POLICY ON BILINGUALISM
AT LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

Prepared and revised by the Joint Committee on Bilingualism

Adopted by the Senate, December 13, 2005

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1. Objective

This policy aims to promote harmonious and inclusive bilingualism as well as establish francophone linguistic and cultural practices to facilitate concretization and implementation of Laurentian University's bilingual and tri-cultural mandate in a spirit of mutual respect for the rights, statuses, privileges and traditions of all university community members.

The policy also aims to foster real equality between French and English by ensuring balanced representation of both languages in institutional, academic, and administrative activities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities of Laurentian University, including:
- Meetings
- Official Communications
- Human Resources
- Academic Programs
- Student Body
- Services

Recognition of the FNIM (Indigenous) Context: This policy respects the tri-cultural mandate of the University which fosters the development of FNIM (Indigenous) communities. It ensures that services and programs designed for these communities are not adversely affected by bilingualism requirements. Specific exemptions related to bilingualism will be granted to FNIM (Indigenous) academic and administrative staff to promote equitable and inclusive representation.

3. Definitions

a) CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION - means collectively the President, Vice-Presidents, the Deans, The Library, The Registrar, Administrative departments and all other areas of similar responsibility.

b) FUNCTIONAL BILINGUALISM - means active and passive knowledge of both official languages;

c) RECEPTIVE BILINGUALISM - means active knowledge of one of the official languages and passive comprehension of the other official language;

d) UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY - means the students, the personnel, and the members external community who, due to their appointment to committees or councils (e.g. the Board of Governors) are an integral part of the University;

e) JOINT COMMITTEE - means the Joint Committee on Bilingualism designated by Senate and the Board;

f) OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION - means any communication in whatever form and in the broadest sense issued by the central administration and its general services (such as: answering telephone calls, recorded messages, letters, memos, posters, temporary or permanent signs, emails, websites, social media (primary university account) or any other official document, etc.);

g) ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF A LANGUAGE – means proficiency in the active functions of a language, namely oral and written expression in that language;

h) PASSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF A LANGUAGE - means proficiency in the passive functions of a language, namely the ability to understand that language in its oral and written form;

i) INDIGENOUS: includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Please note that the term Indigenous includes the term 'Aboriginal' as per Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

j) BOARD - means the Board of Governors of Laurentian University;

k) OFFICIAL LANGUAGES - means English and French; and

l) PRINCIPAL LANGUAGE - means the official language which is the only or predominant working language of the members of an academic unit or a general service of the University, or a functional division thereof, or which is the only or predominant language used in an academic programme;

m) SECOND LANGUAGE - means English or French, depending on whether the language communication is French or English;

n) ACTIVE OFFER – means the Active Offer of Services in French as prescribed by the French Language Services Act (Ontario Regulation 544/22);

o) SENATE - means the Senate of the University;

p) ACADEMIC UNIT - means a department or a School as approved by Senate;

q) BILINGUAL SERVICE - means a service which is available in English and in French;

r) GENERAL SERVICES - means all the services reporting directly to the University's central administration which are not designated as academic units;

s) EDUCATIONAL SERVICES - means the range of activities in support of teaching and research and such student procedures as admission, registration, guidance, etc.;

t) UNIVERSITY - means Laurentian University of Sudbury, as defined in the Act to incorporate Laurentian University of Sudbury, Statutes of Ontario, 1960, Chapter 15, as amended by Chapter 154, 1961-1962.

4. Principles

a) the preamble in the "Act to Incorporate Laurentian University of Sudbury" declares that this institution is a "bilingual institution";

b) English and French are the official languages of the University;

c) the University fosters development of Francophone and FNIM (Indigenous) communities and has as part of its mission to prepare the leaders of tomorrow through an inclusive, intellectually curious and connected bilingual and tricultural learning community;

d) nothing in the current policy shall infringe upon the maintenance and the development of programs and services designed for the FNIM (Indigenous) population;

e) the University maintains that bilingualism constitutes in itself a cultural value, and that in some disciplines and programmes it is an important condition of academic excellence;

f) the University maintains as well that bilingualism constitutes an educational value, since it allows for the development of an educational and living environment that fosters exchanges and the development of mutual respect between the two official language groups;

g) the bilingual character of the University is expressed in the bilingualism of its programmes, its central administration, its general services, the internal administration of its faculties and schools which offer francophone and bilingual programs, its teaching staff, its support staff and its student population;

h) while encouraging the development of its present programmes which, notwithstanding their varied linguistic requirements, contribute to the affirmation of, and benefit from, the bilingual character of the University, the University must continue to improve the quality of its programmes offered in both official languages;

i) the central administration of the University will reflect the bilingual character of the institution, and its general services must be able to communicate in both official languages with the university community and the general public and to serve equally well members of both linguistic groups;

j) the University's bilingual character is manifested by the quality of its official communications in both languages;

k) the faculties of the University must assure bilingual services to the extent required by the nature of their programmes and courses and the composition of their student population;

l) the University shall fully respect the acquired rights of its teaching personnel, support staff and students who are at the University at the moment of the coming into force of the regulation, including any collective agreements;

m) this policy will respect the various areas of responsibility of the Board of Governors, Senate and the administrative bodies, and the collective agreement;

n) the entire community is responsible for the respect and application of the Policy on Bilingualism;

5. Roles and Responsibilities

a) The Board of Governors oversees the overall implementation of the policy through the President, supported by the Associate Vice-President of Francophone Affairs;

b) The Joint Committee on Bilingualism evaluates the implementation of the policy and submits recommendations for change to the Board of Governors;

c) The Associate Vice-President of Francophone Affairs advises the President on the Bilingualism Policy, as well as on the French Language Services Act (Ontario Regulation 544/22);

d) The Central Administration ensures equal accessibility to services in both official languages;

e) Teaching and Administrative Staff support the implementation of the policy and participate in personal bilingualism development if necessary.

6. Policy

6.1 GENERAL POLICY

a) English and French are the official languages of the University.

b) As part of its Partial Bilingual Designation and the *French Language Services Act*, the University is responsible for providing academic support services and non-academic services in both official languages to students and prospective students.

c) Service contracts will respect the pertinent regulations of this bilingualism policy.

6.2 MEETINGS

6.2.1 BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND SENATE MEETINGS

a) Either of the official languages may be used:
- at meetings of the Board, Senate and their committees; and
- in any document or correspondence which is addressed to the Board, Senate and their committees.

b) At meetings, members of the University community have the right to express themselves and be understood in the official language of their choice.

It is desirable that all members of Senate and its committees have at least a passive knowledge of their additional official language, i.e. English or French as the case may be.

c) The minutes and documents of the Board and Senate will be issued simultaneously in both official languages.

6.2.2 GENERAL SERVICES AND ACADEMIC SERVICES

a) Either of the official languages may be used:
- at meetings of general services departments, academic units and their committees; and
- in any document or correspondence which is addressed to general services departments, academic units and to their committees.

b) At such meetings, the translation of a statement or question can be obtained by request to the Chair.

c) The minutes and reports produced by general services, academic units and their committees will be written in the language in which the comments and motions were made.

6.3 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

a) Communications from central administration and general services addressed to the entire faculty, support staff or student body will be issued simultaneously in both official languages.

b) In special cases, official communications may, at the Associate Vice-President, Francophone Affairs' discretion, be made in only one of the official languages when this is justified by the nature of the communication.

c) Any official communication addressed to a member of the University community will be in the official language chosen by the recipient.

6.4 Human Resources

6.4.1 POSITIONS REQUIRING FUNCTIONAL BILINGUALISM

a) Designation of all positions requiring bilingualism must be done according to the following two criteria:

- Will the applicant be supervising personnel who must offer services in both official languages?
- Will the applicant be responsible to offer services in both official languages?

b) In the case of administrative or support personnel, Human Resources Services will recommend to the Associate Vice-President Francophone Affairs, if a position is designated as bilingual. In the case of academic officers, the designation is recommended by the immediate supervisor.

In all cases, the office of the Associate Vice-President, Francophone Affairs, must approve the determination.

When an exemption request involves or impacts FNIM (Indigenous) candidates or FNIM (Indigenous) matters in general, Associate Vice-President, Francophone Affairs will consult with the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous Programs to approve any determination.

The list of positions requiring functional bilingualism will be updated on a quarterly basis annually by Human Resources Services. Subject to an exemption being approved pursuant to section 6.4.1f), individuals who are not sufficiently fluent in both English and French may not be appointed to a position which is designated as requiring functional bilingualism.

c) Evaluation of the level of bilingualism of the staff hired will be administered by Human Resources as required.

d) Except as stipulated in 6.4.1e) the Board will not consider a recommendation from a search committee to appoint a candidate who is not sufficiently fluent in both English and French for the positions of the following senior academic administrators: President and Vice-Chancellor; Vice-President, Academic and Provost; Deans of Faculties offering both English language and French-language programs; University Librarian.

e) Consistent with the University's FNIM (Indigenous) Equity Initiative and its desire to address the underrepresentation of FNIM (Indigenous) faculty and staff, the Board will consider a recommendation from a search committee to appoint to the positions identified in section 6.4.1d) a candidate who is not sufficiently fluent in both English and French, if this candidate self-identifies as First Nation, Inuit or Metis. The chosen candidate is eligible to pursue continued learning of one or both official languages of the University, French and English, through the services offered by the University, should they choose to do so. (See section 6.4.3c)

f) Requests for an exemption to the requirements of section 6.4.1a) must be made in writing to the Associate Vice-President Francophone Affairs, who shall evaluate the request and make a determination. The results of that determination will be communicated to the requestor in writing and shall include:

- the reasons given for making the request for permission and for its acceptance or rejection;

- the special steps, clearly stated and applicable, taken in order that the services offered by the incumbent be made available in both official languages;

Mechanisms available to bring the incumbent to achieve the language requirements for the position.

For each exemption, the incumbent will follow a personalized learning pathway to achieve the language requirements for the position. Their progress will be evaluated on an annual basis until those requirements have been met.

g) It is understood that the exceptions authorized under subsection f) are at the staffing level and as such, are positions of a temporary nature. The authorized exception does not modify the bilingual character of the position.

h) The Associate Vice-President, Francophone Affairs will submit annually to the Board a written report justifying the exceptions granted, the special measures adopted and their follow-up. A copy of this report will be forwarded to the Joint Committee on Bilingualism for comments before going to the Board.

6.4.2 FACULTY MEMBERS

a) In its management of faculty members, the University will continue to reinforce the bilingual nature of the institution.

b) The University will honour in every respect the rights acquired by its present faculty members in its collective agreement.

c) The University will make use of incentive measures only to encourage faculty members who wish to improve their knowledge of one or the other official language and on whom no obligation has been imposed regarding bilingualism.

d) The University will, unless an exception is made, hire as faculty members only persons who are at least receptively bilingual, or who commit to attaining this level of linguistic competence.

e) A faculty member hired on the basis of this commitment will not be able to obtain tenure until the commitment has been fulfilled.

Mechanisms for evaluating the level of bilingualism of teaching staff will be established and applied when hiring or awarding tenure to faculty members, except in situations where an exemption is made.

f) Notwithstanding paragraph 6.4.2d, special consideration will be given in accordance with the Board's commitment to increasing the participation of equity-seeking groups (including but not limited to women, visible minorities, FNIM (Indigenous) persons, people with diverse gender identities and people with disabilities, provided the commitment to attain this level of linguistic competency is given as indicated 6.4.2d.

g) A faculty member hired under the terms of paragraph 6.4.2d will not normally be granted tenure unless they have reached the level of receptive bilingualism.

h) In the case of an FNIM (Indigenous) person, an exemption will be automatically made.

i) In the case of personnel appointed with tenure special arrangements may be made.

j) Where such special arrangements have been made in a particular case, the Associate Vice President, Francophone Affairs, must invariably show in writing:
- the nature of the special arrangements;
- the reasons for such measures; and/or
- if applicable, the mechanisms available to achieve receptive bilingualism.

k) The University will provide French and English courses for the benefit of members of the teaching personnel who wish to improve their knowledge of either official language; the participation of these members will be voluntary, without cost and subject to such regulatory provisions as the University may adopt.

6.4.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF

a) In its management of teaching and support personnel, the University will endeavor to reinforce the bilingual nature of the institution.

b) The University will honour in every respect the rights acquired by its present administrative and support staff.

c) The University will make use of incentive measures only to encourage employees who wish to improve their knowledge of one or the other official language and to whom no obligation has been imposed regarding bilingualism.

d) For positions occupied by administrative and support staff, the University will determine, given the duties they are required to perform, the nature of the relations they might have with the University community and the general public; and it will define the level of bilingualism required for each of these positions.

e) The University will provide English and French courses for staff and faculty wishing to improve their knowledge of either official language. For these members, participation will be non-compulsory, free of charge, and subject to any regulations which the University may subsequently approve.

6.5 PROGRAMS OF STUDY

In terms of bilingualism, the University's existing academic programmes may be classified as follows:

a) On the basis of the languages used in teaching, the following distinctions will be made among:

- **unilingual programmes**: those in which all courses are given in only one of the official languages;

- **bilingual programmes through parallelism**: those in which all courses are given in both English and French;

- **bilingual programmes with predominance of one of the official languages**: those in which requisite courses are given in both official languages, but in which a majority of the optional courses are offered in the predominant language~~;~~

- **partially bilingual programmes:** those in which some requisite courses and some optional courses are offered in French

- programmes in which another language than English or French is taught.

b) On the basis of academic regulations, the following distinctions will be made among:

- programmes in which no linguistic competence is imposed by regulation as a condition for the degree, except the knowledge of the language required for registration in the courses;

- programmes which, by regulation, require as a condition of graduation, a level of knowledge of the second language to be shown by success in a test administered at the beginning of such studies at the University or by success in a second language course or courses specified in such programs.

6.6 STUDENTS

a) Students will not be admitted to a programme of study unless they have a sufficient knowledge of the language or languages of instruction of the courses required by their programme. Each programme will clearly indicate the linguistic requirements needed to succeed.

b) Each of the faculties are encouraged to implement appropriate measures to assist its students to acquire at the very least a passive knowledge of the official languages, English and French.

c) Students have the right to use English or French in their dealings with the University's central administration and general services, and with the administration of the academic units in which they are registered insofar as they offer courses in that language.

d) The University will provide the requisite courses and a sufficient number of the elective courses announced in its Academic Calendar in one of the official languages so that students can complete their programme, in the language announced for the programme, within the normal time limits.

6.7 PARTIAL BILINGUAL DESIGNATION AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT

a) The Associate Vice-President of Francophone Affairs is responsible for ensuring our conformity with all requirements associated with Laurentian University's Partial Bilingual Designation as well as with its conformity with the French Language Services Act.

b) The Associate Vice-President of Francophone Affairs is responsible for ensuring consultation with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Francophone Affairs before making any changes that could impact its designation under Regulation 398/93. The results of this consultation will be presented to the Senate before it makes decisions on any changes.

6.8 JOINT COMMITTEE ON BILINGUALISM

a) The Joint Committee on Bilingualism is responsible for evaluating the progress of the implementation of this policy. To this end, it will inform the Board on a regular basis and submit an annual report to the Board and to Senate. The Board and Senate will ensure that the Joint Committee has representation from both official language groups.