



## **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH**

VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

Department of Linguistics

College of Liberal Arts

February 2020 (for 2019-20 review)

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the consensus reached by the Department of Linguistics, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recent program review (self-study in June 2019, the external review in October 2019, and UPRC report in January, 2020). It describes the goals to be achieved, and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Department of Linguistics offers an undergraduate major and minor in Linguistics, a major and minor in American Sign Language and Deaf Culture (ASLD), an undergraduate minor in TESOL, a certificate in TESOL, and an MA with four options: Language & Culture, TESOL, Special Concentration, and a General option. The Department is currently in the process of adding 2 options for the BA in Linguistics: Translation studies, and TESOL. The ASLD major and minor will be considered under a separate review.

The last program review occurred in 2012. The prior Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May of 2013. The Department has made progress on previously identified issues toward most of the items identified in the MOU, except for “The department will review the viability of the four MA options, investigating strategies for enhancing the graduate experience and culture of the cohorts”. This will be discussed later, under concerns.

A number of strengths were identified in the reports:

- The program, particularly the TESOL components, prepares students for an important and growing aspects of California’s economy: teachers able to work with students who have limited English proficiency, and interpreters and translators.
- The department has observed a positive growth trend in its BA over the past several years. The number of undergraduate degrees awarded in 2017 had more than doubled since AY 2011-12. Similarly, the graduate degrees awarded in 2017 (25) had more than doubled since AY 2011-12 (10).
- The department and its faculty are involving both undergraduates and graduate students in the research process. UPRC members were also impressed with the poster presentations on display in the Linguistics lab and noted that several of them were collaborations between students and faculty.

Areas of Concern and Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports:

- There is no clearly articulated mission statement for the Linguistics programs on the Department's website. The Department should make its overarching mission statement publicly available at the earliest convenience.
- The department has recently suffered the loss of tenured faculty members. Presently, only 9 tenured/tenure track faculty support a load of over 273 FTES for 169 undergraduate majors and 66 graduate students. One new position for a faculty hire has been posted, however the external reviewers posited that this was not sufficient to address the workload gap given the recent losses. Also, the external reviewers recommended "in the strongest possible terms" that additional staff support is required for the department.
- As noted previously, the Department has not followed through with the previous MOU recommendation to restructure their graduate programs. The external reviewers suggested a number of changes to the graduate program including:
  - Restructure the MA course requirements for the General and Language & Culture options to address possible knowledge gaps prior to comprehensive examinations with the goals of meeting administrative requirements for core curricula, relieving pressure on overstretched faculty, and fostering community among students.
  - Streamline the requirements for MA options. Using the Linguistic, General Linguistics Option, MA as the foundation degree, there is a one course offering difference between required courses and the elective courses in the General and the Culture and Language options. In addition, address the unity count disparity between the thesis/oral defense (LING 698, 6 units) and comprehensive examination/paper culminating experiences (LING 697, 1 unit).
  - Make a separate MA for the TESOL courses rather than an option, splitting these efforts to meet core curriculum requirements.
- The Department has had several advising issues for graduate students, related to student academic progression, advancement to candidacy, and comprehensive examination.

Opportunities:

- The graduation rates of the department may have room for improvement. Specifically:
  - The 4 year grad rate for first-time freshmen in the department is consistently lower than both the University-wide 4 year grad rate and the CLA 4 year grad rates (which range anywhere from 10 to 28 percentage points higher from 2010 onwards).
  - The 4 year graduation rate in department for transfer students is consistently at least 5 percentage points below the University rate.
  - The 2- and 3 Year Grad rates for graduate students are consistently below the same rates for College of Liberal Arts on average.

- Internal data show that 35% of students are not satisfied with the current scheduling of classes – which according to students are bunched in the morning and mid-day hours. Scheduling more evening classes and avoiding overlap of required courses or offering online courses might address student concerns about class scheduling.
- Graduate students orientation and communication could be improved with more cohort-based communication and events, possibly including continuing graduate students. Development of an online graduate student handbook could also help to improve communication with all students.
- Apart from some research opportunities, there is no mention of service learning in the self-study. The department may want to explore opportunities to develop service-learning experiences for students that are integrated into coursework, perhaps in conjunction with the Center for Community Engagement.
- The external reviewers recommended that instructors (including lecturers) need to receive guidance on instructional design and interacting with interpreters in order to foster an inclusive environment for deaf students.

It is therefore agreed that the Department will:

1. Provide an annual update (due June 1) on progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU to the CLA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Director of Program Review and Assessment. The review cycle will be seven years beyond your previous review cycle from 2019-2026. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2026 for a 2026-2027 Academic Year review process.
2. Make publicly available on its website the Department mission statement.
3. Work to improve course scheduling, by avoiding overlap and by offering more afternoon or evening or online classes, in order to address student concerns.
4. Ensure that graduate students undergo an adequate orientation to the program, possibly using some combination of in-person events in the fall semester and an online graduate student handbook to enhance the graduate cohort experience.
5. Reconsider the structure of the graduate program and streamline the options and their course requirements accordingly in order to meet core curriculum administrative requirements.
6. Explore opportunities to develop service-learning experiences for students.
7. Review and improve advising practices for graduate students.
8. Continue efforts in progress to resolve issues around American Sign Language competencies for ASLD students taking Linguistics courses.
9. As budget permits, work with the College to hire additional staff and tenure-track faculty and replace recent losses to address issues pertaining to staff and faculty

workload and course scheduling.

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Linguistics Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nancy Hall

College of Liberal Arts Dean: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
David Wallace

Vice Provost Academic Programs: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jody Cormack