



Interfaculty Program in Linguistics Final Assessment Report

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Faculty of Social Science
Degrees Offered	Bachelor of Arts (Honors)
Modules Reviewed	Honors Specialization in Linguistics Major in Linguistics
External Consultants	Dr. Randall Gess, Professor Linguistics and Applied Linguistics & Language Studies Carleton University Dr. Juana Muñoz-Liceras, Distinguished Professor Modern Languages and Literatures University of Ottawa
Internal Reviewers	Ken Yeung, Acting Associate Dean (Academic) Faculty of Science
Date of Site Visit	March 1 st , 2018
Evaluation	Good Quality
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 6, 2018 SCAPA: Senate:

Executive Summary

The undergraduate linguistics program at Western is an inter-faculty program, offered by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Social Science. During the site visit, the external consultants met with Dr. John Doerksen, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) and the various members involved in this program from both faculties: the Deans (Dr. Robert Andersen and Dr. Michael Milde) and Associate Deans (Dr. Joan Finegan and Dr. Tracy Isaacs), the Department Chairs of Anthropology and French Studies, the two Co-Directors of the program, other faculty members with significant teaching duties in the program, as well as a group of undergraduate students in the program. Despite of the inter-faculty operating structure of this program, the consultants found the curriculum to be “immediately identifiable as a North American program in Linguistics”, which I interpreted as being closely aligned with what one expects of a typical Linguistics program.

The external consultants were generally impressed with the program and the enrolment. They highlighted its two positive inherent characters of interdisciplinary and internationalization, due to instructors coming from various departments in the two faculties and a substantial emphasis in foreign content and languages in the curriculum. They commented that “interdisciplinary and internationalization are the trademark of the research and most of the teaching carried out by the core faculty in this Linguistics Program”, and “many students exiting the Western Linguistics program will have a stronger background in French and/or Spanish linguistics than students in other programs in Canada”.

They were also pleased to see the program’s commitment to field work, community engagement, undergraduate research experience, and experiential learning, as recognized in courses such as: Language Revitalization in Practice, Languages in Canada, Second Language Acquisition, Language Impairments, Spanish in Contact, and Language and Power.

A strong component in indigenous studies in the Linguistics curriculum was identified by consultants, not only on the indigenous communities in Canada, but also those in other countries as well (Mexico and Venezuela). They expected the element of indigeneity in the program will be further reinforced with the ongoing collaboration with the First Nations Studies program at Western.

Regarding the curriculum in Linguistics modules, the external consultants were overall satisfied with the design of the “core” courses, referring to it as the “typical, bare-bone, core structure” for a Linguistics program. However, they noted gaps in the curriculum in Phonetics, Semantics and Morphology, which may be important for students pursuing a career in speech therapy and graduate studies in Linguistics. These gaps were also identified by the program during their curriculum mapping exercise in preparation of this review. New courses in Phonetics and Semantics already have been put in place for 2018-19. However, additional teaching resources will be needed for the introduction of a new course in Morphology.

Likewise, the consultants noted two desirable courses that have not been available to students due to lack of teaching resources, Ling 3102 (Linguistic Analysis with Computers) and Ling 3100 (Language Impairments). The Co-Directors acknowledged that the offering of these additional courses would be beneficial, but course offerings in the program have been generally restricted by workload constraints. There was a consensus during the meetings with various members of the program, that the hiring of one additional faculty member would alleviate the existing teaching pressure due to retirement, administrative and sabbatical leaves, and reduce the dependency of the program on part-time instructors. Nevertheless, the efforts of the two Co-Directors of Linguistics, and the support of their Chairs and Deans, in keeping the program running smoothly and efficiently were clearly acknowledged.

Students in the Linguistics program generally expressed their learning experiences being good. They commented that, despite a large selection of optional courses, the subset of courses taught in English unintentionally created a situation where many of the cohort selecting a similar set of courses, which helped bringing the cohort together as a community inside the classrooms. Nevertheless, they also expressed their desire to have a physical space outside the classroom where the students in Linguistics could identify as their community space.

Significant Strengths of the Program

1. Program is inherently interdisciplinary; a strong element of internationalization is evident in courses and the contribution from the French and Spanish Departments.
2. A strong indigenous component exists in the program, not only on indigenous people in Canada but also those in other countries (Mexico, Venezuela).
3. The program has a strong commitment in experiential learning and community engagement.
4. Despite not having one home department/faculty, Co-Directors have done a superb job in ensuring the smooth and efficient delivery of the program. Curriculum was immediately identifiable as a typically North American program in Linguistics.

Suggestions for Improvement & Enhancement

1. While resources are generally adequate for sustainability of the program, one additional regular faculty position is desirable to allow delivery of all core-courses by full-time members and increase the overall teaching capacity to mount additional courses.
2. Gaps in curriculum were previously identified. Consultants were pleased to see that Phonetics and Semantics are being added to the curriculum. A new course in Morphology should be considered.

3. The number of optional courses can be limiting for English-speaking only students, and not all courses on the Calendar are offered every year (e.g., computational linguistics, language impairments). Plans should be made in prioritization and relocation of teaching resources to ensure that students have access to core courses during their studies.
4. The program should consider identifying a physical space for the student community to address the lack of inclusion/belonging of the program. The upcoming Theoretical and Applied Linguistics Lab, in the newly renovated University College building, has been identified as a physical and intellectual hub for the program. While the lab itself is a research space, students may congregate in the common spaces in the vicinity of the lab within the building.

Recommendations Required for Program Sustainability

Recommendation	Responsibility
Continue to prioritize course offering and allocate teaching resources accordingly	Program Co-Directors, Departments, Faculties
Consider extracurricular initiatives that promote in-program student community	Program Co-Directors, Departments