

Department of Linguistics Academic Programme Review 2008-09: Response and Action Plan

1. MISSION STATEMENT AND APPOINTMENTS (Recommendations 3.1, 3.2, 4.1)

Recommendation 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

Recommendation 3.2 The Dean should assist the Department in organizing a retreat to discuss and formulate the strategic plan

Departmental response: The retreat was held July 3, 2009 and a Mission Statement prepared. The strategic plan was begun.

Target Date: summer 2009

Responsibility: Department faculty and Head

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 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.

Departmental response: The type of replacement positions that will be needed is being considered as part of the Strategic Plan of the department; although there will be one retirement of a jointly-appointed faculty member as of August 2009, a firm retirement date for the full-time person has not been communicated to us.

Target Date: 2010

Responsibility: Department as a whole

Progress: In progress

2. SUPPORT STAFF (Recommendations 5.1 - 5.7)

Recommendation 5.1 The part-time assignment of Ms. Lawrence in the Departmental office should be maintained.

Departmental response: We strongly agree and have urged to Dean's office to recommend this.

Target Date: ASAP

Responsibility: Dean's office

Progress: Unknown

Recommendation 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.

Departmental response: We agree and strongly recommend that the MUN Finance department provide appropriate and targeted training.

Target Date: ASAP

Responsibility: Department

Progress: Completed for staff in place, but ongoing for new staff

Recommendation 5.3 Future external grant applications should include, where applicable, financial administrative budget allocations.

Departmental response: This is being done within the constraints of the funding agency guidelines; for instance it is not a possible category for SSHRC Standard Research grants; it had already been implemented with CURA and NIH funded projects

Target Date: ASAP

Responsibility: Individual faculty members

Progress: Ongoing

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Recommendation 5.4 Research project managers should be informed of and given opportunities to participate in professional development.

Departmental response: We agree and had already given our staff information on which courses are available, for instance the supervisory skills program.

Target Date: ASAP

Responsibility: Department

Progress: Completed, but ongoing for new staff

Recommendation 5.5 Resources and training should be made available to the Department of Linguistics to upgrade and maintain their university web site.

Departmental response: We agree that we need someone to give us good advice but we can implement it ourselves; we understand that C&C may charge for advice on this matter; the Faculty guidelines for websites keep changing; while websites are criticized, when we ask for specific advice, none is forthcoming.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Department, Faculty of Arts

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 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.

Departmental response: BANNER training badly is needed for existing and new staff and faculty. MUN needs to provide training targeted in a focused way relevant to our research projects.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Faculty of Arts, MUN Finance

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 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.

Departmental response: Individual faculty members have already done this and more are learning to use Desire2Learn and availing of DELT facilities. We will ask Colleen Collett of DELT to come and speak to department meeting

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Head

Progress: Ongoing

3. SPACE (Recommendation 6.1)

Recommendation 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

Departmental response: We agree but also understand the space constraints in the Faculty of Arts.

Target Date: Unknown

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Responsibility: Dean of Arts

Progress: Ongoing

4. GRADUATE PROGRAM (Recommendations 7.1-7.13)

Please note that the Graduate Committee is a committee of the whole department.

Recommendation 7.1 Enrolment at the MA level should be increased, aiming for at least 6 students per year.

Departmental response: continue recruiting efforts

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee, Head

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 7.2 Less emphasis should be placed on recruiting Memorial undergraduates and more attention should be paid to recruiting from Eastern Canada.

Departmental response: We agree that enrollment can be increased and it was discussed at the planning meeting July 3rd. In our meeting with the APR committee it was much clearer than in the written report that we should put more emphasis on the PhD program. However, the issues of space and of funding for an increased number of students are largely beyond our control. Funding is, of course, the primary issue in making us competitive with programs across Canada. We have also discussed making the MA without thesis into a one-year program, but this is dependent on the availability of faculty to teach a sufficient number of dedicated graduate courses.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee, Head

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 7.3 A review and rationalization of the number of courses required for the MA program should be undertaken.

Departmental response: We are largely in agreement with the re-organization of the MA and PhD programs and discussed this at the July 3rd meeting; we have researched the norms used in other departments in Canada with respect to the number of courses required for each degree, as well as the types of MA programs. We will adjust the number of courses needed by a student on an individual basis, depending on prior training.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee, Head

Progress: Largely complete, changes to be submitted to Arts Graduate Committee

Recommendation 7.4 The possibility of a one-year Master's program should be considered.

Departmental response: We have discussed and approved making the MA without thesis into a one-year program, but it is constrained by the availability of faculty to teach a sufficient number of dedicated graduate courses.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee, Head

Progress: Largely complete, changes to be submitted to Arts Graduate Committee

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Recommendation 7.5 Enrolment at the PhD level should be increased, aiming for at least 3 students per year.

Departmental response: Three students will begin in Fall 2009; we have been making recruiting efforts but it is difficult to compete with funding levels at mainland universities.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 7.6 Greater emphasis should be placed on the PhD program.

Departmental response: We will consider this.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 7.7 A review and rationalization of the number of courses required for the PhD program should be undertaken.

Departmental response: This was done at the meeting on July 3rd and it was agreed to reduce the number of courses for students who had completed a sufficient number of courses during their MA, to be done on an individual basis.

Target Date: Not applicable

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 7.8 The scope and function of the comprehensive examinations should be re-examined.

Departmental response: The requirement to produce two publishable papers is the norm for a number of Linguistics departments, and we are inclined to keep this.

Target Date: Not applicable

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 7.9 The number of piggy-backed courses should be reduced.

Departmental response: The issue of piggy-backing fourth-year and graduate course is a difficult one and will depend partly on what changes are implemented in the undergraduate program and whether faculty are freed up from teaching lower level courses, as well as the recruitment of additional faculty members. At the meeting on July 3rd, the issue was discussed and a plan for offering graduate course that would be open to senior undergraduates was formulated.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 7.10 A number of dedicated graduate courses should be created.

Departmental response: Two required stand-alone course already exist; at the meeting on July 3rd, the issue was discussed and a plan for offering graduate course that would be open to senior undergraduates was formulated.

Target Date: 2009-2010

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Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 7.11 The required graduate seminars should be assigned to the Graduate Coordinator and should be offered as Pass/Fail options.

Departmental response: The 7000 course was already pass/fail; it is taught by available faculty; 7001 has been taught by the Graduate Coordinator; the grading system will be kept as is since the assignment of a grade is required for funding from SGS.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 7.12 The Department should agree on a minimum level of graduate funding.

Departmental response: We have agreed on a level, but it is not necessarily the level which will attract students from away.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 7.13 The Department should explore ways of combining internal and external resources to ensure that graduate funding packages are competitive.

Departmental response: More buy-in from faculty members with research grants is needed but all are aware of the situation.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Graduate Committee and Faculty members

Progress: Ongoing

5. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM (Recommendations 8.1-7.16)

Recommendation 8.1 The departmental web page should present the structure, progression, and expected outcomes of the undergraduate programs in a more user-friendly manner.

Departmental Response: Head and UGS committee are working on this
Head and UGS committee

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: In progress

Recommendation 8.2 The sequence of introduction courses should be simplified and rationalized.

Departmental Response: We will address this but are aware that certain programs require 2000 level course (CNA in Labrador, Communication Studies) and we need to retain both 1000 and 2000 numberings; if we renumber our 2000 level courses as 1000, and then there may be a gap at the 2000 level.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: Ongoing

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Recommendation 8.3 The 2000-level listing for all introductory courses should be eliminated.

Departmental Response: We are unable to do this as certain programs require 2000 level courses (Communications, CNA in Labrador); there would be a gap at 2000 level; we will ask current students if this was an issue for them.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: Ongoing.

Recommendation 8.4 The course LING 2210 should be renumbered at the 1000-level.

Departmental Response: this course will remain 2000 level, to feed the 3210 course, and has been made Research/Writing

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 8.5 The total number of sections dedicated to the 4 introductory courses should be reduced to between 6 and 8.

Departmental Response: This is under discussions as the advice to us has always been that more introductory courses in a discipline that is not well-known bring in more students to the Major and Minor programs; we would be interested in having fewer but larger classes if there were sufficient classrooms.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: In progress

Recommendation 8.6 Enrolment caps in all introduction course sections should be completely removed.

Departmental Response: We agree and had already removed the caps for many courses; now the enrollment but depends on the size of available classrooms.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Head

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 8.7 Introductory courses should be offered, inasmuch as possible, by core faculty members.

Departmental Response: we agree in principle but we also have to staff senior courses with core faculty and are committed to offering teaching opportunities for PhD students.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Head

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 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).

Departmental Response: This was discussed at the July 3rd meeting and will be implemented as far as possible, BUT undergraduates are allowed one graduate course.

Target Date: 2009-2010

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Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee
Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 8.9 The Department should participate in efforts to promote the discipline of Linguistics at the high school level, in collaboration with Faculty-wide efforts.

Departmental Response: We had already prepared a video and had it distributed to high schools; as the segments are deemed to be too long, we will prepare a second version of short clips; we already participate in all Faculty-wide promotion efforts, as well as give information to the Advising Centre for the newsletter send to high school guidance counselors.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee and Head

Progress: Ongoing

Recommendation 8.10 The Department should lobby for the reinstatement of Linguistics as a teachable subject for Education students.

Departmental Response: This has begun via Dean of Education; the issue may need to go straight to provincial Dept of Education but a meeting with a representative of the Department and Dr. Phil Branigan in 2003 indicated that this would never be re-opened; assistance by the Dean's office might help.

Target Date: future

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: In progress

Recommendation 8.11 The Department should make every effort to foster a sense of community in the unit.

Departmental Response: There is already has a strong sense of community among faculty and graduate students, as there are regular social events every semester; the colloquia series has been begun again and will be continued, bringing in undergraduate students as well as faculty from other departments

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Head and various committees

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 8.12 The Departmental colloquia series should be revived.

Departmental Response: done as of Jan 2009

Target Date: 2009

Responsibility: Dean of Arts

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 8.13 Space should be provided for the Student Linguists at MUN (SLAM).

Departmental Response: We agree strongly

Target Date: Future

Responsibility: Dean of Arts

Progress: Unknown

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Recommendation 8.14 The Department should make more information on career development available to its undergraduate students.

Departmental Response: We already have information on our website and a brochure which mentions possible careers; we may produce a separate brochure; we can have an information session for students every semester or once a year.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee

Progress: In progress

Recommendation 8.15 The Department should work at improving communication with Psychology and French in order to optimize the scheduling of upper level courses.

Departmental Response: This is unworkable as we do not know which specific courses will be in conflict for particular students in a particular year; we are now required to hand in time slots 5 months in advance, well before students have decided on their courses for a particular semester.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Undergraduate Committee and head

Progress: No action

Recommendation 8.16 Enhanced advising and mentoring options should be provided for senior level undergraduate students.

Departmental Response: This is not a problem; the Head has an open door policy for advising all interested students, and visits classes and offers to meet with individual students; individual faculty members already chat with senior students; we can put something more on the website about advising and career options.

Target Date: 2009-2010

Responsibility: Head and all faculty

Progress: Completed

6. Governance (Recommendations 9.1-9.3)

Recommendation 9.1 Regular monthly Departmental meetings should be held (with graduate and undergraduate representation where appropriate) to enhance Departmental communications.

Departmental Response: We do not understand this recommendation. Regular meetings have always been held and a representative of the graduate students has attended; this past year we also invited SLAM to send an undergraduate representative; the minutes are available in the departmental office.

Target Date: Not applicable

Responsibility: Head

Progress: Completed

Recommendation 9.2 The faculty should have greater involvement in Departmental decision-making through an internal working committee structure designed to strengthen internal consultation.

Departmental Response: We have always had committees (P&T, Search, UGS, Grad, Ethics, computer, etc.); consultation is often first on an individual basis and some decisions are made through email, but all are involved and decisions are documented in the minutes of the regular meetings.

Target Date: Not applicable

Responsibility: Head

Progress: Completed

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Recommendation 9.3 A Graduate Committee be created to oversee the graduate programs.

Departmental Response: There has always been a Graduate Committee; in this small department it is a committee of the whole.

Target Date: Not applicable

Responsibility: Grad Coordinator

Progress: Completed