



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
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To: Su Swarat, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness

From: Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date: July 17, 2020

Subject: Dean's Summary and Evaluation of the Linguistics BA and MA, Program Performance Review

The Linguistics BA and MA programs are housed in the large department of English, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics. As of late Spring, there were 67 linguistics majors/double major, nine minors, and 22 graduate students. Three tenure/tenure track faculty members, and one full-time lecturer, carry the teaching and advising load. In AY 19-20, LING has a target of 78, and an SFR of 20.8, one of the lowest SFRs in the College. In addition to supporting their major classes, Linguistics faculty teach two popular General Education classes, LING 106: Language and Linguistics in the Introduction to the Humanities GE Area (C2) and LING 102: Languages of the World in the Introduction to the Social Sciences GE Area (D1).

In what follows I will add to the dialogue that has been started between the Department and the External Review Committee by adding my insight and suggestions.

Growing the number of majors and minors:

As the self-study and external review team noted, though the number of students who have applied to enter the Linguistics program as first-time students and transfers has increased, the number of students who ultimately enroll has remained steady. For first-time freshmen who are applying to universities, the Linguistic program's yield is only slightly lower than the College average. The most recent data, from Fall 19, show that 17.9% of prospective Linguistics student who were admitted to CSUF ultimately enrolled versus 18.9% across the College (all these data are available on the Tableau dashboards that can be accessed through the CSUF Institutional Research webpage). The difference between the College yield of transfer admits and Linguistics program admits is more significant, with 35% of transfers across the College who are admitted choosing to enroll in contrast to the 30.8% of Linguistics transfer admits who enroll.

A second contrast between first-time and transfer students is in their eligibility. The lowest percentage of enrolled first-time students have the highest eligibility indices, suggesting they may have greater choice of the universities they can attend. However, transfer students with a 3.61 or higher GPA are *more* likely to attend CSUF than students with a 3.01-3.2. Complicating the pattern further, early data about the F20 cohorts unfortunately shows a decrease in the number of first time and transfer students who will likely start in Fall 20: 8-10 first-time students, down from 12 last year and only 1-2 transfers, down from the 8 transfers who started last year.



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I commend the Linguistics faculty for their current outreach experiences and encourage them to grow the opportunities. This year, after the program's participation in the campus-wide recruitment event Welcome to CSUF Day, five potential Linguistics students attended the Linguistics recruitment sessions and four of those ultimately chose to come to CSUF. So once potential students get to know the program at CSUF they realize its value. In order to make the program more visible, I suggest working with the College marketing team, Mari Migliore and Alan Van Fleet, to develop promotional material and a stronger website presence, perhaps creating some profiles of individual students or alumni or faculty researchers or teachers. It would be further beneficial to highlight the aspects of the CSUF program that set it apart from others in the SoCal area, particularly other CSU programs. These distinctions may be curricular strengths, the ability for students to work closely with a faculty member on independent research, or the extremely active student group.

Because the second major way to grow programs is to retain and recruit current CSUF students, I have asked our data analyst, Whitney Youngren, to track the students Linguistics loses and gains from other departments (Appendix 1 in this document). A quick look at the data suggests that Linguistics is gaining more students who enter as first-time students than it loses, but it is losing more transfer students than it is gaining. I suspect that the lower-division GE classes are to thank for the found majors (see more discussion of this below). A closer look at why those few students who leave the major choose to do so might be worthwhile, and the number is small enough that you could reach out to each of them to determine their reasons (Whitney can provide the names). It is, of course, normal for students to use college as a time to explore, so while I am not suggesting that we prevent students from changing majors once they learn more about different disciplines, you might find that students are changing majors for reasons you can address (for example, a desire for more high-impact practices or a sense of a clear career trajectory, as suggested by the External Review Team). In light of workload, these surveys of students could give insight into where to invest your labors.

Curricular development in Computational Linguistics:

The linguistics program has strong core of requirements which, their assessment efforts reveal, help 80 percent or more of their graduating students meet or exceed their learning outcomes. As I noted above, Linguistics offer two popular GE classes, LING 106: Language and Linguistics in the Introduction to the Humanities GE Area (C2) and LING 102: Languages of the World in the Introduction to the Social Sciences GE Area (D1). LING 106 is particularly popular, and is one of only a handful of classes in this GE area that enrolled more than 100 students in Fall 2019. I suspect those non-majors who enter as first-time students and then change their major to Linguistics, are learning about the field in one of these two classes. Creating an upper-division GE class might encourage a similar inflow at the transfer level that would compensate for the outflow at that level. Though I respect the program's rejection of the External Review Team's suggestion that they change LING 406 into a 300-level GE class, I do think they should consider creating a new GE class in the upper-division Humanities area (C3). This course could provide yet another entry point for current students to learn about Linguistics and choose to either change majors or add a minor.



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As the External Review Team notes, the small but mighty Linguistics program manages to offer students classes in most of the major areas of the field. One gap is Computational Linguistics. I am very excited by the idea of Linguistics growing in this area. As the External Review Team noted, graduates in Linguistics who are trained in Computational Linguistics are competitive for jobs at tech firms who are developing programs that require natural language processing. The College of HSS and the College of Engineering and Computer Science have started discussing an interdisciplinary minor or certificate that would provide majors in both colleges with essential skills of the other. Courses in computational linguistics would be a perfect addition to this program. Unfortunately, Linguistics currently has a full-time faculty ratio of 80 percent and no faculty replacement positions. I would be happy to explore with you some alternative means for adding faculty who could teach courses in this area—using lecturer positions, or collaborative or joint hires with other departments or colleges come to mind.

Supporting High Impact Practices: I hear the External Review Team and Linguistic Program's point that it is hard for the three tenure/tenure-track faculty to sustain the number of high impact practices that would benefit their students. Every tenure/tenure-track faculty member is hired on a 5-5 load, and the expectation for HSS faculty is that 2/5 of this load is devoted to other activities that enrich students and departments. If they are not doing so already, I encourage the department to be very thoughtful and deliberate in how they are allocating this time towards specific tasks. For example, this could be place where you credit faculty for advising student research activities. The External Review Team's suggestion is that the program only offer LING 597 once a year; this would increase the enrollment to more than the college requisite "double digits," making it eligible to be part of a faculty member's workload. History and American Studies have both managed student journals for a very long time. Perhaps they have advice on sustainable methods for doing so. As I said during the review, I recommend that the department either apply for the MCF special projects call made by the college every June, or, if this is a yearly cost, discuss with Budget Director Pat Balderas increasing the baseline MCF program amount.

I accept Linguistic's suggestion that changing international demand is leading to the decrease in graduate students. The number of applicants continues to creep down. Fall 2020 has one fewer applicant than last year. If your goal is to grow the program, I commend you for already taking the External Review Team's suggestion to lower the number of prerequisites for the linguistics MA program and moving to implement that change by removing LING 412: Sociolinguistics. The number of different concentrations offered in the MA program is noteworthy; could highlighting these, many of which may not be offered at competing institutions, also be a way to draw more students? If it is the case that international demand is likely to decrease for the foreseeable future (for reasons out of our control.), then does the department want to explore ways to increase the number of domestic students in the graduate program? Many of our other graduate programs in the college draw numbers from the undergraduate programs. Is this the case in Linguistics? These numbers might also be increased in light of the recommendation to partner with the Career Center in order to promote the usefulness of both the BA and MA and to use the college marketing team to promote your uniqueness and student success.

Graduation Rates and the Equity Gap:

Finally, I would like to speak to the graduation rates in the program. With small programs like Linguistics, it is hard to get a large enough "N" to truly track graduation rates in a reliable way; nonetheless it is



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possible to identify patterns. Over the last five cohorts of first-time students, the Linguistic program's 4-year graduation rates have been very unstable: a high of 42.9% (Fall 2012 cohort) to a low of 14.3% (Fall 2014 cohort). The transfer cohort 2-year graduation rates are similarly unpredictable: 60% of the 2017 cohort graduating in two years, and only 28.6% of the 2015 cohort doing so. The equity gap between Pell and non-Pell students sometimes disappears and at other times presents as a negative equity gap.

On the one hand, the small sample sizes can make it very difficult to determine why the graduation rates fluctuate so much and the equity gap is so much smaller than the college average. On the other hand, because the sample is small, the department can look very closely at individual cohorts, classes, faculty pedagogies, and student behaviors. For example, you might ask what characterized the experience of the Fall 2012 cohort that might have contributed to the high four year graduation rate. Was more service time devoted to mentorships? Was the student group particularly active? In the next AY, the college will be discussing an analysis of GI 2025 initiatives and the most promising practices that have been undertaken by departments. You may find some models in these practices.

In summary, I commend the Linguistics faculty for building solid and comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programs. The faculty are admirably committed to their students, to the value of their teaching and research, and to collaborating to do all the work that is required to run a successful program regardless of its size. With the College Associate Deans and Student Success Team, I look forward to assisting Linguistics in better promoting the value of their degrees to potential students and growing the undergraduate major, minor, and graduate programs; discussing possible curricular growth in Computational Linguistics; and finding ways to integrate GI 2025 lessons into their curriculum and advising systems.



APPENDIX 1: Students leaving and entering the Linguistics BA

Major Latest of First-time Full-Time Freshman with LING Major at Entry, Fall 2015 - Fall 2019 Cohorts							
Major (Latest)	Cohort					Total	
	fa15	fa16	fa17	fa18	fa19	#	%
ACCT		1				1	2%
ARAH	1					1	2%
ARTS				1		1	2%
CHAD	1	2			1	4	10%
CHIC	1					1	2%
CMES	1					1	2%
COMD	1					1	2%
CPSC				1		1	2%
EGME			1			1	2%
FLJP			1			1	2%
HUSR				1		1	2%
LING	2	4	4	4	11	25	61%
PBUS				1		1	2%
POSC		1				1	2%
Total	7	8	6	8	12	41	100%
% of Cohort to Leave Major	71%	50%	33%	50%	8%	39%	
Source: OBIEE Student Success Dashboard, Accessed 4/3/2020							



Major Latest of New Undergraduate Transfers with LING Major at Entry, Fall 2015 - Fall 2019 Cohorts							
Major (Latest)	Cohort					Total	
	fa15	fa16	fa17	fa18	fa19	#	%
HUSR				1		1	3%
LING	6	9	5	3	8	31	91%
PSYC		1				1	3%
SDCR	1					1	3%
Total	7	10	5	4	8	34	100%
% of Cohort to Leave Major	14%	10%	0%	25%	0%	9%	
Major Latest of New Undergraduate Transfers with LING Major at Entry, Spring 2016 - Spring 2020 Cohorts							
Major (Latest)	Cohort					Total	
	sp16	sp17	sp18	sp19	sp20	#	%
CHAD		1				1	5%
CTVA	1					1	5%
FLJP	1					1	5%
GEOG				1		1	5%
LING	1	7	3	3	3	17	81%
Total	3	8	3	4	3	21	100%
% of Cohort to Leave Major	67%	13%	0%	25%	0%	19%	
Source: OBIEE Student Success Dashboard, Accessed 4/3/2020							



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Major at Entry	Cohort					Total	
	fa15	fa16	fa17	fa18	fa19	#	%
ARTS			1			1	2%
BSCI					1	1	2%
CMPR		1				1	2%
CMST			1			1	2%
CPSC			1			1	2%
CTVA		1	1			2	5%
LING	2	4	4	4	11	25	60%
MAAP		1				1	2%
MUED			1			1	2%
PINB		1				1	2%
POSC	1					1	2%
UNDC	2	1	3			6	14%
Total	5	9	12	4	12	42	100%
% of Major Latest who Found Major	60%	56%	67%	0%	8%	40%	

Source: OBIEE Student Success Dashboard, Accessed 4/3/2020



Major Entry of New Undergraduate Transfers with LING Major Latest, Fall 2015 - Fall 2019 Cohorts							
Major at Entry	Cohort					Total	
	fa15	fa16	fa17	fa18	fa19	#	%
CMJR				1		1	3%
COMD				1		1	3%
ENGL		1				1	3%
FLJP				1		1	3%
LING	6	9	5	3	8	31	86%
POSC	1					1	3%
Total	7	10	5	6	8	36	100%
% of Major Latest who Found Major	14%	10%	0%	50%	0%	14%	
Major Entry of New Undergraduate Transfers with LING Major Latest, Spring 2016 - Spring 2020 Cohorts							
Major at Entry	Cohort					Total	
	sp16	sp17	sp18	sp19	sp20	#	%
ENGL			1			1	6%
LING	1	7	3	3	3	17	94%
Total	1	7	4	3	3	18	100%
% of Major Latest who Found Major	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	6%	
Source: OBIEE Student Success Dashboard, Accessed 4/3/2020							