

**Report of the
Academic Program Review Panel
on the
Department of Linguistics
Memorial University**

Prepared by

Dr. Diane Goldstein (Chair)
Department of Folklore,
Memorial University

Dr. Glyne Piggott
Department of Linguistics,
McGill University

Dr. Yves Roberge
Département d'études françaises,
St. Michael's College,
University of Toronto

Dr. Trevor Bell
Department of Geography,
Memorial University

January 8, 2009

1.0 Procedures

1.1 Site Visit

The Academic Program Review for the Department of Linguistics was conducted by panel members Glyne Piggott (Department of Linguistics, McGill University), Yves Roberge (Département d'études françaises, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto), Trevor Bell (Geography Department, Memorial University), and Diane Goldstein (Folklore Department, Memorial University) in November of 2008. The panel met for its initial meeting to review procedures on November 12, 2008 with the Dean of Graduate Studies (Noreen Golfman), Dean of Arts (Reeta Tremblay) and the APR Coordinator (Joan Bessey) . The Vice President Academic (Michael Collins), and Vice President Research (Christopher Loomis) sent their apologies.

Over the next two days the Review Committee toured the Department's teaching, research, and administrative facilities and met with the following members of the Linguistics Department and the university community:

1. Department of Linguistics Head, Marguerite MacKenzie.
2. Department of Linguistics Graduate Coordinator, Phil Branigan.
3. Current tenured and tenure-track faculty members in Linguistics including, Vit Bubenik, Carrie Dyck, Jim Black, Paul DeDecker, Julie Brittain and Gerard Van Herk (Canada Research Chair in Regional Languages and Oral Text). (Yvan Rose (on sabbatical) participated by e-mail.)
4. Contractual Appointments, Christophe dos Santos and Doug Wharram.
5. Per course instructor, Asuka Dwyer.
6. Adjunct professor, Sarah Rose.
7. Professor Emeritus John Hewson. (Of the other Professor Emeriti, Sandra Clarke participated by e-mail and Derek Nurse declined to meet with the panel).
8. Graduate Students in Linguistics.
9. Undergraduate members of Students of Linguistics at MUN (SLAM).
10. Staff from a number of research projects: Carla Dunphy, Laurel Anne Hasler, Sarah Knee, Greg Hedlund, and alumni, Will Oxford.
11. Administrative Secretary, Ruby Bishop.
12. Head of French, Magessa O'Reilly.
13. Dean of Arts, Reeta Tremblay.

The panel would like to acknowledge the cooperation of all participants in the review process as well as the excellent support provided by Joan Bessey throughout our work. Faculty, staff and students in the Linguistics Department were informative and responsive to our questions. Head of the Department of Linguistics, Marguerite MacKenzie graciously provided the panel with any information that was requested and returned three times to continue our discussions and answer queries. The staff at the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning and the Office of the Dean of Arts provided additional statistical information as requested.

1.2 Self-Study and Supplementary Information

Our discussions during the site visit were supported by information supplied by the Department in the academic program review Self-Study report and supplemented by a few additional informational items requested by the panel and subsequently supplied by Ms. Joan Bessey and the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning. The Self-Study included information in the following areas:

1. Strategic Objectives of the Linguistics Program
2. Student enrolment and Program Outcomes
3. Curriculum and Teaching
4. Faculty Contributions
5. Administrative Support and Effectiveness
6. New Directions and Initiatives
7. Faculty CVs
8. List of External Grants
9. List of University and National Committees
10. Undergraduate Program Calendar Description
11. Revisions to the Undergraduate Program Since the last APR.
12. Major/minor survey results from September 2008
13. Undergraduate student awards
14. Calendar description, undergraduate
15. Graduate handbook and information
16. survey of graduate students who have completed studies
17. Strategic framework for Memorial University
18. Statistical information including academic unit profile, majors and minors, faculty and staff by rank, function, workload, gender, teaching remuneration, use of contract and per course instructors, Departmental budgets.

Requested supplementary information included:

19. Statistics for Graduate applications 2004-2008 illustrating applications in relation to admissions and rejected offers
20. Course enrolment figures 2003-2008

The Department, and particularly Marguerite MacKenzie, are to be commended for the documentation provided in the Self-Study, which offered a clear picture of the current status of the unit. Supplementary data were required solely to resolve issues which arose during the site visit.

2.0 Introduction

The last Linguistics Departmental review, conducted in 2003, concluded that this was “an excellent Department” but that this excellence was “in jeopardy” due to understaffing and impending retirements. Five years later, our committee has found that this Department continues its reputation of excellence, having partially rebuilt the faculty

cohort and developed expertise and strength in a number of strategic areas. However, our panel believes that the Department requires both internal and external nurturing and support to maintain that excellence. The Department is at a pivotal point in its history, following the loss of a number of highly respected faculty members through retirement and the hiring of a number of well trained, productive and respected new faculty, as well as the award of a Canada Research Chair in Regional Languages and Oral Text. At least two further retirements hover on the horizon. These circumstances have created an opportunity to imaginatively rethink the future of the Department and to strategically plan its role in the university, the province, the country and the discipline.

As Atlantic Canada's largest university, Memorial plays an important role in the Newfoundland and Labrador community as an integral part of the distinctiveness of the Province within the Canadian and North American context. At the same time, MUN sees its situation at the edge of North America as an asset, rather than as an obstacle to intellectual and technological progress. The MUN Department of Linguistics fits in extremely well within this larger context in many ways. It is the only Department of Linguistics in the Atlantic Provinces. It has built a remarkably strong research profile in fields of crucial relevance to Newfoundland and Labrador, such as aboriginal languages and socio-linguistics. As part of their academic activities, many of its researchers affirm their commitment to the communities in which they work. In theoretical Linguistics, the Department is at the leading edge of current developments. Finally, a significant number of its members play an important and appreciated role in the larger community of Canadian linguists, mainly through their involvement in the Canadian Linguistic Association. Clearly, the Department's efforts aimed at achieving a high level of excellence have been very successful at the provincial, national, and international levels. As a consequence, this panel recommends that the short and mid term objectives of the Department's strategic planning be focused on building its current strengths and fine tuning its distinctiveness.

3.0 Vision

As pointed out in the Introduction, the Department has taken some important steps to maintain and even enhance its strengths. The process of planning for the future would be greatly facilitated, if it were informed by general agreement about the shape of the Department and its role in the university, the province and the country. The members of the Review Panel therefore strongly recommend that the Department adopt a statement that presents a vision of the academic and intellectual experience it aims to provide. The statement should clearly identify the distinctive and unique features of Linguistics at Memorial University; it should indicate the contribution of the Department to the overall mission of the University; it should draw attention to its role in enhancing the image of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, nationally and internationally. The value of such a vision statement seems to be recognized by faculty members who met with the Review Panel, specifically by the Head, Marguerite MacKenzie and the Graduate Coordinator, Philip Branigan.

Since Memorial's is the only Linguistics Department in Atlantic Canada, its vision should reflect this fact. There is also compelling evidence that the Department has a distinctive national and international profile. The focus on the structure and acquisition of the aboriginal languages of Central and Eastern Canada is unique. From such a perspective, it can be compared with the Department of Linguistics at the University of British Columbia, where the emphasis is on western aboriginal languages. Another distinctive feature of the Department is its emphasis on the study of language variation. The vision statement may draw attention to the Department's location in a unique geographical setting where regional varieties of both English and French can be studied in the context of a society that is undergoing rapid social changes.

The preparation of the vision statement should be undertaken as more than a purely academic exercise. It may be the first step in a strategic and long-term planning exercise. The result of this effort would represent the collective wisdom of the Department and would be a principled basis for making policy decisions. For example, Prof. Vit Bubenik, who is contemplating retirement, and Emeritus Prof. John Hewson appeared before the Review Panel and expressed some dissatisfaction with the direction the Department; they are concerned that courses in morphology, semantics and historical Linguistics do not seem to be favoured. According to their thinking, such courses are core components of a Linguistics program. Principled decisions about the teaching of such (or other) courses could be made, if the vision of the Department was clearly articulated.

A well-constructed strategic plan positions the Department to take advantage of opportunities that arise when retirements occur. The imminent departure of Prof. Jim Black is such an opportunity. Should the joint appointment with the French Department be maintained? If the study of French as spoken in Newfoundland and Labrador is a crucial component of the profile of the Department, a compelling case for maintaining a joint appointment with the French Department can probably be made. The Department might also want to make a case for strengthening another area that is considered to be more crucial to its mission.

The Review Panel considers the vision statement to be essential to the long-term planning of the Department. It therefore recommends that the Head organize a retreat for one or two days where members would reflect on the way the Department should be defined and that the Dean should support the holding of such a retreat.

The Panel recommends that:

- 1. The Department should prepare a mission statement that defines the profile of the Department and identifies its contribution to the University's strategic objectives.*
- 2. The Dean should assist the Department in organizing a retreat to discuss and formulate the strategic plan.*

4.0 Faculty

The Memorial University Department of Linguistics has maintained a distinguished record of scholarship, teaching excellence and community outreach throughout its history. Faculty members across the board have commendable research records reflected in the publication profiles of the individual faculty as well as remarkable success in attracting grant funding to support their research. As noted in their Self-Study, almost all tenured faculty have been successful in obtaining SSHRC funding, others have secured CFI infra-structure grants, as well as provincial funding. The success of Yvan Rose in obtaining NIH funding and winning a Petro Canada award is also highly noteworthy. The teaching and mentoring work of the Department is also excellent. Students at all levels noted their excitement over the quality of teaching and the willingness of faculty to involve students in their research projects. In light of the fact that several of the permanent faculty are in early career stages (Rose, Brittain, De Decker), one is a Canada Research Chair (Van Herk), and one is a shared appointment and until recently (2005) Associate Dean of Arts (Black), the Department is also well represented on, and contributes significantly to, faculty and university committees at Memorial. On a national level, mid-career faculty members have regularly participated in SSHRC review and adjudication committees, while all members contribute to regional and national professional organizations and peer-review for national and international journals, funding agencies and publishing houses. Many of the faculty have demonstrated exemplary community service through research outreach programs and service on local and provincial boards.

4.1 Faculty Complement

While the last academic program Review Panel underlined the excellence of the Department, it also pointed out that this excellence would be in jeopardy without faculty appointments and program restructuring. We are pleased to see that those two main recommendations were acted upon and resulted in a strengthening of the Department's standing in research and teaching. Further faculty appointments will be required however, in the near future to retain this excellence and continue to build the Department. The self-study document states that the current faculty complement is 9.5. This number is deceiving. The number of full-time faculty as it stands is more often actually seven, since research leaves (sabbaticals) affect the number of faculty members available, the Departmental Chair and Canada Research Chair both have significant administrative course reductions, and the Department's success in securing research funding from outside agencies is such that teaching capacity is affected. In other words, circumstances on which the Department has little control, if any, makes the current situation in terms of teaching capacity just barely sustainable. With at least two, and probably three, retirements expected in the next few years, the situation will become even more critical. Therefore, we recommend that the complement of full-time (tenured and/or tenure-track) faculty not be allowed to fall below its current level, which is comparable to the level in most Linguistics Departments across the country. As a result, two appointments should be made within the next three years. The areas in which these positions will be advertised should be determined on the basis of the larger vision

statement to be articulated by the Department in the short-term. However, based on our understanding of the Department's strengths and specificity, we have identified a "short list" of areas that offer the best fit with the current situation and future prospects. The list is given in no particular order.

- phonology and/or Aboriginal studies;
- second language acquisition with three possible connection branches for secondary specialization: Aboriginal languages, French, or English (as a second language);
- French Linguistics with particular emphasis on regional Canadian varieties with the aim of developing a joint research program in Newfoundland French with the CRC socio-linguistics lab and the Department of French.

Finally, since any Linguistics Department should be able to provide some instruction in historical Linguistics, this should be considered as a possible secondary area for any search.

The panel recommends that:

1. *Two appointments should be made within the next three years. The areas in which these positions will be advertised should be determined on the basis of the larger vision statement to be articulated by the Department.*

5.0 Support Staff

5.1 Administrative Support

Currently the Department of Linguistics is administratively supported full-time by Ms. Ruby Bishop and part-time (one-third assignment) by Ms. Juanita Lawrence. The panel received numerous words of appreciation from faculty and students for the dedication and resourcefulness of Ms. Bishop and her contribution to the positive workplace and learning environment in the Department. Although the panel did not meet with Ms. Lawrence, we were told of her significant contribution to the effective operation of the Departmental office. Of particular importance was her ability to maintain access to the Departmental office during sick leave, vacation, and other times when Ms. Bishop was away from the office on work-related responsibilities. Her part-time presence also allowed Ms. Bishop the necessary opportunity to work on research and personnel administration, which because of its sensitive nature, may not be appropriately conducted in the open, confined space of the Departmental office.

In addition to regular office staff, three current or former graduate students are managers of externally funded projects or laboratories. Their employment is contractual and involves 80-95% research responsibilities covering a broad spectrum of duties. All three managers articulated general satisfaction with their work responsibilities and environment; however, there was strong interest expressed in greater access to and communication about professional development courses on campus.

Although one large research grant (CURA grant to Dr. Mackenzie) has part-time financial administrative support, other funded projects do not and this has increased the administrative workload for Ms. Bishop in the Departmental office. Given the anticipated success in future funding applications (e.g. two planned SSHRC CURA grants) and the administrative and financial responsibilities that accompany them, the panel recommends that:

- 1. The part-time assignment of Ms. Lawrence in the Departmental office is maintained.*
- 2. Research project managers are given formal training and responsibility in financial administration of projects to reduce the workload of the Departmental office.*
- 3. Future external grant applications include, where applicable, financial administrative budget allocations.*
- 4. Research project managers are informed of and given opportunities to participate in professional development.*

5.2 Technical Support

In the Department's Self-Study report and through discussions with faculty and students, there was general satisfaction expressed with the availability and quality of technical resources for teaching and conducting research in Linguistics. In contrast, the panel documented some degree of faculty frustration with technical help and resources to effectively advertise the Department and its activities over the internet, to access and manipulate financial records through the MUN system, and to receive MAC support on campus. In addition, students expressed a broad frustration that Linguistics faculty were not availing themselves of online teaching and course management tools (e.g. Desire2Learn) on campus. They felt that these resources would help to improve interaction with faculty and to facilitate a more diverse learning experience. (Note that at least one faculty member has developed web-assisted courses in Linguistics this semester.)

The panel recommends that:

- 1. Resources and training be made available to the Department of Linguistics to upgrade and maintain their university web site*
- 2. The Department, with the assistance of Office of the Dean of Arts, explore how the burden of research administration be better shared among researchers and staff at the Departmental and faculty levels.*
- 3. The Department, with the assistance of the Instructional Development Office, explore opportunities for incorporation of course management tools into their undergraduate program.*

6.0 Space

Acquiring and maintaining sufficient space for the Department of Linguistics have been persistent challenges for the Departmental Head and are pivotal for continued growth and success. Dr. Mackenzie is to be commended for her perseverance in securing laboratory space for the Canada Research Chair in Regional Language and Oral Text, and although its location in a building separate from the main thoroughfare of the Department is less than desirable, its acquisition and renovation are regarded as a major break-through for the Department. Several other space issues, however, are now of increased concern for the Department and in the opinion of the Review Panel require immediate attention.

First, the burgeoning administrative workload in the Department is being conducted in cramped space with limited opportunities to protect the privacy of individuals or documents. The workload demands at regular times several staff members working in the Departmental office, yet there is only sufficient space for access to one computer, which must limit productivity and privacy.

Second, space for undergraduate students and in particular their very active society (SLAM) is viewed as a priority both by the Department and the panel. The strategic location of such a space would place students in the heart of the Department and address one of their main concerns - closer interaction with faculty. Graduate student space was not identified as a priority for the Department and this in part may be due to the provision of work stations and desk space in research laboratories.

Third, archival space for the Department's collections of local languages (tapes and texts) is identified as an issue by the Department in its Self-Study; the panel, however, did not receive any further details during interviews and meetings and although we have some concern about the preservation of, and long-term access to, this provincial treasure, there appears to be a short-term solution identified through storage in the socio-linguistics laboratory.

The panel made short visits to each of the research laboratories in the Department. We were impressed by the use of space and resources in existing laboratories (Aboriginal Languages and Speech Sciences and Language Acquisition laboratories) and the planned renovations and future resources to be provided in the socio-linguistics laboratory.

In summary, the panel recommends that:

1. *The Department, with the assistance and support of the Dean, explore options to increase the administrative space in the Departmental office and create new space for undergraduates with the specific goal to increase interaction with faculty in the Department.*

7.0 The Graduate Program

The Department offers MA and PhD programs. Both are fairly small; statistics provided by the University indicate that there are 9 MA students and only 3 are registered for the PhD. (The Self-Study document (p. 11) reports that there are 12 MA students but 3 of them are on leave.) Students expressed overall satisfaction with the programs but identified some problems that should be addressed; these are described below.

7.1 Master's (MA) Program

The MA program offers a thesis and a non-thesis option. The latter requires the successful completion of a minimum of 7 courses, while the former requires a minimum of 5. In both options, students are expected to complete at least one graduate course in syntax (i.e. 6001/6110/6115) and at least one in phonology (i.e. 6200/6201) in addition to the two graduate seminars (i.e. 7000, 7001). At the graduate level, the Department obviously places greater emphasis on the Master's than the PhD program, as revealed by the following statement in the Self-Study document (p. 11): "at the graduate level, a primary aim of the Department is to ensure the provision of the Master's program in Linguistics". One indication that this program is quite strong is the success of the students in winning SSHRC Master's Scholarships. However, the program can and should be strengthened, and we offer some recommendations to this end.

First, the Department must take steps to increase enrolment in the program. We recommend that an admission target should be at least 6 students per year and that steps be taken to ensure that this target is met. Among the steps that can be taken is to broaden the recruitment base. The current strategy focuses on students who completed their undergraduate degrees at Memorial; only one of the registered Master's students is from elsewhere. We recommend that the Department take advantage of its regional status and broaden its recruitment base to include all of Eastern Canada.

The Department should also review the degree requirements, focusing in particular on the course requirements. How is the number of courses required by the thesis and non-thesis options determined? The Graduate Handbook does not provide any obvious rationalization of the requirements. The need for such a rethinking is apparent when it is recognized that (a) most MA students have completed an undergraduate Linguistics degree at MUN and (b) there are no dedicated graduate courses (see the issue of piggy-backed courses below). The preparation of a vision statement or strategic plan (see §3.0) would be a prerequisite for the rationalization of the MA course requirements.

Rationalization of the number of courses required for the Master's degree has implications for the time to completion. Both thesis and non-thesis options are now considered to be two-year programs in which first year is devoted to course work. While a year of course work is obviously necessary for students who do not hold an undergraduate degree in Linguistics or its equivalent, the Department should review the imposition of this requirement on students with such a degree, especially those who are graduates of MUN. A one-year Master's has an obvious appeal and may help to increase the enrolment, without compromising the quality of the education.

7.2 Doctoral (PhD) Program

According to the Graduate Handbook, admission to the PhD program is normally limited to holders of a Master's degree in Linguistics. It requires the successful completion of a minimum of 6 courses in addition to the two graduate seminars (i.e. 7000, 7001). Students must also pass two comprehensive (written and oral) examinations and then write a thesis. The three students currently in the program are generally satisfied. However, the small size is an obvious concern. The aim of the recommendations below is to promote the growth in the size and quality of the program.

First, we recommend that the Department reconsider the emphasis on the Master's program over the PhD. This is essential, if the Department is to enhance its standing nationally and internationally. The top Linguistics Departments in Canada and elsewhere all have strong doctoral programs. The participation of PhD students at national and international conferences reflects positively on the image of their home Departments and University and helps in the process of recruiting new students.

The Department must take steps to increase enrolment in the program. We recommend that an admission target should be at least 3 students per year. Assuming that the degree can be completed in four years as the Handbook envisages, there would normally be at least 12 students at the PhD level, providing a critical mass for productive intellectual interaction. Since students learn from each other, the growth in the number of PhD students is essential to improving the quality of the program.

As we recommended for the Master's program, the Department should also review the course requirements for the PhD. The Graduate Handbook does not provide any obvious rationalization for requiring the completion of a minimum of 6 courses. If PhD candidates must have the equivalent of a Master's degree in Linguistics, what purpose does an additional 6 courses serve? The answer to this question is necessary, because the courses that PhD students are required to take are not substantially different from the undergraduate courses that students must have taken to qualify for admission to the program (see the issue of piggy-backed courses below). We note again that the preparation of a vision statement or strategic plan (see §3.0) is a necessary part of the rationalization of the PhD course requirements.

A reduction in the number of required PhD courses would have a positive effect on the time to completion. Other changes to the structure of the program would also help. For example, the scope and function of the comprehensive examinations should be reviewed; they seem to be unnecessarily complex. It would not be a bad idea to compare the Memorial model with the equivalent examinations in other comparable PhD programs in Canada and elsewhere.

7.3 The Graduate Curriculum

A number of 6000 and 7000 level courses are listed in the Calendar as graduate courses. In reality, however, many of these courses are taught with undergraduate courses, a pattern described as piggy-backing. This manner of teaching was identified in the previous review as problematic, and the problem has not yet been addressed.

Undergraduates seem to be reasonably satisfied with the experience; they see real benefits from the opportunity to interact with graduate students. However, the experience for graduate students is less satisfactory. Such courses cannot provide the basic education required by undergraduates and also expose Master's and PhD level students to leading-edge research. We recommend that the piggy-backing of graduate and undergraduate courses be significantly reduced. Furthermore, to enhance the graduate experience, some dedicated graduate courses should be introduced and taught regularly. In exceptional cases, 4th Year undergraduate may be allowed to take these courses.

The graduate seminars (7000, 7001) are important elements of the graduate education. The Department must therefore ensure that these courses be available in a timely manner to Master's and PhD students. Ideally, they should be taught every year. The Department should consider assigning these courses to the Graduate Program Coordinator; it should also consider allowing students to be graded as Pass/Fail for these courses.

7.4 Graduate Funding

The availability of funding for graduate students factors in the growth and development of graduate programs. It affects the capacity to attract good students. The Self-Study document (p.12) identifies this as a crucial factor in the decline in applications to the graduate programs. Competing programs normally offer more than \$15,000 per year in guaranteed funding to students. The funding packages available at MUN are not competitive. To maintain and enhance the graduate programs, creative solutions to the funding problem must be sought. We recommend a number of steps.

First, the Department must establish minimum levels of funding for the Master's and PhD programs, taking into the consideration tuition and other fees and the cost of living. It should then enter into discussion with Graduate Studies to determine the funds the University can commit annually to the Department for graduate support. Internal funds should then be combined with resources available from research grants to create competitive funding packages. In other words, several sources of funding (e.g. TAsip, Fellowship/Scholarship, RAship, direct grant) may be combined to form a package.

7.5 Governance

The responsibility for coordinating the graduate programs seems to be vested in the Graduate Coordinator, currently Philip Branigan. Governance therefore seems be broadly distributed. It may be desirable to create a Graduate Committee that is given the responsibility of formulating graduate policies, of course, under the overarching authority of the Department.

The panel recommends that:

- 1. Enrolment at the MA level should be increased, aiming for at least 6 students per year.*
- 2. Less emphasis should be placed on recruiting Memorial undergraduates and*

- more attention should be paid to recruiting from Eastern Canada.*
3. *A review and rationalization of the number of courses required for the MA program should be undertaken.*
 4. *The possibility of a one-year Master's program should be considered.*
 5. *Enrolment at the PhD level should be increased, aiming for at least 3 students per year*
 6. *Greater emphasis should be placed on the PhD program.*
 7. *A review and rationalization of the number of courses required for the PhD program should be undertaken.*
 8. *The scope and function of the comprehensive examinations should be re-examined.*
 9. *The number of piggy-backed courses should be reduced.*
 10. *A number of dedicated graduate courses should be created.*
 11. *The required graduate seminars should be assigned to the Graduate Coordinator and should be offered as Pass/Fail options.*
 12. *The Department should agree on a minimum level of graduate funding.*
 13. *The Department should explore ways of combining internal and external resources to ensure that graduate funding packages are competitive.*

8.0 The Undergraduate Program

8.1 Curriculum

Given the limits imposed by staffing considerations, the undergraduate programs (Major, Honours, Minors) are well-structured and students have expressed a high degree of satisfaction with respect to both their courses and the progression within their program. However, the coherence of the programs should be made more immediately visible to students in the brochures and web page. The web page in particular should not simply reproduce the MUN Calendar contents but should package the structure, progression, and expected outcomes of the programs in a more user-friendly manner. For instance, sample course selections over 4 years should be provided as a guide to students.

We did however identify some issues in the sequence and number of introductory courses. The current structure is the following:

1100/2100 - Language and Communication
1103/2103 - Introduction to Linguistics: Morphology and Syntax
1104/2104 - Introduction to Linguistics: Phonetics and Phonology
1105/2105 - The Wonder of Words
2210 - Language in Newfoundland and Labrador: An Introduction to Linguistic Variation

None of these courses has a prerequisite. They are designed with a dual purpose. First to be of interest to non-specialists in order to properly introduce them to a field to which they have had very little or no prior exposure (Linguistics is not covered in high school) and eventually lead them to elect to pursue a degree in Linguistics. The second purpose of the introductory courses is to adequately inform students who will take further courses

in Linguistics. Clearly, the introductory sequence must maintain these two objectives. In addition, introductory courses in most disciplines are meant to attract large numbers of students; there is no reason to believe that Linguistics should be different in that respect. These parameters are respected in the following recommendations.

Our general recommendation is to simplify and rationalize the introductory sequence. The first (and straightforward) simplification is to eliminate the 2000-level listing for all introductory courses. We understand that the historical motivation for the creation of this double numbering is no longer applicable; it thus now creates an avoidable complication. Most of the courses already have a 1000-level designation -- 1100/2100, 1103/2103, 1104/2104, 1105/2105 – so it is simply a question of deleting the 2000-level designations. LING 2210 should be renumbered at the 1000-level for the reasons given below; for the sake of presentation we assume a tentative LING 1101 designator for *Language in Newfoundland and Labrador: An Introduction to Linguistic Variation*.

The next step is to rationalize the sequence. This should be based on the establishment of clear outcomes and objectives, for the sequence in general, and specific courses in particular. Given the two types of students served by these courses, specialists and non-specialists, there should be 4 core introductory courses divided into 2 groups of 2 with 1100 + 1101 as general introductions, and 1103 + 1104, as more specific introductions, all with no prerequisites:

1100 - Language and Communication

1101 - Language in Newfoundland and Labrador: An Introduction to Linguistic Variation

1103 - Introduction to Linguistics: Morphology and Syntax

1104 - Introduction to Linguistics: Phonetics and Phonology

As for the number of sections offered and the semesters in which they are offered, we recommend that a flexible system be adopted with the aim of at least maintaining and, optimistically, increasing the total enrolment numbers at the introductory level. Over the last 3 years or so, these 4 courses have been given over 9 sections, not including the Spring terms.¹ The total number of sections dedicated to the 4 introductory courses should be reduced to between 6 and 8, distributed on the (to-be-determined) basis of enrolment patterns. At the same time, enrolment caps in each section should be completely removed.

Many students pointed out to us that they had elected to pursue a degree in Linguistics as a result of their positive experience in the intro courses. While the excellence of the course contents played a role in their positive experience, the students also singled out the enthusiasm, attentiveness, and generosity of their instructor as the main factor in their decision. Consequently, we strongly recommend that the introductory courses be offered, inasmuch as possible, by core faculty members, who have a vested interest in

¹ LING1100/2100: 3 sections/year; LING1103/2103: 2 sections/year; LING1104/2104: 2 sections/year; LING2210: 2 sections/year.

attracting students to the programs in Linguistics.

Finally, the Department offers a certain number of 4th year undergraduate courses in which graduate students are allowed to register. This is a practice that is used in other comparable Departments across the country and that can have many positive practical and intellectual advantages. It makes for a more efficient use of available resources (both in terms of student enrolments and available instructors). It also provides an opportunity for advanced undergraduate students to be in close contact with graduate students and, in turn, graduate students can gain mentoring experience if they decide to help their undergraduate colleagues. However, we gather that the current system takes advanced *undergraduate* courses and opens them to graduate students. In order to avoid the concomitant risk that the graduate experience be diluted, we recommend that the system be reversed, i.e. graduate courses should be opened to motivated advanced undergraduate students with the appropriate prerequisites or adequate preparation.

8.2 Enrolments

As pointed out in the self-study document, undergraduate enrolments have been generally steady since 2002 and there has been a 75% increase in the number of Majors over the last 5 years and, this, despite some fairly important decreases in total enrolment figures in the Faculty of Arts. In addition the number of degrees awarded is healthy and indicates that the retention rate is appropriate. However, we feel that more efforts could be made to attract more undergraduate degree students and to increase undergraduate enrolments since a successful undergraduate program should be the foundation for a strong research oriented unit, like the Department of Linguistics. To do so, we encourage better promotion of the undergraduate program, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts, in order to increase high school students' awareness of this discipline and attract them to the programs. At the same time, we believe that efforts could be made to attract more students "internally". For instance, the Faculty of Arts should support the Department's lobbying efforts towards the reinstatement of Linguistics as a teachable subject for Education students.

At the institutional level, the members of the Department should make every effort to foster a sense of community in the unit: by reviving the colloquia series; providing a room for SLAM that may also serve as a location for undergraduates, graduates, Faculty and staff to interact; making more information available to undergraduates in terms of career development; improving communication with Psychology and French to optimize the scheduling of upper level courses needed by joint majors; enhancing advising and mentoring options for senior level undergraduate students. Finally, successful university-wide efforts on the enrolment front are bound to have positive repercussions for the Department.

The panel recommends that:

1. *The departmental web page should present the structure, progression, and expected outcomes of the undergraduate programs in a more user-friendly manor.*

2. *The sequence of introduction courses should be simplified and rationalized.*
3. *The 2000-level listing for all introductory courses should be eliminated.*
4. *The course LING 2210 should be renumbered at the 1000-level.*
5. *The total number of sections dedicated to the 4 introductory courses should be reduced to between 6 and 8.*
6. *Enrolment caps in all introduction course sections should be completely removed.*
7. *Introductory courses should be offered, inasmuch as possible, by core faculty members.*
8. *The piggy-backed course system should involve graduate courses opened to motivated advanced undergraduate students with the appropriate prerequisites or adequate preparation (as opposed to the current reversed system).*
9. *The Department should participate in efforts to promote the discipline of Linguistics at the high school level, in collaboration with the Faculty-wide promotion efforts.*
10. *The Department should lobby for the reinstatement of Linguistics as a teachable subject for Education students.*
11. *The Department should make every effort to foster a sense of community in the unit.*
12. *The Departmental colloquia series should be revived.*
13. *Space should be provided for SLAM.*
14. *The Department should make more information on career development available to its undergraduate students.*
15. *The Department should work at improving communication with Psychology and French in order to optimize the scheduling of upper level courses.*
16. *Enhanced advising and mentoring options should be provided for senior level undergraduate students.*

9.0 Governance

9.1 Departmental Meetings

A great deal of the decision making and daily running of the Department appears to fall on the shoulders of the Head and Graduate Administrator with limited participation from faculty and staff and with limited Departmental communication. While the Head and Graduate Administrator clearly manage these tasks well, greater faculty and staff involvement through regular Department meetings and an internal committee structure would foster collegiality and communication.

9.2 Graduate Committee

The responsibility for coordinating the graduate programs seems to be vested in the Graduate Coordinator, currently Philip Branigan. Governance therefore seems be broadly distributed. It may be desirable to create a Graduate Committee that is given the responsibility of formulating graduate policies, of course, under the overarching authority of the Department.

The panel recommends that:

1. *Regular monthly Departmental meetings be held (with graduate and undergraduate representation where appropriate) to enhance Departmental communication.*
2. *The faculty have greater involvement in Departmental decision making through an internal working committee structure designed to strengthen internal consultation.*
3. *A Graduate Committee be created to oversee the graduate programs*

10.0 Conclusion

The Department of Linguistics is to be commended for its excellence in research, teaching, community outreach and university service. Moving from the threat of impending crisis brought on by mass retirement during the last program review, the Department has rebuilt its strength and excellence through a series of wise, but perhaps un-orchestrated decisions. Our recommendations are intended to guide the Department from a period of transition to a well thought-out distinctive identity which can raise its profile as a top-notch research and teaching program.

Summary of Recommendations

- 3.1 *The Department should prepare a mission statement that defines the profile of the Department and identifies its contribution to the University's strategic objectives.*
- 3.2 *The Dean should assist the Department in organizing a retreat to discuss and formulate the strategic plan.*
- 4.1 *Two appointments should be made within the next three years. The areas in which these positions will be advertised should be determined on the basis of the larger vision statement to be articulated by the Department.*
- 5.1 *The part-time assignment of Ms. Lawrence in the Departmental office should be maintained.*
- 5.2 *Research project managers should be given formal training and responsibility in financial administration of projects to reduce the workload of the Departmental office.*
- 5.3 *Future external grant applications should include, where applicable, financial administrative budget allocations.*

- 5.4 *Research project managers should be informed of and given opportunities to participate in professional development.*
- 5.5 *Resources and training should be made available to the Department of Linguistics to upgrade and maintain their university web site*
- 5.6 *The Department, with the assistance of Office of the Dean of Arts, should explore how the burden of research administration can be better shared among researchers and staff at the Departmental and faculty levels.*
- 5.7 *The Department, with the assistance of the Instructional Development Office, should explore opportunities for incorporation of course management tools into their undergraduate program.*
- 6.1 *The Department, with the assistance and support of the Dean, should explore options to increase the administrative space in the Departmental office and create new space for undergraduates with the specific goal to increase interaction with faculty in the Department.*
- 7.1 *Enrolment at the MA level should be increased, aiming for at least 6 students per year.*
- 7.2 *Less emphasis should be placed on recruiting Memorial undergraduates and more attention should be paid to recruiting from Eastern Canada.*
- 7.3 *A review and rationalization of the number of courses required for the MA program should be undertaken.*
- 7.4 *The possibility of a one-year Master's program should be considered.*
- 7.5 *Enrolment at the PhD level should be increased, aiming for at least 3 students per year.*
- 7.6 *Greater emphasis should be placed on the PhD program.*
- 7.7 *A review and rationalization of the number of courses required for the PhD program should be undertaken.*
- 7.8 *The scope and function of the comprehensive examinations should be re-examined.*
- 7.9 *The number of piggy-backed courses should be reduced.*
- 7.10 *. A number of dedicated graduate courses should be created.*

- 7.11 *The required graduate seminars should be assigned to the Graduate Coordinator and should be offered as Pass/Fail options.*
- 7.12 *The Department should agree on a minimum level of graduate funding.*
- 7.13 *The Department should explore ways of combining internal and external resources to ensure that graduate funding packages are competitive.*
- 8.1 *The departmental web page should present the structure, progression, and expected outcomes of the undergraduate programs in a more user-friendly manor.*
- 8.2 *The sequence of introduction courses should be simplified and rationalized.*
- 8.3 *The 2000-level listing for all introductory courses should be eliminated.*
- 8.4 *The course LING 2210 should be renumbered at the 1000-level.*
- 8.5 *The total number of sections dedicated to the 4 introductory courses should be reduced to between 6 and 8.*
- 8.6 *Enrolment caps in all introduction course sections should be completely removed.*
- 8.7 *Introductory courses should be offered, inasmuch as possible, by core faculty members.*
- 8.8 *The piggy-backed course system should involve graduate courses opened to motivated advanced undergraduate students with the appropriate prerequisites or adequate preparation (as opposed to the current reversed system).*
- 8.9 *The Department should participate in efforts to promote the discipline of Linguistics at the high school level, in collaboration with the Faculty-wide promotion efforts.*
- 8.10 *The Department should lobby for the reinstatement of Linguistics as a teachable subject for Education students.*
- 8.11. *The Department should make every effort to foster a sense of community in the unit.*
- 8.12 *The Departmental colloquia series should be revived.*
- 8.13 *Space should be provided for SLAM.*

- 8.14 *The Department should make more information on career development available to its undergraduate students.*
- 8.15 *The Department should work at improving communication with Psychology and French in order to optimize the scheduling of upper level courses.*
- 8.16 *Enhanced advising and mentoring options should be provided for senior level undergraduate students.*
- 9.1 *Regular monthly Departmental meetings should be held (with graduate and undergraduate representation where appropriate) to enhance Departmental communications.*
- 9.2 *The faculty should have greater involvement in Departmental decision making through an internal working committee structure designed to strengthen internal consultation.*
- 9.3 *A Graduate Committee be created to oversee the graduate programs.*