Mission. The Department of French & Italian serves the State of Iowa and its citizens by providing instruction in French, Italian, and Arabic languages, literatures, and cultures to prepare students for a wide variety of professional careers, both within and outside academe. The degree Doctor of Philosophy in French certifies that the recipient has acquired a sound general knowledge of French and Francophone cultures and literatures, and an in-depth knowledge of specific areas with concomitant critical and research methodologies, often involving cross-disciplinary approaches. The doctorate prepares a teacher-scholar capable of addressing both students and peers, and of making significant and original contributions to learning. The expertise of the faculty allows for courses in most major historical periods of French literature and culture, various literary genres and critical theories, the Francophone literatures and cultures of Canada, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and the Indian Ocean, as well as the postcolonial cultures of contemporary France. The Graduate degree programs in French and Francophone World Studies leading to the M.A. and PhD enjoy interdisciplinary strengths in the areas of Early Modern Studies, Film Studies, Francophone and Postcolonial Studies, History, and Interarts Discourse.

Admission Processes and Criteria. The PhD program admits highly qualified candidates on the basis of a rigorous evaluation of applications. While GRE scores are required, and GREs have risen markedly from V451/Q478/A457 in 1997 to V650 /Q750/A5.5 in 2008, the Department assesses these scores in the context of the application dossier as a whole, in combination with a number of other factors. The cultural and linguistic diversity inherent to the field of Francophone studies, a field that consistently enrolls international students, necessarily results in a heterogeneous sample of standardized tests--the relevance of such tests to each individual student's background and qualifications varies considerably. Therefore the Department looks carefully at letters of recommendation, academic transcripts, and detailed writing samples in French. Despite an overall decrease in the numbers of applications in French studies--a trend observable at peer institutions throughout the CIC that is partly the result of a tight job market since the 1990s--the Department regularly enrolls students from across America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. The presence of our culturally and linguistically diverse doctoral student cohort is of great value to the undergraduate students whom they teach and to the campus as a whole.

Program Size and Graduate Student Support. The Department’s current tenure-stream FTE in French (i.e., members of the Graduate Faculty) is 5.6, just over half of what it was in the 1980s and 1990s (our 1995 FTE was close to 10). Like faculty numbers, graduate student enrollments have declined over the past decade due in part to reductions in the number of faculty positions advertised. While total graduate student numbers averaged in the mid-20s during the 1990s (there were 26 graduate students as late as 2001, when a number of PhD candidates from the mid-1990s were completing their degrees), currently we have 19 graduate students enrolled, of which 7 are MA candidates. Given current faculty size, reliable statistics from the Modern Language Association regarding hiring trends in French and other languages (http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/rep_employment/prof_employment/prof_employment6 ), and our success in placing our PhDs, an optimal program size would allow for between 15 and 20 graduate students (MA and PhD combined). The PhD Program in French and Francophone World Studies benefits from course offerings from several other departments, including Art and Art History, Cinema and Comparative Literature, English, and History (either through cross-listing, or through the three courses outside of French that PhD students are required to take). French faculty regularly collaborate with colleagues in these departments on projects ranging from teaching to grants and publications. French faculty remain actively involved in various International Programs interdisciplinary research groups including the African Studies Program, the Caribbean Diaspora and Atlantic Studies Program, the
European Studies Group, and the Middle East and Muslim World Studies Group. In addition to serving on MA and PhD committees in French and Francophone World Studies, during the past five years the graduate faculty in French have served on over 70 committees supervising graduate students in other programs on campus, including Art History, Comparative Literature, English, Film Studies, German, History, Music, Spanish and Portuguese, and Women's Studies.

PhD candidates in good standing (i.e., who are achieving appropriate progress toward the degree) are supported primarily through TAships. Our two current Presidential Fellows receive additional support through the Graduate College. The Department offers a modest fellowship (the Benhamou Fellowship) to highly qualified students selected by a faculty committee. Whenever possible, we allocate partial travel support for graduate students to present their dissertation research at regional and national conferences.

The Department prides itself on providing extensive one-on-one contact between faculty and graduate students, beginning with 9.208 Introduction to Graduate Studies in French, a 1-semester-hour course focused on pre-professional acculturation, required of all incoming graduate students. The Director of Graduate Studies works closely with first-year PhD students until they form an advisory committee chaired by the director of the dissertation project. Thesis directors then closely advise students throughout the course of their work toward completion of the dissertation. Many post-comps students have the opportunity to teach an advanced undergraduate literature/culture course in the French major, occasionally in tandem with and regularly under the supervision of a faculty member, something few graduate programs in this country are able to do. Each year the Department organizes mock interviews to help finishing students prepare for the interview process, which takes place primarily at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association. The French and Italian Forum, our lecture series, also provides opportunities for graduate students to hear presentations by scholars and creative writers from different institutions and parts of the world. The Forum also gives ABDs the opportunity to present their work in preparation for conferences and job interview talks. In spring 2009, graduate students organized the University of Iowa Graduate Symposium in French and Francophone Studies around the topic of "Trespassing, Translation, Transcendence and Transvestism: Finding Comfort in the Space Between." This event attracted graduate student participation both from the University of Iowa and peer institutions nationwide, thus contributing to the visibility of our students, our program and our Department. In recent years our graduate students have had the opportunity to present their work in interdisciplinary groups housed in International Programs including the African Studies Program and the European Studies Group. In spring 2009, two of our graduate students gave presentations at the University of Iowa Crossing Borders/European Studies Convocation and one of our students was selected to participate in the Obermann Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy.

Program requirements are offered in a manner that allows students to make progress toward the PhD without delays caused by unavailable courses or instructors. Despite the fact that we “guarantee” only four years financial support to PhD candidates in the form of TA-ships (five years for those students who have particularly complex or interdisciplinary dissertation projects), our students’ time to degree is currently too high. In addition to humanities-specific norms with respect to time to degree, we believe that significant intellectual as well as pre-professional mentoring is crucial to candidates’ future success as teachers and scholars. We nonetheless recognize that there is work to do in this area. Therefore we work with advisees to take concrete steps to reduce this figure significantly. All incoming PhD students are informed of strict deadlines for the formation of the advisory committee, the composition of reading lists, and the completion of the comprehensive examinations. While these examinations have to be scheduled individually for each student, the Department sets clear limits on the flexibility that students have to schedule their exams. This ensures that students are on track from the outset of their program. It is important to note that our year-long exchange programs with French universities, which in some cases extend time to degree, provide students with excellent opportunities for salaried work, linguistic and cultural enhancement, and professional experience in France.
The Department has a strong record of nominating outstanding applicants for the Presidential and Dean's Fellowship programs through the Graduate College. Our PhD students regularly write successful proposals for the T. Anne Cleary International Dissertation Research Fellowship and for the Seashore/Ballard Dissertation-Year Fellowship. The Division of Sponsored Programs is also regularly invited to give presentations to PhD students on strategies for external funding searches, both for opportunities that may currently be available to them and in anticipation of the post-doctoral stage of their careers. We believe that this steady involvement in fellowship programs and external funding opportunities takes place at an appropriate level for our students' needs and professional development.

**Program Outcomes.** During the five-year period between fall 2003 and spring 2008, there were 13 successful Ph.D. defenses in French. Data for the 7-year period between August 1997 and May 2004 show that 9 University of Iowa French PhDs took jobs at colleges and universities, and that 8 out of these 9 were tenure-track positions. In a very tight job market during AY 2005-2006, our graduating PhD students had great success, partly due to our pre-professional training workshops and mock interviews: 3 graduates went to tenure-track positions and 2 accepted one-year, full-time positions. Since that time, one of these positions became a tenure-track position, and the other former French PhD student accepted a tenure-track position at another institution. Since 2005-2006, two of our PhD students have accepted tenure-track positions and two have found one-year positions with possibilities for renewal. Statistics from the Modern Language Association (http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/rep_employment/prof_employment/prof_employment7) demonstrate that the majority of first jobs for PhDs in our fields are in temporary, non-tenure-track positions. In this climate, we are particularly proud of our PhD students' success. We maintain strong ties with these new colleagues and continue to train our current students for similar achievements in the future.

**Program Characteristics.** The Board of Regents of The University of Iowa acknowledged in 2008 the international reputation and strength of our graduate program, when it was renamed French and Francophone World Studies. This renaming reflects the innovative interdisciplinary work of the graduate faculty, work that increasingly takes place within the global contexts of Francophone Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, the Indian Ocean, and North America. While the graduate faculty in French face new challenges in covering all major historical periods necessary for graduate study, the innovative cross-disciplinary nature of the program in French and Francophone World Studies provides additional opportunities for graduate students to work with faculty in related units across campus.

**Conclusion/Summary.** Currently the program is strong in diversity. We enroll students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, from America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. Our faculty are engaged in interdisciplinary work in a diverse array of fields, and we all work multilingually, both inside the classroom and out. Thus, our diversity is manifested in the very languages in which our work is carried out. One of our weaknesses is that we have lost colleagues and we have not been able to fill their positions. On July 31, 2009, we lost our dear colleague Professor L. Kathy Heilenman, one of the founders of the PhD program in Second Language Acquisition and the cornerstone of our program in pedagogy for graduate students. We are a small faculty compared to our peer programs, but our relatively small size allows for close contact with students, from the beginnings of their PhD coursework to their entry into the profession. Despite our relatively low FTE, the intensity of our scholarly activity and productivity is on par with the most visible units on campus. In the recent Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, our program ranked #7 nationally. While there will certainly be further discussion of the validity of the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, there is no doubt that the French graduate faculty at the University of Iowa maintain a high level of productivity and visibility, across disciplines and continents, and that the growing cadre of Iowa French PhDs continues through their expertise and hard work to promote the reputation of the program in an increasingly global academic and professional environment.