

PROMOTING FRENCH IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The promotion of French is a long-term endeavor that must be performed as a team effort. An efficient recruiting campaign will be organized around specific strategies that can increase student enrollment. Here is a list of strategies that will give new impetus to your French program and help you to recruit students!

French Course Offerings

In addition to more traditional courses in advanced language, literature, and civilization, the French curriculum should offer professional courses, such as business French, scientific French, or French for tourism (hotel and restaurant management) that will provide advanced training for individuals who do not wish to become teachers. These courses may include the preparation for national French exams such as the various certificates organized by the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP, Direction des Relations Internationales/Enseignement, 28, rue de l'Abbé Grégoire, 75006 PARIS; Web: [<http://www.fda.ccip.fr>]) or proficiency tests such as the *Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF)* and the *Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF)* (French Institute/*Alliance Française*, 22 East 60th Street, New York, NY 10022; E-mail: [fhenry@fiaf.org]) which is the French equivalent of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Occasional content courses taught in English (French-speaking cultures, women, film) will attract students to the French program. At the graduate level, special programs for elementary and secondary teachers of French should be organized, such as short immersion periods or summer institutes which may be subsidized by grants. Information on grants may be obtained from the NEH at [<http://www.neh.gov>] or from the Department of Education at the state or federal level [<http://www.ed.gov>]. At the doctoral level, creative and unique programs are more likely to attract students than more traditional ones. Finally, taking students abroad on an organized program will definitely increase enrollment. It is not rare for students to minor and even major in French just to have the opportunity to travel abroad and enjoy a cultural experience.

Teaching methodology should not be ignored, not only in language courses but also in content courses; the Modern Language Association recently initiated a new series for the publication of volumes dealing specifically with teaching strategies applied to literature, culture, and other subjects. We should keep this in mind and make use of the wonderful tools that are now available to us. For example, the program WebCT or

Web Course Tools has several templates that will allow instructors to put any course on the Web; it can also be used for a Web-supported course [<http://www.webct.com>].

Exchange Programs

Exchange programs provide low-cost opportunities for student stays in French-speaking countries. Lists of institutions with addresses and Web sites may be accessed from official governmental sites at [<http://www.education.gouv.fr>] for France, [<http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca>] for Quebec, [<http://www.primature.sn/men>] for Senegal, or through a French search engine such as [<http://www.yahoo.fr>], [<http://www.nomade.fr>], or [<http://www.toile.qc.ca>] (See "Culture et Internet: Présentation critique" in past issues of the *National Bulletin* as well as on the AATF Web site at [<http://aatf.utsa.edu/>]). Various types of reciprocal programs may be organized for a summer, semester, or academic year whereby an equal number of students from each institution will study at the host institution while being registered at the home institution. The exchange program may involve students and also teaching assistants or lecturers and even faculty members for various periods of time.

French Activities on Campus

Campus activities that are related to French will help recruit students and enhance the dimension of the French program among faculty members from other departments and the administration:

- French Club for students: with monthly activities organized around festivals or special events such as Christmas and *Mardi Gras* parties, *crêpe* and cheese tasting parties, or *pétanque* games (see page 12). For a copy of the videotape on the famous yearly *Mardi Gras* party that attracts some 500 students from 24 secondary schools and colleges in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, send \$9.95 (shipping included) to Sherry Dean, Cultures and Communications Division, Mountain View College, 4849 West Illinois Avenue, Dallas, TX 75211.
- French Club for faculty and staff: Francophiles are found in every department, and many are actually very enthusiastic about practicing their French or just participating in activities related to French. In fact, such a club will give more visibility to the French program at all levels and in all areas. A newsletter can provide information on French events in the area.
- National French Honor Society (Pi Delta Phi): this honor society is aimed at students of French at the college level. Information regarding the creation of a local chapter on campus may be requested from

Dr. Rolande Leguillon, Department of Modern and Classical Languages, University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, TX 77006. Sponsoring a chapter usually involves recruiting eligible students and organizing an initiation ceremony once or twice a year.

- French Table: this conversation activity may be conducted on a regular basis at lunch time or later in the day. It can take place at a designated area of the college cafeteria or in a lounge where participants may bring a sack lunch. French exchange students and Francophiles on campus and in the community should be invited to participate.
- French Film/Art/Lecture series: this may involve a campus French Film Festival, a traveling art exhibit, or a lecture series dealing with the literatures and/or cultures of French-speaking countries. Presentations may be conducted by French faculty and faculty from other departments (art, music, film). The French Cultural Services (972 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021 or your local consulate, see listing of French consulates in the January *National Bulletin* or on the AATF Web site) offer small in-kind grants through free rental of films and exhibits.
- Yearly departmental awards for deserving French majors: this is a nice touch that will create memories and encourage students. This is also an item that can be added to a resume.
- Yearly departmental travel-abroad or study scholarships for French majors: if no funding is available for this purpose, French faculty may try to establish a scholarship fund by contacting alumni and local companies.
- Securing pen pals in French-speaking countries: this activity will provide students with an opportunity for an authentic exchange and may lead to visits.

Active Recruiting

Establish a yearly schedule for active recruiting. As a starting point, prepare a detailed Web site and an attractive flyer on the French program, including a list of French faculty, courses offered, as well as programs and activities related to French. Add some information on the importance of French as an international language and career opportunities with French. Richard Shryock's Web page at Virginia Tech offers convincing arguments on the importance of French in his section titled French: The Most Practical Foreign Language [<http://www.majbill.vt.edu/fil/french/whyfrench.html>]. Flyers may be disseminated as follows:

- Advisors: copies should be sent to advisors of all departments on campus;

- Recruiting freshmen and new transfer students: flyers can be distributed to incoming freshmen and transfer students during the orientation sessions that take place during the summer;
- Recruiting in high schools: relations with local secondary school teachers should be strengthened through various means: (1) meetings or conferences aimed at developing articulation between levels; (2) presentations about the French program to high school students by college students and faculty; (3) sharing flyers with secondary school teachers. Special events may also be organized on college campuses, such as inviting secondary teachers to film/art/lecture series or even an immersion weekend. Finally, campus tours may be organized for high school students who would thereby become acquainted with the French program through participation in short interactive units (language, culture, and literature), taste French foods for lunch, and even receive or win free tickets for the football game on homecoming weekend;
- Recruiting prospective French minors and majors among students who are enrolled in first- and second-year French courses to fulfill a language requirement. Encourage them to minor or even major in French through participation in a study-abroad program and do a 10-minute presentation each semester in all sections of the second and fourth semester courses. During these short presentations, students could receive an envelope containing documents on the French program and career opportunities with French.

The documents produced by AATF will assist instructors in the promotion of French. They include documents of all kinds produced by AATF, individual members, flyers and booklets produced by the AATF Task Force on the Promotion of French and the AATF Commission for the Promotion of French. (See the Materials Center Listing on page 31 for a complete list of materials available and page 16 for the special Promotional Kit.)

Celebrating National French Week on a College Campus

Here are suggestions for organizing activities on a college campus during the festivities of National French Week, November 4-10. Background information on many activities is available through the Internet. The dozens of activities listed elsewhere in this issue can often be adapted to the college and university level.

Cuisine: Thursday, November 4

Organize a French food tasting fair with several booths organized around regions or types of foods as follows:

By region or country with a sample of regional dishes from Alsace (*choucroute alsacienne*, *kugelhopf*), Auvergne (*salade auvergnate*), Brittany (*crêpes*, *gâteau breton*), Lyon (*salade lyonnaise*, *cervelle de canut*), Normandy (*sablés normands*, *tarte normande*), Provence (*ratatouille*, *salade niçoise*), Belgium (chocolate candy, *gaufres*), Morocco (*couscous*, honey and almond pastries), Quebec (*assiette des habitants*, *tarte au sirop d'érable*), Senegal (*poulet yassa*, *bœuf aux arachides*), or Switzerland (*fondue suisse*, *röstis*), for example.

By dishes: salads, chicken dishes, beef dishes, *quiches*, desserts.

Each booth may be decorated with posters and presented by a student wearing a traditional costume while music plays in the background. Handouts on the regions or recipes may be made available; a videotape on the area may be played at each booth during the fair.

Arts, Arts and Crafts: Friday, November 5

Exhibits may be set up on various aspects of this theme:

Art reproductions may be arranged by artist or by genre and could be presented to the audience in the form of short lectures illustrated by slides. Faculty (including art faculty) and students may be involved in the presentations.

Regional artifacts: typical objects from specific regions/countries such as *santons* from Provence or clogs from Savoie; photos of traditional costumes may be presented. Another possibility would be to organize a parade of students wearing traditional costumes from various regions/countries with a commentary for the audience while slides from the corresponding areas are shown on a large screen.

Community Events: Saturday or Sunday, November 6-7

Film: one or even several films may be presented with a formal introduction before each viewing;

Concert: with the cooperation of the music department on campus, French faculty may plan to have a concert of a music piece or excerpts by composers from French-speaking countries. This may include a piece by the college choir or a small band.

Play: with the cooperation from the drama department, the performance of a play by a French-speaking playwright could be scheduled ahead of time.

Sports and Games, Traditions: Monday, November 8

Organize an exhibit on sports in

France with several booths around each type of sport or sport event: the Olympics, *Tour de France*, *Coupe du Monde de Football*, skiing, sailing, or ice-skating. Photos of French athletes should be posted and handouts available for visitors. In addition, short presentations by students may be scheduled.

Organize a *pétanque* game or tournament (see page 12) sponsored by the French Club with several teams of 2-4 players each and with semi-finals and finals. Prizes may be awarded to the members of the winning team. A handout with the rules of the game should be available for the audience.

Science, Technology, and Careers: Tuesday, November 9

A special event may be scheduled and could involve several activities:

- Exhibit with booths on themes such as scientific research in France, medical research, French technology, French businesses in the world and the U.S., career opportunities with French. These booths should include posters and provide handouts for visitors; French faculty may host each booth and answer questions. Some of the AATF flyers would be particularly well suited for this purpose (see page 31 to order).
- Invite representatives from French companies in the area to set up a booth on their company, providing brochures and information for visitors.
- Invite representatives from the Cultural Services of French-speaking countries, the *Alliance Française*, or the local French-American Chamber of Commerce to present a short talk on French businesses and career opportunities with French.

Music and Dance: Wednesday, November 10

The possibilities are endless. This may be the perfect opportunity to bring National French Week to a close and have a big party to mark the importance of the event. Guests should include students, parents, faculty from all departments, college administrators, city officials, and individuals who participated in previous events that week. All guests should receive a flyer on the importance of French (*Speaking French: An Investment in the Future*, see page 31 to order). Both the college and city newspapers should be notified of this special event which could include various items:

- Banquet in the form of a buffet with regional specialties from French-speaking areas (tickets to be purchased in advance);
- Formal address by a speaker on the importance of French as a world language;
- Talent show performed by students in the French program: playing a French piece

with an instrument, singing, folk dances in traditional costumes, etc.;

- The evening could end with a dance using contemporary tunes from French-speaking countries.

In order to better achieve the promotional goal of National French Week, each event should include a booth with information on (1) the French program, (2) facts about the importance of French as a world language, and (3) career opportunities with French. To this end, large supplies of flyers should be available for visitors.

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