University of Colorado **Boulder**

2020 Program Review

Department of Linguistics

Academic Review and Planning
Advisory Committee Report

Approved

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Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | Date

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Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the Department of Linguistics (LING) was conducted in accordance with the 2020 program review guidelines. Self-study responses were prepared by the unit and checked by an internal review committee composed of two University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) faculty members outside of the unit. The internal reviewers submitted a summary of findings derived from the self-study and from interviews with department leadership, faculty, and staff unit members. An external review committee, consisting of two experts from outside of CU Boulder, submitted a report based upon a review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. An external review committee, consisting of two experts from outside of CU Boulder, visited the unit over March 5 and 6, 2020, and submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. Internal and external reviewer comments and recommendations are shared when relevant throughout this report.

Unit Overview

The campus' standardized description of the Department of Linguistics is available on the website of the Office of Data Analytics (ODA). ODA updates the unit data profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites data posted in October 2019, reflecting the state of the Department of Linguistics as of the academic year (AY) 2018-2019.

Disciplinary Context

Linguistics prides itself on standing out from other programs in the nation for its interdisciplinary approach to studying the connection between the formal properties of language and its functions. The department's scholarly strengths include cognitive-functional linguistics, computational linguistics, language documentation, psycholinguistics and experimental linguistics, and sociocultural linguistics. Linguistics' faculty members seek out research opportunities with their CU Boulder colleagues in fields as diverse as anthropology, communication, sociology, cognitive science, neuroscience, computer science, and psychology. According to the external reviewers, the department "is not just one among excellent linguistics departments; it has a unique profile." They note how CU Boulder

Linguistics differentiates itself from other research centers for its accomplishments in field-based language documentation, computational linguistics, cognitive/functional approaches to language structure, and sociocultural and anthropological approaches to language use.

According to the self-study, the department's "faculty live this interdisciplinary commitment in their scholarly lives." The department's curriculum reflects this commitment too, offering a range of interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate certificates that draw on faculty expertise in linguistic cognition, sociocultural and interactional linguistics, language documentation, natural language processing, usage-based phonetics, language acquisition, linguistic typology, construction grammar, and conversation analysis.

Research and Scholarship

To study linguistic patterns as dynamic and complex systems, the department's faculty members combine innovative and creative thinking with big data handling to examine spontaneous as well as experimentally elicited language data. According to the self-study, the department's faculty members conduct research in the following fields:

- Computational lexical semantics;
- Computational morphology and phonology;
- Corpus syntax;
- Analysis of conversational practice;
- Ethnographic analysis of language use;
- Psycholinguistics; and
- Laboratory investigation of systematic variation in the sound properties of speech.

The department's self-study includes a national comparison of linguistics units to show that it ranks ninth for scholarly productivity among 29 peer Association of American Universities (AAU) linguistics programs. The external reviewers' observations back this up, observing that CU Boulder's program has emerged since its 2013 review to rank among the nation's strongest linguistics departments.

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the department's grant expenditures total slightly over $5.5 million in the last five years. The department appears to have secured

significantly more sponsored research in the last year, with Linguistics adding $1.3 million in grant funding (or 24% of the total since 2015) in FY 2018-2019. The overall five-year change represents a 32% increase. The self-study notes that the "pursuit of grant funding varies across the field of linguistics," with computational projects typically securing larger grants. Other research areas require less external funding, including language documentation, anthropological fieldwork, and lab-based experimental work. The department's current grantors include the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Spencer Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), [Raytheon] BBN Technologies, Boston Children's Hospital, and the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. As the diversity of these sponsors indicates, the department's scholarship is situated at the nexus of social science, computer science, and the humanities research.

Collaborations

The self-study highlights Linguistics' cross-campus collaborations, including with the departments of Anthropology, Communication, Computer Science, Psychology and Neuroscience, Spanish and Portuguese, and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences, as well as with the Institute of Cognitive Science and the School of Education. Aside from sharing research interests with these units, Linguistics is brought into their orbits through its educational programs, including undergraduate and graduate certificates in Cognitive Science, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and Native American and Indigenous Studies, as well as graduate certificates in Human Language Technology, and Culture, Language, and Social Practice (CLASP). Additionally, the department offers a professional master's degree in computational linguistics, analytics, search and informatics (CLASIC) with the Department of Computer Science. According to the self-study, the "interdisciplinary programs are instrumental to the success of [Linguistics'] graduate program and have enhanced the Department's national and international profiles as a center of training in empirical, transdisciplinary approaches to language structure and linguistic cognition."

Campus Context

As previously noted, Linguistics is committed to interdisciplinary education and serves as a research nexus among various CU Boulder academic units. Leveraging its distinctive niche of language research, the department's course offerings provide students with analytic tools and insights that advance their understanding of how linguistics can help to explain human strategies and capacities.

According to the department website, Linguistics houses four outreach centers devoted to the study of the indigenous languages of the Western United States: the Center for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the West, the CU Lakhota Project, the CU Wichita Project, and the CU Arapaho Project. In addition, it oversees the publication of the Colorado Research in Linguistics (CRIL) journal, featuring new findings and original works by both students and faculty in the Department of Linguistics and allied CU departments. The 25th volume of the CRIL journal will be published in 2021, commemorating the 50th anniversary of its first publication in 1971.

The department's outreach also encompasses offerings available to all CU Boulder students and faculty, including:

- Linguists at Work, a series of professional talks and workshops where linguists and language experts discuss their fields and paths to employment outside of academia;
- Linguistics Circle (LingCircle), a colloquium and workshop series featuring graduate students and faculty from peer institutions as well as linguists in industry.

Faculty and Research Personnel

The AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile shows Linguistics employing 12 tenure-stream faculty members, including one individual with a half-time appointment in the Department of Computer Science, for a total of 11.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) tenure-stream lines. The self-study notes that a search for an assistant professor of computational linguistics is currently ongoing, and if a hire is made, the Linguistics tenure-stream faculty contingent would have grown by 35% since the 2013 review. The department's non-tenured faculty includes one senior instructor. The department also employs two postdoctoral fellows, four lecturers, 13 teaching assistants,

and five graduate part-time instructors. The external reviewers find that the department has "an excellent faculty that compares well with top-tier departments in the nation."

The salaries of Linguistics tenure-stream faculty members approximate those found in peer departments at AAU public institutions, with the department's average salaries for assistant professors and associate professors comparing favorably with those offered elsewhere, at 102% and 113% respectively. Average salaries for full professors slightly lag their AAU public peer average, at 97%. This leads to a combined average that in percentage terms exactly matches the AAU public peer linguistics average (at $116,429).

The self-study does not include the department's criteria for comprehensive review, tenure, and promotion. It does, however, include the department's mentoring procedures for pre-tenure faculty members. The procedures describe two frameworks: one for advancing pre-tenure faculty members towards the attainment of tenure and promotion; and the second, for guiding these faculty members through personal, professional, and intellectual issues that may arise during their pre-tenure career. The documentation did not describe mentoring for instructor-track faculty or for associate professors working toward promotion to full professors.

Staff

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the department employs two exempt professional staff members (one on a temporary basis), two state classified staff members, and eight hourly student employees. The self-study details that one classified staff member position oversees event scheduling and graduate admissions, and the other oversees room scheduling and department fiscal operations while also providing administrative support for faculty hiring and promotion processes. An additional half-time classified staff member oversees the department's joint professional master's program with Computer Science but otherwise does not provide Linguistics with administrative support.

Undergraduate Education

The Department of Linguistics confers the bachelor's degree (BA) in linguistics. Students can also pursue a dual bachelor's accelerated-master's (BAM) degree. The ODA unit profile counts 109 linguistics majors and 44 minors as of fall 2018. The department's total count of majors has declined by 4% compared to the five years previous, while the number of minors increased

by 2%. The internal reviewers note that the size of CU Boulder's undergraduate linguistics program is comparable to the size of those at other AAU public universities when adjusted for faculty size and the campus undergraduate student population. In AY 2018-2019, the department taught 4,573 student credit hours, which is an increase of 21% over the last five years; non-major enrollments generated 77% of those student credit hours. In AY 2018-2019, the department awarded 31 bachelor's degrees, or 3.3 per tenure-stream faculty member. This latter metric was slightly above the average for CU Boulder units with undergraduate programs, ranking 21st out of 46 units.

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, not one of the 31 bachelor's degrees awarded were conferred with honors. The self-study provides additional contextual information to this phenomenon, stating that "[eight] students have fulfilled the honors thesis requirement over the past five years to graduate with an honors degree", although acknowledges that this number is still low compared to other social science units. Linguistics outlines two primary causes for this: first, students who are qualified to write an honors thesis would rather opt to enter the highly popular bachelor's accelerated-master's (BAM) program and pursue a master's thesis instead; second, the department had not previously been able to include an upper-division honors thesis research seminar in its undergraduate curriculum, possibly discouraging participation in the honors program due to a perceived lack of support and structure. The self-study states the department plans to offer a faculty-directed capstone research seminar beginning the 2020–2021 academic year.

The department employs a practice of placing holds on prospective Linguistics undergraduates declaring the major until the student has met with a faculty member. Students appear to appreciate this system as a sign of the seriousness with which the faculty members approach undergraduate education. Undergraduates who met with the external reviewers "expressed great interest and excitement in the Department, and felt well-supported by the faculty."

A survey of Linguistics undergraduates administered by the internal reviewers in January 2020, which received responses from 59 students, prompted participants to rate their satisfaction with the program. Of the 59 responding Linguistics students, 25 (representing 42% of the total) rated themselves as "very satisfied" with the department, and 30 (51%) as "satisfied"; four (7%) registered a "less than satisfied" rating.

Despite these overall positive responses, the internal reviewers also identify some concerns with the undergraduate program. For one, the reviewers remark on the department's bias toward scheduling classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and comparatively few on other days. They suggest that this practice makes it "harder for students to get the courses they need, within schedule constraints." But predominant among the reviewers' concerns is an observation directed at the department's increasing reliance on graduate part-time instructors to teach undergraduate courses. The external reviewers note that this trend coincides with a decrease in the teaching of those courses by Linguistics tenure-stream faculty members. They surmise that this shift may be an attempt to open bandwidth for the tenure-stream faculty to pursue more individualized engagements with students and to provide graduate students with additional funding. But the internal reviewers suggest that this approach might be detrimental, noting signs of dissatisfaction among undergraduates with classes taught by the graduate part-time instructors. Per the ODA unit profile, as of the 2018–2019 academic year, 62% of undergraduate student credit hours were taught by graduate student instructors, and only 27% by tenure-stream faculty members. The internal reviewers recommend that this trend be reversed.

This year's review also had as background a spring 2016 survey of graduating seniors conducted by ODA, which yielded responses from 18 students (representing a 50% response rate). The results ranked Linguistics last of nine social science units for course effectiveness, for "providing a good general education," and for preparing undergraduate students for employment or graduate school. According to that survey, the department also ranked second worst for career advising support, for faculty interaction opportunities, and for meeting the student's overall educational goals. The ODA unit profile also included results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered in spring 2017, which garnered responses from 10 graduating seniors. While the respondents of this particular survey rated the academic quality of the major program quite highly (83% of the maximum possible rating, ranking Linguistics second out of the social science units that participated in the survey), the department once again did not fare well in the areas of required course availability (60% of the maximum positive rating) and advising quality (33% of the maximum positive rating); both metrics landed Linguistics last among the social science units that participated in the survey.

The department offers responses to these concerns in its reply to the internal reviewers. As it relates to student advising and preparation for employment and graduate education,

Linguistics points to its introduction of new undergraduate tracks in the fall of 2020. The four new tracks cover computational linguistics, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), language and cognition, and sociocultural and interactional linguistics. According to the department's website, these tracks "will allow students to tailor their major coursework to better reflect their specific interest(s) within the field of linguistics... Concentrated training within a specific subfield of the discipline will provide students with the in-depth knowledge and skills needed to pursue specific careers within the field of linguistics."

Regarding the use of graduate part-time instructors, the department notes that the instructors "generally teach only required lower-division courses" and contends that they excel in this work, earning certifications in teaching as part of their preparations. The department believes that student contact with tenure-stream faculty should increase, but that this problem can be remedied only with additional faculty lines.

Finally, the department diverged from the internal reviewers' observation about class scheduling, and noted that most lower-division courses are offered on Mondays and Wednesdays because it is difficult to schedule courses on Tuesdays and Thursdays due to classroom space constraints.

Graduate Education

The department confers master's (MA) and doctoral (PhD) degrees in linguistics. Additionally, Linguistics and the Department of Computer Science jointly confer a professional master's (MS) degree in computational linguistics, analytics, search, and informatics. Linguistics also participates as an admitting department in the interdisciplinary triple PhD program sponsored by the Institute of Cognitive Science; students earn a degree in their core program as well as in neuroscience and cognitive science. Until 2017, the department conferred the MS in TESOL, but has since phased this program out, with the last students graduating in 2020.

In the fall of 2018, Linguistics had 43 master's and 27 doctoral students. The department awarded 31 master's degrees in AY 2018-2019 but no doctoral degrees. The median time-to-degree for master's students is about 1.7 years; for PhD students it is 6.34 years. ODA notes that 29% of Linguistics doctoral students complete their degrees within six years; 65% within eight years, and 76% within ten years.

The external reviewers assess that "the average time to degree is long relative to most peer institutions." They note that the department's requirements for doctoral candidacy, particularly the preliminary exam and a synthesis paper, are arduous. Moreover, they found that the department's doctoral students considered expectations for the synthesis paper, and more generally, for publishing research, to be ambiguous and that students require more "concrete guidance". The internal reviewers join the external reviewers in critiquing the preliminary exam and the synthesis paper. The self-study acknowledges that the time-to-degree for PhD students is "fairly high" and that the "empirically based and methodologically rigorous" doctoral dissertation projects might factor into lengthy times-to-degree for some students.

The self-study identifies a dearth of funding as an even more significant delaying factor for PhD students, saying that students are left with "significant teaching burdens, relatively small tuition benefits, and financial needs to be met outside of their graduate program careers." The external reviewers agree, saying that funding for Linguistics doctoral students is "woefully inadequate and well below the norm for peer institutions." They observe that CU Boulder doctoral candidates must teach more, and at lower fractional appointment rates, than their peers at other AAU public institutions. According to the self-study, PhD students are guaranteed a "35% appointment (14 work hours per week) that includes a stipend and a tuition waiver up to 7 credit hours each semester, along with discounted student health insurance." The internal reviewers surmise that inadequate funding likely complicates PhD program recruitments and extends degree times. They advise as options shrinking the doctoral program to better concentrate resources, or diverting funding from the MA to the PhD program. In response, the department says that they have already reduced the number of doctoral students relative to the last review cycle, and that, given their success in placing doctoral graduates, including in well-paying industry jobs, further reductions are not needed. The department also suggests that one possible resolution would be to move English as a Second Language (ESL) classes from the purview of the International English Center (which is part of the Division of Continuing Education) to the department in order to create Linguistics course IDs for ESL courses. This, the department argues, would enable it to provide additional teaching assistantships and part-time instructor opportunities to graduate students, including MA students who do not currently have "any promises of support."

The external reviewers admire the department's success in placing its PhD students into academic appointments. They note that, across the United States, there are fewer than 60 college/university linguistics departments, with fewer than 50 at research universities. Despite

the paucity of such places, the department's graduate students have secured tenure-track positions at the University of New Mexico, Nagoya University, the University of Arizona, the University of California Davis, the University of California Santa Barbara, York University, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. They have also undertaken postdoctoral fellowships at Brown University, the University of Michigan, the National Institutes of Health, the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology in New Delhi, Basel University, Saarland University, and the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. Others have begun appointments as research scientists at the Army Research Lab and the Institute of Human-Machine Cognition. The self-study also highlights the department's success in placing its doctoral graduates in industry positions. The external reviewers credit students' success partly to "the strong Computational Linguistics component of the program, a profile likely to become even more important during the next review period."

Postdoctoral Training

The department has successfully utilized the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship for Diversity Program, through which a CU Boulder department may recruit postdoctoral fellows who identify as belonging to an underrepresented minority population; if the individual is a qualified candidate, they are offered a tenure-track faculty position at the completion of the fellowship. One of the program's recent alumni, after completing their term as a Linguistics postdoctoral fellow, was successfully recruited by the department as an assistant professor. At the time of writing of the self-study, the department had proposed a 2020 application to recruit another postdoctoral fellow via the same program; this time, a Native American scholar who is both a syntactician and a heritage Navajo speaker.

Budget

Linguistics in its self-study notes that it has "resources adequate to meet program needs, including invited speakers, student travel and research funding, faculty research and travel funds, [and] capital improvements." In addition to continuing general fund monies which pay for teaching assistants and graduate-student instructors, and an allocation from the College of Arts and Sciences that pays for course coverage related to faculty leaves, the department draws on an allocation of grant-generated indirect cost recovery funds (DAICR) to pay for faculty laboratory costs, including for research assistant salaries. The self-study states that, while adequate to meet current needs, the department's resources will not stretch to cover

anticipated future costs; for example, in the event of increased enrollments, pressures to expand courses, or to recruit more faculty members.

The review identified several additional sources of budget-related stress. The external reviewers note that the department faces two salary equity cases. In such cases, established protocols require that identified inequities be remedied using money drawn from the faculty's shared merit raise pool. The external reviewers note that this arrangement causes anxiety, putting faculty members' own interests in conflict with affirming the correctness of a salary adjustment related to equity. On occasion, the dean makes other monies available to remedy salary inequities. However, such support is unpredictable. The review also registered deep concerns among PhD students with the department's capacity to meet their needs. As observed by the external reviewers, the students' 35% appointments are inadequate and have resulted in extended times-to-degree, hindered student recruitment, and caused financial anxiety and disaffection to such a degree among current students that the situation poses a significant threat to the PhD program.

Finally, the department would like better guidance from the Office of Advancement about how to identify and engage potential donors. Despite occupying a central role in resolving research questions in generously supported fields like computer science, Linguistics receives almost no donor support; averaging some $2,000 to $3,000 per year, according to the self-study.

Space, Infrastructure, and Support Needs

The department faces several space and infrastructure shortfalls. The internal reviewers note that, while the majority of the department's faculty members have contiguous offices in the Hellems Building, space there has run out. Today, Linguistics must assign faculty members to offices further afield, including in the Fleming Building near the southwest corner of the Main Campus and in Office Building 1 in the Grandview neighborhood, north of Macky Auditorium. The department's future hires similarly face the prospect of location assignments away from Hellems. The self-study notes a growing concern for the faculty members who are physically isolated, saying that their distance hinders interactions and "happenstance mentorship opportunities" among linguistics colleagues. Nevertheless, the department sees faculty members' physical dispersion as "the price of growth."

Beyond fragmentation concerns, the spaces assigned to Linguistics are generally inadequate. The internal reviewers note that the department resorts to cannibalizing spaces held by senior faculty members in order to create laboratory space for new faculty. Meanwhile, PhD student offices are often relegated to a suboptimal space in the Hellems basement, and teaching assistants and graduate part-time instructors resort to borrowing faculty offices in order to hold office hours for students.

The department is not asking for additional staff personnel at this time but notes that complexities introduced with the new four-track undergraduate degree structure may create additional administrative burdens. For the time being, Linguistics hopes to handle the extra work with help from the department's professional advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences and by shifting the duties of one of its classified staff members.

Governance

The department revised its bylaws in September 2019. According to the self-study, the revision included changes to the department's salary and non-salary grievances procedures, to terms governing the appointment and charge of the executive committee, to the chair's role on the executive committee, and to the merit criteria determining annual merit evaluations. The self-study notes voting rights for instructors on all matters, including personnel matters that do not involve tenure and promotion.

The executive committee is responsible for conducting annual merit evaluations and has the authority to hear and remedy salary grievances. The committee consists of three faculty members, one from each tenure-stream faculty rank (full, associate, and assistant professor). Faculty members elect the chair, who can serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. Individual faculty votes are recorded, with two exceptions: personnel matters are always voted on by secret ballot; and anyone may request a secret faculty vote on other matters, which will be held if a faculty majority assents.

Placing governance decisions in the context of the department's rise as a research enterprise, the external reviewers observe that Linguistics benefits from "dedicated, creative, and highly competent leadership in all three of its executive officers", counting among these the current chair and associate chairs for undergraduate and graduate education, respectively.

Inclusive Excellence

As already noted, the department recently recruited a new faculty member who identifies as belonging to an underrepresented minority population and who had earlier been recognized by the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship for Diversity Program. The department hopes to build on this earlier success by again leveraging the prestige of the fellowship program to recruit a heritage-speaker Navajo syntactician to contribute to the department's scholarship as a future postdoctoral fellow. The internal reviewers note that Linguistics "plays a special role in encouraging inclusion of indigenous faculty and students in the university, because of its programs in indigenous language and culture."

Indeed, the department in its self-study describes itself as "centrally concerned with diversity: linguists study linguistic diversity across the globe; the differentiation, over historic time, of dialects into distinct languages; the maintenance of linguistic diversity in the face of accelerating language loss and the use of distinctive linguistic features and usage habits to project a wide array of social identities." The department further defines its contribution to the inclusive excellence of CU Boulder by the success of its community teaching initiatives led by the students in the Literacy Practicum and TESOL Practicum. The self-study also notes that the majority of undergraduate linguistics courses include significant discussion of a multiplicity of linguistic traditions, and that the department's curriculum serves as a gateway to fostering student diversity awareness and global engagement.

Of the 10 tenure-stream faculty members counted in the ODA unit profile for AY 2018-2019, only one identifies as belonging to a minority population (i.e., Asian American, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander). This number should increase slightly in the next ODA unit profile given the new hire from the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship for Diversity Program. Per the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, about a quarter (24%) of the 109 students that make up Linguistics' undergraduate body identify as belonging to a minority population (i.e., Asian American, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander), while 19% identify as belonging to an underrepresented minority population (i.e., African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander). Over the preceding five years, the department has seen increases on both measures, growing 8% and 128%, respectively. The self-study provides an updated count, noting that as of fall 2019, 29%

of its undergraduates identify as belonging to a minority population, while 22% identify as belonging to an underrepresented minority population.

Among its 70 graduate students counted in the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, 22% identify as belonging to a minority population and 14% identifying as belonging to an underrepresented minority population. Over the past five years, the percentage of graduate students identifying as belonging to minority and underrepresented minority populations has decreased by 9% and 18%, respectively. Once again, the self-study provides a fall 2019 snapshot, showing further decreases, with just 10% identifying as belonging to a minority population, and 2% identifying as belonging to an underrepresented minority population.

Unit Culture

According to a campus and workplace culture survey administered by the Office of Data Analytics (ODA) and the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) in September 2019, relations among and between Linguistics faculty members, staff members, and graduate students appear to reflect a mostly supportive and collegial atmosphere. The survey revealed a department with positive cultural norms in which people generally feel welcome, feel proud to be a part of Linguistics, and feel taken seriously by peers, colleagues, and advisors.

A closer look at some of the specific results suggest possible areas of concern among some groups. Of note, the survey "found a bimodal distribution in which a majority (two-thirds) of doctoral students responded positively to most questions, while the remaining one-quarter to one-third offered more negative responses." Only 54% of the master's students feel that they receive adequate support or professional development mentoring, and only 44% of doctoral students feel they are treated with respect by undergraduates. More so than master's students, Linguistics doctoral students report lacking a sense of community in their program and at CU. Meanwhile, faculty members registered concerns with the clarity of the department's performance and promotion evaluation criteria, only 54% agree these are understandable. Moving forward, the self-study describes how Linguistics plans to take a studied approach to building on its culture's strengths, while also looking to gather more information "to get to the core of the concerns." It intends to follow up with action plans once it understands this information.

Past Reviews

Linguistics has made substantive progress on recommendations arising from its last program review in 2013. Notably, the department has focused additional resources and attention on its undergraduate program. As previously described, the department organized an associate chair position to oversee the program and to implement four tracks for the major. The tracks are designed to improve student preparedness for careers that draw on linguistics training and to more favorably position students for graduate school.

Following ARPAC's recommendation for Linguistics to grow its Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Program, the department decided instead to assess the program considering available resources, admission trends, and comparable offerings at other universities. Taking into account the dwindling number of applications while recognizing the interdisciplinary potential of offering TESOL training to students from a wider array of disciplines as a growing need, Linguistics decided to convert the program from a professional master's degree to a graduate certificate. In conjunction with this shift, Linguistics hired a senior instructor who specializes in TESOL theory and practice. It also appears that the department considered ARPAC's recommendation to reduce the size of its PhD program, but decided not to. In its self-study, the department argues that the size of the program is sufficient and should be maintained to "provide a sense of camaraderie within cohorts, as well as to have cross-level cohorts within sub-disciplines."

The department has undertaken significant efforts to diversify its faculty contingent. As has already been described, Linguistics was approved for a new hire via the Faculty Diversity Action Plan (FDAP) in the fall of 2020. Success in adding broader representation among the faculty should also bolster the department's efforts to broaden the inclusive excellence of students' academic experiences.

Following up on ARPAC's 2013 recommendation that the department update its bylaws, Linguistics modified its procedures governing salary and non-salary grievances, the appointment and charge of the executive committee, the chair's role on the executive committee, and the role of the merit criteria in annual merit evaluations. The bylaws do not make explicit the voting rights of instructor-track faculty, but includes them as "faculty" as per the definitions in Board of Regents law and policy. As noted earlier, the self-study makes a

small point of clarification that "instructors vote on all matters including personnel matters that do not involve tenure and promotion", but this is not explicitly outlined in the bylaws.

The self-study does not include the department's criteria for comprehensive review, promotion, and tenure, so ARPAC cannot evaluate if the department has implemented the recommendation that these need to clearly define the criteria for findings of "excellence," "meritorious," and "less than meritorious" in personnel reviews and to include within such criteria appropriate credit for interdisciplinary faculty work. The department's most recent follow-up response to the 2013 recommendations, in 2017, indicated only that revisions were in process at that time; it is unclear whether the department was referring to revisions to the bylaws, or specifically to the criteria for comprehensive review, promotion, and tenure.

Despite making progress especially in direction-setting across its educational programs, some of the pressing concerns identified in the 2013 review remain unresolved, including:

- The department's heavy reliance on graduate part-time instructors to teach undergraduates.
- Graduate student funding that remains stuck at a 35% appointment, considerably below campus norms of 50% and below what prospective students might get by choosing a linguistics graduate program elsewhere.
- Unusually high completion times for the doctoral degree.
- Relatively low (and still declining) participation in the undergraduate honors program.

Analysis

Linguistics is a well-functioning department. Its faculty members are well-regarded by their disciplinary peers for their scholarship and by members of the CU Boulder community for their commitment to interdisciplinary work. The faculty's strengths in conducting research and teaching from a position of reputational capital, advantages undergraduate and graduate students alike. Indeed, satisfaction measures are generally high among both groups. The department maintains an intellectually vibrant and socially cohesive culture, despite coming up short for graduate student funding and adequate space, and for trying to resolve salary inequities under conditions of scarcity.

Strategic Vision and Planning

The Department of Linguistics is justifiably proud of its hard-earned reputation and ranking within its discipline, with its high-caliber faculty performing at or above the level of their AAU peers. The department's cross-campus interdisciplinary collaborations are recognized nationally for leading to new linguistics insights. As noted by the external reviewers, Linguistics is "unusually diverse intellectually and highly interdisciplinary". ARPAC congratulates the department for these successes.

ARPAC also commends the department for developing a strategic plan that aims to enhance and enrich the undergraduate student experience by addressing pressing educational needs, including to better meet students' educational goals (such as for careers or for graduate study), and by further strengthening its interdisciplinarity to provide students a comprehensive understanding of linguistics.

Although Linguistics is right to emphasize undergraduate student success as a strategic priority, ARPAC also encourages the department to imagine the future from a broader foundation. To maximize the impact of the department's contributions to the field, Linguistics should consider exploring and determining what makes its program distinct. For example, how might the department prioritize areas for future growth, given the various strengths of the department's research subfields?

Undergraduate Education

By introducing a four-track undergraduate major, the department has responded to student concerns about the practical value of a linguistics major in a significant and promising way. ARPAC looks forward to hearing more about student outcomes arising from this restructuring.

The department has had a history of heavy reliance on graduate part-time instructors (GPTIs) to teach lower-division undergraduate classes. This arrangement has allowed the department to fund its graduate students (if only on 35% appointments). However, the department's current reliance on graduate students to teach courses—including ones required for the major—is suboptimal, and potentially problematic for both undergraduate and graduate students. The external reviewers note that GPTIs "devise their own curriculum for particular classes," which can lead to vastly different and potentially unsatisfactory experiences for undergraduates. Perhaps in turn, only 44% of doctoral students responding to the September 2019 Campus and Workplace Culture Survey agree that undergraduates treat them with respect. The department's recent expansion of its tenure-stream faculty should provide opportunities to ameliorate this issue.

Graduate Education

The underfunding of the department's doctoral students is a serious ongoing issue. Survey responses, and the internal and external reviewers' graduate student interviews, reveal inadequate funding as a significant source of dissatisfaction, representing a real threat to the department's long-term health. Linguistics doctoral students find themselves burdened by the question of how to support themselves and this stymies their educational momentum and dampens their morale. As already noted, the department's median time to doctoral degree is eight years, and a quarter of recent PhD graduates required ten years, or more.

The department has so far struggled to find a tractable way to adequately fund these students. In its reply to the internal reviewers, the department suggests that it could gain resources from English as a Second Language (ESL) Program classes if the university agreed to move these to its purview. Linguistics argues that transferring these classes from the International English Center within the Division of Continuing Education would enable it to provide PhD students with additional teaching assistantships and part-time graduate instructorships. The department speculates that a transfer of ESL courses to its purview might even provide its MA students,

who currently do not receive financial aid, with some support. ARPAC hopes that the department will explore a transfer option with the Division of Continuing Education, or the possibility that the division could reserve a stable number of teaching positions for Linguistics graduate students.

Budget

The department might help reduce anxieties among its faculty members with outstanding salary equity grievances by notifying them that the college has initiated a department-wide compression exercise to measure possible salary shortfalls. It could also work with the College of Arts and Sciences to outline other potential funding sources to address salary inequities, beyond what a collective merit raise pool might accomplish. Any remediation of salary inequities can take multiple years to resolve, even in good budgetary times; however, having a good plan in place for resolving such concerns could help to lessen faculty despair that nothing will ever change.

Space, Infrastructure, and Support Needs

The department's space needs include a greater consolidation of faculty offices and laboratories and better graduate student space, especially for students who work as instructors. The current space allocation, which in effect limits the department's capacity to grow, may soon ease with the transfer of the School of Education out of a building that is adjacent to the Hellems Building. This, in turn, might allow faculty members currently assigned to faraway buildings to move closer to the department's home. Further, the college's assistant dean for infrastructure has backed the department's request for additional "growth space." These are encouraging developments that could lessen current frustrations.

Governance

Since the 2013 review, the Department of Linguistics has revised its bylaws to make these consistent with campus and university rules. ARPAC remains unclear, however, if the department has carried out the committee's 2013 recommendation to update its criteria for comprehensive review, tenure, and promotion. ARPAC urges the department to turn to this task, if needed. The department's mentoring system also needs to address the mentoring of associate professors and of instructor-track faculty towards promotion.

Inclusive Excellence

In its self-study, the department defines the practice of linguistic pedagogy as its most immediate impact on campus inclusive excellence. Facets of this work include the study of language diversity across the globe; language differentiation over time; the evolution of dialects into distinct languages; the challenge of maintaining language diversity in the face of accelerating homogenization; and the use of distinct linguistic features and habits to project social identity. The self-study also notes the department's aspiration to improve faculty diversity, saying that Linguistics is "overtly seeking to hire more faculty of color, as we believe this is essential to securing an inclusive departmental climate." As a step toward this goal, the department notes its recent success in recruiting a scholar via the new Faculty Diversity Action Plan. As described earlier, the department would like to repeat this success with a search for a postdoctoral fellow specializing in Native American and Indigenous linguistics. ARPAC looks forward to further updates on this front.

The department's persistent efforts to improve faculty diversity are laudable, as is its curricular focus on linguistic diversity and the interrelations between language and social identity. However, the self-study makes no mention of outreach work focused on recruiting individual students from minority and historically underrepresented minority populations. While the percentage of undergraduate students from minority and historically underrepresented minority populations has increased over the last five years, the percentage for graduate students has declined. As it stands, less than quarter of its undergraduate and graduate students identify as belonging to a minority race/ethnic population (i.e., Asian American, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander). ARPAC believes the department should consider how to diversify its student population beyond requests for additional graduate student funding support and a reliance on its Native American language scholarship. What specific departmental practices and structures might currently be hindering enrollments of minority students, and what might help?

Unit Culture

Neither the internal nor external reviewers noted concerns with the department's culture despite challenges that undermine cohesion. In particular, the external reviewers remarked:

"[T]he level of cooperation among all stakeholders in the Department as well as the genuine support and interest in each other's work and well-being is noteworthy. Every meeting we had with members of the community, from the undergraduates to the full professors, included comments on how kind, compassionate, supportive, and intellectually exciting the Department is. The entire faculty and the successive chairs and leadership of the Department must be commended for achieving such a remarkable cohesion and positive culture."

These positive feelings exist despite faculty anxieties surrounding salary inequities, and graduate student anxieties stemming from chronic underfunding. Such pressing concerns remain to be resolved, as do other culture-related challenges identified by this year's review, including a request from master's students for more advising and mentoring, and a desire among doctoral students for a more supportive, respectful, and collegial teaching environment. Further, there appears to be some tension among faculty members resulting from a lack of clarity regarding the department's promotion standards. The department leadership appears to be aware of these issues and indicates that these concerns will be addressed. Despite the happiness that recent surveys reveal, ARPAC feels that it will be critical for Linguistics to overcome known shortfalls to avoid a lessening of cohesion and morale.

Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee address the following recommendations to the Department of Linguistics and to the offices of responsible administrators. ARPAC notes that some of its recommendations require resources, and the committee wishes to acknowledge that this report is being written during the COVID-19 pandemic when CU Boulder's financial outlook is uncertain. Committee members understand that recommendations requiring monetary resources might not be actionable in the near term. However, it is a part of ARPAC's responsibility to record these recommendations in its report in order to describe and document the department's needs at the point of its 2020 academic review.

To the Unit:

1. Employ strategic planning to analyze the various strengths of the department's research subfields (including, for example, to define each subfield's centrality to the department mission, to determine a disciplinary niche in light of the department's place in the field relative to peer programs, to develop a unified future trajectory of Linguistics' research advances, etc.). Weigh departmental values and prioritize areas for future growth.

2. Consider aligning the size of the graduate program with available resources; reducing the number of graduate students may provide the department an opportunity to increase PhD student funding to a desired 50% level.

3. Reduce the number of graduate part-time instructors who independently teach undergraduate courses, and increase the number of teaching assistantships in order to support tenure-stream faculty teaching those courses.

4. Shorten the time-to-degree for the department's doctoral students by:
   a. Streamlining the required courses; and
   b. Restructuring the doctoral program milestones, especially the synthesis paper.

5. Consider hiring professional instructors in lieu of employing graduate part-time instructors to teach high demand undergraduate courses.

6. Building on the four new undergraduate major tracks, educate academic advisors and faculty members about career pathways that students might gain from joining a particular track.

7. Examine the honors program, and determine whether changes should be made to increase student participation. Consider collaborating with the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) as a part of this effort.

8. Clarify the performance and promotion evaluation criteria for the department's faculty members. Enhance the department's faculty mentoring framework in order to provide associate professors with additional guidance for achieving promotion to full professor.

9. Revise the department's bylaws and/or policies related to remedying salary grievances, especially to identify mechanisms available to remedy inequities beyond the annual merit raise pool. Work with the College of Arts and Sciences to more clearly outline salary grievance and redress policies, then incorporate these clarifications into the bylaws.

10. Create a multi-year plan to address faculty salary inequities; consider the accumulation of annual merit pool skims for this purpose.

11. Consider collaborating with the Division of Continuing Education on developing a plan to transfer the teaching of CU Boulder ESL courses under the department's purview.

To the Divisional Dean for Social Sciences and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences:

12. Continue to support the department's efforts of hiring diverse tenure-stream faculty members.

13. Explore ways to help the department increase its PhD student funding to a 50% level, including discussing with the unit the optimal size for the program, given funding needs and constraints.

14. Support measures and initiatives to move all tenure-stream faculty members of the Department of Linguistics to a shared location on campus.

Required Follow-Up

The chair of the Department of Linguistics shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2022, 2023, and 2024) to the divisional dean for social sciences and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the program.