UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS SERVICE

August 15, 2007

Dr. William Fischer
Portland State University -- Foreign Languages & Literature
PO Box 751 (ORSP)
Portland, OR 97207

REF: P017A070048

Dear Dr. Fischer:

On behalf of the Secretary of Education we regret to inform you that your application to the 2007 Title VI International Research and Studies (IRS) program was not selected to receive an award. I regret to inform you that, after all pertinent factors were evaluated, your application was not selected to receive IRS funding.

We appreciate your interest in the IRS program and the time and effort spent in the preparation and submission of your application. Details on the evaluation of your application, including the scores and comments from the academic review panel, are enclosed. Please keep in mind that the Department does not necessarily endorse all of the reviewers' comments.

If you would like further information concerning the competition, please write to the Ed McDermott, Advanced Training and Research Team, 6th Floor, 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006-8521.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Sam Eisen
Chief, Advanced Training and Research Team
International Education Programs Service

O361-2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/23/2007 5:55 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Portland State University - Foreign Languages & Literature (P017A070048)

Reader #1:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
Selection Criteria		
1. Need for the Project: Maximum Points 10	10	7
2. Usefulness of Expected Results Maximum Points: 10	10	6
3. Development of New Knowledge Maximum Points: 10	10	6
4. Formulation of Problems and Knowledge of Related Research Maximum Points :10	10	6
5. Specificity of Statement of Procedures Maximum Points: 5	5	3
6. Adequacy of Research Methodology and Scope Maximum Points: 10	10	6
7. Plan of Operation Maximum Points: 10	10	6
8. Quality of Personnel: Maximum Points: 10	10	6
9. Budget and Cost Effectiveness: Maximum Points: 5	5	3
10. Plan of Evaluation: Maximum Points: 15	15	9
11. Adequacy of Resources: Maximum Points: 5	5	4
12. Competitive Priority: Maximum Points: 5	5	5
TOTAL	105	67

Technical Review Form

Panel 5: 84.017A
Reader #1:
Applicant: Portland State University - Foreign Languages & Literature (P017A070048)

Summary

1. Please summarize the application's strengths and weaknesses

This proposal takes a critical look at second-year foreign language instruction. One can assume from the description and anecdotal evidence presented that there is need to conduct research on this topic. One is also surprised that more research of this kind has not already been conducted. The proposal includes a long section making the argument for why the second year course is generally broken, and that means that most sections in the proposal are weak or under-developed. More attention to the core elements of how the project would be undertaken is needed.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria

1. 1. Need for the Project (Rate this criterion from 0 to 10 points)
In evaluating this project, under this criterion, please consider the following questions:
a) Is there a need for the proposed research or study in the educational field to be served?
b) If the project concerns an assessment of needs in any of the areas mandated under Section 605, is the project ikely to be helpful in determining present or future needs in foreign language and other fields in the context of the national interest of the United States?

The proposal attempts to make the case for why second-year foreign language programs should be surveyed and assessed. Although one could assume that such a need exists, the approach employed here to create a "straw man" seems weak. One could assume that the researchers could survey the second-year programs and curricula in their own state without the grant.

Reader's Score: 7

2. Usefulness of Expected Results
Please consider the following questions:
a) Do the anticipated research results have a good potential for being utilized by other projects or programs for similar educational purposes?
b) Are the anticipated research results --if pertinent-- replicable?

This proposal takes a highly critical view of second year language programs. If the attrition rate mentioned here is so high between first year and second year courses, it is surprising that researchers and language departments have not attempted already to understand the underlying causes. The proposal takes as a core assumption that the second year experience is broken, and this approach likely would shape the entire research structure, making it less likely that results gathered would be utilized by others who come at this from different perspectives.

Reader's Score: 6

3. Development of New Knowledge
To what extent can the proposed activity be expected to develop new knowledge, which will contribute to the purposes of the International Educations programs (under Title VI, Part A, Higher Education Act) ?

The proposal suggests that data gathered will provide good information for strengthening the second-year foreign language class experience. OPI interviews and other data gathered would, indeed, be useful information. But the proposed "specialized rubrics" are not fully developed and may not prove to be as useful as proposed.

Reader's Score: 6

4. Formulation of Problems and Knowledge of Related Research
a) Are the problems, questions, or hypotheses to be dealt with well formulated?
b) Does this formulation reflect adequate knowledge of other, past or on-going, related research?

The core problem formulated here is clear: the second year language course is broken. The proposal describes annecdotal evidence to support this argument, yet does not attempt to describe other, similar research being done. For example, one could assume that other universities or research projects involve OPI interviews, and that these interviews could be employed to address the underlying research questions. More work should be done to integrate related research.

Reader's Score: 6

5. Specificity of Statement of Procedures
a) Is the statement of procedures to be followed adequate and specific (including whenever applicable, information on sampling techniques, controls,
data to be gathered, and/or statistical and other analyses to be made)

Aside from describing that data will be gathered and interview conducted, the proposal is relatively vague as to the specifics for how the data will be gathered, what the research team will use in assessing the data, how OPI's will be organized or scheduled, etc. Little information is given on sampling techniques and other statistical analyses to be employed.

Reader's Score: 3

6. Adequacy of Research Methodology and Scope
a) Are the proposed research, teaching or testing methods appropriate to the aims of this project and are they adequate to achieve the expected results?
b) Are the size, scope, and duration of the project sufficient so as to secure meaningful research results?

Some aspects of this proposal are clear: online surveys will be done, and OPI's conducted. But how those things will be done, what they will contain, and how the research team will ensure the accuracy of the data remain unclear. Certain aspects of the project are very ambitious, while the idea to do in-depth surveys in Oregon and another state are more realistic.

Reader's Score: 6

7. Plan of Operation
a) Does the design of the project show high quality?
b) How effective is the plan of management ? To what extent will it ensure proper and efficient administration?
c) Is there a clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the (Section 605) program?
d) In what way does the applicant plan to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective?

e) To what extent will the applicant provide equal access treatment for eligible members of racial and ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons; and the elderly?

The plan of operation is relatively vague. Mention is made of other outcomes research conducted by the researchers, yet the text contains few examples from that research and virtually no overall results. It seems that the idea of altering samples of course materials to obscure the language or location seems time-consuming and potentially distracting, given the large number of samples proposed.

Reader's Score: 6

8. Quality of Personnel:
a) Is there evidence of the project director's (or principal investigator's)professional competence and experince to direct this research?
b) Is there evidence of the qualifications of the other key personnel, if any, to participate in the project?
c) Is the amount of time that the persons referred to under (a) and (b), above plan to commit to the project appropriate to the project's needs?
d) To what extent does the applicant, as part of its non-discriminatory employment practices, encourage pplications for employment from members of groups that have been traditionally under-represented, such as members of ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons, and the elderly?

The PD clearly has experience teaching at the post-secondary level. Other members of the research team are described in limited detail. Given the importance of assessment of language materials, this proposal rests on having diverse opinions about the samples to be gathered, making the research team a key element in the project. Without more detail about the team, it is hard to assess the strength of that team.

Reader's Score: 6

9. Budget and Cost Effectiveness
a) Is the proposed budget adequate to support the proposed project activities?
b) Are the costs reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project?

The budget is overall realistic and adequate for the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 3

10. Plan of Evaluation:
a) Does the application show methods of evaluation that are appropriate for the project and, to the extent possible, are the objective(s) and the product data quantifiable?

The evaluation plan presented here is sketchy and vague. It contains little detail on how internal and external evaluation will be used to determine whether the project is going well or not, and whether the results generated are valid. A grant evaluator is mentioned, but that individual's role is not described.

Reader's Score: 9

11. Adequacy of Resources:
a) Does the applicant have adequate facilities to conduct the project?
b) Are the equipemnt and supplies wich the applicant plans to use adequate?

The applicant does have adequate facilities for the project.

Reader's Score: 4

12. Competitive Priority:

a) Research, surveys, proficiency assessments, or studies that foster linkages between K-12 and postsecondary language training.

Yes, this project would foster linkages.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/23/2007 5:55 AM

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/21/2007 10:22 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Portland State University - Foreign Languages & Literature (P017A070048)

Reader #2:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
Selection Criteria		
1. Need for the Project: Maximum Points 10	10	6
2. Usefulness of Expected Results Maximum Points: 10	10	5
3. Development of New Knowledge Maximum Points: 10	10	5
4. Formulation of Problems and Knowledge of Related Research Maximum Points :10	10	6
5. Specificity of Statement of Procedures Maximum Points: 5	5	2
6. Adequacy of Research Methodology and Scope Maximum Points: 10	10	7
7. Plan of Operation Maximum Points: 10	10	7
8. Quality of Personnel: Maximum Points: 10	10	5
9. Budget and Cost Effectiveness: Maximum Points: 5	5	3
10. Plan of Evaluation: Maximum Points: 15	15	10
11. Adequacy of Resources: Maximum Points: 5	5	4
12. Competitive Priority: Maximum Points: 5	5	5
TOTAL	105	65

Technical Review Form

Panel 5: 84.017A
Reader #2:
Applicant: Portland State University - Foreign Languages & Literature (P017A070048)

Summary

1. Please summarize the application's strengths and weaknesses

There is a strong need for research that will evaluate the health of foreign language courses in American Colleges and Universities. This topic is within the critical priority area and the results from the study will have great benefit to other programs. The problem is that the proposal was poorly written, and the applican lacked adequate knowledge of related literature in the field.

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria

1. 1. Need for the Project (Rate this criterion from 0 to 10 points)
In evaluating this project, under this criterion, please consider the following questions:
a) Is there a need for the proposed research or study in the educational field to be served?
b) If the project concerns an assessment of needs in any of the areas mandated under Section 605, is the project ikely to be helpful in determining present or future needs in foreign language and other fields in the context of the national interest of the United States?

Ther is a need based on the title of this proposal but the entire proposal was written with so much jargons that I was unable to read it with full understanding. The applicant failed to articulate the need for the project.

Reader's Score: 6

2. Usefulness of Expected Results
Please consider the following questions:
a) Do the anticipated research results have a good potential for being utilized by other projects or programs for similar educational purposes?
b) Are the anticipated research results --if pertinent-- replicable?

Reader's Score: 5

3. Development of New Knowledge
To what extent can the proposed activity be expected to develop new knowledge, which will contribute to the purposes of the International Educations programs (under Title VI, Part A, Higher Education Act) ?

Reader's Score: 5

4. Formulation of Problems and Knowledge of Related Research
a) Are the problems, questions, or hypotheses to be dealt with well formulated?
b) Does this formulation reflect adequate knowledge of other, past or on-going, related research?

O 361-9

Reader's Score: 6

5. Specificity of Statement of Procedures
a) Is the statement of procedures to be followed adequate and specific (including whenever applicable, information on sampling techniques, controls, data to be gathered, and/or statistical and other analyses to be made)

Reader's Score: 2

6. Adequacy of Research Methodology and Scope
a) Are the proposed research, teaching or testing methods appropriate to the aims of this project and are they adequate to achieve the expected results?
b) Are the size, scope, and duration of the project sufficient so as to secure meaningful research results?

Reader's Score: 7

7. Plan of Operation
a) Does the design of the project show high quality?
b) How effective is the plan of management ? To what extent will it ensure proper and efficient administration?
c) Is there a clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the (Section 605) program?
d) In what way does the applicant plan to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective?
e) To what extent will the applicant provide equal access treatment for eligible members of racial and ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons; and the elderly?

Reader's Score: 7

8. Quality of Personnel:
a) Is there evidence of the project director's (or principal investigator's)professional competence and experince to direct this research?
b) Is there evidence of the qualifications of the other key personnel, if any, to participate in the project?
c) Is the amount of time that the persons referred to under (a) and (b), above plan to commit to the project appropriate to the project's needs?
d) To what extent does the applicant, as part of its non-discriminatory employment practices, encourage pplications for employment from members of groups that have been traditionally under-represented, such as members of ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons, and the elderly?

Reader's Score: 5

9. Budget and Cost Effectiveness
a) Is the proposed budget adequate to support the proposed project activities?
b) Are the costs reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project?

Reader's Score: 3

10. Plan of Evaluation:
a) Does the application show methods of evaluation that are appropriate for the project and, to the extent possible, are the objective(s) and the product data quantifiable?

Reader's Score: 10

11. Adequacy of Resources:
a) Does the applicant have adequate facilities to conduct the project?
b) Are the equipemnt and supplies wich the applicant plans to use adequate?

0361-10

Reader's Score: 4

12. Competitive Priority:
a) Research, surveys, proficiency assessments, or studies that foster linkages between K-12 and postsecondary language training.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 05/21/2007 10:22 AM

0361-11

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/18/2007 11:31 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Portland State University - Foreign Languages & Literature (P017A070048)

Reader #3:

	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS SCORED
Summary		
1. Summary Comments	0	0
Selection Criteria		
1. Need for the Project: Maximum Points 10	10	7
2. Usefulness of Expected Results Maximum Points: 10	10	6
3. Development of New Knowledge Maximum Points: 10	10	5
4. Formulation of Problems and Knowledge of Related Research Maximum Points :10	10	6
5. Specificity of Statement of Procedures Maximum Points: 5	5	5
6. Adequacy of Research Methodology and Scope Maximum Points: 10	10	6
7. Plan of Operation Maximum Points: 10	10	7
8. Quality of Personnel: Maximum Points: 10	10	7
9. Budget and Cost Effectiveness: Maximum Points: 5	5	3
10. Plan of Evaluation: Maximum Points: 15	15	10
11. Adequacy of Resources: Maximum Points: 5	5	5
12. Competitive Priority: Maximum Points: 5	5	3
TOTAL	105	70

0361-12

Technical Review Form

Panel 5: 84.017A
Reader #3:
Applicant: Portland State University - Foreign Languages & Literature (P017A070048)

Summary

1. Please summarize the application's strengths and weaknesses

problematic proposal that is scripted to TELL the reviewers their answers to their criteria
very "jargony" for non-specialist to read
would suggest rethinking this approach and rewrite and resubmit at a later date

Reader's Score: 0

Selection Criteria

1. 1. Need for the Project (Rate this criterion from 0 to 10 points)
In evaluating this project, under this criterion, please consider the following questions:
a) Is there a need for the proposed research or study in the educational field to be served?
b) If the project concerns an assessment of needs in any of the areas mandated under Section 605, is the project ikely to be helpful in determining present or future needs in foreign language and other fields in the context of the national interest of the United States?

hard to assess- the PI seems to insist that he knows the problem and can find the proof.. that 2nd year FL
courses are inadequate - most likely because previous courses are ill designed
possibly-- although smaller classes do not have such problems-- class size is never mentioned

Reader's Score: 7

2. Usefulness of Expected Results
Please consider the following questions:
a) Do the anticipated research results have a good potential for being utilized by other projects or programs for similar educational purposes?
b) Are the anticipated research results --if pertinent-- replicable?

unclear to this reader
seems mostly of local interest

Reader's Score: 6

3. Development of New Knowledge
To what extent can the proposed activity be expected to develop new knowledge, which will contribute to the purposes of the International Educations programs (under Title VI, Part A, Higher Education Act) ?

moderately

036l-13

Reader's Score: 5

4. Formulation of Problems and Knowledge of Related Research
a) Are the problems, questions, or hypotheses to be dealt with well formulated?
b) Does this formulation reflect adequate knowledge of other, past or on-going, related research?

     not to this reader
     adequate but not comprehensive

Reader's Score: 6

5. Specificity of Statement of Procedures
a) Is the statement of procedures to be followed adequate and specific (including whenever applicable, information on sampling techniques, controls,
data to be gathered, and/or statistical and other analyses to be made)

Reader's Score: 5

6. Adequacy of Research Methodology and Scope
a) Are the proposed research, teaching or testing methods appropriate to the aims of this project and are they adequate to achieve the expected results?
b) Are the size, scope, and duration of the project sufficient so as to secure meaningful research results?

     I think this calls for more than 1 or 2 state data collection

Reader's Score: 6

7. Plan of Operation
a) Does the design of the project show high quality?
b) How effective is the plan of management ? To what extent will it ensure proper and efficient administration?
c) Is there a clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the (Section 605) program?
d) In what way does the applicant plan to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective?
e) To what extent will the applicant provide equal access treatment for eligible members of racial and ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons; and the elderly?

     moderate quality
     this is difficult to assess
     not terribly clear
     should be rewritten to clarify
     --

Reader's Score: 7

8. Quality of Personnel:
a) Is there evidence of the project director's (or principal investigator's)professional competence and experince to direct this research?
b) Is there evidence of the qualifications of the other key personnel, if any, to participate in the project?
c) Is the amount of time that the persons referred to under (a) and (b), above plan to commit to the project appropriate to the project's needs?
d) To what extent does the applicant, as part of its non-discriminatory employment practices, encourage pplications for employment from members of groups that have been traditionally under-represented, such as members of ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons, and the elderly?

0361-14

yes
not as much
hard to assess
--

Reader's Score: 7

9. Budget and Cost Effectiveness
a) Is the proposed budget adequate to support the proposed project activities?
b) Are the costs reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project?

this asks for the maximum amount - to the penny.. unclear if this is reasonable given the project's vagueness

Reader's Score: 3

10. Plan of Evaluation:
a) Does the application show methods of evaluation that are appropriate for the project and, to the extent possible, are the objective(s) and the product data quantifiable?

moderately

Reader's Score: 10

11. Adequacy of Resources:
a) Does the applicant have adequate facilities to conduct the project?
b) Are the equipemnt and supplies wich the applicant plans to use adequate?

yes

Reader's Score: 5

12. Competitive Priority:
a) Research, surveys, proficiency assessments, or studies that foster linkages between K-12 and postsecondary language training.

perhaps moderately

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 05/18/2007 11:31 AM