

Comments – for NAS Committee  
for Review of Title VI and Fulbright Hays Programs

Before launching on responses to the important questions asked by the Committee, I should let the reader know why many of the ins and outs of Title VI are familiar to me. From 1970 to 1995 I was a program officer at the U.S. Department of Education, working on the Title VI programs for National Resource Centers, FLAS, Graduate and Undergraduate International Studies Programs, and learning about related programs under both Title VI and Fulbright Hays. Since leaving the Department I have done evaluations for many of the Title VI National Resource Centers and have worked on three Title VI-funded research projects. I understand that members of the Committee have been provided with one of the resulting research reports, the study of the long term impact of the undergraduate international studies program which I did with Barbara Burn and others in the late 1990s. I am now completing work on the second of two grants for study of the prospects for increasing international content in the undergraduate training of K-12 teachers.

Turning to the Committee's questions:

1. The Title VI legislation provides a statement of purpose. As a staff member, I understood Title VI to be a charge to improve Americans' capacity to understand the languages, culture, history, economies, politics, and social contexts of other nations, and their interrelationships. Most of the Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs are specifically for higher education, but over the years they, and particularly the National Resource Centers (NRCs), have evolved from their location and focus in the liberal arts curriculum to include (ideally) the full spectrum of university programs as well as outreach to other education communities plus business, the media, and the general public.

A major limitation for all of the Title VI programs has been funding – particularly for the fellowship programs (FLAS, Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad, and Faculty Research Abroad). I do not know what the ratio of applications to awards has been over the years, but I do know that whenever I suggested giving them wider publicity, the Department's response was that with such modest amounts of money available (particularly for the Fulbright Hays Faculty Research Abroad program) it would be unrealistic to advertise the program more widely. With little publicity given to the Faculty Research Abroad program it is difficult to know what the demand might have been. For FLAS, although it was not so in the beginning, the awards have long been made at the university level, and the applicant/award ratio data are therefore not available; to some extent the Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad demand data are unavailable as well, because the applications are screened at the university level before submission to a national competition. Anecdotal data has certainly indicated more interest than could be met – and the likelihood that interested students/faculty turned to other pursuits or that completion of their studies/research took much longer because they could not do it full time.

However, on the positive side, it seemed that the institutional programs that were funded (specifically, the National Resource Centers, the Graduate<sup>1</sup> and Undergraduate International Studies Programs and, more recently, the Language Resource Centers) have been relatively cost efficient. Most of the institutional grants are essentially seed money, either helping new programs get started or encouraging

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<sup>1</sup> The Graduate International Studies Program was initiated in 1972 and discontinued in 1982, primarily for budgetary reasons.

development of new dimensions for existing programs. Applicants' promised financial commitments have been essential ingredients in decisions to fund programs, particularly under Sections 602 and 604, and have been key factors in explaining why a high proportion of the start-up undergraduate programs (section 604) continue after the completion of the Title VI grants.<sup>2</sup> The fact that competition is keen for the NRCs, even when the Title VI funding is, on average, far less than 5% of their budgets, is testimony to the importance of the grants' leverage on university budgeting processes, serving as strong incentive to recipient institutions to continue their own support for the programs – and particularly for the low enrollment less commonly taught languages.

Criticisms of the programs have been many over the years and the staff has responded when it could. But major cutbacks in staff have limited the options. Looking ahead, an important improvement would be increases in staffing and in professional development funds, so that staff might attend more meetings and conduct more site visits, thereby improving their understanding of the constraints and opportunities faced by grantees, which in turn would contribute to more effective technical assistance to current and prospective grantees. (See also comments below, under #5.)

Just before I left the Department, we revised the evaluation criteria for the NRC and FLAS programs to give the application review process more transparency, by providing more detail in the criteria and the related rating system. Recently the Department decided to remove the weighting of the criteria (which had been very carefully reviewed ten years ago), and to announce new versions at the time of each competition. This has introduced an element of uncertainty in the process, since the NRC – and all other – applicants must plan many months in advance for each competition while the announcements about the relative importance of each criterion can now be made only one or two months before the deadline.

Another criticism of recent vintage has to do with the application evaluation process itself. For budgetary and staffing reasons, the Department is not assembling its review panels, so that reviewers no longer are encouraged to discuss their criticisms and point allocations, a process which allowed them to correct misunderstandings about both the applications themselves and the intent of the criteria. An important aspect of the application review process is feedback to the applicant, and the procedures should yield guidance for applicants for either carrying out the grant or preparing a more competitive subsequent application – in other words, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the program – but this guidance is likely to be less instructive under current procedures.

See also comments below, under #3.

A broader criticism might be related to the Title VI goal of improving foreign language instruction and competence. Progress has been made, under the longstanding International Research and Studies program, which has funded many much-needed instructional materials, and under the relatively recent Language Resource Centers program, which focuses on a combination of new materials and in-service pedagogical training for language teachers. However, evidence from my current research<sup>3</sup> indicates that much more work in language pedagogy is needed, for both prospective and current foreign language teachers, to restore foreign language study to a prominent place in curricula at all levels of instruction.

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<sup>2</sup> Ann Imlah Schneider and Barbara B. Burn, *Federal Funding for International Studies: Does it Help? Does it Matter?* University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ann Imlah Schneider, "Language Instruction and Prospective Teachers: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations" presented at the ILR Showcase, July 29, 2005 and posted at [www.internationaledadvice.org](http://www.internationaledadvice.org).

2. How to define and measure success for these programs has long been a question, and the answers must be different for each program. Numbers of participants, and yearly comparisons to show progress, would be a starting point.

- For fellowship programs (FLAS, Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad, Faculty Research Abroad, and probably the Seminars program), the applicant to award ratio is one indicator. Program completion would be another. In the long term, impact on employment and related publications can tell a story, but these data are unlikely to be available until long after the end of a grant, making systematic collection of these data unrealistic (although I recall an attempt being made, under NAS/NRC auspices, in the mid-1990s).
- For Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs of institutional support (NRCs, the Undergraduate Program, Language Resource Centers, the business education programs, possibly Group Projects Abroad, and probably the IIPP), obvious participant data are enrollments and graduates. The Department has been collecting graduation data for the NRCs for many years, but as far as I know has not been doing so for other programs, where the criteria for counting could be less precise. (Defining “graduate” is itself a challenge; since before 1970 the criterion for the NRCs’ B.A. “recipients” has been 15-18 semester credit hours from among the relevant courses; the issue may not have been resolved for other institutional support programs.) Additional participation data for the NRCs, and other programs, would be from their outreach activities – teachers attending workshops, attendance at presentations for business groups or the media, and so on.
- Institutional support programs could also measure numbers of new and revised courses, numbers of faculty awards for course development and/or research, pedagogy workshops attended (particularly for language faculty), school visits, and library resource development, for example.
- Because encouraging foreign language acquisition is the bedrock of all these programs, there have been attempts to measure changes in participants’ foreign language competence, but, in the language teaching community and elsewhere, these efforts have been fraught with controversy about reliable and consistent measures. Perhaps an easier first approach would be comparisons of language enrollments by level of instruction at grantee institutions.
- Measurement of the accomplishments of the Research and Studies program could certainly be the numbers of publications and perhaps information about their dissemination and use – but, like the individual fellowships, the accomplishments may not be completed until well after the grant reporting periods.

3. In 1978 the GAO did a review of Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs.<sup>4</sup> One of its recommendations was that evaluative data be shared with grantees, to provide information about accomplishments and guidance (“lessons learned”) for possible improvements. As a program officer for the Title VI NRCs and FLAS programs I took the recommendation very seriously and over the years shared several pieces with the NRC/FLAS community. One was an essay on NRC budgets, prepared for the President’s Commission in

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<sup>4</sup> United States General Accounting Office, *Comptroller General’s Report to Congress: Study of Foreign Languages and Related Areas: Federal Support, Administration, Need* (ID-78-46, September 13, 1978).

1979;<sup>5</sup> others dealt with course coverage comparisons, defining international studies, consortia, examples of outreach activities, and library resources. In addition, at the end of every funding cycle we compiled the data from NRC and FLAS reports and added some analysis, questions, and implicit exhortations to share with current and prospective grantees, and anyone else who was interested. From the September 1995 paper, the data compiled on NRC graduates included:

- Average numbers of NRC degrees in selected years (1970-1994)
- Distribution of degrees by discipline (percentages) comparing 1988-91 to 1991-94
- Distribution of degrees in selected disciplines – averages/center, 1988-91 and 1991-94
- Distribution of Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral Degree Recipients by world area and discipline, 1991-94
- Graduates' Career Choices: MAs and Ph.D.s, by world area, 1991-94
- Graduates' Career Choices: for Government, by world area, 1989-94
- Degrees Awarded at National Resource Centers, 1991-94 (by institution and degree level)

Similarly, a September 1995 paper on FLAS awards included:

- Comparison of Award Numbers and Available Funds – by Area, 1988-91 and 1991-94
- FLAS Award Numbers, Stipend Rates, and Dollars – by Year (1983-1994)
- FLAS Fellowships by Discipline, 1985-94
- Discipline Distributions of FLAS Awards and NRC Graduate Degrees, 1988-91 and 1991-94
- Indices of FLAS Awardees' Career Goal Options – by Area (1982-1994)
- Distribution by Career Goals
- Distribution of Awards by World Area, 1990-94, Academic Year and Summer
- Distribution of Awards by Language, 1991-94
- Distribution of Awards by Career Goal and World Area, 1991-94

In addition, a reflective piece about NRC budgets (June 16, 1995) provided comments and questions. Among the tabular presentations were:

- Average Total Center Budgets, by world area, 1991-92 and 1994-95
- Title VI Share of all Center Expenses, by world area
- Average Center Expenditures, by type of expenditure, for 1988-89, 1991-92, 1994-95
- Language Instruction Expenditures, by world area, showing Title VI \$ as % of Total
- Non-Language Course Instruction, by world area, showing Title VI \$ as % of Total
- Library Acquisitions and Teaching Materials, by world area, showing Title VI \$ as % of Total
- Outreach Staff Salaries, by world area, showing Title VI \$ as % of Total

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<sup>5</sup> Ann Imlah Schneider, "NDEA Centers: How They Use Their Federal Money" in *President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies: Background Papers and Studies*, November 1979

All of these papers should be available from the Department of Education; I do not have them in electronic form (but can make hard copies available if needed). However, availability of documentation about the Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs has been very much on my mind since before I left the Department. Records about the initiation and development of Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs may still exist at the Department, but every office reorganization and move puts them in increasing jeopardy. The Department of Education does not have a historian, and its records management practices seem to emphasize disposal. To the best of my knowledge these programs are not even “scheduled” at the National Archives (NARA), so that future researchers will find no information about these important programs. Although it might seem logical for NARA to compare agency budgets or other program summary information with their own “schedule,” they do not seem to have enough personnel to chase down missing archival material – indeed, the rules say that agencies are to submit their records to the Archives for review, for their ultimate availability for future researchers. The Department is required to do this, but enforcement is wanting – and probably not just for Title VI and Fulbright Hays.

Returning to more immediate issues of data collection, since 1995, the NRCs and other grantees have continued to submit reports with most if not all of the data mentioned above, but the system for doing so is now electronic (EELIAS) for all the Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs. It is my understanding that systematic feedback to the various constituencies has yet to be developed. Indeed, my attempt to obtain data related to my current research was unsuccessful. Perhaps the current contractor for the system, working with the Department of Education staff, can make needed changes, making sure that reports are complete and using appropriate categories in any compilations (differentiation of degree levels, for example, in career choice data). This is surely an area in which much improvement is needed, for all the Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs.

4. Moving to another of the Committee’s questions: On a micro level, in my work as a consultant, I use the data described above whenever I am asked to evaluate an NRC. Juxtaposing the relatively current data of the program or center being evaluated (as provided to me by its staff) (on course offerings, degree productivity, library resources, and budgets) with the averages, however old, for the world area involved is nearly always illuminating and helpful, indicating possible reporting problems as well as the disciplines and languages in need of improved coverage, not to mention possibilities for more professional school linkages and outreach and other activity. This is an approach that current and potential grantees could be enabled to do themselves – were comparative and current data available to them.

At the policy level, staff should be able to use the program data in formulating priorities for future program development. In the past, evaluation results – from the data reported by grantees and from specially prepared reports – have been important in Title VI budget decisions and in persuading Congress to appropriate funds.

5. The role of the Department’s Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs has perhaps been different from many other Department of Education programs because, with its limited appropriations (compared with Title III, for example), the technical assistance offered by the staff has played a crucial role in maximizing impact. Indeed, it might be argued that staff advice even to unsuccessful applicants, and even for those who decide not to apply, has had a positive impact on the internationalization of university curricula. With a reduced staff dealing with an increased number of programs in recent years, combined with fewer opportunities for staff professional development, the technical assistance function has suffered.

Comparing the role of the Department’s Title VI and Fulbright Hays programs with other related Federal programs is difficult. The first step is to decide what is – or could be – “related.” The Department of Education has a number of programs for institutional development, but rarely do they include international components. Yes, foreign language has recently been added to the priorities for Title II, but much more could be done in most of the Department’s programs for institutional development. Rather than being considered an add-on, all institutions should be encouraged – even required – to include international dimensions in their development efforts.

And the Department itself should review its organization vis-à-vis international. When I began working at the Department, “international” was a separate organizational unit; since then some functions have been dropped, some distributed to other offices, and some added in new offices. Perhaps the logic of the distribution of “international” responsibilities should be re-examined – in an era when global interdependence permeates the fabric of our lives, it should also permeate the fabric of our educational system – and the Department.

As the Department of Education is charged with strengthening American educational institutions, it is logical for the funding to strengthen the international components in those institutions to be managed by that Department. However, as befits our pluralistic system, grants to individuals for study and research on international (and foreign language) topics are appropriately available through other Federal agencies, such as the NEH, and the Department of State for the many exchange programs, as well as the Department of Education. The coordination of these efforts has always been a challenge, and deserves continued attention, notwithstanding the normal tensions between the maintenance of variety in funding sources for individuals and the needs for some coordination.

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