



## THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

*Creating Global Professionals*

# Discourse

NEWSLETTER OF THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

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## Flagship Centers Unveil Language Roadmaps

To compete in a global economy and to respond to the demands of its increasingly diverse population, America must promote and support the study of foreign languages and cultures. Such is the overwhelming consensus of three “roadmaps to language excellence,” the results of a Flagship initiative conducted to address growing language and cultural deficiencies in regional, state, and local U.S. workforces.

Flagship Centers at Ohio State University; the University of Oregon; and the University of Texas, Austin, led the language roadmap effort. The National Security Education Program oversaw the initiative, which was funded by the U.S. Congress and co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Labor. The six-month project included the June 2007 Language Summits held at these three Flagship Centers and culminated in October 2007 with the publication of a language roadmap — a strategic plan for language education — for each participating state.

Participants in the language roadmap initiative recognize the importance of articulating the demand for foreign language skills within broad private as well as public contexts. “To increase language capability in the federal government, we have to assume a more proactive role in promoting language education in the American population,” says David Chu, undersecretary for

personnel and readiness at the U.S. Department of Defense. “We recognize that the need for language capacity in the United States goes well beyond the needs of the national security community.” This Flagship effort helps define the roles of governments and educational communities (K–12 teachers, higher education teachers, administrators, and parents) and underlines the great need to engage business as part of the strategic response to the demand for language skills.

A successful workforce for the 21st century must have a strong knowledge of foreign languages and cultures, as some of the largest, most successful U.S. companies already recognize. “Microsoft does business in more than 160 countries,” explains Erick Watson, lead project manager at Microsoft Corporation. “So, it’s really imperative for us that we have a highly educated and culturally fluent workforce.” He adds, “We wouldn’t be able to be half the success we are today without that.” Mari McBurney, a leadership development director at Nike Corporation, agrees. “Some of Nike’s fastest growth is occurring in the Americas and the Asia Pacific region,” she says. “The ability of our employees to speak to our customers and to our employees in [the Asia Pacific] region is absolutely critical.”

### Objective and Approach

“The roadmap initiative gave those of us who teach languages a chance to learn how our work impacts society by creating a dialogue on foreign language with business and government,” says Galal Walker, director of the Chinese Flagship Program at Ohio State University. Each language summit was intended to identify and quantify the foreign language requirements of its host state by bringing together the business, state and local government, and educational communities. Government and business represented the demand side, and K–12 educators, state boards of education, and universities represented the supply side. In an active “think tank” environment, participants discussed the factors that drive demand for language and cultural skills — currently and over the coming decades — and those

## Arabic Flagship Appeals to UT–Austin Students



*Arabic Flagship student  
Brittany Hodges*

Brittany Hodges of Montezuma, Georgia, is an unlikely Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies major; growing up in a small southern town of fewer than 5,000 people, she had little opportunity to learn about Arabic language or culture. But the 19-

year-old sophomore at the University of Texas, Austin (UT–Austin), is motivated by a desire to help people better understand the Middle East. “I came into college knowing nothing about Arabic and quickly fell in love with the language,” she said. “The Flagship Program has provided a nurturing environment for me to really engage in the language and opportunities to further my studies in Arabic.”

Hodges is one of 28 students enrolled in the new undergraduate Arabic Flagship Program at UT–Austin. The program has generated great interest because it not only helps undergraduate students develop superior skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing the language; it also makes Arabic culture an essential component of the curriculum by bringing the sights, smells, and tastes of the Middle East to Texas.

What’s unique about these students is that they didn’t come to the program as language majors. Government, chemistry, religion, and business are just some of the degrees that students pursue in addition to their rigorous Arabic coursework. The Arabic Flagship Program also has succeeded in recruiting students who are nontraditional learners of Arabic. Of this year’s cohort, only a few studied Arabic in high school; only one grew up speaking Arabic at home.

The multidisciplinary curriculum includes history, geography, economics, and religion courses — all with an “Arabic across the curriculum” component, which allows students to read and discuss texts in Arabic. Films and cultural events add depth to the coursework. For example, a recent on-campus



*Michael Dominguez (left), principal undersecretary for personnel at the U.S. Department of Defense, speaks with Assistant Superintendent Salam Noor (center) of the Oregon Department of Education, and Hong Mautz (right) of the University of Oregon Chinese Flagship Center.*

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### Flagship Centers... (From page 1)

that prevent the state from supplying foreign language and cultural education. "We learned much about how people in the work-a-day world cope with language issues and how they think things can be made better," Walker reports.

"It's a different way of thinking about educational reform and a different way of thinking about language education," says Carl Falsgraf, director of the Chinese Flagship Program at the University of Oregon. Globalization, immigration, and the events of September 11, 2001, have created an environment in which the United States is "now looking seriously at languages and cultures as something that is essential instead of a thrill," he adds.



*Audience members learn details about the Ohio Language Roadmap.*

A series of working groups composed of representatives from business, state and local government, and the educational community convened after each summit. The challenge to these working groups was to develop a strategic plan for meeting the demand for language education, and the solutions were intended to reflect the economic, political, and social realities of each state.

The final product of each summit (and subsequent working groups) is that state's language roadmap for the 21st century. Each roadmap provides strategically developed proposals to help implement short- and long-term approaches to foreign language and cultural education in that state's system.

### Recommendations

Each language roadmap establishes a unique set of state-specific goals and timelines for meeting those goals. "They reflect the realities of the demographics of each state. Their efforts and recommendations are path-breaking," says Chu. The reports share five recommendations that may be applicable to other states:

- Make language a matter of public policy.
- Establish advocacy and coordination for language

education at the state level.

- Train and certify a qualified teaching force.
- Improve public awareness about language learning and academic performance.
- Start language learning early.

### Applications and Future Directions

The roadmaps to language excellence are sources of important ideas and strategies, and not only for Ohio, Oregon, and Texas. "We have some revolutionary ideas for making things happen in Oregon that will give us a sustained competitive advantage — that will make Oregon the kind of place where people coming from overseas will feel comfortable, a place where every Oregonian can be part of the culture here," says Falsgraf. These strategies may be extrapolated and adapted to other systems, state and federal.

In Ohio, a transitioning economy motivates changing the current approach to foreign language teaching. "Getting citizens and officials to focus on language issues provides us an opportunity to expand the vision of the future of the state," says Walker. "It is time that Ohioans consider their role in the global economy. Actually, it's past time."

In the bigger picture, The Language Flagship is "exactly what the country needs to integrate ourselves in the global economy and to guarantee for ourselves a future of peace, security, and prosperity as one of the nations of a global world," says Chu. The initiative is already having an effect; Utah, for example, is taking steps to develop its own language roadmap. Flagship Centers will remain integral components of this initiative and will continue to seek ways to expand innovative approaches and best practices to foreign language programs throughout the United States.

To learn more, download the Ohio, Oregon, and Texas language roadmaps from the Special Initiatives section of the Flagship Web site ([www.thelanguageflagship.org](http://www.thelanguageflagship.org)).



*David Chu, undersecretary for personnel and readiness at the U.S. Department of Defense, addresses an audience at the launch of the Ohio Language Roadmap.*

## Word from Flagship

Dr. Michael Nugent  
Director  
The Language Flagship



Special initiatives such as the state language roadmaps are important components of The Language Flagship. They provide forums for discourse and action in areas that are important to language learning and complement the core activities of The Language Flagship. These core activities — for example, creating new undergraduate programs in target languages and helping Flagship Fellows realize their goals to become global professionals — are part of the larger context of language issues that face us all.

This issue of *Discourse* highlights the results of the path-breaking June 2007 Language Summits at Flagship Centers at Ohio State University; the University of Oregon; and the University of Texas, Austin, and the important work that followed them. The strategic plans that emerged from this effort — a language roadmap for each state — constitute an unprecedented approach to examining the demand for language expertise in the United States.

The Ohio, Oregon, and Texas language roadmaps represent the kind of can-do approach of Flagship Center directors and their staffs who willingly added this challenge to the many other activities involved with running their centers. They brought together business leaders, state and local government officials, policy-makers, and educators. On behalf of the rest of the Flagship staff, I thank the many individuals who took the time to participate in not only the day-long summits but also the various working groups that were held throughout the summer of 2007.

In October 2007, even as the language roadmaps were being released, the participants knew that their jobs were not yet finished. As the word indicates, a *roadmap* is not the end of a journey but rather the beginning. Now we begin to travel toward our goals. I invite you to review the Ohio, Oregon, and Texas language roadmaps (available for download from the Special Initiatives section of the Flagship Web site, [www.thelanguageflagship.org](http://www.thelanguageflagship.org)) and join us on the journey.

## Arabic Flagship... (From page 1)

performance by musician Marcel Khalifeh, who combines traditional Arabic music with Western instrumentation, gave students a taste of Middle Eastern culture that can't be learned from a textbook. Together, various Flagship experiences prepare students for their capstone immersion study at the Flagship Center in Alexandria, Egypt.

One of three Arabic Flagship programs in the United States, UT–Austin benefits from the expertise of the largest group of tenured full-time faculty devoted to teaching Arabic. Of universities that offer Arabic, it is one of only a few that teach Modern Standard Arabic (typically used for reading and writing) and colloquial dialects (used in day-to-day interactions in Arabic-speaking countries) side by side.

The Flagship students reflect a growing national trend toward the study of Arabic. According to the Modern Language Association, more than 20,000 students enrolled in Arabic courses in 2006. However, fewer than 5% of these students are expected to graduate with professional proficiency. Many programs seek qualified instructors for domestic programs and are still working to develop advanced course tracks.

According to Mahmoud Al-Batal, director of the Arabic Flagship Program at UT–Austin, The Language Flagship is helping to transform the Arabic teaching profession. He believes that by building bridges between stateside and overseas programs, The Language Flagship will have a great impact on the Arabic field.

"Hopefully, when students graduate, they will show that Arabic is not an impossible language to learn," Al-Batal says. "All they need is determination, commitment, good instruction, and a supportive and challenging overseas experience. Put all that together, and you'll have a superior level of Arabic in four to five years."

For Hodges, the Arabic Flagship Program is both a challenge and a dream come true. Her immediate goals are to reach the highest level of Arabic proficiency possible and to study abroad in Egypt next year. However, she also realizes the long-term benefits of being a Flagship graduate. "I know that coming out of this program, I will be prepared, language-wise, for whatever field I choose to enter," Hodges says. "Completion of the Flagship program is like an automatic seal of approval; potential employers will be guaranteed of my [Arabic language] capabilities."

## Op-ed: Industry Matching Is Key to Flagship Success

Admiral Bobby R. Inman  
Lyndon B. Johnson Centennial Chair in National Policy  
University of Texas, Austin



The United States was an isolationist country in the 1930s. Suddenly, when war was thrust upon us and we needed to find language abilities for an array of problems, we tapped the children of immigrants. After World War II, our leaders said, "Never again should this country be so ill-informed about so much of the world." So, beginning in 1947, the directive was to build a classified *Encyclopedia Britannica* on the entire world: languages, cultures, economics — everything about every country — because the view was that you never know where the next problem is going to be.

That philosophy drove government investment until 1958, when we hit a plateau. In 1964, the United States overtly moved into the Vietnam conflict, requiring a surge in tactical intelligence support. Instead of adding resources, we diverted support. Any funding for in-depth language or cultural study was lost for much of the world, and after 1967, the infrastructure began to disappear. There were not only fewer students who learned languages but also fewer people who taught languages. Not until the turn of the century did both sides — private sector and government — begin to realize that we had to take a different approach.

I am excited to hear about the prospect of new language programs, but my question is, where are we going to find the teachers to support this initiative and give them the language skills that they need? Government programs such as Title VI, (U.S. Department of Education funding for international and area studies), have been kept alive, but only just above a starvation level. I would like to see industry match this new effort from government. We really need to think about how to put the challenge to the multinational corporations operating around the globe that ought to help fund this effort. Just think how much farther and faster we could go if they matched funding. It's late, but the need is growing, not shrinking.

I worry a little that the public at large still doesn't understand how much their well-being is dependent on our ability to interact globally in a dramatically changing world. And language is only the beginning. We need to understand cultures, religions, and more. As I look back at the mistakes made in the intelligence community during the years that I was there, almost without fail, the mistake was mirror imaging — that is, projecting how the United States would respond or act and presuming that other countries would act or move in that same way. So, we have a long way to go, but the Flagship's language roadmap initiative is a great start.

### Building a Community of Innovators

Want to join the Flagship movement? The Promoting the Diffusion of Innovation grant program provides academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, school

districts, businesses, and private-sector organizations an opportunity to team up with Flagship Centers to increase the Flagship's scope and scale. This new grant program is intended to increase collaboration within the Flagship framework as well as the number of participating institutions, language programs, degree programs, and students.

Three new projects were funded by Promoting the Diffusion of Innovation grants in 2007:

- In partnership with the Chinese Flagship Center at the University of Oregon, Arizona State University created a Chinese Flagship Partner Program to offer the same Flagship curriculum to its students.
- The American Councils for International Education created the Flagship Online Russian Proficiency Test and Assessment, which provides assessment tools for evaluating individual student performance.
- The University of Oregon began the MyChina project, an online virtual world. Students of Chinese will be able to interact with Chinese speakers in a structured yet authentic socio-cultural context.

To learn more visit [www.thelanguageflagship.org](http://www.thelanguageflagship.org).

## From Russia with Love



Carrie Diffenderfer (left) and Graham Dumas (right) talk business at the National Endowment for Democracy.

For Flagship graduates Graham Dumas and Carrie Diffenderfer, Russian isn't just a language; it's a way of life. After years of language study as undergraduates, they won competitive Flagship Fellowships in 2004 and 2005, respectively, to participate in a post-bachelor's degree Russian Flagship Program at Saint Petersburg State University in Russia. The one-year language and cultural immersion proved to be an overwhelmingly positive experience, bumping up the students' Russian proficiency to the professional level. But Dumas and Diffenderfer admit that this program is not for the uncommitted. They devoted thousands of hours to studying Russian and interacting with Russians to reach their goals.

Dumas and Diffenderfer now apply their expertise in Russian language and culture as program assistants in the Europe and Eurasia department of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a private nonprofit organization located in Washington, D.C., that supports democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts. These Flagship Fellows work with partners such as the International Protection Center in Russia, which provides legal aid to victims of human rights violations who are pursuing cases in multinational courts. Translating Russian texts, interpreting for visiting Russian scholars, and analyzing the impact of NED programs on democracy worldwide, Dumas and Diffenderfer are doing what they love most — speaking Russian. Thanks to the Russian Flagship Program, they apply their in-depth knowledge of Russian language and culture to their work, every day.

### Flagship Mission

The Language Flagship leads the nation in designing, supporting, and implementing a new paradigm for advanced language education. Through an innovative partnership among the federal government, education, and business, The Language Flagship seeks to graduate students who will take their place among the next generation of global professionals, commanding a superior level of proficiency in one of many languages critical to U.S. competitiveness and security.

### What Do We Do?

Flagship Centers offer students intensive language instruction to enhance their academic degrees, graduating students with superior-level language proficiency. Programs are available at undergraduate and post-bachelor's degree levels and include periods of rigorous language and cultural immersion at Overseas Flagship Centers. The Language Flagship also funds a select number of pilot K–12 programs designed to provide an articulated path of language instruction for students from elementary school through college.

Flagship graduates leverage their superior language and cultural skills in various careers, offering an intercultural perspective to employers in the federal and state governments, global businesses, and nongovernmental organizations.



## THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

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### A new brand for a new language paradigm

The Language Flagship is a partnership among government, education, and business. Our logo comprises a blue diamond for government, the creator and seminal funder of this program; a gold diamond for business, a key beneficiary and supporter of this effort; and a green diamond for education. Education is at the center of this collaborative effort, responding to advanced language demands in both government and business. Two converging white lines thrust across all three partners, leading the nation to a new paradigm for advanced language education.

*An initiative of the National Security Education Program*

### Flagship Centers

#### Arabic

Michigan State University  
Dearborn Public Schools K–12 Flagship Program  
University of Texas, Austin  
University of Maryland, College Park  
*Alexandria University, Egypt\**  
*Damascus University, Syria\**

#### Central Asian Turkic Languages

American Councils for International Education

#### Chinese

Arizona State University Flagship Partner Program  
Brigham Young University  
Ohio State University  
Ohio Public Schools K–12 Flagship Program  
University of Oregon  
Portland Public Schools K–12 Flagship Program  
University of Mississippi  
*Nanjing University, China\**  
*Qingdao University, China\**

#### Eurasian Languages

American Councils for International Education  
Bryn Mawr College  
Middlebury College  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Maryland, College Park  
*Saint Petersburg University, Russia\**

#### Hindi/Urdu

University of Texas, Austin

#### Korean

University of Hawai'i, Mānoa  
*Korea University, South Korea\**

#### Persian/Farsi

University of Maryland, College Park  
*Tajik State National University, Tajikistan\**

*\*Overseas Flagship Center*

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