



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The Graduate School

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June 15, 2011

To: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Robert C. Stacey, Divisional Dean for Arts and Humanities, College of Arts & Sciences

From: Gerald J. Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean
James S. Antony, Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Department of Linguistics (2010-2011)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the academic program review of the Department of Linguistics. Detailed comments on the program can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, department, and administrators (March 17, 2010)
- Linguistics self-study (November 1, 2010)
- Site visit (February 14-15, 2011)
- Review committee report (March 15, 2011)
- Linguistics response to the review committee report (April 21, 2011)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (June 2, 2011)

The Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS) did not submit a report for the Linguistics review.

The review committee consisted of:

Lynne A. Werner, Professor, UW Speech & Hearing Sciences (Committee Chair)
Steven L. Tanimoto, Professor, UW Computer Science and Engineering
Mary E. Beckman, Professor, Department of Linguistics, The Ohio State University
Richard P. Meier, Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of Texas at Austin

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on June 2, 2011. After discussion, Council recommended continuing

status for department's degree programs, with the next review to be scheduled for the 2020-2021 academic year. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the department and its degree programs include the following:

Program Strengths

The review committee report notes that the department now ranks among the top 15 to 20 Linguistics programs nationally and has played a significant role in three key areas in the field: research into the cultural transmission and diversity of languages; contributing to a burgeoning industry in applied speech and language technologies; and bridging the gap between the sciences and the humanities. Strengths include:

- The department has established a network of collaborations among faculty and departments throughout the Seattle campus that has substantially enlarged the breadth of the department and the quality of the degree programs it offers. These include interactions with units involved in languages as well as Anthropology, Sociology, Communication, and Speech and Hearing Sciences. The Computational Linguistics program involves collaborative interactions with Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and Engineering that serve both the university and industry.
- The department has produced 33 doctorates since the previous academic program review in 1999-2000. More than one third of these PhDs have been placed in language-related industries and more than half are in faculty positions.
- The undergraduate major and non-major offerings are of high quality and well enrolled. The new American Sign Language sequence is oversubscribed each quarter.
- Current departmental leadership has done a remarkable job over the past eleven years.

Challenges & Risks

- Departmental space is inadequate for the computational and laboratory-based research emphasis of many of the departmental faculty. Graduate student space is far removed from faculty offices and labs, limiting incidental contact and training opportunities. Some very active teaching faculty do not have private office space.
- The lack of competitive support for graduate students hampers recruitment and may play a role in excessive time to PhD. While most students do manage to fund their training through work in other departments (e.g., language training) these positions cannot be offered at the time of recruitment.
- There are currently no staff resources dedicated to providing administrative support for research funding applications and for grants management.
- Increased collaboration between the department's teaching and research missions would strengthen its programs and research activities for undergraduates, graduates, and faculty.
- Any future leadership transition may be a challenge in light of the previous decade of strength from the current department chair.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

In the response to the program review, the department agreed with the seven recommendations made by reviewers and has begun to take action on a number of the items, as described below.

- Regarding space: the department agrees that they have outgrown their current space and suggests moving to another building on campus to accommodate its needs.

- Regarding resources for graduate students: the department has formed two committees, the Resource Committee and the Graduate Committee to work toward leveraging departmental resources and to explore funding opportunities for doctoral students.
- Regarding administrative support for research and teaching: the Resource Committee will address support for research activities of the faculty. The faculty is working on ways to increase more interdisciplinary and entry-level courses. The department has rescheduled courses to respond to the demand for courses most frequently encountering wait lists.
- Regarding departmental administration: new committees formed as a result of the review are designed to address many of the issues and suggestions raised by the review committee. These new committees significantly contribute to the decision-making process of the department.
- Regarding a broader leadership role for Linguistics in second language: the department has initiated discussions with language programs, staff at the Language Learning Center, computational linguists, and L2 specialists across campus to establish collaborations in this area.
- Regarding integrating and expanding departmental infrastructure in support of language diversity: the department feels that establishing the American Sign Language program was a good first step in addressing diversity and welcomes recommendations to expand the program to accommodate the demand.
- Regarding a plan for strategic hiring: the department agrees with the recommendations by the review committee for prioritizing the hiring.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

- The Graduate School Council recommends continuing status for the department's programs, with review in 10 years (2020-2021).
- The Council encourages Linguistics to continue its work to address items raised by the review committee, including the following:
 - Take risks to arrange funding packages that can be offered to graduate students at the time of admission. This may involve utilizing resources from its computational linguistics program or collaborating with language departments.
 - Secure additional staff resources to provide administrative support for research funding applications and for grants management. Allocate funds or create a departmental resource for supporting research shared across labs.
 - Consider expanding the undergraduate research options to non-honors students and try to encourage more undergraduate student involvement in research of graduate students and faculty. This may lead to closer collaboration between the department's teaching and research missions.
 - To ease the way for a new chair, continue to pursue faculty committees related to undergraduate curriculum, graduate curriculum, and research resources. Consider creating a departmental Executive Committee or an alternate means to distribute the responsibilities of governance.
 - Consider increasing involvement in language pedagogy, possibly with the goal of creating a center for excellence in this area.
 - Develop a departmental strategic plan for hiring.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Mary E. Lidstrom, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning
John Sahr, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Julia R. Herschensohn, Professor and Chair, Linguistics
Members of the Linguistics Review Committee
Members of the Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President