

## **Modern Languages & Literatures: Statement Regarding the 2026-2031 Proposed Strategic Plan**

We want to begin by saying that we strongly support the ambition and urgency of the strategic plan. Its emphasis on AI literacy, experiential learning, workforce alignment, and civic engagement speaks directly to the moment that higher education is facing.

From the perspective of Modern Languages & Literatures, we see an opportunity to strengthen the plan by making one element more explicit: language proficiency and cultural competency.

The plan identifies AI literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, and constructive dialogue as core competencies. Our point is simple: linguistic and intercultural competence are prerequisites for all three. Constructive dialogue across difference is fundamentally a linguistic skill. Ethical AI use depends on understanding how language, translation, and cultural bias are embedded in AI systems.

Similarly, the plan calls for a reimagined humanities, yet world languages are not clearly named. This is worth attention because language programs already operate at the intersection of humanities inquiry, workforce preparation, and public engagement. They are among the most applied and outward-facing humanities disciplines.

This matters for workforce readiness as well. Language skills directly enhance employability in healthcare, education, government, and international business—areas that the plan already prioritizes. They don't compete with technical training; they amplify it.

Current global events from Israeli–Arab relations to tensions between Russia and the West, as well as ongoing domestic conflicts that affect various immigrant communities, underscore that many of today's challenges are conflicts of culture, history, and narrative. Preparing students to navigate that reality requires more than technical fluency; it requires cultural and linguistic literacy.

Our request is not for special treatment, but for explicit recognition. Language study already advances the plan's goals. Naming it clearly would strengthen institutional coherence, messaging, and long-term impact.

Thank you.

The Department of Modern Languages & Literatures