

Resolution in Support of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Michigan

The University of Michigan's language teaching programs are a defining aspect of our curriculum and a resource that enriches students and citizens alike. Since the foundation of the Center for Japanese Studies in 1947, Michigan has been a national leader in the production of knowledge and education about the world. Michigan's language program has [equipped generations of students with the skills](#) they need to live and work in a cosmopolitan world. Interpreters are vitally important in the work of Michigan Medicine, which relies on their expertise to render medical advice to their patients. Today Michigan students can study Quechua, Swahili, Mandarin, Hebrew, Uzbek, and dozens of other 'Less Commonly-Taught Languages.' Much of this has been possible because of funding from the federal government, which under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 has provided U-M and other American universities with financial resources to support foreign language teaching.

In September 2025 the United States Department of Education [informed the leadership of the International Institute](#) that their language and area studies programs 'are inconsistent with Administration priorities and do not advance American interests or values.' Some \$3.4 million annually have been withdrawn by this edict. At stake are the salaries of the lecturers who, by their knowledge and expertise, drive the language program. At stake also are the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) grants that made it financially possible for dozens of U-M students to study foreign languages each year.

As leaders of the faculty at the leading public university in the United States, we are indignant at federal authorities' lamentably narrow vision for higher education. What are "American values" if not a commitment to teach and learn about the rest of the world? What are "American interests" if not the advancement of our students' capacity to communicate with and learn from people living in other places? The DoE edict deprives U-M and other universities of the resources we need to equip the next generation of Americans with the skills and knowledge to act meaningfully in the world.

Faculty government thanks the leadership of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, which has willingly taken on the salaries of most of the language faculty left marooned by the DoE edict. We call on the University's administration to ensure that the College of LS&A is provided with financial support sufficient to offset these additional costs. We ask also for the creation of a funding stream that would offset the loss of FLAS funding for student learners. And we ask our University's leaders to work with universities across the country to stabilize their capacity to continue offering intensive foreign language instruction.

Faculty government calls upon our representatives in the United States Congress to press for the restoration and continuity of funding for Title VI and the dispersal of funds that have already been allocated. It is vitally important, at this time of great challenge, that our schools and universities would not retreat into narrow insularity. Michigan graduates must be proudly and emphatically multi-lingual, for it is by command over language that graduates will create the bonds of mutual respect and meaningful exchange that must uphold the international order.

Adopted by the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs on February 9, 2026

Adopted, as amended, by the Senate Assembly on February 26, 2026