

S.02-37

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Senate Committee on University Priorities

Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: John Waterhouse
Chair, SCUP
Vice President, Academic

RE: Department of Linguistics
External Review

DATE: April 25, 2002

The Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) has reviewed the External Review Report prepared on the Department of Linguistics in May 2001, together with the response from the Unit and comments from the Dean and the Associate Vice-President Academic.

Motion:

"that Senate concurs with the recommendations from the Senate Committee on University Priorities concerning advice to the Department of Linguistics on priority items resulting from the external review as outlined in S.02-37 "

SCUP recommends to Senate that the Department of Linguistics and Dean be advised to pursue the following as priority items:

1. The Department of Linguistics should initiate changes in several areas of its graduate programs including improving the availability and type of graduate offerings, increasing TA positions, and reviewing doctoral program requirements.
2. In the Teaching English as a Second Language area, the Department of Linguistics should continue the initiative to differentiate the two streams in the Certificate program. The current moratorium on admission to the Diploma program, the development of the MA in TESOL, and the expansion of the Certificate should be revisited as resources permit. Issues such as improving the management of the practicum and introducing formal language screening methods should continue to be explored by the Department.

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3. The Department of Linguistics and the Dean should continue to examine and discuss various alternatives to resolve issues around the Language Training Institute.
4. If the Language Training Institute becomes a separate unit, the Department of Linguistics should revisit its decision to keep the Proficiency Certificate in First Nations Language within its area of responsibility.
5. The Department should seek out ways and means of providing regular technical support for the Department's computer labs and the Language Learning Centre as well as the development of program information brochures.
6. The Department of Linguistics is encouraged to move forward on the implementation of faculty colloquia.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Waterhouse,
Vice-President,
Academic

FROM: Bill Krane,
Associate Vice-President,
Academic

RE: External Review
Department of Linguistics

DATE: April 10, 2002

The report of the External Review Committee (ERC) for the Department of Linguistics was submitted on May 22, 2001 following its site visit on March 28-30, 2001. The response of the Department of Linguistics was submitted on September 14, 2001 followed by a response from the Dean on November 5, 2001.

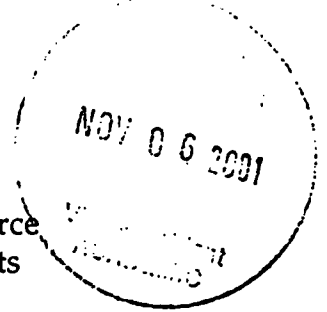
My comments on this external review report and the submissions from the Department and the Faculty are as follows:

1. A number of recommendations were made regarding the Department's undergraduate programs, the challenges of enrollment increases, constrained resources, and the resulting stress on the Department. I support the subsequent actions of the Department to try to remedy these problems (within existing resource constraints). Actions such as restructuring course offerings, providing additional teaching support, streamlining and realigning programs, and striking a better balance between service and core teaching requirements will assist the Department to more effectively serve the needs of its students and faculty.
2. With respect to Linguistics' graduate programs, I support the view of the ERC and the Dean that the Department must initiate changes in several areas. Initiatives such as improving the availability and type of graduate offerings, re-examining TA positions, and reviewing doctoral program requirements should help to enhance the existing programs.
3. In the Teaching English as a Second Language area, I support the initiative to differentiate the two streams in the Certificate program. The current moratorium on admission to the Diploma program, the development of the MA in TESOL, and the expansion of the Certificate should be revisited as resources permit. Issues such as improving the management of the practicum and introducing formal language screening methods should continue to be explored by the Department.

4. If the Language Training Institute were to be constituted as a separate unit, some of the current concerns and tensions may disappear. The Department and the Dean should continue to examine and discuss various alternatives to resolve this issue.
5. If the Language Training Institute becomes a separate unit, the Department may wish to revisit its decision to keep the Proficiency Certificate in First Nations Language within its area of responsibility.
6. Two administrative issues were also highlighted by the ERC: the provision of regular technical support for the Department's computer labs and the Language Learning Centre, and the development of program information brochures. The Department is encouraged to act on developing these services and information sources.
7. I support the recommendation of the ERC with respect to the implementation of faculty colloquia. This would serve to enhance the collegial environment and academic focus in the Department.

cc: L. Summers, Director, Academic Planning

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM



To: John Waterhouse
Vice-President, Academic

From: John T. Pierce
Dean of Arts

Subject: Linguistics Review

Date: November 5, 2001

John, I have provided, in the attached document, my response to the Linguistics external review. I believe that the external review itself, and the two responses to that review, provide clear directions for the Department of Linguistics. I would be happy to discuss with you any ambiguities.


John T. Pierce

Linguistics External Review - Dean's Response

Introduction

- The committee in the Linguistics external review did a very thorough job and produced a report containing very detailed recommendations for the department to consider. The Department's response indicates many points of agreement with the recommendations and the department has already begun to act on many of them. The Faculty response will focus on strategic issues facing the department, rather than the detailed recommendations.
- The review report identifies a number of points of stress concerning the department's programs, resources, and administration. Almost all of these are products of the department's recent history, and are a direct or indirect result of the rapid expansion of the department's programs since the last review in 1993. While some level of growth was intended (it is still a fairly young department, having been founded in 1988), the scale and rapidity of the growth was unanticipated by the department and Faculty. While this growth is a generally positive development, it has created a management headache for the department and is the root cause of many of the problems identified by the review.
- The department response identifies increased resources, particularly faculty complement, as the key to addressing most of the strains on the department. In principle, the Faculty agrees with this assessment, noting that restructuring course offerings as recommended in the report can only result in better deployment of thin resources that are seriously under the level they should be in order to service the nominal load the department's offerings now place on the department's faculty, staff, and temporary instruction resources. It remains a zero-sum game, and no amount of reorganization will address the underlying shortfall. The Faculty recognizes this and has addressed this situation with net new positions, including a lecturer position that will shore up faculty available to teach in the Teaching English as a Second Language stream. The Faculty will also provide indirect improvements by considering additional support for Cognitive Science. The Faculty will continue to monitor this situation and provide resources when possible.
- If the Dean is unable to provide further increases in the faculty complement commensurate with increases in student demand then consideration must be given to enrollment limits. One way to bring resource requirements closer

into line with what the department has available is to lower the target level of classroom spaces in non-essential teaching areas. This would require the department to prioritize its service teaching, considering, for example, which courses serve a strong recruiting function for the major and minor programs and which do not. In principle, students left out of Linguistics service courses will presumably seek electives from another department. This will contribute to strengthening support of major and minor programs, the graduate program, participation in interdisciplinary programs such as Cognitive Science, and new initiatives such as computational linguistics. The bottom line here is to strike a better balance in teaching between the service component and the pedagogical core designed for the completion of minors and majors.

Programs

- The review report identified particular steps to streamline and rebalance the undergraduate programs of the department. Key to this is a restructuring of the core curriculum for the major and minor to use faculty resources more efficiently relative to the curricular and pedagogical norms of the field. For one thing, preparation in problem-solving, writing, and analysis needs to be reintroduced in core areas where class size has led away from these pedagogical norms, especially in the upper division, and for another, upper-level variety needs to be reintroduced into the offerings. Attention needs to be paid to requirement and prerequisite structures relative to course offerings to assure that students in the program can graduate in a timely manner. The department is working in this direction, and proposals addressing these problems are already before the department's undergraduate curriculum committee.
- In the Teaching English as a Second Language area, the department should proceed with its plans to differentiate two streams in the Certificate (one with, one without a practicum) and put a moratorium on the Diploma. The Faculty, department, and review committee are in agreement on those issues. The addition of a lecturer in this area in fall 2002 will help maintain access to certificate courses and improve the management of the practicum.
- The graduate program issues have been identified in previous reviews and 3-year plans. The department should move to make adjustments along the lines recommended in the review without further delay. If this is not possible, then the only alternative is to reduce the number and range of admissions to the program so that manageable cohorts in defined areas move through the program together. It should be noted that completion times for MA students in the program are above the university average but are at average for the

PhD, so the department should consider either streamlining the MA program or possibly opting for a higher mix of PhD students. It may also be that resolution of the problem of access to an adequate array of courses will reduce the MA completion times. It is clear that the department needs to consider the graduate offerings and assure that appropriate faculty resources become available to support the existing programs. The recommendations in the review around redeployment of resources are meant to benefit this area, and if it cannot be achieved then some retrenching will be necessary. Recent and pending additions to the faculty complement should bring some impetus to this task.

- The department has begun reviewing graduate program requirements and is taking steps to address such issues as moving students through the program and limiting the use of largely directed readings and piggy-backed courses to meet program needs. The Faculty supports such initiatives.
- The review also expresses some concern for graduate students. Improving program access will be an important help to them, but support through the TA system and improved supervision standards are needed as well. If the realignment of the curriculum can lead to a reduction in sessionals, the department could move to increased use of tutorials and therefore TAs with little or no increase in temporary instruction resources. The Faculty will support such an initiative and is willing to work with the department to make it happen.

Administration

- For one of the smaller departments in the Faculty, this department is complicated because of the diversity of administrative tasks it must fulfill. The review noted this complexity and makes several recommendations in the direction of simplification. The department has responded largely in agreement. Curricular administration is complex because of the certificate, a major and minor at the undergraduate level, and the administration of the Cognitive Science program (which is currently growing in majors). The Faculty will seek to alleviate the Cognitive Science load if it can get more resources for Cognitive Science studies from the university. Recent addition of clerical staff in the Language Training Institute should reduce some of the burden of that sub-unit for department staff.
- A key to simplifying and streamlining the structure of the department would be to make the Language Training Institute an independent unit. The commonality between the members of this unit and the department at large is low, and was largely a decision of administrative convenience at the time

Interdisciplinary Studies was dissolved and the non-program languages (i. e. all but French) placed under the department. The review and the department agree that the present structure is not working well, and the Faculty is committed to working out an alternative to the present situation. A proposal already circulated calls for the Language Training Institute to become a separate unit with a director. This would address the marginalization of LTI faculty and at the same time address the very same issue identified for the language teaching faculty of the French department in their last review by providing a venue in which language teaching professionals in the Faculty can come together with common interests and goals. The Dean's office will examine in more depth this proposal in the current academic year. The viability of the change is of course heavily dependent upon the availability of resources.

Memorandum
Simon Fraser University
Department of Linguistics



TO: Dr. John Waterhouse
Vice President, Academic

FROM: Paul McFetridge

SUBJECT: Response to external review

DATE: September 14, 2001

Attached is the Department of Linguistics' response to the external review of Spring, 2001.

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Department of Linguistics

Response to External Review

2001

1.0 Preamble

The Department appreciates the effort of the review committee to understand the functioning of the Department of Linguistics and the SFU context. There are aspects of the Department not always found in Linguistics departments and the review committee appreciated both the strengths that they provide and the resources they require.

The process of preparing for the external review and working with the review committee was a valuable one. It helped considerably to focus the Department's hiring priorities and to validate several discussions that have been current in the Department.

The review report includes a large number of recommendations. The Department appreciates that these recommendations are intended to achieve stated goals and, where specific recommendations cannot be implemented, the goals will be nonetheless remain salient.

2.0 Undergraduate Programme

The review committee agreed with the Department reports that the steadily increasing enrollments in Linguistics without concomitant increase in resources has threatened pedagogy, has lengthened time to completion and has limited the range of courses that can be offered. Many of the Committee's recommendations are intended to address this problem by moving existing resources from the lower division courses to upper division courses. There is also an intention to move to a more robust tutorial system than currently used in the Department as a method of providing increased support for graduate students.

The best method for meeting the challenge of enrollment increases is to also increase the number of faculty in the Department. The Department has hired 3 new faculty in the last 2 years and is authorized to search for 3 positions in 2001/2002. Of these 6 positions, 3 are retirement replacements. These new faculty will provide a flexibility that the Department has not previously enjoyed and will help considerably with the enrollment pressures that the committee noted. At the time of the review, the committee was not aware that the Department would have authorization for 3 searches and consequently their attention was focussed on redeploying available resources. As these new faculty are integrated into the program, the effects of enrollment increases will not be as dramatic as they have been in the last 2 or 3 years.

Although this was not among the recommendations, the Department is examining the mechanisms that exist within the university to provide Linguistics majors and minors with registration priority in Linguistics courses. It is expected that this will improve time to completion rates and encourage students to declare their major earlier.

1. Reduce the number of sections offered in the courses for non-majors and the lower-division courses for majors (e.g. 100, 110, 130, 200, 220)

This recommendation is intended to free budget resources which can then be used to increase funding to graduate students and free faculty for other purposes. The Department has begun to move in this direction. This move is largely as a result of cuts to its Temporary Instruction budget and so the Department has not received the predicted benefits.

Mitigating against a drastic cut in the number of sections of lower division courses is the Department's responsibility to hold 10-12 sections of courses at Harbour Centre each year. It is the lower division courses that are most appropriate for Harbour Centre offerings. As room capacity at Harbour Centre is less than what these courses typically attract on the Burnaby Campus, offering these courses only at Harbour Centre will negatively impact enrollments.

The Department will closely examine the extent to which it is possible or desirable to move to single and large sections of lower division courses. This will be done in consultation with the Faculty so that enrollment targets and Harbour Centre obligations are met.

2. Make 220 an introductory course for majors and minors (and very interested undeclareds) and renumber it as 120. Remove the requirement that students have both 130 and 220 before getting into 221.

Ling220 is already the introductory course for majors and minors. The intent of this recommendation may be to restrict enrollment to majors and minors, but to do so would have a significantly negative impact on enrollments as it is required for most subsequent courses in the programme.

The Department feels that the 200 level numbering is appropriate as it signals that the content is more technical than that in the general interest 100 level courses.

The Department is sympathetic to removing the 130 requirement for 221. Preliminary discussions have explored the effect that this could have on the content on 130. It is felt that this move may help retain the integrity of 130 and may reduce enrollment pressures.

3. *Drop LING 310 (the department does not have the resources to offer a duplicate introductory course).*

The purpose of this course was to provide background for students who wished to take the PBD in Teaching English as a Second Language. In light of the recommendation to impose a moratorium on admission on the Diploma programme (recommendation #24), there is no need to offer this course in the foreseeable future.

4. *Use the resources freed up to allow more sections of senior-division courses.*

The Department is aware of the need to offer a wider range of upper division courses. Unfortunately, most of the resources freed by offering fewer sections of lower division courses are in the form of sessional positions. The Department does not normally use sessionals in upper division courses. The review team also recommends that these resources be used to offer more TA positions (recommendation #13).

The Department anticipates that a greater range of courses will be possible as the faculty complement and availability increases.

5. *Reduce the three-level streams of phonology and syntax.*

This will be referred to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for serious consideration.

6. *Reorganize Practical Phonetics to a large lecture, with tutorials, possibly not offered every semester.*

The Department has traditionally had a strong phonetics stream that begins with this course. As this course stresses the development of skills in phonetic transcription, it has been offered in multiple and smaller sections than many other courses. This recommendation would force the Department to redesign the pedagogy for this course. There is some reluctance to move in this direction. It has been noted that the recommendation depends on a continuing supply of graduate students skilled in phonetics. The graduate programme in Linguistics is a small one and does not always include students of phonetics. If this course remains a skill course but is removed from the prerequisite list of other courses, enrollments may decline and the course can be dedicated to majors and minors.

This recommendation will be examined, particularly for the long term. The next two retirees in the Department have teaching responsibilities in the phonetics stream. If they are not replaced, the Department may be forced to this option.

7. *To the extent that it is possible, we would recommend that the large, remaining sections of these courses be taught by faculty, further reducing the need for sessionals.*

This recommendation seems to conflict with recommendation #4 which includes the suggestion that faculty freed from teaching lower division courses teach more upper level courses.

The intent of the recommendation is move resources from the sessional budget to the TA budget. The Department will keep this goal in mind when it submits its budget requests and will negotiate this matter with the Faculty.

8. *At the level of the specific course content, specific topics in the introductory course (now LING 220), particularly in the areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax, drawing up statements which identify the core concepts that must be covered no matter who is teaching the course.*

The Department agrees that this course should have standardized content. The faculty who regularly teach this course have developed a standardized package which covers the areas mentioned. This package will be made available when the course is taught by sessionals.

9. *Create and provide for students a number of documents (and corresponding web pages) such as "Answers to questions most frequently asked by SFU students and UBC's Audiology and Speech*

Sciences programme" based on the survey of students and on the streaming of majors and minors which outline clearly the options available and reduce the amount of advising required to explain the intricacies of the programmes.

The Department has brochures of this sort for some of its programmes and recognizes that more information for students is useful. This recommendation will be referred to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Departmental Assistant for action.

3.0 Graduate Programme

The review committee's recommendations for the graduate programme are directed at improving student funding and increasing the number and quality of course offerings. It is expected that the increased faculty complement will be an opportunity for renewal of the graduate program and will provide the needed resources to meet some of the recommendations of the committee.

The graduate programme in the Department was largely a mentoring or apprenticeship programme that stressed the relationship between supervisor and student. As the Department reacted to the increasing enrollments in the undergraduate programme, the structure of the graduate programme began to erode. The Department has recognized that it must add more structure to the programme and welcomes the committee's comments.

10. Change requirements for graduate students so that their courses must be stand-alone non-piggy-backed courses (and normally not directed readings).

The Department was moving in this in this direction before the review. The courses required for graduate degrees are now offered as stand alone graduate courses. The increase in faculty complement should make it possible to decouple graduate courses on a more regular basis.

The Department is considering an internal policy limiting the number of directed readings courses.

11. Provide a series of graduate courses in a variety of the areas of specialization of the faculty.

The Department has such courses in the calendar. As it becomes possible to offer more graduate courses, implementation of this recommendation will be a natural consequence.

12. Offer at least three of these non-required graduate courses every year.

The Department agrees that a wider range of graduate courses is preferred and will examine how graduate courses are to be scheduled

13. Offer a greater number of TA positions.

As mentioned, the Department is offering fewer sections of courses as a result of budget cuts and so is not receiving the economic benefits the review committee expected. The Department acknowledges the desirability of a more robust tutorial system for both undergraduates and graduates and will consult with the Faculty on how this can be funded.

14. Make more explicit the criteria and mechanisms used to determine a student's eligibility for Fellowships and TA assignments.

The Department distributes its criteria for awarding Fellowships with the application forms. The Department has previously discussed formal criteria for TA assignments, but did not implement them. The Department will revisit this issue.

15. Reconsider the adoption of either Comprehensive Examinations or Generals Papers at the doctoral level.

The Department shares the review committee's concerns that Ph.D. students may not get the breadth that they require if they intend to continue as academic linguists. The review committee notes that a greater range of graduate courses may address this concern. The Department will examine this issue to determine how it may be appropriately addressed.

- 16. Allow the Graduate Committee of the department to make offers of admission without ratification by the whole department. We also feel that information about graduate fellowships and TA assignments should be discussed by both the Chair and the Graduate Committee. The Chair alone should not make this decision.*

The review committee may have misunderstood our admission procedures. The Graduate Studies Committee is charged with reviewing applications, approaching potential supervisors and making recommendations. These recommendations are discussed by the Department so that all faculty are aware of the interests of incoming graduate students and how supervisory loads are distributed.

When appropriate, the Chair discusses TA assignments with the Graduate Studies Committee, as well as the students involved and course supervisors. The Department will examine whether these discussions should be formalized.

- 17. Consider allowing part-time status for MA students. Ph.D. students must be full time.*

The Department was unaware of the desire for part time MAs and will investigate. It is agreed that Ph.D. students must be full time.

4.0 Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language

The Department welcomes the committee's comments on the Certificate in TESL. The committee highlights the pressure points that have concerned the Department.

The committee's recommendations that the Certificate be expanded to cover other languages likely reflect the experience of one member of the committee who is from a department that includes both language teachers and researchers in language teaching. This is a different situation from that at Simon Fraser University. The Department has deliberately focussed on Teaching English as a Second Language and has hired researchers in this area. It is felt that this area has considerable salience in the Lower Mainland and is deserving of this focus.

- 18. Develop means to stream students into a career-oriented Certificate (with practicum) primarily intended for Linguistics majors versus an academic-oriented, more theoretical Certificate (without practicum) which could be either for majors or non-majors.*

- 19. Make the criteria for each of the two streams clear and straightforward, and produce print descriptions to simplify the job of student advising.*

The Department has had a problem satisfying the needs of students whose first language is not English but who wish to study for the Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language. Often, these students are unable to handle the classroom work of a practicum. The practicum is necessary for students who want certification by the local professional body in British Columbia. Development of a non-practicum stream for students who do not require local certification has been discussed. This recommendation validates that discussion and the Department will continue planning for two streams.

- 20. Consider the possibility of making the majors/practicum Certificate one in Second Language Teaching (with ESL as one manifestation: e.e. "Certificate in Second Language Teaching: English").*

This recommendation will be examined. It is generally felt that the Certificate as it stands fully occupies available resources and that more resources are required to expand offerings.

- 21. Develop a working relationship with the LTI where practica can be carried out in different language classes (ESL as well as other languages).*

The Department will examine this possibility but recognizes that the various language units each have established practices and does not want impose practica on them if that interferes with those practices.

22. *Consider curricular options that would allow students to take a course in another language (with reflections on the language-learning process as part of the assigned work) as part of their Certificate in Second Language Teaching.*

This recommendation will be examined with the general recommendation of creating the Certificate in Second Language Teaching.

23. *Investigate ways to require students to have a high level of English proficiency and fluency (using performance-based test with an oral component like CAEL, for example) in order for students to enter the practicum Certificate programme.*

The Department is using informal screening methods at present. It will examine whether more formal methods are expedient.

24. *Impose a moratorium on admission to the Diploma programme (review this decision in three years).*

The Department has implemented this recommendation.

25. *Do not develop an MA TESOL at this time.*

The Department agrees that it does not have sufficient resources to mount an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language.

5.0 Proficiency Certificate in First Nations Languages

26. *Consider the pros and cons of housing the programme in the Language Training Institute.*

At present, the Certificate programme is best maintained by the Department of Linguistics. The LTI is understaffed and cannot accommodate the increased workload of the Certificate. The staff in the Department of Linguistics are accustomed to handling the occasional problems that arise when administering a programme that is conducted at numerous sites around the province.

6.0 Administration of the Department

27. *Provide straightforward guidelines (with print/brochure versions available that can be taken away and read) regarding course possibilities, criteria for streaming students into majors and non-majors (and arguing for the importance of making an early declaration of major), then the load of the support staff would be lessened.*

This recommendation repeats recommendation #9 The Department will review the information it disseminates to students and the manner in which it does so.

28. *Provide (perhaps at the Faculty level) technical support for the computer labs and the Language Learning Centre.*

Technical support would be greatly appreciated.

7.0 The Language Training Institute

The Language Training Institute was created and moved into the Department of Linguistics as part of the Faculty of Art's 1997 3 Year Plan. It was conceived as an opportunity to create a unit for the several language units in Interdisciplinary Studies and provide administrative support. There is no interaction between the lecturers of the LTI and the faculty in the Department of Linguistics, in part because there are no overlapping interests and in part because the two units are geographically isolated.

The review committee recognizes that the instructors in the Language Training Institute feel marginalized. The various units have small programmes in some cases servicing other Certificate programmes. The primary recommendation, to establish the LTI as a separate unit, is an attempt to create a more unified and coherent unit.

29. Create a separate unit for the LTI.

Establishing the Language Training Institute as a separate unit could be an important first step to fostering language learning at SFU. Of particular importance is leadership of this unit. Languages deserve a leader who is experienced in the issues of language teaching, is able to evaluate how languages are currently taught and suggest areas of improvement, and is able to conduct community outreach. Linguists are not language teachers and so are not the appropriate group to search for a leader.

The review committee correctly notes that the administrative relations between the LTI and the Department of Linguistics proper need to be clarified. Neither group has expressed interest in voting on issues relevant only to the other and both groups have indicated that they would prefer that the other not be involved issues not relevant to them. If the LTI remains as part of the Department of Linguistics, the Department's constitution will be amended to clarify this relationship.

30. Add one half-time support position to the LTI.

A half-time position is being created using revenue generated by the English Bridge Programme.

31. Investigate a means to pay language TAs at the same rate as Linguistics TAs.

The rate of pay for language TAs was established before the creation of the Language Training Institute. The Department will consult with the Faculty of Arts on whether this rate is still appropriate and, if not, how an appropriate rate can be established.

32. Clarify the relationship of the Language Learning Centre to the operations of the Department of Linguistics and the LTI.

The Language Learning Centre is a computer laboratory that the Department of Linguistics was charged with creating and administering by the Faculty. It provides computer support for classes in Linguistics and the languages taught in the Language Training Institute and the Department of French.

8.0 Other Recommendations

33. The department should reconsider the offering of colloquia.

The Department is examining ways of encouraging attendance at colloquia.

**Report of the External Review of the Department of Linguistics
at Simon Fraser University**

Prepared by

**John Archibald (Calgary), Chair
Francis Jeffry Pelletier (Alberta)
Catherine Ringen (Iowa)
Devon Woods (Carleton)**

22 May 2001

Table of Contents

Preamble	1
Goals of the Report	1
I. Overall Situation Assessment	2
Successes/Unique Features	2
Analysis of Problem Areas	2
II. The Programs	
Undergraduate Programme	6
Graduate Programme	8
Certificate in Teaching TESL	9
First Nations Programme	10
III. Faculty	11
IV. The Administration of the Department	11
V. Other Recommendations	13
VI. Future Directions	13
VII. Executive Summary	14

Preamble

The External Review Committee, composed of John Archibald (Calgary), May Ann Gillies (SFU), Jeff Pelletier (Alberta), Catherine Ringen (Iowa), and Devon Woods (Carleton) spent three days, March 28 to March 30, 2001 at Simon Fraser University. The Committee would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Gillies. She was able to tell us many useful facts about the operation of the University. However, as per the terms of reference of the Committee, she was not involved in the writing of this report.

The Committee met with a variety of interested parties, and consulted a range of documents provided by senior administration and the department, including a very thorough Review Report dated March 2001, and the Three Year Plans formulated toward the end of 2000.

We had meetings with:

John Waterhouse (VP(A))
Bruce Clayman (VP(R))
Jon Driver (Dean, GS)
John Pierce (Dean, Arts)
Roger Blackman (Associate Dean, Arts)

Ross Saunders (LING)
Nancy Hederg (LING)
Paul McFetridge (LING)
Murray Munro (LING)
Dean Mellow (LING)
Tom Perry (LING)
Donna Gerds (LING)
Wyn Roberts (LING)
Juan Sosa (LING)
Zita McRobbie (LING)
Dick De Armond (LING)
Trude Heift (LING/LTI)
Billie Ng (LTI)
Noriko Omae (LTI)
Sarah Fleming (LTI)
Lilian Zuccolo (LTI)
Marianne Ignace (First Nations)

We also met with sessional instructors of the Linguistics Department, support staff and graduate students. Unfortunately, arrangements were not successful for us to be able to talk to any undergraduate students other than those who had gone on to the graduate programme. We would like to note how valuable it was talking to students about the programme. This should be an important element in future reviews.

Goals of the Report

The Committee, in making its recommendations, would like to declare the following goals in preparing the report:

1. To strengthen the undergraduate and graduate programmes.
2. To alleviate stresses on faculty members.
3. To identify the problems with the programmes and the causes for them.
4. To make suggestions that would assist the department in accomplishing its goals.

Our attempt in making recommendations is to focus initially on our analysis of the most agreed upon issues, and from this to set a series of superordinate goals to be accomplished in the near future. Then we will suggest more specific strategies which we feel might address these goals, but acknowledge that there may be alternative approaches to achieving them. However, the goals, if agreed upon, can be a future benchmark to be used in evaluating the implementation of strategic alternatives.

I. Overall Situation Assessment

The Committee was struck by a number of crucially positive aspects of the department. Faculty members (with only a few exceptions) expressed a sense of collegiality and a feeling that there exists a good dynamic. For the most part, they feel that the Linguistics Department at Simon Fraser is a good place to be working, that there is the possibility for cooperative and productive research, and that there is great potential and interesting new directions that the department is beginning to pursue. The recent new hires and possibility of additional ones in the near future has added to this optimism. Overall, the Committee was highly impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the faculty. Considering the huge workloads that they were carrying, they showed a great deal of loyalty for the programmes and the students, and were willing to put enormous time and effort as well as creativity into trying to provide the best possible education for their students. This effort is certainly signalled in the course evaluations that we saw, where in many cases, the students applauded the faculty members and sessionals' efforts to make the class more than a simple lecture and fact-memorization course, but rather include a tutorial component and more interactive types of teaching.

Successes/Unique Features

The Department of Linguistics has a number of unique features and clear successes which we would like to highlight:

1. The diversity of options available to the students in terms of such broad divisions as theoretical, descriptive and applied linguistics. Faculty and students alike spoke to the beneficial mixing of these areas. Of particular note is the inclusion of the TESL training certificate in the department; this is not a common offering in linguistics departments in Canada, and could form the basis of a 'unique SFU outlook'.
2. The new hires in the department are strong. They have quickly developed well-defined research programmes and are positioning themselves to attract external funding in the near future.
3. The existing faculty. We acknowledge the range and strength of the department and make our recommendations in the spirit of wanting to build on this.
4. The field of computational linguistics is well-represented at SFU. Existing personnel (McFetridge and Heift) as well as new hires (Taboada & Han) will strengthen this area. This clearly brands SFU as one of the few linguistics departments that has an emphasis in this area, and its close affiliation with computational linguistics in the Computing Science department further strengthens its standing. This is an area which allows for clear links to be made with industry.
5. Atmosphere. As noted above, the majority of the faculty we talked to commented that this was a department where people got along and allowed people to work together. While there may have been problems in the past, it is widely thought that things are getting better.
6. Connections with Cognitive Science. The Cognitive Science Programme is viewed as the joint effort of professors in four departments - Philosophy, Linguistics, Computer Science, and Psychology - but only Linguistics has a half-time joint appointment in it (Nancy Hedberg). The current 'home' of Cognitive Science therefore is the Linguistics department, and the support of the current administration in Linguistics is very much appreciated. The long-standing involvement of Linguistics in Cognitive Science has aided in the success of this interdisciplinary programme.

Analysis of Problem Areas

In many meetings that we had in the three days, we heard about the programmes and the department from a number of different perspectives. We heard the perspectives of faculty, senior administration, staff, and students. We were able to compare the perspectives of experienced faculty with new faculty, and of faculty members in distinct areas of specialty and with distinct theoretical orientations to the issues concerning the department. In spite of these many different perspectives (and in some cases disagreements) about how things should be handled, there was significant agreement about what the problems are. With the opportunity that the external committee had to take three days to step back and try to fit the pieces together, it was possible to come up with an explanation of the interwoven set of causes and effects which produces these problems, to see the structural contradictions or mutually exclusive elements which lead to them, and to make some recommendations in an attempt to resolve them.

The problems are complex and interrelated. The area initially identified as most crucial by faculty was the excessive teaching workload caused by the rapidly increasing numbers of students enrolling in courses at the undergraduate level. Right now the department members feel as if they are "running on a treadmill" or "sitting in boiling water"

(phrases we heard during our interviews). This workload stems from the combination of the Provincial government's emphasis on undergraduate student FTE's, the Department's interpretation of the University's implementation of this, and attempts by faculty members to provide a more than cursory education under such circumstances. It is clear that the funding formulas developed by the Provincial government based on numbers of students enrolled in undergraduate programmes means that there is pressure to "process" the students and put as many as possible into and through the system. However, there are signs that the education these students are thus receiving is somewhat "cursory" (this is not directed solely at the Linguistics Department). In spite of the fact that there is growing research to indicate that industry values language abilities - understanding and using language to analyze, to solve problems, to communicate the problem solving processes, to write, to frame rhetorically the solutions - these abilities are sacrificed by the current system, as, increasingly, courses must depend on multiple choice exams to train and evaluate students. When faculty members attempt to counter this tendency in their teaching (which many have and which students' course evaluations that we looked at indicate is an important part of their education) the result is enormous workloads, and the sacrifice of research and balance in the activities of the department and its individuals. However, this reality, dependent as it is upon the funding procedures used by the Provincial government, is outside our mandate - even though it plays a role in shaping the department that we are looking at.

The more crucial question, from the point of view of the External Committee, is how this Provincial funding basis is translated into educational practices via the senior administration of the University, the Dean of Arts, and the Chair of the Department of Linguistics. This emphasis on maintaining a high level of student numbers (and therefore a high student/instructor ratio) is seen as being extremely important when it is transmitted from the Dean of Arts to the Department: on a number of occasions, the comment was made by faculty members that "we are being good citizens" in taking such a load of students in each course. There is clearly an impression that large classes are rewarded in some explicit ways (future positions and larger support budgets) and in many implicit ways, and it seemed to the Committee that the departmental attempt to further this goal has taken precedence over other facets of the department. However, there are a number of negative consequences of these policies. The question is, since the Provincial mandate cannot be challenged, what are the ways that these consequences can be offset within the university so as to produce an effective Linguistics programme with positive educational outcomes. We will try to answer this question in the sections of this report which follow.

There are a number of consequences which result from this strategy, which for the most part seems to have evolved implicitly. The first is that this enrollment-driven set of priorities for the department has had an affect not only on class size but also programme structure. It was stated by several faculty members that, in setting up the initial departmental syllabus, there was an attempt to take into account what would be considered important for a Linguistics graduate to have in the form of knowledge and skills upon graduation. However, when student numbers were at a critically low level a few years ago, the department began to put some emphasis on developing and running courses that would attract students. This emphasis has been successful, far more so than was imagined just a few years ago - registrations in Linguistics courses have increased dramatically in the past three years, as shown by statistics from the Office of the VP Academic. In 1995, they taught 1143 students while in 2000 they taught 4737. It is this increase (without a concomitant increase in teaching staff) which is considered to be a major problem and blamed for the workload pressure that faculty members are currently feeling. However, it is not only the large increases in enrollments in terms of pure numbers of students that seemed to the External Committee to be the problem. Members of faculty noted that the courses are attracting many students from other departments and it is these numbers which have grown recently, while at the same time majors and minors in Linguistics seem to have levelled out or perhaps been dropping. This impression is supported by university statistics which indicate that only 8% of departmental FTE's are approved majors and minors in Linguistics, and 92% are "students in other programmes" (we should note, however, that this figure may include undeclareds). These statistics suggest that, overwhelmingly, this is no longer primarily a Linguistics programme; this is a service programme. Moreover, this change has taken place not by design, but by accident.

Faculty members also noted that the composition of the group taking Linguistics courses has changed with regard to the native language of the students: a large number of students are non-native speakers of English. For the most part, they are not international students, but students who have taken their high school in British Columbia, and who are able to be admitted with 4 years of high school in English as a way to fulfill their English language requirement. We know from the experience in other provinces that it is possible for non-native speakers of English to fulfill their high school requirements with a predominant selection of courses which do not require or develop a high degree of sophistication in the rhetorical demands of academic English. We have no independent assessment of the academic English proficiency of students in Linguistics, but feel the university administration should investigate this concern. Perhaps there needs to be a place for credit ESL courses on campus.

Faculty members noted the following possible causes for the increases in enrollment, and the increased workload they are forced to take on:

- The linguistics department has developed a number of excellent courses of general interest in the lower division which have become popular as electives among students in other departments in the university.
- The Certificate in ESL teaching (which can be done concurrently with an undergraduate degree in other areas as well as in Linguistics) has become a popular addition for students from other departments. This has caused increased enrollment in upper level Linguistics courses as well as the lower division, and an increase in the demands of the practicum component (placement of students with teachers in community ESL classes) of the Certificate programme.
- Linguistics courses are perceived to be relatively easy to get good grades in. However, an examination of average course grades for lower division Linguistics courses versus other departments in the faculty showed little or no difference in recent years. A number of years ago there was some difference, and it is possible that student perceptions result from a lag effect. If so, presumably this effect will disappear. It is possible, however, that the perception stems from the fact that the popular courses in Linguistics have grown, they have become less language intensive (i.e. it is impossible to demand rhetoric and language intensive learning and testing opportunities, such as class presentation, and written assignments). Therefore, students who have difficulties functioning effectively in English may choose these courses as a way of avoiding lower grades. This was presumed to be the case of some of the non-majors who are taking the courses - the "Business wanna-be's" as they were termed: students who want to get into the Faculty of Business and seem to feel that they can raise their grades by taking these courses.
- An associated reason is that some of these courses may well seem to promise practice in developing English skills (especially ones in phonetics and in English grammar, a recent addition in the programme). As the student body of Simon Fraser increasingly has other languages than English as their mother tongue, these are attractive means that can be taken for credit, in a student's attempt to improve their English. If this is the case it would mean, that in essence, since no ESL programme exists at Simon Fraser, the students are creating their own.

Because of these enrollment pressures, the department puts a very large amount of resources into handling lower division courses. In order to service the large number of students who are taking Linguistics courses (in particular the non-majors), the department has to allocate a significant part of its temporary instructional budget to sessionals teaching lower level courses. More than 50% of the lower division course sections are taught by sessionals. This has several perhaps further unintended consequences. It raises concerns that Linguistics majors at lower levels are not getting the benefit of regular-faculty teaching. In addition, when faculty members are required to put a great deal of time into these courses, they have to direct their energies away from their research, and away from the graduate programme (graduate courses, when offered, are usually taught as an overload). A further consequence is that support (both financial and in terms of training opportunities) for graduate students through TA'ships is minimized.

A programme consequence of putting so many resources into lower division courses and into courses which service students from other departments is that these resources are diverted away from a full palette of upper division courses. This was mentioned as a problem by faculty and is supported by university statistics for the department indicating that a four-year degree usually takes longer than four years to complete. Reports from the students we talked to blamed this problem on the fact that they cannot get the upper division courses they need; this viewpoint is corroborated by university statistics (a follow-up survey done on graduates from the 1997 class), where only 9% of Linguistics graduates (compared to 20% for the university as a whole) reported that they found the availability of courses was "excellent".

It is not just a matter of class sizes being very large. It is also that with the resulting group of students who have a wide range of purposes for taking the course and interests in the field, there is consequently a wide range of background knowledge and skills. This means that the degree to which the teaching can focus on techniques of linguistic analysis is seriously hampered. As a result, the coherence of the programme suffers, as the instructional staff tries to teach to such a wide range of needs. The programme does not suffer from the fact that there is a theoretical side, a TESL side and a graduate side. These are positive aspects of its diversity. The problem is that students enrolling in each of the courses in these areas have a wide variety of needs. The needs of these diverse students could be addressed in a redesigned programme.

There are also some serious methodological consequences that have resulted from these large classes: some important basics of a university education - particularly effective high level literacy - are being neglected. Because of the size of the classes, it is impossible to put a focus on rhetorical problem-solving skills through writing and discussion. The use of computers for example seemed, as far as we could tell, mainly for doing exercises, rather than developing interactive rhetorical and problem-solving skills. A number of faculty members described the ways in which they try to counteract this situation, and student evaluations indicated the degree to which this attempt is appreciated by students. However, the fact remains that certain basic skills are not adequately addressed by the programme. This point is also supported by the statistics reported in the survey of graduates. The ability to write well was considered to be an outcome of the programme by 36% of Linguistics grads versus 52% of SFU grads. While on the other hand, the ability to write well is considered important in current jobs by 61% of Linguistics grads compared to 49% of SFU grads.

The effects described above filter up and produce a negative effect on the graduate programme as well. Feedback from the graduate students indicates that the central issue is that there are virtually no courses for students to take at the graduate level, and that students are left to their own devices. When there are courses that graduate students can take, they are piggybacked onto the fourth year undergraduate courses. For the students who had gone through the SFU undergraduate programme, this meant that they sat through three hours a week of course content that they had already taken. The fourth hour that they were intended to get to make it a graduate course (which is taught as an overload by faculty) did not always happen, due to the overwhelming demands of the undergraduate programme. The notion of the graduate programme as a 'mentoring' programme did not resonate with these students: very few of the students felt they had 'mentors'. Indeed, they were surprised to hear that this was what the 'official position' of the Department was. All the students expected that there would be graduate courses for them to take, since they are mentioned in the Calendar; and they were bitterly disappointed when they found out (after arrival) that there were no such courses offered.

The attempt to provide a thorough education to so many students with so many goals and agendas ultimately affects the research productivity of the faculty. Although research is being carried out, it is a case of faculty burning the candle at both ends in order to do it. Faculty members are clearly dedicated teachers who put enormous amounts of energy and time into their students and, with the immediate pressures of student and course deadlines, it is the research programmes that will ultimately suffer if the current situation is not altered.

It is not just the faculty who reported being overwhelmed by the workload inherent in the current situation. The support staff also noted that the increase in students and responsibilities of the department, the change in the demographics of the students (an increase in non-native speakers who are less familiar with procedures and who take longer to advise), and the lack of coherence in the programme (trying to provide a programme for so many types of students results in trying to explain to each type how the programme works and how they fit into it) has had the consequence of dramatically increasing the demands on the non-academic staff. There was some expression given to the idea that the addition of the LTI, the increase of the TESL programme, and the adoption of Cognitive Science's administration have all led to a sharp increase of workload - much of which is seen as being "extra to their real job".

In this report, we considered the questions posed in the terms of reference presented to the External Committee. It was interesting, in retrospect, to read the report of the External Reviewers from 1993. Our Committee did not feel, as the previous Committee did, that there is fragmentation and a lack of vision in the department. Indeed, the effort and careful analysis that went into the departmental Review Report, the Three Year Plans and TESL Self Study indicate a strong sense of vision and insight into the workings and problems in the department. There is fragmentation, but it is not a result of the diversity of the department. Rather, this diversity is seen as a strength; it is the diversity of student types and an attempt to try to satisfy all their needs simultaneously that is perceived by the External Committee as the source of many of the problems. However, even with this important difference

between the 1993 Review and the present one, there are a number of recommendations made previously that are mirrored in our goals and strategies.

In each of the areas below, we have attempted to suggest goals which seem to reflect a consensus of opinion among faculty, staff and students, as well as senior administration, and then specify a set of strategies which may achieve some of these goals. However, we acknowledge that we are still outsiders, and although this distance allows us to see patterns that may be less clear to those in the thick of daily departmental life, there may be other political and personal issues at play that may make certain of these strategies unworkable. We note that in the previous External Review, a number of the recommendations were rejected at the departmental level. Our purpose is not to insist on specific strategies but rather to provide a framework within which different local strategies can be evaluated in light of agreed upon goals.

II. The Programmes

1. Undergraduate Programme

As noted above, the main difficulties facing the undergraduate programme include the extremely large class sizes and the high proportion of non-majors in the classes, both resulting in an a kind of pedagogy which is not favourable neither to either general academic learning or linguistic analysis, and a lack of availability of upper level courses resulting in undergraduate students having a hard time completing their degrees in 4 years. In addition, the students we talked to who had graduated from the SFU undergraduate programme indicated that the attempt to create a vertical structure of courses in syntax and phonology was not successful. Although, in theory, the previous courses are intended to be prerequisites for the later courses, the students made it abundantly clear that, in practice, this is not the case, primarily because the theoretical models which are taught are not compatible. This may occur partly because they sometimes are taught by sessionals, and partly because individual faculty members insist on the right to teach their own (sometimes very idiosyncratic) versions of these theoretical courses. This variety, it was acknowledged by the Committee, in itself is not a bad thing; however, when it conflicts with the purpose of the expressed prerequisite structure of the courses, then it nullifies the purpose of having that structure.

An additional factor that plays a role in a number of the problems is something outside the scope of the committee's terms of reference. The schedule of courses, based as they are on a semester system which is intended to promote flexibility, ultimately produces its own rigidity in the sense that there then have to be extremely frequent offerings (usually each semester) of each required course. The extended vertical structure discussed above intensifies the problem. The result is a very large number of medium sized course sections taught by sessionals. Since the semester system cannot be tampered with, perhaps it is time to revisit the question of programme structure along the lines noted below to allow students more flexibility in programme paths and course sequencing.

Goals

1. Consider a reconfiguration of the undergraduate programme structure and curriculum returning to a top-down planning strategy to deal with such broad questions as "what we want (i) our Linguistics graduates and (ii) students who take Linguistics courses as electives to know and be able to do when they graduate". This type of analysis would be intended to dictate the nature of the programme structure. This seems to be a particularly good time for this, as the department is undergoing a period of faculty renewal.
2. To structure the programme and the curriculum so that there is a good availability of courses at all levels which provide majors with the knowledge, skills and experiences for further study in Linguistics (or other related areas) or the job market. A consideration of the difference between the BA programme and its BA Honours programme might also be done in this light. The structure of the BA programme seems to reflect an intention to prepare students for graduate school, whereas the impression that the Committee got in the interviews was that only a small percentage of undergraduate degree holders in Linguistics go on to graduate study. We feel that the students who wish to go on to graduate work could be encouraged to register in the BA (Honours programme).
3. To increase the coherence and efficiency of the programme by separating the service role of the department from the degree programme role of the department, with certain courses primarily intended for declared majors (or interested undeclareds), and others for students from other departments (and other undeclareds). The criteria for choosing (and thus advising) would be as simple and straightforward as possible.

4. To retain student numbers and student FTE's and keep the programme attractive to students, by providing both a series of popular service courses which are primarily lecture-based and can expand to very large levels, and a series of more analytic courses for majors which are smaller.
5. Determine an optimum mix of faculty, sessionals and TA's in achieving the pedagogic goals. Ensure that the coherence of majors' and minors' programmes are enhanced by as much as possible faculty teaching, and by the greater use of TA's and reduced use of sessionals.

Strategies

The following are some specific strategies suggested by the External Committee to be considered in light of the above goals.

- (a) Reduce the number of sections offered in the courses for non-majors and the lower-division courses for majors (e.g. 100, 110, 130, 200, 220). Increase the number of students taught in each section of these courses so as to maintain roughly the same total number of students in each of the courses. Pedagogically, the difference between teaching a class of 100 and teaching a class of 300 is less important than the difference between a class of 40 and one of 100. Numbers of students - so crucial for maintaining the base operating budget of the department - would not be lost.
- (b) Make 220 an introductory course for majors and minors (and very interested undeclareds) and renumber it as 120. Remove the requirement that students have *both* 130 and 220 before getting into 221. Most students do not arrive on campus knowing that they want to study linguistics. As a result they may not take the 130 course until their second year. Even if they take the 130 (or 100, or 110) course in their first year, and discover that they like Linguistics, they most likely will not take the 220 course until their second year. They currently need both 130 and 220 to get into 221 (Intro to Phonology), and this means they cannot take 221 until even later in their programme. This change would improve the current time-to-completion stats for the department which as noted are far too high.
- (c) Drop LING 310 (the department does not have the resources to offer a duplicate Introductory stream)
- (d) Use the resources freed up to allow more sections of senior-division courses. We do not feel that the pedagogic change resulting from this change will make LING 100 or 110 less attractive to students.
- (e) Reduce the three-level streams of phonology and syntax. No other linguistics programme that we know of requires this many levels in the core areas (this recommendation was also made in the 1993 review of the department). The argument might well be made that SFU graduates are different in that they emerge with a level of sophistication not achieved by students in other programmes. However, the comments we have heard, lead us to question this. We heard both faculty members and students mention that this 'vertical streaming' is not working. There is no mechanism which ensures that students are taught in 221 what they need in 321 or are taught in 321 what they need in 403. In addition, this structure also does not meet the needs of the undergraduate students who move directly into the MA programme. These students commented that they had to repeat the content of the 400-level courses in the graduate programme while paying graduate fees.
- (f) Reorganize Practical Phonetics to a large lecture, with tutorials, possibly not offered every semester. This might mean one hour of lecture and two of tutorials, one taught by the faculty member doing the lecture, and the other taught by TAs. In this way, material that can be taught to large numbers of students could be covered in the lecture, but ear-training and production practice could be carried out in appropriately sized tutorial sections. The current arrangement of moderately large sections means that students do not get the attention so crucial in such a course, and mentioned as being desirable by the faculty. (It is the attempt to achieve this pedagogic goal that adds so dramatically to the workload of the faculty.)
- (g) To the extent that it is possible, we would recommend that the large, remaining sections of these courses be taught by regular faculty, further reducing the need for sessionals. Our discussions with the Dean's Office confirmed that the department would be able to switch the funds from the TI to the TA budget.
- (h) At the level of the specific course content, specific topics in the introductory course (now LING 220), particularly in the areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax, drawing up statements which identify the core concepts that must be covered no matter who is teaching the course. We do not feel that this would impinge on academic freedom in any way. Faculty members might agree that x,y, and z *must* be taught in the phonology section of the Introductory course, but that a,b,c,d, and e are optional. This still allows each faculty member to put their own stamp onto a course, but ensures that students who are enrolled in higher level courses have the required background for the course (meaning that the higher level course would not have to review material that some students have missed).
- (i) Create and provide for students a number of documents (and corresponding webpages) such as "Answers to questions most frequently asked by SFU students about UBC's Audiology and Speech Sciences programme"

based on the survey of students and on the streaming of majors and minors which outline clearly the options available and reduce the amount of advising time required to explain the intricacies of the programmes.

2. Graduate Programme

It seemed to the External Committee that although there is little support for graduate programmes provided by the Provincial government, SFU has the potential to provide a very unique graduate programme that can be attractive to both domestic and international students and can enhance the reputation of the university. Such a programme is already in existence theoretically, but as noted by students, in practice it does not fully exist. Two main obstacles raised repeatedly throughout the interview sessions we held: the lack of graduate course offerings and the relatively small number of TA positions available for graduate students. These problems were considered serious by faculty and disastrous by students.

Currently Masters students are required to take five graduate courses, while Ph.D. students must take four. For both MA and PhD students, two of the courses must be phonology and syntax. In the past, graduate students have most often taken their courses "piggy-backed" on undergraduate courses. This has been unsatisfactory both for faculty and students. As of this year, though, graduate syntax and phonology have been offered as free-standing courses. We believe that this is a move in the right direction and applaud this decision. However, since no other stand-alone graduate courses are offered, the pattern has been that the remaining courses are taken as "directed readings" (at times with a single faculty mentor throughout the student's career). Almost everyone we spoke with felt that there are serious drawbacks to this system and we agree. We understand that the reason that stand-alone graduate courses have not been routinely offered is the heavy demands on faculty to teach undergraduate courses leaving no faculty strength to teach graduate courses. We discuss strategies elsewhere about changes in the undergraduate requirements and reorganization of service courses to include tutorials which are intended in part to allow the faculty to teach the five required graduate courses every two years.

In contrast to the undergraduate programme, we feel the the graduate programme is understructured. We found a difference compared to the previous reviewers: the graduate students we talked to were not enthusiastic about the flexibility of the graduate programme. Although they also appreciate some degree of flexibility, without exception they expressed the desire for "real" graduate courses with more diversity and structure to the programme. The department's Three Year Plan of December 2000 recognizes these points, and the External Committee feels that although the "cohort" plan described there may assist in this development, the key is offering the courses.

The Committee feels for a number of reasons that it is important to increase the support for graduate students support, in terms of TAs. TAs will be needed as the undergraduate courses are reorganized (as recommended elsewhere) as larger courses with tutorials. (This will entail reducing the number of sections taught by sessionals so as to free up funds to support TAs.) The current situation has another drawback. Graduate students get very little teaching experience which is a crucial aspect of graduate education. If the undergraduate teaching is reorganized so that graduate students run more tutorials (and assist with grading) not only will faculty be freed to teach some graduate courses, but the graduate students will gain valuable teaching experience.

Goals

1. To create, maintain and publicize a coherent and unique SFU graduate programme that will attract both top level domestic and international graduate students.
2. Within current resource restrictions and current Provincial policies, to provide an element of breadth and depth to the graduate programme and reduce the overlap with the undergraduate programme
3. To provide financial support and teaching experience for graduate students.

Strategies

The following are strategies suggested by members of the External Committee in light of the above goals.

- (a) Change requirements for graduate students so that their courses must be stand-alone non-piggy-backed courses (and normally not directed readings). Required courses remain Phonology and Syntax.
- (b) Provide a series of graduate courses in a variety of the areas of specialization of the faculty. These might include Computational Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Field Methods, Applied Linguistics, Typology, Semantics, Morphology.
- (c) Offer at least three of these non-required graduate courses every year. These courses should count toward faculty teaching load.
- (d) Offer a greater number of TA positions for graduate students.
- (e) Make more explicit the criteria and mechanisms used to determine a student's eligibility for Fellowships and TA assignments. These criteria should be published in a Graduate handbook.
- (f) Reconsider the adoption of either Comprehensive Examinations or Generals Papers at the Doctoral level. The Committee was uncomfortable with the current programme structure which does not guarantee that the student emerge with any particular breadth in their programme. This seems to be undesirable both in terms of the granting of a PhD, and the implications of the marketability of the students in the academic market. However, we do acknowledge the department's rejection of this recommendation from the previous External Review. It is important that entering students are aware of this characteristic of the department. It is possible that with the implementation of the course-related strategies described above, the issue of breadth will seem less problematic.

There were also two other suggestions made regarding the administration of the programme not directly related to the goals noted above:

- (g) Allow the Graduate Committee of the department to make offers of admission without ratification by the whole department. Our Committee feels that when the department agrees to have someone sit on this committee, they are agreeing to abide by their decisions. We also feel that information about graduate fellowships and T.A. assignments should be discussed by both the Chair and the Graduate Committee. Knowing the rough amount of TA funding to expect, may well influence a student's decision to come to the university. The Chair alone should not make this decision.
- (h) Consider allowing part-time status for MA students. PhD. students must be full time.

3. Certificate in Teaching ESL

The Committee felt that the Certificate in Teaching ESL Programme is of great benefit to the department, and the faculty members who have joined since the last review and are now directly involved in this programme have been important contributors to the department's profile. The main difficulty seems to be that, like the undergraduate programme, the TESL Certificate programme attracts students with a wide range of interests and backgrounds, which produces a significant drain on resources and detracts from the direction and momentum of the programme. This also contributes to the overcrowding in upper division courses, to the difficult administrative task of assessing applications and advising students, and ultimately to the heavy workload of faculty teaching these courses. The issue of year-round scheduling and the plethora of medium-sized sections is problematic with regard to the TESL Certificate (for example there are 7 sections a year of Ling 360 and 362).

However, it is possible that a clear streaming of students and a structural refining of the department's courses, along with the suggestions made by the TESL Committee in the Self-Study Report of March 1, 2001 - in particular the distinction between a TESL Certificate and a TESL Preparatory Certificate - can help to alleviate the problem somewhat while retaining the benefits of offering a Certificate programme.

The Committee felt that for the present, it is important to put the TESL focus in the department on the Certificate programme. It is not feasible to include a TESL stream in the M.A. programme at present and, in addition, it is advisable to suspend the Diploma programme for the time being.

It was also felt that it would be worth exploring possibilities for mutually beneficial links between this programme and the Language Training Institute (see the discussion of the LTI below). The TESL Director should work closely with the Director of the LTI to examine links and coordination between the programmes.

Goals

1. To streamline the administrative system so that the department's energy can produce a strong sense of direction and momentum.
2. To stream students into two separate streams, distinguishing between students who are majors/minors in Linguistics and interested in a Linguistics/Language Teaching career, and students from other departments taking the Certificate as an add-on to their programme.
3. To establish a mutually beneficial working relationship between the Certificate programme and the Language Training Institute.

Strategies

- a) Develop means to stream students into a career-oriented Certificate (with practicum) primarily intended for Linguistics majors versus an academic-oriented more theoretical Certificate (without practicum) which could be either for majors or non-majors. The Certificate parchment can specify that a practicum is included, as this might be important for job placement.
- b) Make the criteria for each of the two streams clear and straightforward, and produce print descriptions to simplify the job of student advising.
- c) Consider the possibility of making the majors/practicum Certificate one in Second Language Teaching (with ESL as one manifestation: i.e. "Certificate in Second Language Teaching: English"). This would not require a change in the content of the programme in any dramatic way. The focus (advertised and actual) would remain primarily ESL, but discussions of linguistic aspects of other languages which are covered in the department, general methodological aspects of language teaching, and practica in language classes other than ESL, would be considered part of the programme. Graduates of the programme could then be valid candidates for industry jobs where teaching other languages is relevant, or community jobs where local languages of new or Aboriginal Canadians are important. This could appeal to students whose native language is not English and where pedagogical aspects of their languages could be a basis of their project work in the programme. From the departmental perspective, it could enhance, first, the relationship between the applied side of the department and the theoretical side and, secondly between, the applied side and the practical language teaching in the LTI.
- d) Develop a working relationship with the LTI where practica can be carried out in different language classes (ESL as well as other languages).
- e) Consider curricular options that would allow students to take a course in another language (with reflections on the language-learning process as part of the assigned work) as part of their Certificate in Second Language Teaching.
- f) Investigate ways to require students to have a high level of English proficiency and fluency (using a performance-based test with an oral component like CAEL, for example) in order for students to enter the practicum Certificate programme.
- g) Impose a moratorium on admission to the Diploma programme (review this decision in three years).
- h) Do not develop an MA TESOL at this time.

4. The First Nations Programme

The First Nations programme is one which benefits many of the citizens of British Columbia, contributes to the research agendas of a number of faculty members, and enhances the reputation of the university. The SFU programmes are helping to try to preserve endangered languages, and are aiding in the education of a population frequently at risk in the mainstream education system. The administration is to be congratulated for running these programmes.

Goals

1. To preserve the programme and bring it into a mutually beneficial relationship with the work of the faculty and graduate students in the area of endangered indigenous languages.
2. To enhance the opportunities of native peoples in the province to enter into university programmes at SFU and elsewhere.

Strategies

1. Consider the pros and cons of housing the programme in the Language Training Institute. The Committee was split on this recommendation. The majority of members felt that the programme was beneficial to the linguistics department, and reinforced the connection with first nations languages that has been a traditional strength of SFU linguistics.

III. Faculty

When we look at the existing faculty members, we see, as in any department, a range of experience and productivity. Senior scholars such as Saunders, have had productive careers but are retiring soon. Mid-career scholars, like Gerdts, McRobbie, Munro, Hedberg, and McFetridge, have established research programmes and have contributed to the department in diverse ways (ranging from extensive publication, presentations, supervision, funding and industry contact). Junior scholars, such as Mellow and Heift, are impressive in terms of their early contributions and clear potential. We feel that the changes made since the last Review in 1993 have been in line with the recommendations made by that Committee and have been clearly successful in the development of the department. The recent new hires look extremely promising in terms of the departmental "vision". The next hiring of a theoretical phonologist is appropriate and will add greatly to the depth of the department. It is extremely important that at the Faculty level decisions are made to continue the renewal of the department in light of upcoming retirements. This along with the structural suggestions made here should help to streamline the work of the department and put a greater momentum into the research programmes of the department. Overall the Committee was impressed with the faculty profiles.

The Committee notes a strong interest in collaboration among certain members of the department. A number of faculty members have complementary research programmes or are interested in pursuing such possibilities. This is important to encourage at departmental and faculty levels.

IV. The Administration of the Department

1. Academic Staff

As noted above, the Committee was extremely impressed with the energy and dedication of the faculty. The Chair is to be commended for his devotion to the department. With few exceptions, faculty members and support staff were strongly supportive of his work and appreciative of his efforts to be fair, and simply that he is "there". The one issue that was brought up as an area to improve is the issue of delegation, clearly a difficult thing to achieve in times of demanding workload as it is often easier to do something yourself than arrange for others to do it. However, it was clear from the interviews with support staff that an attempt by the Chair to delegate would be appreciated and make them feel that they have some control over the operations they are engaged in. The administrative load carried by some faculty members seems to be a guarantee for burn out. Both streamlining of operations and additional support are needed.

2. Support Staff

Support staff seemed to be suffering from the same overwhelming workload that the faculty described. Although the Committee was unable to resolve the complex issues around the administrative workings of the office, it is clear that both the huge increase in the number of students and the changing nature of the student group (including many students from other cultures and having native languages other than English, and including many students from other departments) has made the load of the support staff much heavier. The amount of time it takes to explain regulations and provide advice on course selection has increased dramatically, it was reported. An additional important factor is the increase in the number of programmes/units that the administrative staff has to look after. Having, in addition to the 12 faculty members and the departmental administration to take care of, the support staff also administers the TESL Programmes, the LTI, the First Nations Programme, the Cognitive Science programme. In similar fashion to the faculty, the support staff are trying to do everything for everybody.

Goals

1. Create an environment where support staff are able to effectively and efficiently provide information to students and support for faculty.

Strategies

- (a) Provide straightforward guidelines (with print/brochure versions available that can be taken away and read) regarding course possibilities, criteria for streaming students into majors and non-majors (and arguing for the importance of making an early declaration of major), then the load of the support staff would be lessened.
- (b) See strategies listed elsewhere for the LTI and the recommendations for Cognitive Science. The implementation of these would also help reduce the load. Linguistics has taken on the staff duties for Cognitive Science, and it is reasonable to ask for some extra support for this. If the Cognitive Science programme reverts to the 'minimalist version' (of the Cognitive Science Review Recommendations), and its administration remains in Linguistics, then perhaps a 0.5 staff position can be shared between Cognitive Science and Linguistics. If the 'full version' of Cognitive Science is embraced, then these duties would move away from Linguistics.
- (c) Provide (perhaps at the Faculty level) technical support for the computer labs and the Language Learning Centre. Right now, the professors and students rely on the good will of the Department Chair and Trude Heift to make sure that everything is operating. This is not a good system. Both of these individuals are overburdened, and we want to ensure that they do not burn out in the near future. The Faculty must recognize this need.

3. Language Teaching Institute

It was felt by the members of the Committee (in particular Woods) that the LTI could be of tremendous benefit to the university and the workings of the department. It was a surprise that none of the instructional staff interviewed, from both the department and the LTI, saw any possibility for collaboration or mutual benefit between the LTI and the department (many were confused by the question). However, as a basis for linguistic and applied research, a source of subjects, a locus for practica for the Certificate, there are many ways in which the units could mutually benefit from some coordination. For the time being, primarily for administrative reasons, it seems better to separate these units to ensure a strong foundation for the language teaching unit, reduce the sense of "marginality" that was expressed by LTI instructors and staff, and ensure that individual languages within the unit are given equivalent treatment. The Committee strongly supports the proposal and Draft Charter that have been put forward.

Goals

1. To create an independent language teaching unit which can serve the local community, provide financial benefits for the university, support departmental research and pedagogic interests, as well as support for a range of world languages.

Strategies

- (a) Create a separate unit for the LTI, as per the draft document submitted to us. A Director position would be created, and the budget would come from the Deans of Arts and Continuing Studies. Faculty members would be seconded from departments, and would be assessed (i.e. reviewed annually) by their Department Chairs. LTI students would not be part of the Linguistics FTE count. The voting status of LTI members on Department of Linguistics issues would have to be clarified.
- (b) Add one half-time support position to the LTI.
- (c) Investigate a means to pay language TA's at the same rate as Linguistics TA's; this is an essential strategy in creating a successful and sustainable language teaching unit. It came to our attention during the interviews that "language T.A.'s" are paid at much less than their "non-language" counterparts to teach in the LTI. We find this extremely disconcerting. It flies in the face of over twenty years of scholarship which has made abundantly clear that in order to be a successful second language teacher, one must be much more than a native speaker of that language. Many non-native speakers can be excellent second language teachers, while many native speakers can fail. The key to success is training as a language teacher. If the allegations that we have heard, that people are being hired as Chinese or Japanese or Spanish TAs merely because they are native speakers is true, this is highly inappropriate and must be stopped at once. In any case, the very idea that prior knowledge of the subject

matter (here, prior knowledge of the language in question) somehow lessens the workload and therefore should be worth less than in the face of other TA positions where knowledge of the matter to be taught can be used to increase their salary. The treatment of the language TAs is akin to lowering the salaries of other TAs as soon as they become proficient in their subject matter! And in any case, the claim that they have less work to do than other TAs is highly contentious. Just because a course outline is provided to the Teaching Assistant does not translate into less preparation for actually going into the class and explaining, say, the past perfect.

- (d) Clarify the relationship of the Language Learning Centre to the operations of the Department of Linguistics and the LTI.

V. Other Recommendations

1. The department should reconsider the offering of colloquia. We received contradictory statements as to the cause of earlier failures in this area. Our team feels that it would add to the atmosphere of the department if such a series were offered. Perhaps it could happen at the Downtown campus if that would attract more students and faculty, and might also have the benefit of drawing UBC and SFU people together.

VI. Future Directions

The Committee is concerned that the department is losing its previous strength in First Nations Languages. There are still course offerings, but an upcoming retirement, and a claim that one faculty member made that he or she would not be accepting any more graduate students, raised concerns that this valuable area would be lost to the department. Perhaps it should be reconsidered at the time of future hiring. Another concern about future hiring that we had, was that the department is attempting to achieve even greater breadth (by considering appointments in sociolinguistics, speech science, language acquisition, neurolinguistics). We hope that the department will instead ensure that the core areas of its programme remain strong, and perhaps even increase in depth, before they add to the breadth of their offerings.

We would also like to note that attracting external research grants will help the department fund their graduate students. Currently, relatively few faculty hold SSHRCC grants. We are confident that this will change in the future. The hiring of a grant facilitator in the Dean's Office is a positive move in this direction and we urge the Linguistics department to take advantage of this opportunity.

As noted above, the Committee would like to recognize the contribution of Paul McFetridge to the operation of the Department. The next couple of years will be critical to this department. During the next year, there will be an Acting Head and this will reveal just how many of the changes have been institutionalized and how much depended, in fact, on the good will of one person. Given McFetridge's connections with private industry, the department will have to plan for succession explicitly; what will happen if he does not come back?

VII. Executive Summary

Goals of the Report

The Committee, in making its recommendations, would like to declare the following goals in preparing the report:

1. To strengthen the undergraduate and graduate programmes.
2. To alleviate stresses on faculty members.
3. To identify the problems with the programmes and the causes for them.
4. To make suggestions that would assist the department in accomplishing its goals.

Our attempt in making recommendations is to focus initially on our analysis of the most agreed upon issues, and from this to set a series of superordinate goals to be accomplished in the near future. Then we will suggest more specific strategies which we feel might address these goals, but acknowledge that there may be alternative approaches to achieving them. However, the goals, if agreed upon, can be a future benchmark to be used in evaluating the implementation of strategic alternatives.

Successes/Unique Features

The Department of Linguistics has a number of unique features and clear successes which we would like to highlight:

1. The diversity of options available to the students in terms of such broad divisions as theoretical, descriptive and applied linguistics. Faculty and students alike spoke to the beneficial mixing of these areas. Of particular note is the inclusion of the TESL training certificate in the department; this is not a common offering in linguistics departments in Canada, and could form the basis of a 'unique SFU outlook'.
2. The new hires in the department are strong. They have quickly developed well-defined research programmes and are positioning themselves to attract external funding in the near future.
3. The existing faculty. We acknowledge the range and strength of the department and make our recommendations in the spirit of wanting to build on this.
4. The field of computational linguistics is well-represented at SFU. Existing personnel (McFetridge and Heift) as well as new hires (Taboada & Han) will strengthen this area. This clearly brands SFU as one of the few linguistics departments that has an emphasis in this area, and its close affiliation with computational linguistics in the Computing Science department further strengthens its standing. This is an area which allows for clear links to be made with industry.
5. Atmosphere. As noted above, the majority of the faculty we talked to commented that this was a department where people got along and allowed people to work together. While there may have been problems in the past, it is widely thought that things are getting better.
6. Connections with Cognitive Science. The Cognitive Science Programme is viewed as the joint effort of professors in four departments - Philosophy, Linguistics, Computer Science, and Psychology - but only Linguistics has a half-time joint appointment in it (Nancy Hedberg). The current 'home' of Cognitive Science therefore is the Linguistics department, and the support of the current administration in Linguistics is very much appreciated. The long-standing involvement of Linguistics in Cognitive Science has aided in the success of this interdisciplinary programme.

Recommendations

1. Reduce the number of sections offered in the courses for non-majors and the lower-division courses for majors (e.g. 100, 110, 130, 200, 220). Increase the number of students taught in each section of these courses so as to maintain roughly the same total number of students in each of the courses. Pedagogically, the difference between teaching a class of 100 and teaching a class of 300 is less important than the difference between a class of 40 and one of 100. Numbers of students - so crucial for maintaining the base operating budget of the department - would not be lost.
2. Make 220 an introductory course for majors and minors (and very interested undeclareds) and renumber it as 120. Remove the requirement that students have *both* 130 and 220 before getting into 221. Most students do not arrive on campus knowing that they want to study linguistics. As a result they may not

take the 130 course until their second year. Even if they take the 130 (or 100, or 110) course in their first year, and discover that they like Linguistics, they most likely will not take the 220 course until their second year. They currently need both 130 and 220 to get into 221 (Intro to Phonology), and this means they cannot take 221 until even later in their programme. This change would improve the current time-to-completion stats for the department which as noted are far too high.

3. Drop LING 310 (the department does not have the resources to offer a duplicate Introductory stream)
4. Use the resources freed up to allow more sections of senior-division courses. We do not feel that the pedagogic change resulting from this change will make LING 100 or 110 less attractive to students.
5. Reduce the three-level streams of phonology and syntax. No other linguistics programme that we know of requires this many levels in the core areas (this recommendation was also made in the 1993 review of the department). The argument might well be made that SFU graduates are different in that they emerge with a level of sophistication not achieved by students in other programmes. However, the comments we have heard, lead us to question this. We heard both faculty members and students mention that this 'vertical streaming' is not working. There is no mechanism which ensures that students are taught in 221 what they need in 321 or are taught in 321 what they need in 403. In addition, this structure also does not meet the needs of the undergraduate students who move directly into the MA programme. These students commented that they had to repeat the content of the 400-level courses in the graduate programme while paying graduate fees.
6. Reorganize Practical Phonetics to a large lecture, with tutorials, possibly not offered every semester. This might mean one hour of lecture and two of tutorials, one taught by the faculty member doing the lecture, and the other taught by TAs. In this way, material that can be taught to large numbers of students could be covered in the lecture, but ear-training and production practice could be carried out in appropriately sized tutorial sections. The current arrangement of moderately large sections means that students do not get the attention so crucial in such a course, and mentioned as being desirable by the faculty. (It is the attempt to achieve this pedagogic goal that adds so dramatically to the workload of the faculty.)
7. To the extent that it is possible, we would recommend that the large, remaining sections of these courses be taught by regular faculty, further reducing the need for sessionals. Our discussions with the Dean's Office confirmed that the department would be able to switch the funds from the TI to the TA budget.
8. At the level of the specific course content, specific topics in the introductory course (now LING 220), particularly in the areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax, drawing up statements which identify the core concepts that must be covered no matter who is teaching the course. We do not feel that this would impinge on academic freedom in any way. Faculty members might agree that x,y, and z *must* be taught in the phonology section of the Introductory course, but that a,b,c,d, and e are optional. This still allows each faculty member to put their own stamp onto a course, but ensures that students who are enrolled in higher level courses have the required background for the course (meaning that the higher level course would not have to review material that some students have missed).
9. Create and provide for students a number of documents (and corresponding webpages) such as "Answers to questions most frequently asked by SFU students about UBC's Audiology and Speech Sciences programme" based on the survey of students and on the streaming of majors and minors which outline clearly the options available and reduce the amount of advising time required to explain the intricacies of the programmes.
10. Change requirements for graduate students so that their courses must be stand-alone non-piggy-backed courses (and normally not directed readings). Required courses remain Phonology and Syntax.
11. Provide a series of graduate courses in a variety of the areas of specialization of the faculty. These might include Computational Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Field Methods, Applied Linguistics, Typology, Semantics, Morphology.
12. Offer at least three of these non-required graduate courses every year. These courses should count toward faculty teaching load.
13. Offer a greater number of TA positions for graduate students.
14. Make more explicit the criteria and mechanisms used to determine a student's eligibility for Fellowships and TA assignments. These criteria should be published in a Graduate handbook.
15. Reconsider the adoption of either Comprehensive Examinations or Generals Papers at the Doctoral level. The Committee was uncomfortable with the current programme structure which does not guarantee that the student emerge with any particular breadth in their programme. This seems to be undesirable both in terms of the granting of a PhD, and the implications of the marketability of the students in the academic market. However, we do acknowledge the department's rejection of this recommendation from the previous External Review. It is important that entering students are aware of this characteristic of the department. It is

- possible that with the implementation of the course-related strategies described above, the issue of breadth will seem less problematic.
16. Allow the Graduate Committee of the department to make offers of admission without ratification by the whole department. Our Committee feels that when the department agrees to have someone sit on this committee, they are agreeing to abide by their decisions. We also feel that information about graduate fellowships and T.A. assignments should be discussed by both the Chair and the Graduate Committee. Knowing the rough amount of TA funding to expect, may well influence a student's decision to come to the university. The Chair alone should not make this decision.
 17. Consider allowing part-time status for MA students. PhD. students must be full time.
 18. Develop means to stream students into a career-oriented Certificate (with practicum) primarily intended for Linguistics majors versus an academic-oriented more theoretical Certificate (without practicum) which could be either for majors or non-majors. The Certificate parchment can specify that a practicum is included, as this might be important for job placement.
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 24. Impose a moratorium on admission to the Diploma programme (review this decision in three years).
 25. Do not develop an MA TESOL at this time.
 26. Consider the pros and cons of housing the programme in the Language Training Institute. The Committee was split on this recommendation. The majority of members felt that the programme was beneficial to the linguistics department, and reinforced the connection with first nations languages that has been a traditional strength of SFU linguistics.
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 29. Create a separate unit for the LTI, as per the draft document submitted to us.
 30. Add one half-time support position to the LTI.
 31. Investigate a means to pay language TA's at the same rate as Linguistics TA's; this is an essential strategy in creating a successful and sustainable language teaching unit.
 32. Clarify the relationship of the Language Learning Centre to the operations of the Department of Linguistics and the LTI.
 33. The department should reconsider the offering of colloquia. We received contradictory statements as to the cause of earlier failures in this area. Our team feels that it would add to the atmosphere of the department if

such a series were offered. Perhaps it could happen at the Downtown campus if that would attract more students and faculty, and might also have the benefit of drawing UBC and SFU people together.