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American Institute of Indian Studies: Advanced Language Programs in India

Project Narrative

1. Plan of Operation

The AIIS year-long language program allowed me not only to learn Tamil more deeply than was possible at my home institution; the practical experience with both language and culture also helped me immeasurably as an anthropologist at the beginning of my career. After the language program I found I was capable of easily making contacts, negotiating the social system without insulting anyone, and quickly gaining the trust needed for ethnographic research. Even now I continue to draw on contacts I made in India on that program years ago, for example, in recent (successful) efforts to inaugurate several exchange programs between my home university and institutions in South India, and in gaining input on and assistance for new research projects.

Diane Mines (AIIS Tamil Program, 1985-86)
Associate Professor of Anthropology
Appalachian State University, Boone NC

A. Introduction: AIIS and its Programs

For more than four decades, participation in the language programs run by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) has been a crucial ingredient in the training of the majority of U.S.-based scholars of South Asian area studies in both the humanities and social science disciplines, as well as of area experts employed in government, NGOs, and the private sector. The centerpiece of AIIS's instructional effort has been the Advanced Language Programs in India (ALPI), which offer both nine-month academic year and ten-week summer courses in such languages as Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu to students who have successfully completed two years of language training and who seek intensive immersion instruction within a target-language environment to bring them to an advanced-to-superior level of proficiency. In addition, AIIS has regularly provided instruction at elementary to advanced levels in other Indic languages (such as Gujarati,

Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Punjabi, and Telugu) that are rarely if ever taught in the United States. Students with less than two years of training in these languages attend summer programs, and are not supported with GPA funds.

Beginning in a period when instruction in even the most widely-spoken South Asian languages was available at only a handful of U.S. institutions of higher learning, when pedagogical materials were almost non-existent, and when second-language training in regional vernaculars within India was rudimentary and amateurish, the AIIS built a network of well-equipped language training centers and a cadre of trained and experienced teachers, and pioneered the development of learner-centered and proficiency-based instructional methods and materials. During the past decade of leadership by Dr. Surendra Gambhir and through the continuing support of the US Department of Education, the Institute's language programs and their staff have attained a new level of professionalism and accountability, and this, coupled with growing U.S. public and governmental awareness of India's economic, strategic, and cultural importance, has led to dramatic growth in ALPI applications and enrollments. The present proposal seeks to maintain and further develop the unique infrastructure of language-training facilities and personnel created by AIIS, and to support the growing numbers of highly qualified students seeking to participate in the programs. Like their predecessors—whose testimonials will be found throughout this document—these students will be instrumental in shaping American knowledge and perceptions of India and in forging ties between the two nations for decades to come. The aims and proven achievements of these programs, and their focus on the less-commonly-taught languages of South Asia, thus directly address the goals of the GPA “Advanced Overseas Intensive Language Training Projects” grants.

For qualified students willing to invest the time, the AIIS academic year programs offer

an incomparable experience of language immersion training. Participants typically become well integrated into their host families and communities, experience the Subcontinent's changing seasons and the range of social and cultural practices associated with them, participate in numerous fieldtrips and have other opportunities to travel within India, and work individually with local experts on major projects relevant to their planned academic research. The ten-week summer courses necessarily have more limited scope and, due to climatic factors, can be quite physically challenging; nevertheless, they attract large numbers of motivated students who are intent on maximizing their language experience, and the demanding instructional and extracurricular program is designed to capitalize on this commitment.

For the current GPA grant cycle, the AIIS is requesting annual funding for twenty-two academic year language fellows. We are not requesting any summer fellowships because we anticipate being able to support all qualified applicants through other funds. This increased academic year request (from the fifteen fellowships requested in the last competition) reflects the striking growth of our programs in recent years: e.g., a 28% increase in the AY program in 2006-07, and a 78% increase in summer enrollments between 2005 and 2007. In reading applications during the past three years, Language Committee members have been struck by the overall quality and seriousness of applicants, by the awareness among graduate students of the need for sustained immersion training, and by the increasing number of upper-level undergraduate applicants who have already completed two years of training in a South Asian language and who are planning careers that involve expertise on India. These gratifying developments suggest the broader maturation of South Asian studies in U.S. institutions of higher learning and bode well for the future supply of area experts in all fields. The present funding request intends to capitalize on these trends.

Established in 1961, the AIIS is a consortium of fifty-nine American colleges and universities that offer training in South Asian area studies. Its membership includes the major research universities that regularly receive federal support as National Resource Centers for South Asia, but also dozens of other public and private institutions of higher learning, large and small, that have made significant investment in developing faculty expertise on India and adjacent countries. Membership in AIIS is widely recognized as a key marker of institutional commitment to such research and teaching, and the number of members continues to grow—four institutions were admitted to the consortium in 2007. Although the diverse activities of AIIS include publications, scholarly conferences, and two unique research archives in India, the most crucial functions of the Institute are the Advanced Language Training Programs for graduate and upper-level undergraduate students, and the provision of fellowships and administrative support to junior and senior scholars and creative artists pursuing research in India. The former frequently lays the foundation for the latter, since sophisticated overseas research is seldom possible without language skills, and a high percentage of AIIS fellowship recipients (as well as others who receive Fulbright or Social Science Research Council grants for South Asia-based research) are alumni of the AIIS language programs.

In the U.S., the Institute is administered from an office at the University of Chicago. In India, the AIIS is run from its headquarters building at Gurgaon, outside New Delhi, and from four regional administrative offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Pune. The language programs are located in cities and states where the respective target language predominates: Jaipur, Rajasthan (Hindi); Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (Urdu); Kolkata, West Bengal (Bengali); Madurai, Tamil Nadu (Tamil); Chandigarh, Punjab (Punjabi); Pune, Maharashtra (Marathi and Sanskrit); and Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala (Malayalam). Although the programs vary

considerably in size, each program center contains classrooms, a library of target-language materials, computer learning stations, a kitchen and dining area, and staff office space. Students are normally housed with target-language-speaking families in the area. The AIIS ALPI Mission Statement (Appendix A), which is displayed on our website, sent with our materials to students, and displayed prominently in the target language and in English in the lobby of every language center, sums up the learner-centered and immersion-based philosophy of our programs.

B. Project design (pre-departure phase, overseas phase, and post-program phase)

The AIIS Advanced Hindi Language Program was essential for the development of my graduate work and my career. An AIIS language program is really almost a rite of passage for American academics in South Asian studies. I have many singular and intense memories of my experiences: a discussion with a teacher in a rickshaw while stuck in traffic, a devastating story we read, an intense conversation with a host "auntie," a film that changed my thinking, the moments when I found I'd mastered a new phrase. It is hard to imagine my academic career in Hindi literature without the AIIS experience.

Valerie Ritter (AIIS Hindi Program, 1995)
Assistant Professor of Hindi and South Asian Literature,
University of Chicago

Pre-Departure Phase: Recruitment and Selection of Participants The Advanced Language Programs in India are widely advertised by direct mailings to AIIS member institutions and to other South Asia programs and faculty throughout the US, as well as by announcements posted on the AIIS website (<http://www.indiastudies.org/>), on other sites (such as www.studyabroad.com), and at professional conferences, and published in newsletters. Copies of the announcement and application package for 2008-09 are given as Appendix B and C. The timetable and application materials for subsequent years are expected to be similar.

Applicants for fellowships are required to be students regularly enrolled at a U.S. college or university, and they must have studied the target language for a minimum of two academic years. Although the AIIS provides instruction during the academic year and (especially) during

the summer to elementary- and intermediate-level students of some less-taught Indic languages for which the two-year prerequisite is waived, such students are supported through institutional FLAS awards or private funds, and not with Department of Education GPA fellowships. A new Intensive Intermediate Hindi Program, begun during the summer of 2006 (and much welcomed by Hindi instructors in the US; it grew from twelve to twenty-seven students by its second year), similarly lies outside the purview of this proposal.

ALPI participants are selected on merit, without regard to gender, race, sex, age, handicapping physical condition, or home institution. All must, however, be affiliated with a U.S. university and all GPA-funded fellowship recipients must be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. Applicants include teachers of South Asian studies, and graduate students and upper-level undergraduates who are planning teaching careers in modern foreign languages or area studies or in government service. Although the AIIS also periodically offers instruction in classical languages relevant to South Asian research (such as Sanskrit, Persian, Pali, and Prakrit), it does not use GPA funds or FLAS fellowships to support them.

Soon after submitting their application materials in January, all applicants take a written screening test in the language for which they seek admission. These tests are graded by professional language teachers in either the U.S. or India and scores are reported to the Language Committee Chair. All complete applications that meet announced qualifications are then distributed to the members of the Language Committee for evaluation (see evaluation form in Appendix D). Language competency level is only one factor considered in the selection process. Other important criteria are the quality of the applicants' academic preparation as evidenced by full transcripts and by letters of reference from language teachers and research supervisors; applicants' ability to adapt to life and study in a foreign country, as reflected in their "statement

of purpose” and in specific comments solicited from referees regarding their adaptability and resilience; and the importance of intensive language training to the applicants’ career goals, as reflected in their personal statements. To qualify for consideration for GPA fellowships, applicants must indicate their intent to pursue a career in foreign language or area studies teaching, or to apply their language skills and knowledge of South Asia in fields outside teaching, including government, the professions, or international development. Though qualified undergraduates are eligible, a majority of our fellows are graduate students with a strong commitment to South Asian studies. They usually already have a dissertation project in mind and are strongly motivated to acquire the language proficiency necessary for their research.

The Committee members send their scores to the AIIS Chicago office, and then convene for an all-day meeting, generally in late March, held in conjunction with the annual Association for Asian Studies meetings, to discuss and adjust scores and to establish final rankings. Applicants receive notification of admission decisions by early April, and those who have been admitted then get instructions for visa application and transportation arrangements, as well as a preliminary orientation package (now sent electronically) containing cultural and practical information as well as a detailed syllabus and timetable for the instructional program. They are also asked to provide the Institute with personal information relevant to homestay accommodations. The AIIS office in Chicago works closely with its Indian centers to assist students as they prepare for departure to India by answering diverse questions and attempting to accommodate individual needs. Since students embark from all parts of the U.S., a pre-departure orientation workshop for all is not feasible. On arrival in India, however, all AIIS students attend a three-day workshop that includes presentations by a range of experts on such topics as health and safety, climate and living conditions, and cultural norms, as well as a review of

program schedules and expectations. After they are transported to their language program centers, students receive an additional day of orientation specific to each program and site, and are assisted in making homestay arrangements. They also take placement tests that assess them in four skill areas (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), on the basis of which they are divided into two or more groups for each language skill. These assignments (the groups are given neutral, culturally-relevant names rather than numbers) are flexible and are frequently re-evaluated to permit students to be moved into the group from which they will derive the maximum benefit. Based on our experience of many years, most arriving students are at the intermediate level of the ACTFL proficiency scale, and the aim of instruction is therefore to bring them to the advanced or superior level.

I probably wouldn't have become a historian were it not for the AIIS Hindi program. It was a formative experience. Among other things, it represented my first foray into the Backward Classes movement—central to my subsequent Ph.D. research and first book—on which I wrote a twenty-page paper, in Hindi!

William Pinch (AIIS Hindi Program, 1982-83)
Professor of History, Wesleyan University

Overseas Phase: Instructional Program, First Term In order to take maximum advantage of the host-country setting and to counterbalance the emphasis on reading and writing that prevails in many stateside programs, the primary goal of the first term is to develop advanced-level oral-aural skills. The first few weeks of instruction review and reinforce intermediate-level tasks: negotiation of basic survival situations, and description of animate and inanimate objects and of everyday activities. Following this review, advanced-level tasks involving more extended speech and writing are introduced progressively: satisfying routine social demands, giving autobiographical information, and discussing current events, leading to the ability to carry out sustained narrative in the past and future tenses. To these simple situations of life and travel,

often acted out in small groups, complications and unfamiliar situations and topics are progressively added. The curriculum also features readings of newspapers and magazines, fiction, poetry and popular song lyrics, listening to daily radio and TV broadcasts, and reporting on films, plays, lectures, trips and other assigned activities. Such input triggers discussions and role-playing situations in which students' conversational skills are further developed. Listening comprehension—which is challenged daily outside of class—is also especially emphasized in the instructional program, since it is the most intimidating skill area, as the listener has no control over another speaker's pace of speech, and his/her selection of lexical items. In addition, students write term papers on topics in their specific fields of interest, which require them to draw on written and oral source materials in the target language that are relevant to their academic discipline. This also helps them develop contextual vocabulary in their field of specialization. Another important aspect of the program is the requirement that students keep a journal; these are checked daily and are an important record of the students' activities and linguistic progress. The goal of the journal is not necessarily to teach writing skills, but to check students' mastery of new vocabulary, sociolinguistic variants, and grammar, and to insure that they are monitoring their own progress.

An example of the basic weekly schedule for the Hindi and Urdu programs is provided in Appendix E. Instructional tasks are sequenced in accordance with ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Each week's activities in all skill areas are organized for maximum reinforcement. The selection of listening and reading assignments, vocabulary, and grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions are geared toward providing students with linguistic tools for the performance of specific situational and academic tasks of an increasingly advanced nature. The multiple tutorials serve to customize instruction and to accommodate individual interests and

proficiency levels. The most important factor in the success of the program is, however, the total immersion technique, as a result of which students quickly become accustomed to expressing all their needs and thoughts in the target language. Weekly tests and quizzes reinforce the instructional process, and the last week of the first term is devoted to extensive testing in all four skills. These tests, preserved on tape or in written form, provide a basis for the continuation or reassignment of students in different skill groups during the second term.

Mid-Program Teacher Training Workshop Teacher training has been a key component of ALPI for many years. Since most elite universities in India are English-medium and lack programs in Second Language Acquisition focused on indigenous languages, few novice teachers come with experience in SLA pedagogy geared to the needs of adult learners. Apart from intensive on-site training offered by experienced teachers in each program, the annual three-day workshop, held while students are on their winter vacation, provides ongoing training for the entire staff, intended to keep them abreast of new developments in proficiency-oriented pedagogy and testing. In addition, we have found the annual workshop to be highly effective in developing a sense of professionalism and team spirit among the geographically far-flung and culturally diverse AIIS teachers and programs. Recent workshops have focused on the development of appropriate written and audiovisual materials for students at various proficiency levels. They have included presentations by invited SLA experts, as well as presentations of “best practice” by participants from each program, discussed and critiqued by the entire group. They also routinely incorporate training in new computer-based hardware and software that has been made available to the programs for the development and delivery of instructional material. The AIIS works cooperatively with other federally funded programs such as the Berkeley Urdu Language Program and the South Asian Language Resource Center (SALRC) in planning these workshops.

Second Term It is expected that, by the end of the first term, all Hindi and Urdu students will perform comfortably in the advanced level range and that all Bengali and Tamil students will be close to that goal. A primary purpose of instruction during the second term is to reinforce advanced-level skills and to foster the development of superior-level skills. The focus shifts from everyday to abstract subject matter. Besides acting out unfamiliar situations, students gain practice in supporting their opinions and in hypothesizing. Invited speakers vary increasingly in age, sex, education, social standing, and urban/rural speech, so as to foster comprehension of dialectal variants and facility in the “code-switching” that is common, even among less-educated speakers, in the South Asian linguistic environment. Invited speakers from NGOs often generate particular enthusiasm and facilitate student involvement with these organizations, which the programs strongly encourage. Other second-term training includes handling situations with an emotional load, such as expressing disagreement, anger, and embarrassment in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities Throughout the program, students, first accompanied by their teachers and later on their own, go on field trips in the city and surrounding area, and carry out targeted group and individual skill-building activities. Field trips range from attendance at area festivals to planned buying trips to nearby markets (e.g., for purchasing ingredients for a group cooking lesson) to visits to rural sites and interviews with local people. Each field trip assignment is preceded by topical linguistic preparation and followed by written and oral reports, discussion, and remedial feedback. Regular assignments outside the classroom also include the use of local libraries, and attendance at movies, plays, lectures, public meetings, and other cultural and social events, followed by written or oral reports. A weeklong “language camp” in a culturally significant rural area, incorporating additional intensive language

experiences and student demonstrations of acquired skills, has become a popular “capstone” feature of many of the programs in recent years. In addition, academic-year students work intensively, during the final months of the program, in tutorials or activities with a local specialist on their anticipated research topic.

The AIIS program opened doors to Bengali culture in ways that are only possible in India. My teacher included me in family activities: a wedding, festivals, numerous dinners and lunches at home, Sunday morning viewing of the Ramayana on TV. We travelled up to Gaur and Pandua, and Murshidabad, and locally, around the nearby markets. Each of these occasions allowed me to ask endless questions, so that not only did my Bengali improve, but I learned things you can't get from books or even by watching movies back at home.

Rebecca J. Manring, Associate Professor
(AIIS Bengali Program, 1987-88)
India Studies and Religious Studies, Indiana University

Post-Program Assessment: Testing and Evaluation On the completion of the instructional program in India, students take a battery of tests in the four skills areas. Their scores are compared to those achieved on the tests given on arrival and provide a quantitative and qualitative measure of each program's success in meeting its objectives. Test results are sent to the Associate Director-General (Programs) in Chennai and to the Language Committee Chair in the U.S. Students also complete detailed evaluation forms, both at midterm and at the conclusion of the program (a sample is provided as Appendix F), that permit them to comment on each aspect of the instructional program and each member of the teaching staff. These are sent to the ADG (Programs), who prepares a report for each program and teacher, highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement as identified by participants. These reports, which are also sent to the LC Chair, are taken very seriously and are extensively discussed by the staff at each program center, and sometimes result in adjustments in individual assignments and workload. Additional information on program assessment is provided in Section Four below.

Instructional Planning The Program Heads and their teachers devote the weeks between the end of the academic year program and the beginning of the summer program to reviewing the results of participants' final tests and evaluations. On that basis, they prepare and send to the ADG (Programs) and the LC Chair a detailed outline of the curriculum for the following summer and academic year programs. At this point, changes are routinely introduced with a view to improving instruction. As soon as they receive copies of application materials from the next set of participants, teachers begin fine-tuning the program schedule and curriculum to maximize language-learning opportunities for individual students. This attention to individual needs—reflected, for example, in teachers who show familiarity with arriving students' research interests and offer them pre-prepared materials targeted to their personal goals—is often noted by grateful participants in evaluations and in interviews with the LC Chair during site-visits.

C. Management Plan

The AIIS program enabled me to achieve a high level of fluency in Hindi and an attentiveness to the intricacies of cultural-linguistic interpretation. This experience proved invaluable both for my graduate and professional career as a historian of modern India, and could not be replicated by any program within the U.S. It was the experience of intensive, advanced language study in India that provided both unique linguistic opportunities and a strongly enriched understanding of contemporary India. The AIIS program truly formed the foundation for my scholarly career.

Rachel Sturman (AIIS Hindi Program, 1991-92)
Assistant Professor of History and Asian Studies, Bowdoin
College

As explained in the Introduction to this proposal, the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) is the most appropriate body to provide the academic and organizational infrastructure and supervision for advanced language programs in India. An organizational chart of ALPI is given as Appendix G. Now approaching its fiftieth anniversary, AIIS has provided fellowship support for Ph.D. students, senior scholars, and creative and performing artists, has offered

intensive language training at multiple centers, and has extended knowledge of Indian culture and society through its two research centers and through periodic conferences and special events. The cumulative work of more than 4,000 Institute fellows and language students is reflected in hundreds of books and dissertations and thousands of articles; indeed, it is rare to find a major publication on South Asia in the U.S. that does not acknowledge AIIS support. As the single most active organization promoting the study of India, AIIS is well equipped to publicize and administer advanced language programs through its U.S.-based Executive Committee, Language Committee, and Trustees representing the member institutions, and through its India-based administrative and pedagogical infrastructure.

The AIIS Executive Committee appoints the Language Committee, which is composed of four scholars actively involved in teaching South Asian languages at major universities. Their names and qualifications are found in Section 2 below. The Language Committee sets the instructional policies to be applied in ALPI, oversees its academic activities, and selects and evaluates student participants. It meets annually to review applications and to discuss matters of policy and curriculum.

In India, AIIS administrators provide constant support and oversight to the far-flung language program centers. Both the AIIS Director-General, based in Delhi, and the Chennai-based Associate Director-General (Programs) make periodic trips to the language program centers to meet with staff and students, and to interview potential instructors. The U.S.-based Language Committee Chair makes two annual visits to India during which he visits as many programs as is feasible, meets with staff and students, and submits reports to the Delhi, Chennai and Chicago offices. He also meets with the Delhi and Chennai administrators to discuss programmatic issues and longer-range planning, and helps plan the annual teachers workshop, in

which he participates. The advent of e-mail (and most of the AIIS centers in India are now equipped with wireless internet access) has supplemented vastly improved telecommunications to permit the fast and efficient exchange of program reports (which are sent weekly for both the academic year and summer programs) and other important data between AIIS language program centers and the Institute's relevant officers in India and the United States.

D. Achieving Project Objectives

Previous sections of this proposal explain how the AIIS infrastructure and ALPI teaching centers will help to achieve the principal objective of this project: the provision of the best possible advanced-level training in modern Indic languages in an academically challenging and culturally appropriate and hospitable environment. Our students, selected through a national competition, study their target language in a location in India where it is natively spoken and in an environment that is conducive to intensive language acquisition, supported by a trained and responsive staff of teachers and administrators.

The present project objectives also include promoting such rarely-taught Indic languages as Bengali and Punjabi (both recently designated "critical languages" by the State Department) as well as other modern languages spoken by tens of millions of South Asians but seldom taught in even the most comprehensive South Asian area centers in the US. The Language Committee's selection process is "language-blind," and hence the Institute sometimes creates programs in rarely-taught languages for even a single student; this is possible through the pool of qualified teachers that AIIS has identified and trained over the years, some of whom remain on a retainer salary even when there are no students in their language. The Institute also devotes substantial resources to creating new, larger-scale programs when funding priorities produce shifts in student demand (e.g. the flood of summer applications for Punjabi, which followed that rarely-

taught language's designation as a "strategic language" in 2005; AIIS has since been working hard to build a Punjabi program comparable in quality to its more established ones).

Specific objectives for the next funding cycle also include acquiring improved instructional facilities for the Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and Punjabi programs, all of which have been (during summer sessions) operating at or beyond the present capacity of their program centers. In addition, we must seek to improve the compensation of our language teachers. Although many of our best teachers, once they become trained in the AIIS's student-centered and intensive approach, much prefer the challenges it offers to the more rigid curricula of most Indian academic institutions, they must obviously consider the economic needs of their families in making employment decisions. Hence, in order to recruit and retain the very best teachers, the Institute must compete with the rising salaries and benefits offered in both the academic and private sectors. Both of these pragmatic objectives are reflected in the budgetary requests included in this proposal.

E. Provision of Equal Access to All Eligible Participants

The AIIS language programs are non-discriminatory with regard to race, color, national origin, gender, and age of participants, and every effort is made to accommodate applicants with handicapping physical conditions. Up to the present, our only handicapped student was blind, and we were able to provide him with the assistance he needed to carry on his work successfully. The teachers workshop scheduled for December of 2007 will include a presentation on teaching handicapped students foreign languages, including the helpful information provided by the website of "Mobility International USA"

(<http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/foreignlang#students-with-visual-impairments-1>).

However, at present not all ALPI facilities in India meet ADA standards of accessibility, and the

Institute lacks the financial resources to bring all of them up to this standard within the present grant cycle. As new facilities are constructed (e.g., the planned AIIS office and guesthouse to replace the current structure in New Delhi), they will be compliant with ADA standards, but most of the Language Programs currently occupy rented space in buildings that are not compliant and that, in some cases, cannot be made so. An important exception is the building in which the Hindi program is located, which was constructed with an elevator shaft. We are currently exploring with the owner of the building the possibility of equipping it with an elevator. The AIIS commits itself, as premises are remodeled and as new ones are sought, to insuring that they are accessible to handicapped students, and in the meantime to making every effort to assist such applicants in participating in our program.

2. Quality of Key Personnel

Marathi, the language I needed to know for my dissertation research, was rarely offered anywhere in the U.S. when I was in graduate school. After learning beginning Marathi with the help of a tutor, I pursued intermediate and advanced Marathi study in the AIIS program in Pune. The level of instruction far exceeded my expectations. My primary language instructor held an M.A. in Marathi literature, as well as a Ph.D. in linguistics. Moreover, her own work as a professional translator of literary and scholarly works from English to Marathi further enabled her to assist me in my work of translating a variety of Marathi genres into English. AIIS does a fantastic job hiring top-notch language instructors with expertise in working with scholars from overseas.

Jeffrey M. Brackett (AIIS Marathi Program, 1996-97)
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Ball State University

A. *The Project Director* The Language Committee Chair serves as Project Director for ALPI and reports directly to the AIIS Executive Committee and to the Board of Trustees. With the assistance of the Chicago office, he prepares grant proposals and funding requests to support and enhance the language programs, and reports on the implementation of grants. He makes two annual site-visits to meet with administrators in New Delhi and Chennai, with the Heads of the

language centers and the teaching staff to review policy and curriculum and to discuss the progress of individual participants, and with the participants themselves for feedback. On the basis of these visits, he writes reports that make specific recommendations for the improvement of the programs. He also convenes an annual teachers workshop. The Chair receives no compensation, but is reimbursed for travel and receives a standard per diem.

The present LC Chair is Philip Lutgendorf, Professor of Hindi and Modern Indian Studies at the University of Iowa. His administrative experience includes service as Vice President of AIIS (1993-94), four years on the Institute's Fellowship Selection Committee (1993-96, 2003), and a decade of prior service on the Language Committee (1997-2007). In addition, he served three terms as Chair of the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Iowa, and two years as a member of the Executive Committee of its College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. His teaching duties have combined all levels of Hindi language instruction with courses on South Asian literature, popular culture, and cinema, and he is presently a Visiting Professor at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He is the author of *The Life of a Text* (University of California Press, 1991), a study of the popularity and influence of the Hindi version of the Rama story in north and central India, based on Fulbright-supported pre-doctoral research, and which received the Coomaraswamy Prize of the Association for Asian Studies (1992). He was awarded an AIIS senior research fellowship in 1989-90 and a Guggenheim fellowship in 2002-03 to support his work on the cult of the "monkey god," Hanuman, which has since appeared as *Hanuman's Tale: The Messages of a Divine Monkey* (Oxford University Press, 2007). He is the author of more than thirty articles and essays dealing with South Asian literature, folklore, popular religion, and mass media, and maintains a website devoted to popular Indian cinema (www.uiowa.edu/~incinema). Trained in an area studies graduate program at the

University of Chicago, he participated in the AIIS Hindi program in 1979-80, as a language fellow supported by Department of Education funds, and he has been an enthusiastic advocate of AIIS language programs ever since. Since he lacks training in the increasingly sophisticated field of Second Language Acquisition, he works closely with recognized experts in SLA (including the former LC Chair, Dr. Surendra Gambhir) to insure that our ALPI centers continue to keep abreast of advances in pedagogy. Appointed LC Chair in April, 2007, he has already made two visits to India on behalf of the programs (January and July, 2007) and has established good rapport with the administrative and teaching staff there. His annual time commitment to the programs, averaging ten-twelve hours per week, includes roughly six weeks of site-visits and workshops in India, three weeks of application review and meetings in the U.S., two weeks of proposal and report writing, and almost daily communication, mostly by e-mail, with AIIS applicants, students, teachers, Program Heads, and senior administrators in the U.S. and India. His curriculum vita is given in Appendix H.

B. *Other Key Personnel* This section notes the qualifications of the other three members of the U.S.-based Language Committee, of the President and the U.S.-based Director of AIIS, and of the Program Heads in the ALPI centers in India. Two key administrators in India—the Director-General in New Delhi and the Associate Director-General (Programs) in Chennai—will be introduced below under “Host Country Coordinator(s).”

Financial administration of the AIIS is handled by both the accounting office at our Indian headquarters in Gurgaon (where a full-time Certified Chartered Accountant is employed) and by the firm of Kaczynski and Associates in Chicago, which performs monthly audits of U.S. accounts. The Treasurer of the Institute, Professor Geraldine Forbes, provides the officers and Trustees with a financial overview. The annual A-133 Audit is performed by Price Waterhouse.

The Language Committee. These scholars are appointed by the Executive Committee of AIIS and represent expertise in several of the languages taught through ALPI. They receive no compensation, apart from reimbursement of airfares and hotel accommodations when attending the selection meeting, and their annual time commitment includes roughly four weeks of evaluating applications, attending the selection meeting and additional discussions of program policy, and engaging in regular consultation with the Chair on program-related matters, via e-mail. While on their own research trips to India, they may make site-visits to ALPI centers and submit reports to the Chair, for which they may receive reimbursement for local travel and accommodation, and the Institute's standard per diem in Indian currency.

- Naseem Akhtar Hines is Preceptor in Urdu and Hindi in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University. She obtained her Ph. D. from the University of Washington in Seattle. She has taught Hindi and Urdu languages and literatures at all levels at the UW in Seattle, and established the Hindi program at Washington University in St. Louis, before joining the faculty at Harvard in 2001. Her interests include the devotional literatures of North India, especially Indo-Sufi texts, the Urdu *ghazal* and *qawwali*, and North Indian classical music. Her scholarly articles, fiction, poetry, and English translations of Urdu and Hindi poetry are published in several anthologies. Current projects include an English translation of the fourteenth century Indo-Sufi allegorical romance, *Chandayan*.
- Carol Salomon, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Washington, is a scholar of Bengali language and literature. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She has taught courses in Bengali at many institutions, including the University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, University of Memphis,

and Cornell University in addition to the University of Washington. Salomon has also taught courses on Islam in Bengal, South Asian literature and Bengali literature. She is the author of several articles on Bengali folk songs and is co-editor of *Studies in South Asian Devotional Literature and Culture* (New Delhi, 1999). She is currently co-authoring a first year Bengali textbook entitled *Epar Bangla Opar Bangla: Bangla Across Borders, an Elementary Bangla Course*. She is also working on a book of translations of the songs of the nineteenth century Baul poet Lalan Fakir.

- Martha Ann Selby is Associate Professor of South Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Her specialties include Tamil, Sanskrit, and Prakrit poetry and poetics, as well as representations of women and gender dynamics in classical-period texts. A recent recipient of fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and the Guggenheim Foundation, she is the author of two books, *Grow Long, Blessed Night: Love Poems from Classical India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and *A Circle of Six Seasons: A Selection from Old Tamil, Prakrit and Sanskrit Verse* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003). She is also co-editor (with Indira Viswanathan Peterson) of *Tamil Geographies: Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007). An alumna of the ALPI Tamil program in Madurai, she brings to the committee expertise on Dravidian languages, Sanskrit, and Prakrit.

The President of AIIS Ralph Nicholas, Ph.D. is William Rainey Harper Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. A distinguished anthropologist specializing in northeastern India, he has expertise in Bengali and was instrumental in promoting South Asian studies at the University of Chicago, where he served as

Deputy Provost from 1982-87 and Dean of the College from 1987-92. In addition to his many professional affiliations in India, he is a Vice President of the Indo-American Center of Chicago. He also served as a consultant to the Ford Foundation in Bangladesh. His time commitment to ALPI, averaging two-to-three hours per week, includes attendance at the Language Committee's annual selection meeting, periodic site-visits to a number of the programs during his overseas trips, and frequent consultation with the LC Chair and other administrators via telephone and e-mail. His curriculum vita is attached in Appendix H.

U.S. Director, Elise Auerbach Dr. Auerbach, who holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, runs the U.S. office of AIIS, based at the University of Chicago. Her time commitment to ALPI is roughly fifteen-to-eighteen hours per week, and includes the preparation and distribution of program applications to Language Committee members; participation in the selection meeting; preparation of budgets and the writing and editing of grant proposals; distribution of acceptance letters, orientation materials, and other basic information to program participants, and the coordination of their domestic and international travel arrangements. She is also in very regular consultation with the LC Chair and with Institute officers and administrators in the U.S. and India. Many ALPI participants have testified to the efficiency, tact, and good will with which she has fielded their questions, resolved their logistic problems, and facilitated their positive overseas language study experience.

Language Program Heads Each ALPI center has a Program Head who serves as language coordinator for the teaching staff. The Heads are full-time employees of AIIS, and their responsibilities include curriculum and schedule planning, teaching and supervising the other teachers and overseeing the training of novice teachers, and preparing weekly reports to the

ADG (Programs) and the Language Program Chair. (The student comments appended to each biosketch below are from 2006-07 program participants.)

- Dr. S. Bharathy, M.Phil, Ph.D is Head of the Tamil program and was recently designated Associate Director (Programs). Before joining AIIS in 1991, she taught Tamil at Madura College. She has a background in Tamil literature, on which she has authored several articles, and in the grammatical analysis of Tamil. She has created many materials for teaching Tamil at the advanced level. Her students consistently evaluate her as a superb teacher and scholar.

“Dr. Bharathy is an outstanding instructor. She is an excellent resource for students of all learning levels and I have greatly appreciated her commitment to my learning process this year. She is one of the best instructors I have ever had in any subject.”

“Dr. Bharathy’s command over language and teaching is superior. She has a way of explaining things that is clear and understandable. She has a very good sense of our strengths and weaknesses and is always encouraging us to grow as language speakers and writers.”

- V. K. Bindu, Head of the Malayalam Program, holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and has been teaching for AIIS since 2002. She is active in the development of instructional materials for this less-less-commonly-taught language, spoken by some thirty-six million people in the dynamic coastal state of Kerala.

“A dedicated and gifted teacher who is very responsive to individual needs – always very positive and encouraging.”

“Dr. Bindu is a joy and great teacher. She is able to communicate clearly and offers good translation assignments and other materials to integrate grammatical rules into writing assignments.”

- Protima Dutt, B.A., is Head of the Bengali program. She has been teaching for AIIS since 1991 and has consistently earned positive evaluations from students for her enthusiasm for Bengali language and culture and for her patient and methodical way of

explaining the linguistic and cultural nuances of the language. Her expertise in pedagogy-related computer software has been a resource and inspiration to many AIIS teachers.

She has produced numerous teaching materials, especially in the realm of grammar.

“Mrs. Dutt knows her subject very well. Her explanations are helpful and class is interesting.”

“[Mrs. Dutt’s were the] best classes for my developing skills in the language.”

“I really like Protima di (obviously). I learned a lot from her.”

- Ahtesham Ahmad Khan, M.A. is Head of the Urdu Program. He holds a Ph.D. and M.Phil. in Urdu literature, and an undergraduate degree in Mass Communication for Hindi and Urdu, all from Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, one of India’s premiere institutions. Though only with AIIS since 2006, he has quickly demonstrated pedagogic and managerial skills and has brought a new and welcome professionalism to the running of the burgeoning Urdu program in Lucknow. Both students and other teachers have praised his leadership.

“Ahtesham may be one of the most caring people I have ever met. His dedication as an instructor and mentor is inspirational. The classes, therefore, are always extremely valuable.”

“I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to talk about modern Urdu fiction with Ahtesham. He is a fantastic teacher and I learn a great deal from him.”

- Shantanu Kher holds a B.A. in education and, before joining AIIS in 2005, taught Marathi to foreigners through a private institute in Pune. He is a dynamic young teacher who has particular expertise in computer-based software for developing instructional materials.

“Shantanu is attentive to my language learning needs and can sense without me having to repeatedly tell him what to do, where to slow down, where to speed up, etc. He has properly assessed my level and uses vocabulary, velocity, and intonation that I am able to understand, thus encouraging my learning process.”

- Achutya Nand Singh (known to students by his nickname of “Swami-ji”) is Head of the Hindi program and, due to his long and successful experience in teaching and administration, was recently designated Associate Director of all the AIIS language programs. He often helps to train new teachers in ALPI’s methodology. He holds an M.A. degree in Hindi literature and a Ph.D. in linguistics. Under Dr. Singh’s direction, the Hindi program has produced extensive materials for advanced level Hindi instruction incorporating graded-level readings from a wide range of publications and media.

“I found Swami-ji an extremely inspiring and encouraging teacher and enjoyed all classes with him.”

“Swami-ji is incredibly dedicated and invested in his work, and that shows through in his teaching style. I have absolutely no complaints. He’s just great at everything.”

“Swami-ji is incredibly intelligent, patient, and talented at communicating the subtleties of the language. He holds this program together and does a great job at it.”

- Rinku Rani was appointed Head of the Punjabi Program in 2007 when it shifted to Chandigarh from Patiala. She holds a Ph.D. in Punjabi literature and has six years of teaching experience. Though new to the AIIS method, she has shown great dedication to meeting the needs of our students and is working closely with the Hindi teaching staff in Jaipur to develop a comparably sound Punjabi program.

“Rinku is a very good teacher, who taught the material thoroughly and accurately. She made a very strong effort and worked very hard.”

“Rinku is very organized and motivated to help students with any questions they might have.”

C. *Host Country Coordinators*

The AIIS Director-General, New Delhi Since the Government of India (GOI) does not permit programs for foreign students to be conducted by foreign field directors, the Director-General is

an Indian citizen and professional administrator charged with in-country oversight of ALPI as well as the fellowship programs and research centers of AIIS. Among other things, the Director-General and her staff arrange for student and research visas, secure GOI approval for research projects, arrange for researcher affiliations with Indian universities, and run orientations and handle other logistic arrangements associated with the arrival, departure, and internal travel of foreign students and researchers. In addition, the DG oversees the expenditure of funds including the language program staff salaries, and plans and implements the ALPI budget.

Purnima Mehta, MBA, became the Director-General of AIIS in January of 2005, after fifteen years of service to AIIS, including three years as Associate Director-General (Operations). She has demonstrated remarkable leadership and administrative skills and works closely with U.S.-based officers on policy decisions. She has shown particular concern and sensitivity for the needs of the language programs, moving swiftly to acquire facilities and equipment requested by the teaching staff, and often interrupting her busy office schedule to visit program centers as local needs dictate. Her curriculum vita is attached in Appendix H.

Associate Director-General (Programs) Based in Chennai, this administrator coordinates all the ALPI centers and serves as a liaison between their staff and students on the one hand and the AIIS Language Committee and Chicago office on the other. The Heads of the regional programs report directly to him, and he responds promptly to any problem situation involving a teacher or student. He oversees the recruitment of new teachers and makes periodic visits to all the programs to insure their smooth functioning, reporting his findings to the Delhi office and to the LC Chair in the U.S. He carefully examines weekly program reports and midterm and final student evaluations and transmits these to the Program Heads and to the officers in Delhi and the U.S., recommending changes in pedagogy or staffing, when necessary.

Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao, Ph.D., who had long administered AIIS activities in southern India, assumed the in-country oversight of all the ALPI centers in 2000. A scholar of classical Sanskrit literature and of Telugu and the author of many publications, he is also a skilled administrator with fluency in languages of both North and South India (Hindi and Urdu; Tamil and Telugu), as well as English. His organizational skills, sense of humor, and tact have proven to be great assets to the language programs, and his promptness in dealing with routine challenges (which may arise when, as during the past summer, 119 young Americans were studying at nine locations around India) has been exemplary. He is in daily contact with ALPI students, teaching staff, and the LC Chair.

D. *Commitment to Non-Discriminatory Employment Practices*

The Government of India requires that all AIIS personnel in India be Indian citizens. AIIS encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups. ALPI teaching personnel include both men and women, and persons from diverse strata of Indian society, from “brahman” to “backward caste.”

3. Budget and Cost Effectiveness

The GPA award funds requested in the budget attached to this proposal represent only a portion of the cost of running the Advanced Language Programs in India, and will be supplemented by substantial contributions from other sources. Through dues from its member institutions, fees obtained for services to non-fellows (such as undergraduate study-abroad programs in India, for whom AIIS obtains student visas), additional governmental and private foundation grants, and from a modest endowment, the AIIS makes major contributions toward both its U.S. and Indian operations, stateside meetings in fall and spring, the domestic travel of Language Committee members and the domestic and international travel of the Chair, the

acquisition of essential instructional equipment, ongoing teacher training, tutorial arrangements for rarely-taught languages, and the cost of an external review every three years. The Universities of Chicago, Iowa, Texas (Austin), Washington (Seattle), and Harvard University contribute the time of the members of the AIIS Language Committee and the cost of mailings and electronic communications.

Previous sections of this document have detailed the infrastructure created in multiple locations in India in support of ALPI. Most ALPI centers are strategically located in smaller urban areas for both cultural-linguistic and cost-control reasons, and they are run as economically as possible; yet they represent a major investment by AIIS in fulfillment of its commitment to providing excellent training in Indian languages to U.S.-based students. The per-student cost of the programs, detailed in the budget, remains relatively low in comparison to the cost of comparable programs in many other countries.

Fulbright GPA support is requested toward international travel for the designated number of ALPI participants (we anticipate that additional ones will be funded from other sources), ALPI staff salaries in India, students' domestic travel within India and their maintenance and book-purchase allowance, an annual teachers workshop, an outside evaluator for two years, additional instructional equipment and supplies for the centers, fees for visiting speakers, and rental of space for the Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu programs. Budgetary requests represent our best estimates based on current cost-of-living and other economic indicators for the relevant sites in India and on the dollar-rupee exchange rate.

4. Evaluation Plan

The AIIS language program that allowed me to study Hindi in Rajasthan was one of the most beneficial learning experiences in my professional development as an

historian of South Asia. Apart from elevating my language skills well beyond the level that I could have achieved in any other setting, the program gave me exposure, for the first time, to the culture and society in which that language is rooted. The high quality of instruction combined with immersion among an almost exclusively Hindi-speaking population proved invaluable when I returned to India a year later for my dissertation research.

David A. Champion (AIIS Hindi Program, 1998)
Assistant Professor of History, Lewis & Clark College

Methods of Evaluation

The AIIS Advanced Language Programs in India have developed multiple evaluative strategies that allow for ongoing assessment by students, teachers, and external reviewers of the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and of participants' progress. Samples of the evaluation forms described below are attached as Appendix K.

Initial Feedback. The first student evaluation consists of forms soliciting feedback that are completed by students after three weeks of classes. These forms invite students to critique their teachers, curricular materials, daily schedule, and other aspects of the instructional program. This initial evaluation is primarily intended to assist the Program Heads in implementing changes to improve instruction.

Weekly Reports. Each Program Head sends (electronically) a weekly report to the Associate Director-General (Programs) and to the Language Committee chair. These reports detail instructional activities, attendance, field trips, and any unexpected challenges, and also provide an evaluation by the teachers of each participant's progress in key skill areas.

Individual Portfolios. Each student keeps a portfolio in which s/he tracks and evaluates her/his progress and keeps a detailed record of successes, failures and frustrations. Teachers regularly examine these and use them to help craft their instruction to the students' needs and goals.

Mid-Program Evaluation At the end of the first semester of instruction, students complete a second evaluation form that is sent to both the Program Head and the ADG (Programs). They are encouraged to offer feedback on all aspects of the instructional program and on the performance of individual teachers. Their responses are frequently incorporated into final planning for the second semester. At this time (either immediately before or after the winter holiday) each program is also visited by the ADG and/or the LC Chair. This site-visit includes unstructured interviews with the students, teachers, and Program Head, in which all participants are encouraged to frankly assess the strengths and weakness of the program and to provide suggestions for improvement. In addition, the visit may include observation of classes. The visitor produces a report that is shared with the other relevant Indian and U.S. officers. These reports often result in prompt actions to institute requested curricular changes or to supply needed equipment or other materials for improving instruction.

End of Program Testing. Tests in reading, listening, grammar, and speaking are administered to evaluate the progress every student has made during the program, and a detailed report is prepared for every student by the Program Head in consultation with all the teachers. This includes an evaluation of the student's final project (normally a paper of 10-15 pages in the target language).

End of Program Evaluation (by Students). Students provide detailed evaluations through the following forms: Program Evaluation (covering all aspects of the instructional program); Instructor Evaluation (one for each instructor); Summary Report on Pedagogic Aspects of the Program; Self-Evaluation of Progress; Host Family Evaluation; General Suggestions for Improvement of the Program.

Final student evaluations are sent to the ADG who summarizes the data and sends his summaries to the Program Heads, who share and discuss them with their teaching staff, and to the LC Chair. This feedback is used in the planning of subsequent programs.

End of Program Evaluation (by Teachers). Each teacher provides a detailed assessment of each student's progress and motivation. These assessments are used in determining grades, which are finalized by the Program Heads in consultation with the teachers. On a separate form, teachers assess their own work for the program and their success in meeting the objectives of ALPI.

These self-evaluations are reviewed by the ADG (Programs) to see how they compare with the students' assessments, and may result in his arranging for additional training in specific skill areas (e.g., computer technology), or in encouraging a teacher to apply to the Institute for a mini-grant for professional development (a program we instituted in 2001, and have used to fund supplemental training for some fifteen teachers to date).

Evaluation by External Review Every three years a specialist in Second Language Acquisition is contracted to conduct an external review of ALPI. Past reviewers have included Eleanor Jordan of Cornell University, W. Charles Read of University of Wisconsin, Madison, David Hiple of the University of Hawaii, and Suraj Bhan Singh, Advisor, C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Government of India. We are planning the next review, to be conducted during the 2008-09 academic year by a specialist in Second Language Acquisition of non-European languages. This review (and another in 2011-12) is included in the present budgetary request.

Quantifiability of Evaluation Data. Two of the four tests we currently use yield numerical scores. Our Listening and Reading Tests are multiple-choice format and are machine-readable. We administer these two tests at the time of entrance into the program, at mid-year, and again at

the conclusion of the program. Improvement in students' scores between the three administrations of these tests have been consistently in line with other evaluations of their performance in the program. Evaluations of students' proficiency are based on ACTFL standards, in which teachers have been trained by a certified Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) tester. In addition, at the 2006 teachers workshop, written materials were examined and graded using the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale, giving teachers additional familiarity with that instrument, which they found useful for classifying print and audiovisual learning materials. In the present grant cycle, we are planning to introduce new online tests that are being developed by the South Asian Language Resource Center in Chicago.

5. Adequacy of Resources

The full year of Hindi training I received from first-rate teachers helped me to become completely fluent in the language. I have since gone on to become a professor of Hindi literature, and I now send my own students to the AIIS for developing their Hindi skills. I can speak from first hand experience and from monitoring the progress of my students that the AIIS language program provides an invaluable service to the field of South Asian studies. I know I would not be where I am today without it.

Allison Busch (AIIS Hindi Program, 1995-96)
Assistant Professor of Hindi-Urdu Language and Literature,
Columbia University

Through previous Fulbright GPA funding as well as substantial contributions from other sources, AIIS has developed a network of language training facilities that are well equipped with both personnel and material resources to meet the needs of its students, and it continues to improve these each year in response to feedback from students and other evaluators.

The ALPI centers in Jaipur (Hindi), Kolkata (Bengali), Lucknow (Urdu), Chandigarh (Punjabi), Pune (Marathi), and Thiruvananthapuram (Malayalam) occupy extensive rented

premises that include two to five classrooms, office space and computer workstations, a library, a kitchen and dining area, and bathroom facilities. Classrooms are well lit and equipped with ceiling fans and air conditioners, black- or white-boards, and comfortable chairs and desks. Library collections vary in size (e.g.: 2000 books for Hindi, 1300 for Urdu, 1000 for Tamil, 400 for Marathi; a collection for the relatively new Punjabi program is gradually being acquired) but emphasize culturally important fiction and non-fiction works as well as reference materials, and also include growing numbers of target-language films in DVD format. Each center subscribes to one or more daily newspapers in the target language and also stocks an assortment of popular magazines. Instructional materials include the basic textbooks and grammars that students are familiar with from U.S.-based classes, but more prominently feature the extensive corpus of “desktop-published” learning materials that have been created, and are constantly being expanded and updated, by the teaching staff at each center. These include readings at graded levels of difficulty and transcriptions of film screenplays and song lyrics, accompanied by vocabulary lists and exercises, as well as audiovisual and computer-based instructional materials.

The kitchen facility and staff serves tea or coffee during breaks, and also prepares a full midday meal that is shared by the entire cohort. Incidentally—but significantly, since “an army marches on its stomach”—the programs boast excellent cooks, who prepare a healthy and varied menu of local and seasonal specialties and also serve as valued cultural informants. Students often form friendships with these usually monolingual program employees and learn recipes and cooking techniques from them even as they practice their target-language conversational skills.

All ALPI centers are equipped with computer workstations reserved for student use, and separate ones for instructors. All feature software for the target language as well as appropriate self-instructional learning programs. Most centers also have wireless internet access. Each

center has a DVD player, a VHS video player, a CD player, language audiotapes, and tape recorders. Most centers also have a video camera that is used to record visiting lecturers, interactions with monolingual guests, and student presentations and performances. These recordings are archived for future instructional use. Computer and audiovisual equipment is regularly upgraded or replaced (e.g., voice and video recorders are gradually being upgraded from cassette to digital format).

Unquestionably, the most critical and valued resource at each ALPI center is the teaching staff. The full-time staff at present numbers twenty-two and includes seven instructors each in Hindi and Urdu, three in Bengali and Tamil, and two in Marathi. These are supplemented by part-time and contract-hired teachers as enrollments dictate, in order to maintain a very low student-teacher ratio. As previous sections of this proposal have noted, AIIS prides itself on the professionalism of its teachers and devotes substantial and ongoing resources to their recruitment, training, and retention. In their evaluations, students overwhelmingly praise the dedication, enthusiasm, and creativity of these instructors and cite them, along with the host-country location, as an important factor in their language learning.

The greatly expanded size of the summer programs in recent years has led to the recruitment of new teachers, some of whom have demonstrated sufficient talent to be retained for the academic year programs. As a result, AIIS has trained a team of young and energetic language professionals who have plunged enthusiastically into the development of new pedagogic materials and methods, and who have come to love the challenge of working with demanding and motivated ALPI learners. That several of our teachers have been lured away by job offers from prominent U.S. universities (e.g., Emory, Berkeley) demonstrates the success of AIIS in training teachers, and we hope that, with growing enrollments and better compensation,

we will be able in future to retain more of these talented young people. The proposed budget reflects our concern to remain competitive in the salaries we offer to our teachers.

In addition to teachers and the kitchen staff, each ALPI center also has a support staff that includes an office manager charged with program logistics, travel reservations, and other routine daily needs of students and staff. Since they interact with students primarily in the local language, these administrators also function as “teachers” and several have been singled out in participants’ evaluations for their enthusiasm and helpfulness.

Besides facilities at the language centers, AIIS regional offices in Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Delhi, and the headquarters in Gurgaon (suburban Delhi) contain well-equipped office space and (in Delhi and Kolkata) guest rooms for the use of Institute fellows.

6. Potential Impact of the Project

The comprehensive and challenging AIIS Advanced Language Program transformed my Hindi into a functional tool for the fieldwork that I would conduct on water resource management in Rajasthan—the subject of my Ph.D. dissertation and an ongoing part of my scholarly work. The program was also invaluable to my career goals, as working knowledge of Hindi is vital to my current and future research. My introduction at the time to the staff of the AIIS language program and of the office in New Delhi was the start of professional relationships that have remained a source of constant support over the years.

Kathleen O’Reilly (AIIS Hindi Program, 1997)
Assistant Professor, Department of Geography,
Texas A&M University

The impact of participation in ALPI is both immediate and long-term. Upon return to their home institutions, graduate- and undergraduate-level ALPI alumni bring a new cultural and linguistic sophistication to their coursework and to their participation in area studies programs and in wider campus life. Their experience of living and studying in India and their increased proficiency in the target language usually permits them to accelerate their progress toward their intended degrees, and it enhances the quality of their academic work. Many area specialist

faculty in diverse disciplines appreciate the immediate fruit of ALPI training and regularly urge their best pupils to apply to the programs.

The longer-range impact of ALPI has hopefully been suggested by the quotations embedded in this proposal: testimonials from (by now) two generations of scholars, at public and private institutions ranging from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities, for whom participation in one of the AIIS language programs has made a critical difference. Directly or indirectly, these scholars spread the benefits of their linguistic training to their own students and to a wider public through language and area studies teaching and through scholarly presentations and publications. In addition, most interact with a still wider community through outreach lectures, curricular consultation, and contributions to newspapers and other media. They play a key role in shaping American perceptions of India and neighboring South Asian nations, and also contribute to greater understanding between South Asian-Americans and those of other ethnicities. By their example, they inspire their own students to undertake language study, thus opening a door to the more informed understanding of other nations and cultures. It should also be noted that, although the statements in this proposal come from academic scholars, other ALPI alumni have gone on to careers in government service, in non-profit organizations, and in business. In recent years, the “personal statements” contained in applications, especially from undergraduates, have indicated a wide range of career goals suggestive of the growing linkages between the U.S. and India. It is also gratifying to note that applicants regularly come from “unexpected” places — e.g., from small institutions remote from the network of South Asian area studies centers. This too testifies to the “ripple effect” of ALPI’s longstanding reputation as pre-eminent trainer of South Asia specialists.

7. Relevance to Institutional Goals and Development

The language skills I acquired through the AIIS language program opened a new vista on Indian politics and society. At a time when democracy is taking deep roots in Indian society, the mastery of Indian vernacular languages provides a research tool that is absolutely essential for understanding such phenomena as Hindu and Islamic identity politics, caste voting blocs, and more generally, the processes of continuity and change that are central to Indian politics.

John Echeverri-Gent (AIIS Hindi Program, 1976-77)
Associate Professor, Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics,
University of Virginia

The most important mission of the AIIS is to promote research in India by American scholars and to thus ensure that institutions of higher learning in the U.S. can provide expertise in all disciplines with reference to this important part of the world. Since language competence is essential for most South Asia research in the humanities and social sciences (and often valuable for scientific disciplines as well; e.g., we have trained biologists, geologists, and medical specialists who were planning research in India), the training provided by ALPI contributes directly to the Institute's success in fulfilling its goal. The relationship between ALPI and advanced research in India is readily apparent to anyone who has served on the AIIS fellowship selection committee (as the present author has on four occasions), where one encounters a high percentage of ALPI-trained applicants. The continuation and advancement of the language programs thus contribute directly to insuring the finest pool of fellowship applicants and, eventually, of teachers and professionals with South Asia expertise.

8. Need for Direct Experience and Effectiveness in Utilizing Host-Country Resources

I have participated in two AIIS language programs, in Hindi and Bengali. I enjoyed both immensely and learned a huge amount of language in a relatively short time. Like other students on the programs, I dramatically improved in all four areas of language acquisition, thanks to the immersion-style approach, excellent curricula and dedicated teachers. Moreover, taking the courses greatly advanced my academic career. I do not

believe I would have been able to earn a Ph.D. specializing in Hindi literature and gain a tenure-track position in my field if it had not been for the AIIS language programs. Now I tell all of my students who are serious about an academic career related to South Asia to consider going on an AIIS language program.

Pamela J. Lothspeich (AIIS Hindi Program, 1993-94, AIIS Bengali Program, 1996)
Assistant Professor of Hindi, Dept. of Asian Studies,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

At the intermediate-to-advanced level, the student of a South Asian language—indeed, of any foreign language—faces an intimidating challenge: the need to move from the systematic structure, predictable constructions, and controlled vocabulary of most introductory-to-intermediate-level language courses to the (apparent) chaos of actual spoken and written language, with its seemingly limitless vocabulary and idioms, wide dialectical variation, and unpredictable gradations of accent and pace. High quality “immersion” training programs in a target-language environment provide an optimum strategy for plunging into this “ocean” of real-world speech and writing, by combining structured classroom instruction based on proven Second Language Acquisition methodology with continual exposure to the unpredictable reality of native speaker usage, encountered in everyday living, field trips, local collaborations, and diverse social and cultural experiences.

Much thought and care has gone into siting each AIIS language program. Few major urban areas in India are “monolingual” to the extent of, for example, comparable locales in Europe or East Asia, and Indic languages, most of which came into printed format only in the nineteenth century, remain relatively less standardized and more “permeable” by the diverse influences of a multilingual cultural matrix. With the exception of our program in Bengali—for which Kolkata, despite its size, remains the undisputed cultural capital—our programs are based in moderate-sized urban areas in which a “standard” (though not necessarily homogenous) form

of the language predominates and where it is closely identified with local identity and civic pride. Such sites provide ideal locations for the kinds of experiences that our programs emphasize: daily target-language interactions with host families, neighbors, merchants, and a range of functionaries at various economic and educational levels. Program structure and extra-curricular activities are designed to both initiate and reinforce these experiences, and thus to assist students in transforming the once-intimidating “ocean” of native-speaker usage into a challenging but navigable entity marked by familiar islands and recognizable harbors. In each locale, the AIIS program has developed a strong network of teachers, host families, community organizations, and well-wishers, who help our students acquire an insider’s view of local culture. Many families have hosted AIIS students for years, often forming close ties with these “adopted” foreigners (“Whenever I go to Jaipur,” an alumnus of the Hindi program jokingly complained to me last summer, “my host mother won’t let me stay in a hotel, but insists that I return ‘home’!”). Participation in one of these programs is thus often the start of lifelong friendships, as well as of ongoing language-learning experiences. As a result, ALPI has had consistent success in meeting its objective of bringing students to the advanced-to-superior level in the four skills, with special emphasis on achieving this for aural-oral skills, for which an extended stay in the target-language environment remains indispensable.

9. Competitive Preference Priorities

I was fortunate enough to be selected for the 9-month AIIS Hindi Language program. The experience was memorable and invaluable. The teaching was excellent and the program helped me to learn more Hindi than I could possibly have imagined, and gave me the solid foundation and confidence to continue and complete my PhD in South Asian history. The program is enormously valuable, and I wholeheartedly support its continued funding. Now, more than ever, as India becomes more powerful economically, politically, and militarily, it is important that we give our young scholars every

opportunity to learn South Asian languages. The AIIS language program has led the way for many years and should be continued.

Ian Barrow (AIIS Hindi Program, 1991-92)
 Director of International Studies and Associate Professor of History
 Middlebury College

The AIIS language programs readily meet the first Preference Priority of the current competition since they offer advanced overseas intensive instruction in Indic languages. These programs are both long-term (academic year) and short-term (summer), and serve a diverse clientele of motivated learners.

At the present time, Indic languages are almost entirely absent from elementary and secondary school curricula in the U.S., hence there is presently no opportunity for ALPI to serve the clientele addressed by the second Preference Priority. The AIIS does, however, periodically collaborate with the organizers of study tours for K-12 educators, using its resources and Indian infrastructure to make these programs more academically and culturally enriching—e.g., in 2005, AIIS cooperated with the University of Pennsylvania to organize a Group Projects Abroad-funded tour for fourteen high school teachers on the theme, “Cultural Diversity in Indian Democracy”; similar collaborative tours are being proposed by the Universities of Colorado and Pennsylvania in the current round of GPA applications. This ongoing work of the Institute, though consonant with the ultimate objectives of our advanced language training programs, lies outside the scope of the present proposal.

List of appendices: A) AIIS Advanced Language Programs in India Mission Statement; B) Announcement of 2008-09 Advanced Language Programs in India; C) Application form for 2008-09 ALPI; D) Language Committee evaluation form for selection meeting; E) Sample weekly schedule for academic year Hindi program; F) Student evaluation form for ALPI; G) ALPI organizational chart; H) CVs of key personnel; I) Letters of support.