

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo

Linguistics BA, MA

The 2019-2020 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Linguistics, BA and MA programs concluded with a culmination meeting on February 5, 2021.

The following people attended the meeting: Carolyn Thomas (Provost), Mark Filowitz (AVP for Academic Programs and Enrollment Management), Sheryl Fontaine (Dean, HSS), Jessica Stern (Associate Dean, HSS), Stephen Mexal (Chair), Franz Mueller (MA Program Coordinator), and Su Swarat (AVP for Institutional Effectiveness).

The Provost commended the programs for being thoughtful and forward-looking. Specifically, the following accomplishments were highlighted through the PPR process:

- Department faculty reflect wide range of specializations.
- Faculty committed to success of program and have strong sense of collegiality.
- Junior faculty mentored and supported during tenure years, and provided allotted release time.
- Strong student-faculty engagement including faculty mentoring and advising graduate students.
- Positive time-to-degree numbers for first time freshman and transfer students.
- Enthusiastic student association reflects effectiveness of faculty.
- Strong core curriculum provides students, both undergraduate and graduate, with solid education.
- Master's students well prepared to continue their education in competitive Ph.D. programs, enter the tech industry, and pursue university-level English as a Second Language teaching careers.
- Lower division courses attract good number of students, increasing enrollments and FTES.
- Department assessment data show students leave program meeting or exceeding benchmarks in critical thinking.
- Department has amplified value of major and minor programs to students and the community.

Major recommendations and issues raised through the PPR process were discussed as follows:

1. Clear pre-requisite requirement and graduation pathway:
 - The external reviewers recommended that LING 351 (phonetics and phonology) should be made a pre-requisite for historical linguistics courses (LING 430). The AVP-APEM recommended formalizing LING 351 as an official pre-requisite if it is a “de facto” requirement. The Chair and Program Coordinator agreed to do so.
 - The Provost inquired about clear pathways from matriculation to graduation. The Chair and the Program Coordinator reported that the programs’ small size allows for 1-1 mentoring and thus proactive advising with the students. The program keeps course scheduling as consistent and predictable as possible so that students can plan out their career.
 - The Associate Dean recommended the program to do more qualitative exploration to understand student needs or challenges. The AVPIE suggested the program to

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disaggregate student success data to see if there are specific student groups that need more support.

2. Faculty service load:

- The external reviewers and the Dean recommended the programs to discuss ways to create equitable faculty service load, and consider allotting release time for faculty to fulfill required administrative duties.
- The Program Coordinator commented that given the small number of faculty (3 T/TT faculty), the faculty typically act as a “committee of the whole”, engaging in collegial consensual decision making. The Coordinator takes on additional workload (e.g. LING 597) as an overload to meet program target, but it would be preferred if this could count in the instructor’s workload.

3. Student outreach and recruitment:

- The Provost recommended the programs to be more intentional in their outreach and recruitment efforts, telling stories about the major to help students see the value of Linguistics.
- The external reviewers recommended strategies such as focused outreach to double-major or minor students. The Associate Dean suggested the programs to collaborate with the college marketing team to develop attractive recruitment materials.
- The programs are also encouraged to use the admission data provided by the university (e.g. Admission Dashboards) to explore why admission yield to the program is below the college and university average.

4. Computational Linguistics:

- The Program Coordinator stated that Computational Linguistics opens up new career opportunities for the students, and the programs need to adjust to provide students with the appropriate training. The programs’ curriculum had traditionally been intended to prepare students for teaching, and thus needs to be adapted accordingly.
- The Associate Dean commented that HSS and ECS are looking at the possibility of a joint program in this area, allowing for a “soft-landing” for Computer Science students.
- The Provost suggested Computational Linguistics as a priority for future faculty hires. The Chair agreed and suggested the possibility of cluster hire with Computer Science.
- The Dean recommended reaching out to alumni working in Computational Linguistics fields as a way to help students see the connection between curriculum and career.

The Chair commented that Linguistics is a close-knit community where faculty and students are passionate about the field. The Dean praised the programs as the “hidden gems” of the college. The Provost concluded the culmination meeting, and thanked the faculty for their excellent contribution to the university.