

**2023 REGENTS' MOMENTUM YEAR AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND
CURRICULAR INNOVATION**

**University of West Georgia's
Program in International Languages and Cultures**

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UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST



December 5, 2022

Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards Selection Committee
Board of Regents, University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-1450

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

On behalf of the University of West Georgia, I am particularly proud to nominate the University of West Georgia's Program in International Languages and Cultures (ILC) for the 2023 Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Teaching and Curricular Innovation. This program is based in the College of Arts, Culture, and Scientific Inquiry (CACSI). The following portfolio demonstrates the innovative and collaborative efforts of ILC faculty to design a rigorous program that teaches the practice of academic mindset while providing immersive and integrative learning experiences for all students.

From the first language courses students take to their Senior Capstone experience, ILC positions students to seize opportunities that will enhance both their personal and professional lives by updating their courses to meet the demands of Georgia's dynamic global economy. By providing some of the most flexible pathways available at UWG, ILC allows students to choose from five concentrations, three minors, and a new certificate program in Global Languages and Cultures. ILC has designed courses that easily pair advanced language study with another major because of its unique double major track. ILC's awareness of the value of their program has led their faculty to design high impact courses and experiences that align with the University System of Georgia's Momentum, especially in regard to the spirit of providing learning spaces where all students have the opportunity to thrive. Not only do ILC faculty strive to meet the needs of diverse learners from diverse backgrounds by prioritizing evidence-based teaching, they celebrate that diversity, using it as a catalyst to spark student engagement and create memorable, meaningful learning experiences.

ILC faculty implement evidence-based teaching strategies that have yielded demonstrable increases in student achievement in their courses. As one example, they rely on the principles of Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), primarily because evidence shows that TILTing assignments provides more equitable chances for student success. Most impressively, and in demonstration of excellent scholarly teaching, they conducted their own studies on the impact of TILT and used that data to inform the design of their program. They further demonstrated their alignment with Momentum by adopting high touch mentoring practices that enable students to create substantive and trusting relationships with their instructors. These mentoring relationships ensure that students interact with faculty who take a genuine interest in their academic growth and personal development.

In the continued spirit of providing equitable and inclusive student support, ILC has replaced courses' textbooks with Open Educational Resources (OER). Faculty have also collaborated to create an array of learning activities and assessments that engage students and afford opportunities for low-stakes, formative assessments that offer substantive and fast feedback. Their collaborative efforts not only ensure that their students receive excellent instruction that is informed by best teaching practices, but also, by sharing materials and the time-intensive work of creating such materials, their instructors are better able to be present for their students and respond quickly to their needs. ILC continuously seeks innovative ways to provide students with optimal integrative learning experiences. In fact, they are currently working on an Affordable Learning Georgia grant to create an in-house textbook for Spanish 2002.

The University of West Georgia is proud of ILC's the continuous efforts and impressive results. The ILC carefully studied what students need to be successful in college (and beyond) paired that knowledge with innovative, data-informed approaches to scholarly teaching, transparent pathways, and providing outstanding support for their students. Their students do not just succeed, they thrive. The following portfolio provides compelling evidence for how the program embraces the Momentum purpose and fulfills its mission. I enthusiastically offer my resounding support for the nomination of UWG's extraordinary ILC for the 2023 Regents' Momentum Awards for Excellence in Teaching and Curricular Innovation.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Jon A. Preston
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

ILC Statement of Alignment with the Momentum Approach

The Program in International Languages and Cultures (ILC) in the Department of English, Film, Languages, and Performing Arts at the University of West Georgia (UWG) welcomes the opportunity to present our portfolio for consideration of the 2023 USG Momentum Award for Excellence in Teaching and Curricular Innovation. Per its description, this award “is designed to honor teaching and instruction that promotes student achievement, promotes a purposeful program and career choice, and creates an environment where academic mindsets thrive,” including through the incorporation of “high-impact practices in order to create transformative experiences intended to deepen learning as a part of students’ academic careers—particularly in the early years of study.” ILC’s mission is fully aligned with the aims of this award and highlights the “rigorous curriculum and experiential learning opportunities” in our major, minor, and certificate programs, and in our significant contributions to the core.

ILC offers a versatile range of programs and courses that strongly support the mission of the Momentum Approach. The pillars of Purpose, Pathways, and Mindset are interwoven into our program, from the first language courses students take to their Senior Capstone experience. We are continually updating our offerings to meet the demands of Georgia’s dynamic global economy and position our students for career and life success by providing some of the most flexible pathways available at UWG. Students can choose from five concentrations, three minors, and a new certificate program in Global Languages and Cultures. They can also easily pair advanced language study with another major because of our unique double major track. Moreover, our program boasts outstanding teachers, including the winners (all different individuals) of the 2021 College of Art, Culture, and Scientific Inquiry (CACSI) Teaching Excellence Award, the 2016 UWG nomination for the USG’s Teaching Award for Individual Faculty/Staff, and the 2013 and 2015 Foreign Language Association of Georgia’s Teacher of Promise and Post-Secondary Teacher of the Year Awards, respectively. Beyond individual achievements, our faculty work collaboratively within and across language sections (French, German, and Spanish) and with units across campus to bolster student success through teaching and curricular innovation.

In what follows, we showcase our recent achievements in these areas, focusing on our efforts to enhance student access to **quality pedagogical materials, varied and flexible curricular offerings** that connect languages to career paths and other disciplines, **internships and professional preparation**, and **collaborative, mindful learning experiences**. We want to emphasize that these newer initiatives are in addition to our long-standing, continued commitment to leading students in high-impact practices such as first-year seminars, capstone courses, undergraduate research, co- and extracurricular events, and, as one of our signature strengths, study abroad.

ILC Statement of Teaching Philosophy

An overarching commitment to integrative learning, high touch mentoring practices, cultivating academic mindsets, and transparent pathways for student success informs our teaching philosophy. Because our beginning courses have a strong presence in core areas B1 and C2 at UWG, we serve students coming from a range of academic interests and personal backgrounds. We understand this diversity of professional and intellectual goals to be one of the greatest strengths of our classrooms, and honor this with pedagogical approaches that allow students to see the immediate applicability of their efforts in our language and culture classes to the world around them. One of the driving forces behind our teaching philosophy is that every

career path is enhanced by knowledge of global languages and intercultural competence at the same time as we recognize the unique ways that these skills might apply to a given profession and add meaning to the personal lives of every student. The rapidly growing number of minors in our programs hailing from disciplines across campus indicates that students are keenly aware of the global, interconnected world they live in, and that our curriculum helps prepare them to participate more fully in it.

We use several research-backed strategies in our classes to cultivate an **academic mindset** in students. In addition to drawing directly from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency standards to design courses that emphasize communication, reading, writing, and cultural knowledge, we also build course work using the theory of **task-based learning**. This theory argues that students learn best when the content of courses is grounded in situations they encounter in their daily lives. As such, it prompts us to create activities that are focused enough to assess learning while remaining broad enough to allow students to make meaningful and purposeful connections to the content. For example, in French 1002, students synthesize the vocabulary and grammar centered on food, consumption, and partitive articles by making a video of themselves shopping for ingredients for a French recipe of their choice that they will also prepare. Task-based learning thus allows them to connect their lives to the lives of French people across the Atlantic all while attenuating the very real fear students often have about speaking a different language. Moreover, two colleagues from our department extended their research on task-based learning to present at the **2019 Innovations in Pedagogy Conference** at UWG. For the conference, they designed a workshop around some of the scholarship on task-based learning to an interdisciplinary cohort of faculty before guiding participants through the development of a task-based activity for their own courses.

In order to support the learning outcomes of our task-based approaches, our program also draws from the principles of **Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TiLT)**. We use TiLT practices to clearly outline expectations, strategies for success, outcomes, and above all, the purpose of assignments and their components. Doing so creates the conditions for more equitable chances of learning and student success, and allows students who have diverse forms of academic training to succeed in their language courses. One example of a TiLTed assignment is a culminating project for French 1001. The project asks students to describe their daily routine by using a variety of reflexive verbs, and requires them to demonstrate written and oral proficiency. The description is designed to orient students to all the resources they need and already have to successfully complete the project. In addition to the depth of detail and clear presentation of success criteria, we also show models of successful projects in class, thereby adhering to recommended practices for creating transparent assignments. Since Spring 2019 when the assignment was first implemented, students have a strong record of successfully completing this assignment with grades of 80% or higher.

Table 1: Data related to culminating assignment in French 1001

semester	students who completed assignment	students earning A-B on assignment	percentage of students earning A-B on assignment
Spring 2019	75	70	93%
Fall 2019	65	59	91%
Spring 2020	61	60	98%
Fall 2020	62	55	89%
Spring 2021	52	47	90%

Fall 2021	65	62	95%
Spring 2022	55	50	91%

These data also do not reflect the small number of students per section that did not complete the assignment at all (between 2-5 per course, approximately). However, the available data confirm a success rate of no less than 89% of students achieving a grade of 80% or higher on the most challenging assignment of the course. Although they are a small component of the assessment our program undertakes, the data here point to a sustained commitment to curricular development and innovation, and successful implementation of course work that maximizes student engagement and achievement.

We also adopt the precepts of a **growth mindset** as we interact with students. Rather than pretend that languages are and should be easy for everyone, from the very start we openly recognize that our courses might require a very different way of studying because they are cumulative in nature and therefore require sustained and consistent contact with the material. More importantly, we emphasize that students have the skills needed to have a positive and successful learning experience in our program. We posit these efforts within the realm of the transferable skills of attention to detail, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving that will serve them well in their academic coursework and professional lives. We reframe the challenging nature of language learning into an opportunity for academic growth and achievement that will help them become life-long learners (See **Item 1** in Appendix). In short, we recognize the high standards we have in our courses for developing linguistic and cultural proficiency, and we work diligently to help students meet those standards. This approach, however, requires us to adopt **high touch mentoring practices**, which include far more than the frequent contact we maintain with our majors and minors regarding strategies for maintaining full course loads, accomplish degree goals, and obtain professional and opportunities for advanced academic studies. We mentor students to achieve high-impact milestones, such as presenting scholarship in our annual **undergraduate research symposium** or other campus venues, integrating **study abroad** into their academic journey, and applying for **graduate school** or **international teaching positions**. Ultimately, we understand that every course we teach represents an opportunity to recruit and retain students. Our philosophy is therefore not just predicated on developing lifelong learners who are equipped to participate effectively in a global workforce; it centers on offering students multiple and transparent pathways for opportunities for personal, professional, and academic success.

Curricular Innovation through Open Educational Resources

Integrative learning and intellectual growth are key markers of our curriculum. In the area of curricular innovation, all language sections in ILC began replacing expensive textbooks with **low- or no-cost open educational resources (OERs)** in all core courses in 2019. Since then, we have transitioned entirely to OERs in GRMN 1001-2002 and FREN 1001-2001 and SPAN 1001-2001. Additionally, our Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG) grant proposal to create an in-house textbook for SPAN 2002 was recently accepted. This transition did not simply involve adopting OERs created at other institutions; on the contrary, faculty in French won an ALG mini-grant to create hundreds of online practice activities to accompany the University of Texas at Austin's open-access textbook, *Français Interactif*, and faculty in Spanish won an ALG grant to write three in-house textbooks and their accompanying online practices. Faculty in German have developed a large bank of assignments and lessons integrating the OER *Deutsch im Blick*

program into the core sequence. Having access to these resources at no cost from the outset of the semester lifts a financial burden from students, freeing them to cultivate an academic mindset and to focus on learning objectives. Additionally, faculty-tailored resources respond to the contexts and needs of UWG students, helping them connect language study to both international cultures and local communities and businesses in the West Georgia and Atlanta areas.

The financial impact of these initiatives is all the more important because of our important contributions to the core. Since its implementation in January 2019, the shift to *Français interactif* and the free online homework designed by our faculty has resulted in estimated cost savings of **\$127, 266** passed on to students.

Table 2. Cost Savings for Students in French 1001-2001

Estimated number of students who would have purchased the textbook for FREN 1001 between Spring 2019 and Fall 2022, not including summers	Estimated number of students who would have placed into 1002 or 2001 through the placement exam (roughly 10%)	Average cost of FREN 1001-2001 textbook per student prior to the grant
798*	80*	\$144.95 x (798+ 80)

*Number of students based off of Course Bulletin enrollment numbers.

These savings are much higher for students taking multiple courses of French, who would pay approximately \$119.88 to rent the text book for three semesters in addition to the \$104.99 needed to access the online homework platform.

The cost savings for students in Spanish have an even broader impact due to the larger number of students who elect to take Spanish courses. Our best estimate for actual cost savings to students through the Spanish textbook grant since the initial implementation in Fall 2020 through Fall 2022 is approximately **\$240,757.65**.

Table 3. Cost Savings for Students in Spanish 1001-2001

Estimated number of students who would have purchased the textbook for SPAN 1001 between Fall 2020 and Fall 2022, including summers	Estimated number of students who would have placed into 1002 or 2001 through the placement exam	Average cost of SPAN 1001-2001 textbook per student prior to the grant
1418*	115*	\$157.05 x (1418+115)

*Number of students based off of Course Bulletin enrollment numbers.

Since adopting the OER *Deutsch im Blick* in Fall 2020, students of German at UWG have realized significant cost savings compared to what they would have paid for the textbook program *Kontakte* that had been used for over a decade. This adoption represents a cost savings of **\$40, 184.12** over the course of the last five semesters

Table 4. Cost Savings for Students in German 1001-2001

Estimated number of students who would have purchased the textbook for GRMN 1001 between Fall 2020 and Fall 2022, not including summers	Estimated number of students who would have placed into 1002 or 2001 through the placement exam (roughly 10%)	Average cost of GRMN 1001-2001 textbook per student prior to adoption of OER
275*	27*	\$133.06 x (275 + 27)

*Number of students based off of Course Bulletin enrollment numbers.

Although these savings alone underscore an important contribution our faculty have made to student success, they would have less meaning if the materials did not resonate with the students and faculty who use them. The homework materials for *Français Interactif* have since been adopted by faculty in York College, CUNY, and a high school teacher in Georgia, and other inquiries have been made as well. In her initial message about the materials, the faculty member of York College states: “I was wondering whether the *devoirs* activities you so successfully developed could be made available outside of the University of West Georgia? It is quite brilliant.” The positive feedback from our colleagues in other K-16 institutions (See **Item 2** in Appendix: “Feedback on Français Interactif Devoirs”), and adoptions of the French ancillary materials ultimately represent a form of endorsement, and implies their quality and effectiveness as tools for learning.

Assessment data related to the new materials for Spanish core classes also suggest a positive impact on student learning. Overall the data show a slight improvement in student performance on final exams in Fall 2020, with an average score of 71.4 in Spring 2020 and 73.54 in Fall 2020. It is of course somewhat difficult to ascertain how much of that improvement was due solely to the materials, especially given that spring semester was completely abnormal in terms of campus shutdowns and other chaos resulting from the pandemic. Fall semester was challenging in its own way, with UWG implementing dual modality pedagogy that proved trying for both students and faculty. Whatever the factors at play, we were pleased that scores on SPAN 1001 final exams showed slight improvement in this final semester of the project. Probably the most important indicator of the success of our project is the feedback from students themselves with 92% of respondents indicating satisfaction.

Table 5. Overall student opinion about the materials (from ALG final grant report)

Positive	34% of 37 respondents
Neutral	4% of 37 respondents
Negative	11% of 37 respondents

As one student reported, “In high school, I took three years of Spanish via online courses. Yet, this semester, I actually feel like I’m really understanding and retaining the material. My main hope is that my experience with SPAN 1002 next semester will be equally good, and I’d love to see online practice activities being used for it as well” (See **Item 4** in Appendix: “Student Feedback on Spanish OER Materials”).

Curricular Innovation through Course Development

Another salient example of the integrative learning opportunities we offer is the **Certificate in Global Languages and Cultures** we created in 2021. The fifteen credit-hour certificate underscores the range of professional opportunities to which students can apply their language and cultural knowledge, from international humanitarian relief work to the increasing demand of intercultural competency in the workplace. As such, it provides an **alternative pathway** for students who are unable to pursue a language minor and major to understand the relevance of their knowledge of global languages and cultures in Georgia, nationally, and abroad. The co- and pre-requisite of a 2001 language course emphasizes how intermediate language and culture classes equip students with the critical thinking skills and comparative framework that position them to participate more effectively in an increasingly connected and globalized world. With 14% of its population speaking a language other than English at home and substantial investments from international corporations, the state of Georgia is globally connected and

increasingly multilingual. Moreover, the **Global Languages and Cultures Colloquium**, the required course for the certificate, fosters **purposeful choice** among students because it invites them to curate their academic and professional interests through a semester-long **research project**. As a student who recently completed the course states, “[The] semester project scared me in such a good way. It was the first time that I was not told exactly what type of project it would be. I got to decide what my project would be about and I chose how I could share language with the world and why it was so important. This creative freedom not only helped to fortify my wants of learning German, but it showed me that I was capable of so much more. Her Global Languages class is one that will forever be one of my favorites.” (See [REDACTED] letter of support).

Another course our program created and teaches across our language sections is **XIDS 2100 Language and Identity**. This course takes a global approach to the relationship between language and identity through historical, philosophical, and linguistic lenses. Faculty in each of our languages offer this course that explores how language and identity inform the world in which we live today. We specifically ask students to identify and examine the role of language in individual and group identity formations and evaluate the historical, social, and cultural trends that influence language. By doing so, students can then draw from and reflect upon their prior knowledge and experiences, connecting language and identity to their own lives, interests, and other courses or major areas of study.

In recent years, we have also worked to create additional courses that emphasize the far-reaching span and applicability of language and cultural studies to our students’ goals, pathways, and interests, in courses such as **Intro to Linguistics, Comparative Linguistics, Sexuality and Gender**, and **Gender of Language**. Courses like FORL 3111, *The Gender of Language in World Cinema*, bring awareness to socio-cultural differences rooted in approaches to grammatical and social gender across languages and ask students to apply this awareness to their lives and future careers. This challenges students to be well-informed members of our increasingly global and multicultural world and supports our focus on interdisciplinarity and connection of language-based content to student experiences and success on campus and beyond.

Whereas teaching about language and culture unite our three language sections, so do **collaborative pedagogical approaches** that foster intellectual growth. In a team taught pilot course on “International Perspectives on Immigration,” professors from the German, French and Spanish sections designed a course where students in each of the languages would read and discuss materials in the target language once a week in language-specific groups and meet in English in a large group setting once a week. The combination of in-depth language-specific learning and interdisciplinary large group learning helped students see commonalities and differences in immigration policy, movement, and responses in different parts of the world. Additionally, two Spanish professors, acting as Center for Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Fellows, designed and implemented an upper-level Spanish course with a **service learning component**. SPAN 4785 *Latinx Carrollton* invited students into partnership with a local Spanish-speaking church where students taught English as a second language to adults and Spanish as a heritage language to the English-speaking children of those adults. What’s more, one of our Spanish faculty was awarded a \$5,000 Faculty Research Grant to explore mindfulness in the classroom. This faculty member incorporates mindfulness and contemplative practices into their upper-level Spanish classes in addition to offering weekly meditation sessions in Spanish to faculty and staff.

As these courses suggest, our upper-level curriculum regularly centers on the high-impact practice of research. The **undergraduate research symposium** crystallizes many of the programmatic strategies highlighted here: students work closely with faculty mentors to develop and refine a research paper or project growing out of one of ILC's advanced courses and to present this work in a public forum. Understanding that the symposium is designed to reach a wider audience, including students and faculty in other disciplines and family members, students re-work their findings from the target language to English, thus demonstrating the broader reach and applicability of their original research. Beyond the academic nature of such an exercise, presentation at the symposium prepares students for graduate study and for cross-cultural communication in a wide variety of career paths.

Curricular Innovation through Internships

Another high-impact practice ILC has developed through curricular innovations is in the area of **experiential learning**. ILC has worked across sections to establish **relationships with local and regional employers** that lead to **internships and employment opportunities**, seeking and receiving outside support, such as through the Halle Foundation, to help reduce students' expenses in unpaid internships. These relationships have grown organically from the classroom and courses such SPAN 4785 and GRMN 3101 that focus on translation. Students and faculty work closely with partners to provide content and services, with the understanding that UWG students will have the opportunity to continue that work through internships and longer-term employment. For example, last year ILC faculty established a working relationship with Across Healthcare, a local start-up developing a multi-lingual medical records database, Matrix. Across Healthcare needed translators with high levels of cross-cultural understanding and an eye for linguistic nuance. Thanks to their rigorous training, advanced ILC students were able to provide these services. Across Healthcare has been so happy with the results that they have subsequently hired interns or contract workers from all the languages represented in ILC. To cite but one example here: [REDACTED], a German major who has also completed the Global Languages Certificate, was hired by Across Healthcare in an internship position for Across Healthcare for the Fall 2022 Semester. [REDACTED]'s internship was supported by a grant from the Halle Foundation and her work is greatly appreciated by her employer. In an email dated October 17, her supervisor, [REDACTED], wrote: "Just wanted to inform you that [REDACTED] is doing wonderful. She's been very dedicated and able to meet all the deadlines. I have nothing but good words for her." (See **Item 4** in Appendix: "Email from Across Healthcare").

Outside of the translation internships, we have several courses that provide internship experiences for P-12 teaching and connecting students to the region's growing presence in the film industry. All of our students completing a concentration in French or Spanish with P-12 certification complete a teaching internship in an area school. In FORL 4586, **Teaching Internship**, students are observed and mentored by our Teacher Education Program coordinator, who advises them in lesson planning, professional conduct appropriate for the P-12 classroom, and effective second language instruction pedagogy. This program has an excellent record of placement, and from Spring 2017 to Spring 2020, 100% of our teaching certification graduates (six total) placed into either a graduate program or teaching positions in public and private schools in Carrollton, Douglasville, and the metro Atlanta area.

In addition to the teaching internship, a new French course, FREN 4100 **French Film Internship**, allows students to participate in the organization of a French film series on campus, thereby developing skills in public arts management and cross-cultural work. We work with a

French government agency, UniFrance, to plan a French film series on campus using French films created by early-career directors. Although the course is specifically taught by French faculty because of their expertise in the realm of French and Francophone cinema, it is emblematic of our program's efforts to expand the accessibility of our classes to students outside of the discipline and to create opportunities for an internationalized curriculum for students across campus and not just those in our home program, which the co- and pre-requisite of French 1002 signifies. Moreover, it allows students to think about how the international perspective they gain through the course positions them to contribute to the growing presence of the film industry in the greater Atlanta area.

Purposeful Choice and Study Abroad

ILC's demonstrated commitment to curricular development and innovation for the classes at UWG extends to the international opportunities we offer students. Moreover, we have integrated internship opportunities into our study abroad programs. ILC has been the home of three long-standing summer study abroad programs in Tours, France, Vienna, Austria, and Heridita, Costa Rica, and, more recently, semester and year-long exchange programs in France and Chile. From 2014-2019, our program has helped 223 students study abroad, and was poised to send an additional 24 students to our respective programs in 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 6. 2014-2022 Study Abroad Enrollment

	Program	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 *
1	Costa Rica	22	25	14	11	20	10	9 (canceled)
2	Oldenburg	16	9	18	16	12	NA**	NA**
3	France/ Tours	18	13	14	15	8	13	11 (canceled)
4	Vienna	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	4 (canceled)

*No faculty-led program in 2021 and 2022. **The Oldenburg program was replaced with the Vienna program.

With an average of almost 45 students per year taking advantage of our study abroad programs, ILC works not only to equip students with language and intercultural proficiency, but also to prepare students to participate in an increasingly globalized workforce. We have a multi-tiered approach to study abroad that aligns with the three pillars of the Momentum Goals: cultivating academic mindsets, maintaining progress on a clear pathway, and making purposeful choices in an academic program. Cultivating an **academic mindset** from the vantage point of study abroad is woven into every level of our program, from program outcome assessment, to curriculum in 1001 language courses, to Senior Capstone experiences. For example, we introduce the possibility of study abroad at the start of every semester and every class, making sure that students understand how study abroad can enhance their academic and professional profiles, as well as contribute to their personal growth (See **Item 5** in Appendix: "Why Study Abroad?"). This emphasis stems in part from our annual program assessments, which suggest a strong correlation between study abroad and capstone students successfully meeting language and cultural proficiency criteria. Moreover, because many of our students are increasingly double majors, studying abroad is one of the **clear and multiple pathways** we offer that allows them to

meet their dual degree requirements in an efficient and dynamic way. For example, we feature study abroad programs with highly flexible course offerings that allow students to fulfill beginning, intermediate, and advanced coursework requirements. This enables students to progress in their degree goals and to take advantage of study abroad opportunities at the moment that best accommodates their academic schedule. Finally, the range of study abroad experiences we have available allows students to make **purposeful choices** with their degree paths. The option to go abroad for a four-week, one-semester, or two-semester exchange gives students the chance to pick the study abroad program that will best meet their academic, professional, and personal interests and needs. Furthermore, as we explain in the paragraph that follows, we have internships linked to our study abroad programs, making our offerings highly distinct within UWG and the USG.

We have focused attention on developing internship opportunities in the arena of study abroad. Students on our Tours summer study abroad program have the option of completing a **one-month internship with a French organization** as an extension to their month-long study abroad experience. Prior to the disruptions wrought by the pandemic, 3 students successfully participated in this internship, and worked in the hospitality sector and a science lab. As part of our semester or year-long exchange partnership with the Université de Tours, STEM students can complete a **lab internship** with a French scientist (our first student to do this recently returned from France and later applied to Medical School upon graduation). The director of our Vienna program is currently exploring options for an internship extension similar to the Tours program, and one of our faculty members in Spanish has organized internship opportunities with Southwire, which was looking specifically for interns with training in Spanish and cross-cultural competency. A German graduate completed an internship with the DAAD German cultural organization in New York and also with the German Bundestag in Berlin.

Innovation in Co- and Extracurricular Development

In an effort to **support curricular innovation and student success**, ILC provides a variety of **co- and extracurricular opportunities** to students in each of the three languages. We hold weekly conversation sessions where students can practice the language they are learning in the classroom in a relaxed environment. These conversational opportunities have also extended in casual yet instructive experiential learning opportunities, such as excursions to local Spanish markets to shop for ingredients as part of a cooking lesson about Spanish dishes.



1. Students taking part in a paella cooking class



2. French Club students learning about French impressionists

Additionally, every semester we host an international film series that allows students to delve deeper into the cultural and language specificities of the language they study while also contextualizing the languages and cultures we teach within a broader, connected global community. One of our more noteworthy co-curricular activities was the virtual roundtable panel on October 27, 2022 “**World Languages for a Global Georgia.**” The panel hosted distinguished professionals in the field of education: Dr. Greg Barfield, a World Languages and Dual Immersion Consultant, Dr. Jon Valentine, Director of World Languages and Dual

Immersion in the Gwinnett County Public School System, and Dr. Denise Overfield, Professor of Spanish at UWG and experienced member of the Foreign Language Association of Georgia. The panel encouraged a growth mindset in students to persist in their pursuit of acquiring language proficiency despite the challenging nature of the task, as the following student testimonial underscores: “The panel also helped click into place the importance of study abroad, especially in a country that does not speak my primary language, to become even more proficient. My favorite quote of the night came from Dr. Barfield who said, ‘Proficiency is not perfection.’ This really helps set the balance of situations in place...no one will ever be perfect in language but as you said this evening, ‘*Learning* language is about communication and learning to communicate’ (See **Item 6** in Appendix: “Student Reflection on Global Languages Panel”).

These extracurricular activities emerge in part from our recognition that knowledge of language and culture is by necessity oriented to connecting with people and places outside of the classroom, and that what we learn in the classroom has immediate relevance to the communities in which students live. Moreover, they are informed by **theories of co-curricular learning and engagement** which some of our faculty members presented in the workshop “Campus Connections: Engaging with Intercultural Events” for the **2021 Innovations in Pedagogy Conference** at UWG. The workshop was designed to familiarize workshop participants with foundational knowledge about the principles of intercultural, interdisciplinary, and co-curricular learning and engagement, in addition to providing participants the chance to create or reshape an extra- or co-curricular activity and receive immediate feedback on it from a group of peers. The feedback we received regarding the panel was quite positive, with one participant noting, “The workshop on intercultural learning by the French faculty was one of the best sessions I attended. It combined theory and praxis in a way that I found really useful. Their workshop was an excellent model that other session presenters should follow” (See **Item 7** in Appendix: “Feedback on the co-curricular workshop”).

Examples of Student Success

These efforts to provide robust and dynamic learning opportunities underscore our commitment to providing integrative learning experiences. Yet they would have less meaning if they did not contribute to striking examples of student success. For example, a 2018 double major in French and Biology was awarded a prestigious internship at the CDC and now works as the Program Coordinator for Chenaga Corporation at the CDC. Another double major in French and Biology completed a semester abroad in Tours working in a lab under a French professor, and after graduating in 2020 applied to Medical School. Moreover, we have graduates who have earned or are currently earning advanced degrees at the Sorbonne, NYU, UNM, UT, Austin, and UGA. In the area of Spanish, a 2022 graduate with a double major in Spanish and Political Science is applying to Law School, and a 2020 graduate is pursuing advanced degrees to work in Surgery Pathology. Additional students are completing or have completed advanced degrees at Georgia State and Auburn, and less far from home, a 2022 graduate is currently teaching English in Spain as part of a competitive Spanish government English teaching program. Another compelling example of student success is a 2020 graduate with degrees in German and Mass Communications. In addition to being accepted into Georgia Tech University’s Masters program in Global Media and Cultures, he was hired by Atlanta United as a Community Relations Coordinator. As these graduates of ILC demonstrate, our program prepares students for a variety of professions, be they in the areas of teaching, health care, communication, or the law. This range of career opportunities that students are able to undertake speaks to our effectiveness as a

program. In a world of unpredictable change, students leave our program not only ready to meet the demands of the current workplace, but also those of tomorrow.

Ultimately, these classroom, co- and extracurricular experiences are all components of cultivating a **culture of curiosity, engagement, and cultural awareness** at UWG and beyond. They represent ILC's holistic approach to learning and student success, and above all our dedication to providing educational opportunities that position students to participate in a global and increasingly interconnected world. Indeed, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of curricular innovation and teaching not just to help students expand the horizons of what they imagine themselves capable of achieving, but to help them accomplish their most ambitious academic, professional and personal goals.



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

November 28, 2022

Dear members of the USG Momentum Award Committee,

I am pleased to offer this letter of support for International Languages and Cultures at the University of West Georgia. Faculty in ILC's programs in French, German, and Spanish have developed a number of initiatives designed to foster student success. These activities range from innovative curricular reform to engagement with high impact practices such as study abroad, undergraduate research, internships, and service learning. Each language program purposefully seeks to nurture a growth mindset in its students through challenging experiences and numerous opportunities for feedback from a variety of sources, including faculty, student peers, and community partners both in our region and abroad.

Long before UWG selected experiential learning and career success for its new Quality Enhancement Plan, ILC was committed to combining these two essential components of its programs. As Georgia's multilingual population has continued to grow rapidly in the past decade – 14% of people living in Georgia now speak a language other than English at home, compared to just a little over 7% in 2010 – ILC has introduced curricular innovations that respond to our state's workforce and broader societal needs. Adding to its well-regarded teacher training program, which draws on relationships with regional K-12 schools (including a Spanish dual immersion elementary school in Douglas County), ILC has developed internship opportunities in a number of areas. For example, for the past three years students in all three languages have participated in a paid internship program with Across Healthcare, a healthcare IT firm located in Carrollton. ILC selects its most talented students for this internship, during which students translate components of the company's website portal to facilitate its objective of expanding to international markets. ILC classroom experiences prepare students for just this sort of work. Every major is required to take advanced grammar and writing courses, while many choose to take electives in translation. A recent Spanish translation class fully integrated the Across Healthcare partnership into its syllabus: under the supervision of the course instructor students worked in teams to navigate the various linguistic and cultural challenges involved in the translation process. The solutions they found later became part of the company's website. I observed one of these classes and was highly impressed by the instructor's ability to help students realize how any effort at localization (adapting products, services, or content from one cultural/linguistic context to another) relies on sensitivity to not just linguistic but also cultural differences. There is a critical need for skilled translators as our state's economy becomes increasingly connected to the world – the US Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that demand for interpreters and translators will grow by 20% between 2021 and 2031, making it one of the fastest-growing professions in the nation.

In addition to this translation internship opportunity, ILC has developed work-based learning initiatives in other areas: STEM students are able to participate in lab internships with French research teams as part of our exchange program with the Université de Tours; students of

French can also enroll in our French Film Internship class, where they work with films made accessible by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York to learn about the French film industry, familiarize themselves with film festival planning, and organize a French film event on our campus; and students of German are able to apply for \$25,000 in grant funding our German program was awarded through the Halle Foundation in Atlanta to help them identify and partake in internships either in German-speaking regions or with organizations having connections to German-speaking cultures. The Halle grant is part of a larger \$75,000 award, the second of its kind in the past seven years, that will support students participating in the German program's study abroad program in Vienna, Austria. Students of German can also choose a semester or year-long exchange experience at the University of Oldenburg in Germany, while students of Spanish have the opportunity to go on a summer study abroad program in Costa Rica or a semester/year-long program in Chile. Students of French have access to summer, semester, and year-long programs in France. Moreover, ILC faculty developed a virtual exchange program with the Université de Tours in 2021 to provide students of French with an opportunity to interact with international peers during the height of the pandemic, when study abroad was not accessible. Complementing ILC's study abroad options, the Spanish program has organized an innovative service-learning experience that connects students to valuable opportunities to interact with Spanish-speaking communities in Carrollton. Those enrolled in this service-learning program earn academic credits while helping build English-language literacy among our city's Hispanic communities. While doing this, students develop cultural knowledge and build meaningful relationships. These experiences position our students to be successful, professionally, socially, and personally in our state's globally-connected culture. ILC's students learn to embrace challenge and to grow into adaptable, lifelong learners who are able to thrive in a dynamic world. They become comfortable with diversity and develop an inclusive mindset.

Along with these opportunities that take place partially or entirely outside a traditional classroom, ILC has shown a longstanding commitment to nurturing undergraduate research. Faculty have mentored dozens of research projects in the past several years on topics including identity and migration along the U.S.-Mexico border, gender roles in East German cinema, and the legacy of slavery as seen through the perspective of French-Caribbean literature. Students are able to present their research in a variety of contexts, from the capstone courses at the conclusion of each of ILC's degree programs, to departmental symposia and our institution's campus-wide showcase for undergraduate research. When presenting research outside of ILC, students complete the extra task of reworking their original projects not only for oral presentation, but also into a new language (English) and for an audience that may be unfamiliar with relevant cultural context. This cross-cultural and cross-lingual work prepares students for future activities they will pursue in their post-undergraduate plans.

Faculty in ILC have recognized a notable increase in double majors in their programs over the past ten years, and have enacted curricular reforms designed to bring in students from STEM and other disciplines. They have streamlined their area F requirements so as to allow content from any other major at UWG, reducing time to degree; they have developed a new certificate in Global Languages and Cultures that features a colloquium whose purpose is to expose students to professional opportunities in the southeast United States; and they have finalized a new Latinx, Latin American, and Caribbean certificate that allows students from any major to explore the rich histories and cultures of peoples from those regions, and also to frame the

United States as part of those cultures. Overall, more students than ever now have more pathways through which they can pursue an interest in languages and cultures. These changes help ILC's recruitment goals, of course, but also responds to Georgia's need for linguistically and cross-culturally competent professionals who can apply those skills in numerous disciplinary contexts.

ILC's faculty have also been attentive to student success at the core level. All three language programs have adopted open-source resources for their elementary and intermediate sequences, meaning that core-level language learning comes at zero cost in terms of textbooks to UWG students. The French and Spanish programs were able to make this shift thanks to grants from Affordable Learning Georgia: the French program developed ancillary materials and homework activities to complement an existing open-source textbook for the 1001-2001 levels while the Spanish program essentially built an entirely new textbook for its students complete with video resources relevant to UWG students. These initiatives save each student who moves through the language sequence hundreds of dollars, contributing to the University System of Georgia's goal of facilitating college completion. Activities and modules chosen for the curricular reforms were informed by a deep analysis of student performance trends in prior versions of core courses. An attentiveness to student data characterizes ILC's approach to teaching: they have taken ownership over the annual program learning outcomes assessment process, and have implemented changes that have led to clear improvements in areas such as the presentation of research and the performance on the Oral Proficiency Interview, the external exam ILC uses to measure language competency among its graduates. The Spanish program's use of instructor-led practice tests, for example, has led to higher overall ratings for their students, providing them with valuable credentials they can add to their CVs as they embark on their post-undergraduate careers.

In sum, ILC's engagement with high-impact teaching practices across all its language programs and in a variety of areas has situated it at the forefront of curricular innovations in alignment with the USG's Momentum and College Completion principles.

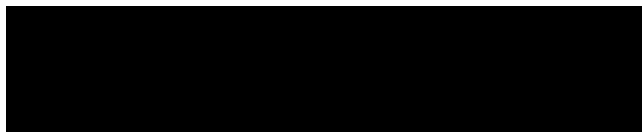
Robert Kilpatrick

Robert Kilpatrick, PhD
Interim Chair, Department of Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology
Former ILC Chair and Program Coordinator (2015-2022)
2022-2023 Chair, Regents Advisory Council on Languages
Professor of French
rkilpatr@westga.edu

I am currently a junior studying for dual majors, German Foreign Language and Literature with a minor in Computer Science and Organizational Leadership. Learning German has broadened the initial career path I thought I wanted. My original goal in learning German was to help better understand the software and machines used at my current place of employment and while that is still a goal, I now feel a lot more flexible in my opportunities for the future. My goal of translation is still there but I would love to share my knowledge and create an exchange program at work to drive a much stronger personal connection with the multitude of German companies we utilize for printers, machines, and even the programs we use to track data. We live in a world of technological connections and showing this appreciation for language is an adaptation that keep us humans connected. It is people like Dr. Tweraser and Professor Connell that drive these connections within their curricula.

My professor, Dr. Felix Tweraser has been nothing short of fantastic. As an adult learner I sometimes feel so far behind my peers. Dr. Tweraser is not only always there with an encouraging word, but also with a way to solve my language block by sharing anecdotal stories, new T.V series, or even singing! He has the uncanny ability to understand when students are struggling without them even saying it and suggests TV shows or movies to reinvigorate the excitement of learning German. It was not until I took Dr. Lisa Connell's Global Language class that I really understood the German impact in Georgia. Her assignments pushed me to really dive deep into how important culture was in a society. Her class made me think outside the box and see how intricate language and culture are intertwined. Her semester project scared me in such a good way. It was the first time that I was not told exactly what type of project it would be. I got to decide what my project would be about and I chose how I could share language with the world and why it was so important. This creative freedom not only helped to fortify my wants of learning German, but it showed me that I was capable of so much more. Her Global Languages class is one that will forever be one of my favorites. It taught me that studying German is so much more than just memorizing foreign words, it is actually about the connections that you make with the people around you and the shared experiences we can have with each other.

It is because of professors like Dr. Connell and Dr. Tweraser that students who doubt and question themselves achieve. They are both kind and understanding, patient and inspiring and without them, learning languages would surely be a much harder endeavor. They are they type of teachers that see their student's success as their own and take pride in the achievements that they have been a part of. Dr. Tweraser and Dr. Connell are able to teach through their own passion for languages and culture and it shows each and every time a student enters the classroom.

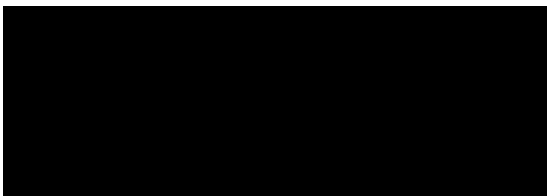


To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED], and I am a senior at the University of West Georgia. I am a Foreign Languages and Literatures major, and I have had the pleasure of being involved with our International Languages and Cultures (ILC) department for the past few years. I have a degree concentration in Spanish, and I have taken three semesters of French. I have also earned the Certificate of Global Languages and Cultures. I am very familiar with the ILC department. I have never met a professor in the ILC department that I did not enjoy working with. It is clear that every professor of language and cultural arts is passionate about what they teach. Not only are they excited to teach, but they love making personal connections with the students. I never hesitate to reach out to any of the ILC faculty and staff, even for something small.

When I started my journey at UWG, I was quite unsure of everything. I wasn't confident that I chose the right major, or the right classes. I was nervous that my language skills would never get to where they needed to be. All of those worries disappeared after I spent time in the department. The ILC consistently offers free tutoring sessions and casual group chats in the target language. There are tons of cultural immersion events throughout the year: an annual international film screening, international cuisine tasting nights, tabling events to learn about other cultural groups, and more. The ILC also offers diverse options for study abroad. There is a trip to fit every need— language immersion and cultural immersion in whatever language the student studies here. They also differ in length of time and price, so it really is for everyone. I have personally participated in multiple research projects through the ILC. I have studied language learning as a whole, intercultural competency and how it can be achieved, and studied in-depth what the term "native speaker" actually means. The latter of which I presented at Scholar's Day. I am currently working on my Honors College Capstone, which is also within the ILC. However, none of these fascinating endeavors would have been possible without the opportunities that the ILC has given me. The faculty, professors, classes, and *many* extracurricular events have proven to me that this department is truly one of a kind. The International Languages and Culture department at UWG is certainly deserving of the Georgia Momentum Award because it is constantly pushing students forward to achieve their goals, as well as providing the necessary tools to do so.

Thank you so much for your consideration.



Appendix

Item 1. Select slides from a “Why Study French?” presentation shown to students in core classes

Maybe you've never thought of how studying a language can help you in the future.

That's OK! We'll take a look at how studying French will:

- Make you more connected in a Global World
- Open opportunities for new experiences and travel
- Build skills that make you more hireable for jobs
- Develop parts of your brain that help with cognitive function and learning

Increase academic achievement

“ Learning another language also provides many other benefits including greater academic achievement, greater cognitive development, and more positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures. ”

Language learning has been shown to improve a student's cognitive function, including, but not limited to:

- Enhanced Problem Solving Skills
- Improved Verbal and Spatial Abilities
- Improved Memory Function (long & short-term)
- Enhanced Creative Thinking Capacity
- Better Memory
- More Flexible and Creative Thinking
- Improved Attitude Towards the Target Language and Culture

Higher standardized test scores
Higher reading achievement
Expanded student vocabulary in native language (English)
Higher academic performance at the college level

True!

Atlanta is the “French Tech” hub

for science, business, **gaming and film**, E-sports, humanitarian collaboration, biotech, & other transatlantic tech perspectives

This means that job opportunities in Atlanta that require knowledge of French are rapidly increasing!

“French Tech Atlanta will be another pillar to support the 14 existing francophile startups, promote French Tech in the Southeast by broadening cross-Atlantic relationships and help future startups to grow their business in the U.S.”

Before you continue, check out the linked articles!

“ The continual globalization of the world's economy is bringing diverse cultures and communities into more frequent contact with each other. The ease of global travel and the internet have collapsed the barrier of distance that once kept the world's communities separate.

From the corporate marketplace to the individual consumer, from the pre-schools to universities, from the beach vacationer to the global jet set, the world community has become integrated and interdependent.

Employers and businesses are seeking applicants who can navigate the modern global economy. ”

Item 2. Feedback on Français Interactif Devoirs

français interactif devoirs

To: "cezekiel@westga.edu" <cezekiel@westga.edu>

Sun, Oct 30, 2022 at 4:02 AM

Bonjour Claire Ezekiel,

I was wondering whether the devoirs activities you so successfully developed could be made available outside of the University of West Georgia? It is quite brilliant.

I teach FR102 at York College, CUNY. Online both synchronous and asynchronous.

Je vous remercie d'avance.

Cordialement

To: "cezekiel@westga.edu" <cezekiel@westga.edu>

Tue, Mar 9, 2021 at 1:54 PM

Bonjour Claire,

Je vous remercie beaucoup de votre réponse rapide et de m'avoir envoyé les liens aux fichiers vidéos.

Je tiens à vous dire que je suis enchantée d'utiliser Français Interactif pour mon enseignement du Français aux niveaux un et deux au lycée (9th and 10th grade). J'utilise votre méthode pour la troisième fois cette année et j'en suis fort satisfaite. Je ne peux bien entendu pas suivre le même rythme qu'à l'université avec mes étudiants de lycée. J'ai donc fait ma propre adaptation. Je suis vraiment ravie de pouvoir également me servir de vos ressources supplémentaires que vous avez si gentiment mises à la disposition des professeurs. Vous et votre équipe avez fait un travail superbe et je vous en félicite!

Merci encore et bonne continuation.

Jessie Mortazavian

Translation of email from [REDACTED]

Hello Claire,

Thank you very much for your quick response and for sending me the links to the video files. I want to tell you that I'm delighted to use Français Interactif for my French teaching at the first and second levels of high school (9th and 10th grade). I'm using your method for the third time this year and I'm highly satisfied with it. I cannot of course follow the same rhythm as the university with my high school students. I therefore made my own adaptation. I am also really delighted to be able to use the supplementary resources that you have so nicely made available to teachers. You and your team have done superb work and I congratulate you on it! Thanks again and have a good semester.

Item 3. Student Feedback on Spanish OER Materials Data

“The activities helped really well with practicing and reinforcing the concepts from the videos and book. It's hard to elaborate exactly which aspect of it was the most helpful, but I think the way everything was laid out and presented was very logical. I have past experience with taking

online courses for Spanish. In high school, I took three years of Spanish via online courses. Yet, this semester, I actually feel like I'm really understanding and retaining the material. My main hope is that my experience with SPAN 1002 next semester will be equally good, and I'd love to see online practice activities being used for it as well."

Item 4. Email recognizing quality of [REDACTED]'s work as intern at Across Healthcare

----- Forwarded message -----
 From: [REDACTED]
 Date: Monday, October 17, 2022
 Subject: [REDACTED]
 To: Felix Tweraser <ftwerase@westga.edu>

Hi Felix,

Hope you are doing well. Just wanted to inform you that [REDACTED] is doing wonderful. She's been very dedicated and able to meet all the deadlines. I have nothing but good words for her.

If you have questions or need further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]
 Sr. Project Manager, Project Management



Item 5. Slide from a "Why Study Abroad?" presentation shown to students in French classes

What does the decision to study abroad in an immersion environment say about you?

- You are willing to embrace challenges and put yourself in unfamiliar circumstances
- You are motivated
- You can negotiate different cultures and different languages (intercultural communication)
- You can adapt to new situations and see problems from multiple perspectives

Item 6. Student reflection on Global Languages Panel

To: Claire Ezekiel <cezekiel@westga.edu>

Thu, Oct 27, 2022 at 7:07 PM

Good evening Prof Ezekiel,

I appreciated being able to learn about the DSL program, which was the very first time I was introduced to this topic. As a parent myself, it was truly exciting to see so much participation in a full immersion program designed to create a whole generation of multilingual speakers starting at such a young age. This event increased my awareness of the possibilities of international careers while still being employed stateside. I found it especially interesting that the idea of arrogance with language skills was tossed around so much. It was a bit shocking at first, but after hearing the panelists describe how best to use this as a tool to set one apart from other applicants, it made a lot of sense. The panel also helped click into place the importance of study abroad, especially in a country that does not speak my primary language, to become even more proficient. My favorite quote of the night came from Dr. Barfield who said, "Proficiency is not perfection." This really helps set the balance of situations in place...no one will ever be perfect in language but as you said this evening, "<Learning> language is about communication and learning to communicate."

Thank you for the panel of discussion, it certainly gave me new perspectives to consider.

Item 7. Feedback on the co-curricular workshop presented at the 2021 Innovations in Pedagogy Conference

Feedback on Workshop: Campus Connections: Engaging with Intercultural Events			
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help Last edit was made on June 30, 2021 by Mandi Campbell			
100% Comment only			
What session did you join at 1:30 p.m.?			
A	B	C	D
What session did you join at 1:30 p.m.?	Did you learn any new strategies, methods, or approaches you are considering trying?	Was attending this session at 1:30 p.m. a good use of your time?	What new strategies, methods, or approaches are you considering trying as a result of the session?
Workshop: Campus Connections: Engaging with Intercultural Events	Definitely	Definitely	The workshop on intercultural learning by the French faculty was one of the best sessions I attended. It combined theory and praxis in a way that I found really useful. Their workshop was an excellent model that other session presenters should follow.
Workshop: Campus Connections: Engaging with Intercultural Events	Definitely	Definitely	I developed a concrete assignment to be connected to a campus event in Fall 2020.
Workshop: Campus Connections: Engaging with Intercultural Events	Definitely	Definitely	I left with a completed activity for a class I'm teaching in the fall.
Workshop: Campus Connections: Engaging with Intercultural Events	Definitely	Definitely	