2021 Overview

WISLI AND THE LANGUAGE PROGRAM OFFICE AT UW-MADISON

The Wisconsin Intensive Summer Language Institutes (WISLI) offers high-quality language instruction in Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) each summer to national and global audiences of undergraduate students, graduate students, professionals, and other non-traditional students. The domestic courses are intensive, condensing an entire year of language study in 8 weeks, and are enhanced by co-curricular activities to engage learners more deeply in cultural learning and developing regional expertise.

WISLI consists of five summer language institutes, and a new self-directed multilanguage seminar aimed at students learning rare languages or languages taught at a highly-advanced level. The institutes and seminar are supported by Area Studies Centers in the International Division, as well as the Academic Departments which house the language courses.

WISLI is housed in the Language Program Office (LPO) in the International Division. The LPO was launched by the International Division in Fall 2020 with the mission to pursue opportunities to grow LCTL programs, support innovative language instruction and outreach, and host and create synergies among its sponsored programs.

In addition to WISLI, the LPO houses the Regional Flagship Language Initiative (RFLI) programs, as well Project Global Officer (Project GO). The RFLI programs are special initiatives of the Boren Awards, sponsored by the National Security Education Program (NSEP) and administered by the Institute for International Education (IIE). RFLI awardees have the opportunity for intensive language education and cultural immersion by studying Hindi or Urdu (SAFLI), Indonesian (IFLI), or Turkish (TURFLI) both domestically at UW-Madison and at overseas institutions.

Piloted with the 2021 Boren Regional Flagship Language Initiatives (RFLI), the Culture Initiative (RFLI-CI) is funded by the Institute of International Education (IIE) to provide supplemental culture materials to RFLI program participants. These materials are provided in the form of interactive scenarios and moderated roundtables through which the participants develop a better understanding of the culture of their host site and how elements of that culture may influence the interactions that they have while there. These culture scenarios and guided roundtables give RFLI students a cultural framework through which they can improve their intercultural communicative competency and more confidently and appropriately apply the language skills they develop through their intensive domestic program and fall abroad.

Project GO is also administered by IIE and is an initiative of the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO). Project GO provides fully funded scholarships to students commissioning through Air Force, Army, and Naval ROTC to study critical languages domestically and abroad. Both RFLI and Project GO students take language courses alongside WISLI students and have access to WISLI cultural lectures and events, language tutors, and professional development resources.
INSTRUCTORS AND PEDAGOGY

In Summer 2021, 62 full-time instructors were hired to teach in the summer language institutes and supported by the WISLI Pedagogy core which included the WISLI Director and 12 pedagogical staff members. Additional support included part-time and hourly instructional support. Instructional staff was in part supported by NRC funding, including: European Studies; Center for South Asia; Center for East Asian Studies, Center for Southeast Asian Studies; Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia; Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Program; the African Studies Program; and the Institute for Regional and International Studies.

Instructors participated in the WISLI Pre-Service Orientation Week from June 7-11, 2021. During this week, instructors participated in training sessions sponsored by WISLI including trauma-sensitive teaching practices and student engagement in synchronous online teaching, as well as sessions offered by individual language institute pedagogy coordinators and staff. Instructors were given access to an online course for additional information and resources on assessment and testing, classroom management, course design and materials development, teaching culture, proficiency-based instruction as well as technology and remote instructional support. A follow-up training session on teaching vs. testing was offered mid-summer to all instructors.

STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND FUNDING
In Summer 2021, the Wisconsin Intensive Summer Language Institutes (WISLI) provided intensive language instruction in 29 LCTLs to 369 students in a virtual learning environment from June 14-August 6, 2021.

- Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Language Institute (APTLI)
  Arabic, Persian/Farsi, Turkish
  https://aptli.wisc.edu/
- Central Eurasian Studies Summer Institute (CESSI)
  Kazakh, Tajik, Uyghur, Uzbek
  https://cessi.wisc.edu/
- Intensive Summer Multilanguage Seminar (MULTI)
  Javanese, Maasai, Manding, Hmong/Hmoob Dawb, Malay/Bahasa Melayu, Nepali
  https://multilanguage.wisc.edu/
- South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI)
  Bengali, Hindi, Pashto, Sanskrit, Sinhala, Tamil, Tibetan, Urdu
  https://sasli.wisc.edu/
- Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI)
  Burmese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Javanese, Khmer, Lao, Thai, Vietnamese
  https://seassi.wisc.edu/
- Summer Intensive Portuguese Institute (SIPI)
  Brazilian Portuguese
  https://sipi.wisc.edu/

119 students in the summer language institutes were supported by Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships. Additional funding for students also included Project GO, Title VIII, Regional Flagship Language Initiatives (RFLIs), as well as individual Institute support.

ASSESSMENT OF SPEAKING ABILITY
Many WISLI and other LPO program students have the opportunity to measure their language gains by completing Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs), proficiency-based assessments on speaking ability administered by Language Testing International (LTI), the exclusive licensee of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).
Funding for OPI tests included program tuition revenue, support from the Institute for Regional and International Studies National Resource Center (IRIS NRC), Title VIII, Project GO, and the Regional Flagship Language Initiative (RFLI) programs. OPI testing is optional for WISLI students and only students not at the beginning language level are invited to take an OPI pre-test. In total, 86 WISLI students completed OPI pre-program tests, while 166 students took the post-program OPI test. The breakdown by institute is as follows:

- APTLI: 32 pre-tests, 45 post-tests
- CESSI: 9 pre-tests, 27 post-tests
- MULTI: 0 pre-tests, 0 post-tests (*students aren’t eligible for OPI testing)
- SASLI: 19 pre-tests, 42 post-tests
- SEASSI: 26 pre-tests, 49 post-tests (*only Indonesian and Thai language students among tested)
- SIPI: 0 pre-tests, 3 post-tests (*students aren’t eligible for pre-tests)

For RFLI and Project Go programs where OPI testing was required, 13 RFLI program students took the OPI pre-test, while 30 took the post-test. For Project GO students, 5 students were eligible and completed the OPI pre-test, while all 14 students completed the required OPI post-test.

Additionally, WISLI is partnered with the Language Institute on a 3-year study of speaking proficiency gains and outcomes of LCTL students in intensive summer programs. The study is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Title VI International Research and Studies (IRS) Program (2020-2023): https://languageinstitute.wisc.edu/speaking-proficiency/.

**PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS**
Throughout the summer, students had opportunities to attend lectures and events sponsored by the WISLI and the language institutes, the majority of which were supported by the National Resource Centers and Area Studies Centers. RFLI funding also sponsored certain events related to their flagship languages.

Along with this co-curricular programming, WISLI Summer 2021 students had multiple professional development and networking opportunities available to them. Most notably, at the 2021 Student Conference (sponsored by SEASSI), students spanning the institutes shared scholarly interests and presented research projects in front of their peers and the general public. This annual student conference encourages cross-disciplinary connections between scholars, and helps students create networks outside of their own language class within a larger, WISLI-wide language-learning community.

In addition to the Student Conference, WISLI Summer 2021 students could participate in the annual Less Commonly Taught Languages Career Fair (https://lctlcareers.wisc.edu/lctl-2021/). The goal of the career fair is to connect LCTL learners and speakers with professional development and career opportunities spanning the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The career fair was sponsored by the Institute for Regional and International Studies NRC and co-sponsored by: the African Studies Program NRC; the Center for East Asian Studies NRC; the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia NRC; the Center for South Asia NRC; the Center for Southeast Asian Studies NRC; European Studies NRC; the Language Institute; the Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies NRC; the Middle East Studies Program, and the Russian Flagship Program.