

VCU Faculty Senate Endorsement of the Joint National Committee on Languages Statement
September 5, 2023

The VCU Faculty Senate endorses the statement of the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) representing associations of world language and international studies organizations which states:

The Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and the National Council for Languages and International Studies (NCLIS) and its national coalition of language professionals strongly object to the damaging decision made by West Virginia University (WVU) to dissolve its Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics. This measure stands in direct conflict with the university's own mission statement which commits the university to "providing access and opportunity" for all and "leading transformation in West Virginia and the world through local, state, and global engagement." This decision will have significant and pervasive negative repercussions for the institution, the state, and the nation. It will unjustly bar students—especially those from low-income backgrounds and traditionally underserved communities—from accessing a multilingual, global education that would empower and prepare them to address the challenges and opportunities of our increasingly interconnected world.

Businesses seeking multilingual, culturally competent employees will be forced to recruit from other states and factor WVU's plan into their relocation decisions. By terminating its role in developing educators prepared to teach world languages and support student diversity, WVU will exacerbate the nationwide K-12 teacher shortage in the critical need areas of multilingual and bilingual educators. The decision to cut funding and staffing for the entire Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, and all of its undergraduate and graduate programs, is an unnecessarily punitive action against the students of West Virginia University and those who aspire to enroll.

We urgently ask West Virginia University to grant the proposed appeal to reverse this decision and preserve its standing as an institute of higher education aimed at global engagement.