

Cornell University
Graduate and Professional
Student Assembly

1 **GPSA Resolution 16: In support of further discussion on proposed**
2 **curricular changes to language requirements in the College of Arts &**
3 **Sciences**

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5 Sponsored by: Jesse Goldberg, GPSA Arts & Humanities Voting Member
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7 **Whereas,** on March 20, 2018 the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee (“the
8 committee”) released a final report of its recommendations for curricular changes; and
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10 **Whereas,** as part of that report, the committee recommends “that we replace the current language
11 requirement — completion of one course taught in any language at or above the non-
12 introductory level or at least 11 credits in one language — with a requirement that students
13 complete one course taught in any language at the non-introductory level or at least two
14 courses of three credits each in one language;”¹ and
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16 **Whereas,** on March 28, 2018, eighty-nine faculty members from departments and programs
17 including nearly all of the faculty in Romance Studies, as well as faculty in English, Near
18 Eastern Studies, Asian Studies, Food Sciences, Religious Studies, Sociology, German studies,
19 Jewish studies, Music, Medieval Studies, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Linguistics,
20 Comparative Literature, Science and Technology Studies, Classics, and Art signed a public
21 Letter to the Editor in the *Cornell Daily Sun* asserting that “[t]hese changes are wide-ranging
22 and, in our opinion, dramatically antithetical to the mission of the College. For this reason,
23 we believe that further discussion must be held that include the opinions of the many
24 members of the faculty who oppose the proposed changes;”² and
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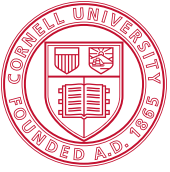
26 **Whereas,** the Letter to the Editor goes on to note, “we foresee a dramatic ripple effect from top to
27 bottom with the language requirement as proposed — on graduate students, on
28 undergraduates, on faculty;” and
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30 **Whereas,** graduate students in Romance Studies have expressed concerns that one part of the
31 “dramatic ripple effect” noted by faculty may likely be a reduction in funding opportunities
32 via graduate teaching assistantships in language courses; and
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34 **Whereas,** we believe that the March 28 Letter to the Editor evidences near unanimous agreement
35 among Romance Studies faculty and overwhelming support from faculty across the College
36 of Arts & Sciences for critical pushback on the committee’s recommendation; and
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¹ <http://as.cornell.edu/curriculum>

² <http://cornellsun.com/2018/03/28/letter-to-the-editor-on-proposed-curriculum-change-to-language-requirement/>



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38 **Whereas**, while the members of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly understand that
39 many factors influence curricular revisions, we generally believe that all possibilities should
40 be exhausted before making curricular revisions which have the potential to negatively affect
41 graduate or professional student funding; and
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43 **Whereas**, while graduate teaching assistants are not recognized by Cornell University administration
44 as “employees,” we believe that the labor that graduate TAs provide to language courses
45 constitute treating those TAs with the same respect and procedural reverence as employees;
46

47 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the GPSA joins our constituent colleagues in Romance Studies as
48 well as the eighty-nine faculty member signees of the March 28 letter in calling for further
49 discussion of the committee’s proposal to reduce the language requirement; and
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51 **Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA in no way dissents from, and in fact supports, the
52 committee’s recommendation “that the College adopt a policy that, for the purpose of
53 completing the language requirement, “language” means any living or extinct human
54 language, including sign languages, offered at Cornell;” and
55

56 **Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA urges the College of Arts & Sciences to explicitly consider
57 lost teaching assistantships as strongly as if they were employee layoffs; and
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59 **Be it further resolved**, that the GPSA urges that should the College of Arts & Sciences finally
60 decide to reduce the language requirement, then the College ought to provide concrete data
61 demonstrating how a reduction in required courses that are heavily constituted by graduate
62 student labor will result in no lost funding opportunities for graduate students; and
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64 **Be it finally resolved**, that the GPSA ultimately urges the College of Arts & Sciences to revise its
65 curriculum without cutting any courses that are heavily served by graduate student labor in
66 the form of assistantships.
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69 Respectfully Submitted,

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71 Jesse Goldberg
72 *GPSA Voting Member, Arts & Humanities*
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