

Executive Summary

A strong area of current research at UNC Charlotte that is positioned for continuing excellence lies at the intersection of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and migration. This thematic cluster brings together an interdisciplinary group of faculty whose research is in regular dialogue with scholarship in translation and interpreting studies; transnationalism; feminist, queer, and gender studies; border and migration studies; cultural and film studies; and Holocaust studies. This thematic research area speaks directly to UNC Charlotte's mission by taking a broad view of cultural, economic, educational, health, and social needs that transcend local, regional, national, and international boundaries, while simultaneously examining the material impact that these larger forces can have on local communities. This group achieves a concomitant panoramic and local view by viewing migration not only as the cross-border movement of people, but also as the mobility of ideas, cultural capital, and knowledge. Unique to this thematic area is the inclusion of language and culture as part of this discussion, which recognizes the ever-present multilingual and multicultural aspect of cross-cultural communication that can, at times, be erased or forgotten. The ability to investigate objects embedded in a particular space, time, language, or culture enables discussion of larger global flows of knowledge, which ultimately challenges prevailing ideologies and conceptions that underpin existing knowledge structures.

Individually, faculty included in this thematic area are recognized experts in various domains with established and emerging reputations of excellence, evidenced by invited national- and international-level keynotes and lectures on cultural mobility, translation, and interpreting. The range of expertise is broad and draws on both humanistic and social-scientific research methodologies to address pressing questions in the areas of multilingualism and migration. Similarly, several faculty members also serve on national and international advisory committees and editorial boards for top-tier academic journals and book series, hold elected positions in national-level organizations, participate in the development of international standards (ISO, ASTM), and contribute to UNC Charlotte's international relationships and reputation by hosting international scholars. Other merits include involvement in grants totaling nearly a million dollars to enhance doctoral training, research awards for outstanding scholarship, and grants and gifts in kind to support student mobility for language learning and cross-cultural understanding.

The faculty included in this thematic area are also committed to collaborative research, demonstrated not only by their publication records, but also by their collective efforts to cooperate on various projects. For instance, over the past ten years, various faculty included in this group have co-organized conferences and an international symposium, edited special issues of academic journals, submitted national-level grant proposals, and been involved in co-edited and co-authored research projects. Others led a recharge unit on campus that provided foreign language services to the surrounding Charlotte community, while still others partnered to enhance access to health services at Camino Community Center.

Therefore, with additional R1 area of excellence funding, this thematic cluster is qualified to establish a research center dedicated to multilingualism, multiculturalism, and migration. In doing so, the group would be well positioned to attract significant external funding and respond to university-level initiatives, including interdisciplinary doctoral programs, graduate student education, and community partnerships.

Evidence of Strength and Excellence

The strength of this thematic area lies in collaborative publication activity along with the ability to attract international scholars to UNC Charlotte by means of visiting scholars, conferences and symposiums. Two of the included members hold editorships of major journals in their respective fields: Dr. Mellinger serves as the managing editor of *Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS)* (Mellinger) and Dr. García León is associate editor of *Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics* (García León). As editors of Scopus-indexed, top-tier journals with a broad remit, these editors have collaborated at various times with thematic area faculty as reviewers and contributors. One of these journals, *TIS*, is currently transitioning its editorial office to UNC Charlotte within the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, which speaks to the growing strength of this area of scholarship. Many of the faculty have considerable editorial experience, editing books and special issues ranging from transnational feminist translation studies (Ergun), digital diasporas (Dalton), legal translation and interpreting (Killman and Mellinger), community interpreting and technology (Mellinger), Catalan cinema (Pujol), and healthcare in Latin America (Dalton). Still others have published monographs on transgender representation (García León), mestizo modernity (Dalton), and quantitative research methods in translation and interpreting (Mellinger), or have volumes in press or under review on border studies and feminine resistance (Ergun) or Mexican and Chicano film (Dalton). These editors have relied on other faculty within this thematic cluster to review and contribute to these volumes, and in some cases, special issues have been co-edited by contributing faculty. The breadth of topics encompassed by this scholarship is considerable, yet they also represent various facets and points of entry to investigate multilingualism, multiculturalism, and migration. Each of these projects represents an intercultural, translational exchange across borders, boundaries, and language while also incorporating the idea of representation across various mediums and settings.

In addition to the considerable editing work, thematic cluster faculty have collaborated on several highly visible events, such as the International Symposium on Languages for Specific Purposes and the Witness in Residence Program. Common to both efforts is Dr. Aliaga-Buchenau, who co-organized the ISLSP-CIBER conference with Dr. Mellinger and another UNC Charlotte colleague. She also is the founder and organizer of the Witness in Residence Program. These events, which seek to encourage dialogue and exchange on the topics of social justice, language, and culture, are the culmination of university-wide support, and they have attracted international attention with participants hailing from numerous parts of the world. Other faculty have organized international conferences on Holocaust, genocide, and human rights studies (Ergun) and local symposiums on east Asian studies (Kaffen) and that bring together scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. These events have resulted in faculty from across campus to engage in cultural exchange and to germinate articles for publication.

The scholarly work by these scholars is not limited, however, to scholarship in the most conventional sense, because the very act of translation and interpreting as a cross-cultural exchange of ideas is also an act of scholarship. Rather than relegating texts written in different languages to a situation of linguistic incommensurability, many of the thematic area faculty are actively engaged in scholarly translation. This work ranges from novels (Aliaga-Buchenau, Ergun) to scholarship on Japanese cinema (Kaffen), Mexican history (Aliaga-Buchenau), Spanish law (Killman), identity politics and Latin American history (Mellinger), women's

reproductive health and sexuality (Ergun), and marginalization, migration, and trauma studies (Pujol). Moreover, many of these scholars actively publish in languages other than English (eg, Spanish, Turkish, German) as a means of engagement beyond traditional disciplinary silos and to challenge hierarchical structures of global knowledge circulation. Moreover, several of these faculty (eg, Pujol and Killman) have pursued national-level grants to support translations of works directly linked to diaspora, while others have submitted collaborative grant proposals to study the role of translation in diasporic communities (eg, Mellinger). In several cases, faculty have received funding to support this work, either as a grant collaborator (Killman) or as part of an international award (Mellinger).

Whereas scholarly output is indeed a keystone of this area of excellence, so too is this thematic cluster's ability to interweave academic expertise with community engagement. Several faculty members included in this cluster (Killman, Pujol) were previously involved in a recharge unit that provided language services to the surrounding community. The recharge unit has since been dissolved; however, expertise in translation and interpreting (TI) remains at the core of some community outreach efforts. Drs. Mellinger and Killman are state-certified court interpreters who have provided TI services to the surrounding community via the Camino Community Center and have aided several CHHS doctoral students to collect data via translation. Likewise, Dr. Mellinger regularly advises community partners in the school system on how to provide language services to non-English-speaking or limited-English-proficient families. Still other faculty members (eg, Pujol, Killman) have overseen graduate-level internships in which students have provided translation and interpreting services.

Not only has this thematic cluster contributed to graduate-level education by means of internships, faculty have also directed MA theses and served on MA and PhD committees both at UNC Charlotte and other institutions. Grants and gifts in kind have also been secured by thematic cluster faculty efforts to enhance student learning, including nearly \$750,000 for students of German to support student mobility and increase cross-cultural understanding (Aliaga-Buchenau) and a nearly million-dollar grant to enhance doctoral training for Ph.D. students in counseling, which includes discussions of how to support migrants with translation and interpreting in clinical settings (Mellinger).

The success of this thematic cluster in terms of scholarly excellence, community engagement, and student education is documented; however, additional funding and resources would allow for previous successes to be augmented. While funding support for graduate education in multilingualism, multiculturalism, and migration currently takes the form of graduate assistantships, these are limited in number and do not allow for consistent engagement in scholarship. Increased funding for graduate student fellowships would provide for sustained lines of inquiry for graduate students working in concert with thematic cluster faculty. Moreover, the establishment of a center dedicated to this thematic cluster's area could serve as an intellectual home for additional faculty hires, while also attracting post-doctoral researchers. There is a sizeable international community for translation, interpreting, and migration studies, and early-career researchers and post-doctoral scholars working at the intersection of these areas are well-suited to collaborate with UNC Charlotte faculty. Moreover, additional seed grants associated with the proposed center would provide affiliated faculty with material, financial, and temporal support to undertake projects that, at present, are time- and resource-prohibitive.

Alignment with Regional and National Priorities

This thematic area closely aligns with university priorities centered on diversity and scholarly excellence, and the proposed center would serve as a nexus for robust intellectual exchange that values social and cultural diversity. By its very nature, the scholarship conducted by associated faculty incorporates diverse perspectives and often highlights questions of equity, access, and inclusion. Moreover, the group exemplifies scholarship that can engage with community partners, in line with the engagement goals outlined by UNC Charlotte's Office of Research and Economic Development. This group's accomplishments align with university efforts to achieve R1 research status and is well poised to contribute to interdisciplinary graduate-level education across campus in existing and future MA and Ph.D. programs.

The alignment of this group's research and scholarly excellence with institutional objectives also dovetails with the strategic plans of several federal agencies over the medium-term, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Justice. For instance, the NEH has established goals to provide opportunities and access for all Americans who wish to pursue knowledge in the humanities. This group meets with several of the outlined objectives to achieve this goal, such as: a demonstrated ability to work with scholars across a range of disciplines (e.g., finance, health and human services, psychology) and utilize a diverse range of research methods; a track record of designing and conducting impactful projects that speak simultaneously to global and local challenges from humanistic, social scientific, and digital humanities perspectives; and the potential for capacity-building grant submissions that would enable larger NEH grant submissions. Furthermore, current NEH initiatives to engage with the semiquincentennial celebration of the US closely align with thematic cluster aims to explore questions of related to (im)migration, border studies, and transnationalism.

Similarly, the thematic cluster also aligns with NEA strategic objectives to support the study and generation of literature, film, and the visual arts. A center dedicated to multilingualism, multiculturalism, and migration would contribute to NEA's efforts to shape national discussions on key issues affecting cultural infrastructure in the US. The significant translational activity of contributing faculty members enables the circulation of artistic expression by highlighting diverse voices and re-situating these perspectives in new literary, artistic, and media forms. Moreover, a center would provide space for additional graduate student training and mentorship to cultivate the next generation of interdisciplinary thinkers, writers, and researchers. Similar efforts are supported by associated national-level academic associations, such as the Modern Language Association, further speaking to considerable growth of translation studies in the US.

The remit of scholarship in this thematic cluster is broad enough that transnational studies, border studies, and translation and interpreting studies are well suited to examine questions of disparities that arise from issues surrounding language access. Consequently, support for projects that examine healthcare or legal disparities resulting from linguistic issues may be possible from granting agencies such as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (DHHS) and the National Institute of Justice (DOJ). Given two national-level priorities highlighted by the White House – namely racial equity and immigration – this thematic cluster is well positioned to respond to these pressing issues.

Supporting Documents:

Faculty Member	Academic Unit(s)	Expertise
Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau	Languages and Culture Studies	translation; immigration; Holocaust studies; women in literature; German literature
David Dalton	Languages and Culture Studies Latin American Studies	Mexican and Chicano/a/x literary and cultural studies; indigeneity and mestizaje; border studies; science and technology studies
Emek Ergun	Global Studies Women and Gender Studies	transnationalism; feminist translation studies; border studies
Javier García-León	Languages and Culture Studies Latin American Studies Women and Gender Studies	languages in contact; queer linguistics; sociolinguistics; Latin American cultural and media studies
Philip Kaffen	Languages and Culture Studies Film Studies	Japan; art, technology, and visual studies; film studies
Jeffrey Killman	Languages and Culture Studies	legal translation and interpreting; translation technologies
Christopher Mellinger	Languages and Culture Studies Latin American Studies	translation and interpreting studies; bi-/multilingualism; research methods; text-based linguistics; digital humanities
Anton Pujol	Languages and Culture Studies	contemporary peninsular literature; Catalan studies
