



Office of the Dean

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May 17, 2007

Valarie Mockabee
Chair, Subcommittee B, ASC CCI

Dear Valarie:

I write to indicate support for the attached Somali language program proposal and to request expeditious approval from Subcommittee B of Somali 101-104 to satisfy the GEC requirement for foreign language. As you likely know, central Ohio has the second largest concentration of Somalis in the U.S., many of whom do not speak English; at the moment more than 50,000 Somalis call central Ohio home. Current international events and circumstances in Ohio provide ample evidence of a growing need to respond productively to the needs of Somali immigrant communities and the needs of the communities in which they are established. Providing university-level language instruction in Somali is a step toward meeting increasingly critical needs and serving such communities in Ohio and beyond.

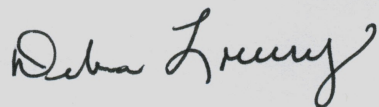
In collaboration with the Center for African Studies (CAS), the Department of African and African American Studies has developed courses to deliver elementary and intermediate Somali language courses. The mission of the CAS includes collaborative support for curricular development in African Studies, including the study of African languages, to meet the needs of our students today and community leaders and professionals tomorrow. The CAS also focuses on outreach to area teachers, representatives of government, business, the media, and civic and community groups to deepen understanding of African issues and strengthen working relationships with Africa and Africans. CAS, under the direction of David Kraybill, considers the proposed Somali language program a highly desirable companion program to the African Studies curriculum and its outreach and engagement goals. The Center has seeded development of courses and provided start-up support for instruction through Title VI funding.

The language specialist employed to develop and teach Somali courses will also provide training for other language instructors in the department to ensure Somali offerings can be sustained over time. Dr. Abdullahi Abdinoor is an active member of the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA), the African Studies Association (ASA), and the Somali Studies International Association (SSIA). He is a member of the organizing committee of the Somali Studies International Association (SSIA) conference to be held at the OSU in August, 16-18, 2007. Dr. Abdinoor taught Somali at the Summer Cooperative African Language Institute (SCALI) in 2003 & 2004 at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, and in 2006 at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. He established and taught the Somali course at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, and he is author of "Let's Speak Somali: a multidimensional approach to teaching and learning of Somali as a foreign language," currently at press for publication by the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at University of Wisconsin at Madison.

The Humanities curriculum committee has engaged in a thorough review of the Somali language program, initiated AU06, and we find that the proposed program conforms to accepted national standards and pedagogical practices for delivery and meets standards for foreign language instruction in the college. Further we are satisfied that it provides for appropriate and on-going assessment to ensure targeted student learning outcomes. Each course has been developed to ensure presentation of appropriate content and activities at level. Each reflects the necessary understanding of the fundamentals of second-language acquisition to ensure cumulative skills-building, and each features the accepted practice of reinforcement of content leading to and culminating in 104. Course organization in 104 (1) allows for the appropriate review of grammar, vocabulary-building, and practice to achieve enhanced accuracy in production (speaking and writing skills), and increased capacity in reception (listening and reading skills), and (2) facilitates skills-development and learning in an increasingly sophisticated cultural context at level with emphasis on cultural content (literature, folklore, music, realia).

It is my hope that Subcommittee B will find that the proposed Somali courses meet criteria for satisfying the GEC for foreign language and that the program attends rigorously to student learning objectives. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns, and many thanks in advance for expediting review.

Cordially,



Debra Lowry
Assistant Dean for Curriculum
College of Humanities

cc: Bill Childs, Jessica Mercerhill, Lupenga Mphande