

Representing Foreign Language Education at the Federal Level in the United States

A series of moderated panels will take place at the following national conferences:

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, San Antonio, Nov. 16, 2007), the Modern Language Association (MLA, Chicago, Dec. 29, 2007), The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL, New York, March 28, 2008), and the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL, Washington, March 31, 2008).

The concluding event will be held on the campus of Georgetown University on April 2, 2008. Together, the four moderated panels and the Georgetown conference, lay the ground work for *Perspectives 92,4* (December, 2008), a column on contemporary issues in language education, policy, and research published semiannually in *The Modern Language Journal*.

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The following list provides desired qualities for forms of institutionalization that are suitable for foreign/second language education:

- long term (not ad hoc);
- encompassing the range of language uses (not merely security language learning)
- comprehensive (not only subsections of the issue);
- substantively educational in terms of academic and experiential knowledge regarding the teaching and learning of languages and cultures (not quick fix instrumental);
- encompassing all languages (not merely those deemed priority languages by government policies);
- comprehensive (not only subsections of the issue);
- attentive to fostering language learning through a continuum that spans all educational levels, from elementary school to graduate education (not disjointed efforts at various points of the educational system);
- open and publicly validated (beyond serving only certain constituencies, of late these have been government security and defense based constituencies);
- based on steady funding sources (rather than being on-again, off-again, which is particularly destructive for language learning);
- transparent (not relying on a stream of ad hoc rulings, programs, initiatives, legislative acts and programs that make it difficult to consider them a rational, coherent whole);
- able to respond to future needs by various constituencies expertly, expeditiously, and in a publicly visible and validated way (rather than short term, narrowly interest-driven, and therefore not conducive to cooperative behaviors that harness the best of knowledge and practice);
- authorized to advocate for language learning and use in a range of societal contexts;
- open and publicly accountable in the usual ways in which government accountability is established and practiced.