paris and which all have a minimum of two exchange affiliations. Last but not least, a wider range of formal offerings would have the additional advantage of reducing our dependence on private, more costly, institutions (i.e. the *Institut Catholique* and private language schools) to accommodate the increasingly diverse curricular needs of our students.

We propose that the agreement with this other university be modeled closely on the one we have currently with the Sorbonne. Just like her counterpart from the Sorbonne, the new exchange would participate in the American Studies diploma and provide tutorial assistance at the Jacobson Center for students in French. She would also teach a number of one-hour conversation sections of FRN 101 or 120. This would help relieve the department staffing problem and give our students additional contact hours with native French speakers—the one key factor to improving oral skills in a foreign language as the latest research suggests.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Martine Gantrel'.

Martine Gantrel, Chair
For the department of French Studies