

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC  
MEMORANDUM**

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**To: Senate**  
**From: J.M. Munro, Vice-President, Academic**  
**Date: September 1, 1993**  
**Subject: External Review - Department of Linguistics**

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The Senate Committee on Academic Planning received for information the report of the External Review of the Linguistics Department and the response prepared by the Department. The executive summary of the report is forwarded for the information of Senate. Members of Senate who would like to review the full text of the External Committee Report and the Departmental response should contact Secretariat Services.

The external review of the Linguistics Department was undertaken by the following:

**Chair of Committee: Dr. Keren Rice, Professor**  
**Linguistics Department, University of Toronto.**

**Members: Dr. Victoria Fromkin, Professor Emerita**  
**Linguistics Department,**  
**University of California, Los Angeles**

**Dr. Tom Wasow, Professor**  
**Linguistics Department**  
**Stanford University**

**Internal Member: Dr. Barrie Bartlett, Professor**  
**Department of French, Simon Fraser University**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Linguistics at SFU defines itself as committed to empirical work rooted in the study of languages. Its large undergraduate population consists mostly of students who plan careers in language teaching or speech therapy. The department expects that its graduate students will compete for jobs as generalists, in departments such as English and languages. Training students for these purposes is laudatory.

However, we found the department lacking the sense of community needed to carry out its stated objectives. Individual faculty members largely set their own agendas independent of larger department needs, and graduate students are typically guided by a single faculty member. The undergraduate curriculum is not well tailored to the career goals of most of its students.

A number of suggestions are made to help change this situation. These include the hiring of a distinguished scholar as chair, in order to provide the vision that will lead the department from its recent period of expansion to a period of defining goals that make it an outstanding and unique program within Canada (if not wider). We recommend the restructuring of the undergraduate program to allow for greater flexibility, with special attention to the English as a Second Language curriculum. We likewise recommend the restructuring of the graduate program to allow for greater systematicity in training. Finally, we propose a redistribution of administrative work load among members of the faculty.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are divided into several groups.

We recommend that:

### A. General recommendations

1. •a scholar of international reputation be recruited to chair the department.
2. •a departmental focus (or small number of foci) be defined, with the department building its strength around this/these.
3. •a faculty member be designated to provide undergraduates with guidance in course selection and career options.
4. •the current top-heavy administrative structure be reexamined with the aim of spreading the administrative work more across the faculty.
5. •the special needs of non-tenured faculty be recognized and that these faculty not be overloaded with administrative work.

### B. Recommendations concerning the undergraduate program

6. •the undergraduate program be restructured so as to reduce the number of required courses to allow for greater flexibility.
7. •the undergraduate major requirements be made more flexible and a reduction in the number of courses in the core areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax be instituted.
8. •a course on English grammar be introduced at the 200-level and be required for the ESL programs.

9. •linguistics-related courses in other specified departments and faculties be allowed to count towards satisfaction of the major requirements.
10. •the department explore ways of overcoming the scheduling problems experienced by students.
11. •sample programs be provided to help students plan their schedules.
12. •most of the current 400-level courses be listed as graduate only courses, with special provisions for undergraduates to take them.
13. •the requirements for the ESL program be rethought to better cover the area and better meet the needs of the students.
14. •a person with a Ph.D. in ESL be hired to define and run the ESL programs.
15. •the administration explore ways to permit greater cooperative efforts between Linguistics and education.
16. •a more detailed brochure be developed to help students better navigate through the program.
17. •close contact be maintained with postgraduate programs that interest SFU undergraduates.

#### C. Recommendations concerning the graduate program

18. •one semester graduate courses in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics be required for the M.A., with courses scheduled so that they can be completed in one year if a student enters with the prerequisite background.
19. •the department consider requiring a field methods course.
20. •the M.A. thesis be required for all M.A. students, and students not be allowed to transfer from the M.A. program to the Ph.D. program without completing the thesis.
21. •the department consider having M.A. theses read and approved by more than one faculty member.
22. •the department adopt a more objective standard for how the language requirements can be satisfied.
23. •course work be required at the Ph.D. level, with writing of professional quality papers stressed.
24. •the department consider requiring a 'generals paper' in an area outside the major focus, and that such a paper be evaluated by the faculty.
25. •the department facilitate the choosing of a supervisor and committee by having an orientation session each fall at which all faculty presented their research interests.

#### D. Other recommendations

26. •the students be involved in organizing the colloquia.
27. •faculty present colloquia on a regular basis.
28. •the policy on teaching loads be clarified.
29. •the lounge be made more accessible to all.
30. •students serve on departmental committees.

Copied to Jim.

**Memorandum**  
**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
*Linguistics Department*

**TO:** Alison Watt  
Assistant to the Vice-President, Academic

**FROM:** Thomas A. Perry, Chair  
Linguistics Department

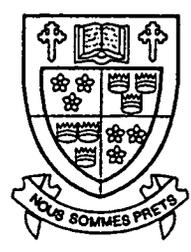


**SUBJECT:** Review report

**DATE:** July 9, 1993

Attached please find the Linguistics Department's response to the External Review Report of Profs. Fromkin, Rice, and Wasow. There is a section containing a general response, followed by discussion of specific recommendations in varying degrees of detail. If you need any further information, please let me know.

cc: Dr. E. Alderson, Dean of Arts



# Response to the External Review Report

## Linguistics Department

### General Response

The Linguistics Department has considered and discussed the external review report submitted by Professors Fromkin, Rice and Wasow. The report documents very clearly how far the Department has come in the five years since its founding in 1988, and notes with approval the efforts of the department in managing extremely rapid growth while developing substantial programs that are relevant to the needs of students. The Department is also pleased with the report's assessment of the quality of recruiting done in the past four years, an indication of consistent development towards a position of significance among Canadian Linguistics Departments.

The report notes that the department is in transition from a period of orienting itself as a new department and experiencing rapid growth in student numbers, to one of defining goals more clearly and consolidating its academic operations and administration. This assessment is consonant with the view of the department. The Department considers that the comments on the graduate program were relatively minor, vindicating the considerable work the department has put into improving the program in the past few years. The review panel observed that the Department has succeeded in building a large undergraduate program with laudable aims. The report highlights a number of issues that need to be addressed in the undergraduate program; the Department is quite prepared to do so wherever feasible. Most of these are the products of rapid growth and the inability of the university to assure that the resource base expands in step with program expansion. Some problems may therefore not lend themselves to solutions unless additional resources are available. The report also recommends a number of changes in the way in which the department's programs are structured and administered; a number of these changes should likewise be implemented. These will all be addressed under individual recommendations detailed below.

In a number of areas the report does not accurately reflect the operation of the department or the university, or misconstrues the intangible aspects of life in the Department. Some of these are simple errors of fact; others may be attributable to the short site visit -- it is very difficult to grasp an accurate picture of a department in two intensively scheduled days. Most of the differences between the Department's perceptions and those of the review panel will be detailed below under the specific responses. Two general issues deserve mention here, however.

One issue is the observation in the review report that there is little sense of mission and community in the department. The Department views these as two aspects of the same issue; where there is community, there is a sense of purpose, and vice-versa. The review panel recognized in their report (p. 11) that impediments to departmental cohesiveness seemed built in to the University. The Department recognizes the importance of cohesiveness, both in the relationships among Department members, and in the goals of the community. But it takes time to develop these intangible attributes, and the Department has been in existence for only five years. During that time there have been fundamental changes to the faculty complement, the numbers of students in the Department's programs, the curriculum, and even in physical location. The members of the Department continue to work to create the kind of community and sense of mission mentioned in the report, and believes they are beginning to make clear progress toward this goal-- particularly in the last year.

As for the Department's academic mission, the Department recognizes that the specialties of each faculty member cannot be featured as a focus of the department. There are two clusters of interest emerging that will likely become the major foci of the department. One is the study of endangered languages -- including native B. C. languages, but also including such diverse languages as Breton, Lappish, and Austro-nesian languages actively being researched in the Department. The second is formal linguistics, including computer processing of natural language data (compilation of dictionaries, sentence parsing, intelligent language instruction, and speech technology), semantics and pragmatics, mathematical properties of natural languages, and grammatical form. The process of building around these foci is just beginning. The review panel's views regarding collegial interaction were furthermore made more acute because of such misunderstandings as the erroneous belief that only one faculty member reads a graduate student's thesis, for one example.

In fact, developments in the past few years have been in the opposite direction -- the addition of a working papers series, the institution of regular colloquia, starting a departmental newsletter, new orientation materials for graduate students, and the organization of informal events to bring department members together have helped build community. It can be expected that in the period of consolidation the Department is moving into, the development of both a sense of community and Departmental focus will continue to proceed until it does in fact reach the solidity envisioned by the reviewers. The Department will examine additional approaches to achieving this end, such as team-teaching; auditing colleagues' classes as means of interchange (not review); intensive summer short courses/field schools with a well-known scholar to focus on an area of broad interest; having a Department-wide focus for an academic year (i. e. a specific language, etc). Specific recommendations relating to these issues receive the Department's comments below.

Another area in which the report does not coincide with the views of the Department was in the area of staffing and resources. The review panel believes that redistribution of staff workload will alleviate the problem of overwork identified in the report. While the Department concurs that there should be more distribution of administrative tasks to faculty, this will not solve the problem. [From the founding of the Department, committee work (Graduate, Undergraduate Studies, etc.) has been dealt with through the entire Department sitting as a committee of the whole. In its next phase of development, the style of operation of the Department will necessarily change. Consequently, the Department will be forming the usual kinds of committees and appointing chairs who will be taking on more administrative responsibility]. Nor is it feasible that some staff work such as graduate applications processing or student appeals be transferred to central University offices. It is here that it becomes clear that the committee -- coming from entirely different kinds of universities -- did not entirely grasp the structure of Simon Fraser. The University has intentionally developed professional advising personnel through the Departmental Assistant's position, and the Department values this resource. The report likewise did not recognize the amount of academic advising already being done by faculty -- there is a special faculty advisor for undergraduates wanting to continue in Audiology/Speech Science graduate studies, and the Graduate chair does take responsibility for graduate advising -- contrary to the conclusions of the report. More importantly, the primary source of advice for the graduate students is their respective senior supervisors. Likewise, the processing of graduate admissions, financial aid applications, examination arrangements, etc. as well as undergraduate petitions, diploma program applications, graduation approvals, etc. are all functions assigned globally to departments by the University; in this instance, the reviewers' recommendations do not make contact with the structure of the University. The suggestion that the staff complement should in principle be sufficient simply does not stand up; it is impossible to equate principle with accepted University practices in this case. Further aspects of this question are dealt with under specific recommendations below.

## Specific Responses

The Department's positions with respect to the itemized recommendations contained in the report are detailed below:

### A. *General recommendations*

1. *a scholar of international reputation be recruited to chair the department.*

The Department concurs with the intent of this recommendation to attract a leader in scholarship to the department. This was the goal of the Department in pursuing a University Chair appointment. The Department does not agree, however, that such a person should be department chair. In fact, the really desirable leaders in scholarship are by and large not interested in being chair, but rather in research and teaching, particularly graduate teaching. This was true of the candidate for the University Chair the Department had forwarded to the Dean of Arts in 1991. It is more efficient in any case to leave the job of department chair to someone who has longer experience in the university than to recruit for one (assuming a suitable candidate is available internally).

2. *a departmental focus (or small number of foci) be defined, with the department building its strength around this/these.*

This recommendation should be taken seriously and pursued by the Department. As noted above, it is a long-term process, but some results of the process of definition are beginning to emerge (see under *General Response* above). The Department feels this process should be carried through along the lines of faculty's teaching and research specialties. Where a faculty member is not directly involved in a focus area, some

path for crossover should be sought. Applied linguistics, for example, does not normally fit with Formal Linguistics, but applying computational linguistics techniques to the design of computer assisted language learning software to produce intelligent tutoring programs draws applied linguists into the Formal Linguistics focus.

3. *A faculty member be designated to provide undergraduates with guidance in course selection and career options.*

The Department already practices this in one form, but would like to extend it. It is too restrictive to provide for a single faculty member to undertake this job. The Department believes it would be best to do so by area, so that there is consistent responsibility for a particular subject/career area, as there is now for Audiology/Speech Science. The Departmental Assistant should continue to be the source for general advising, referring to area specialists as students identify their interests. This issue will be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee to work out a detailed plan for implementing this system.

4. *The current top-heavy administrative structure be reexamined with the aim of spreading the administrative work more across the faculty.*

At the time the Department was founded in 1988, the simplest administrative operating procedure was adopted: most administrative matters were dealt with directly by departmental meetings or the chair's office. There were no separate committees (except for search committees as needed and DTC/Salaries), or administrative assignments to faculty. Undergraduate and Graduate Studies matters were dealt with in a meeting of the Department as a committee of the whole. The members of the Department felt this was appropriate given the initial size of the Department. The administration is gradually evolving away from this model, so that Graduate Studies matters are now largely delegated to a committee and its chair. Some student program functions have been delegated to the Undergraduate Studies Chair (so titled even there is no separate committee associated with the position). The Department recognizes it is now appropriate to strike full committees for Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, and perhaps others, involving the chairs of committees more fully in the administrative work load. In addition, the Department will form subject area interest groups to focus on course content, offerings, and sequencing in their respective areas, thus removing this background aspect of teaching assignments from the chair's office. The suggestion to delegate student appeals and other petitions is not workable, since the University-wide system for such matters requires the involvement of the department chair.

5. *The special needs of non-tenured faculty be recognized and that these faculty not be overloaded with administrative work.*

The Department concurs that it is important to protect faculty in the pre-tenure years, and will give them the latitude to pursue their own work as they see fit.

**B. *Recommendations concerning the undergraduate program:***

6. *The undergraduate program be restructured so as to reduce the number of required courses to allow for greater flexibility.*
7. *The undergraduate major requirements be made more flexible and a reduction in the number of courses in the core areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax be instituted.*

These two recommendations represent aspects of the same problem.

In the report, the panel recommends the removal of vertical streaming and the addition of a wider variety of elective courses. The Department does not agree with this method of achieving diversification, and does not consider it feasible in any case. The philosophy used in the Linguistics curriculum has been to establish a solid basis in core areas and to achieve diversity of offerings within the 18 credit hours of upper-division electives required for the major and 9 for the minor. The department does not agree that one lower-division course in each core area is sufficient, particularly for students wanting to continue in graduate studies. The proposal in the report advocates virtually an all-elective upper-division major and minor, with the addition of new courses to provide more variety. The Department finds such a program difficult to imagine. To do effective, high-quality advanced work of any kind, a solid grounding in basic subject areas is necessary. The Department formerly had a program which only had two courses (one lower-division) in each core area, and added 300-level courses in each area out of experience that showed it was necessary to do so. It would simply not be effective to drop core area courses and replace them with courses in new areas, since all the areas represented by faculty are already represented. With 16 different elective courses and 11

faculty, the Department does not see how it can diversify any further, without seeking new faculty to cover new areas; the courses available are tied to the expertise of present faculty. Variety in elective course offerings is also provided by regular offerings of four 400-level open-topic courses (usually at least one per semester). It is the considered opinion of the Department that the degree requirements are flexible enough. The Department believes that the issue of flexibility arises from integrating the ESL programs into the core linguistic program. The Department does not believe that the solution to this problem is found in relaxing the requirements for a degree in Linguistics. Instead the Department is responding by examining the scheduling of courses to ensure that 400 level courses which are both relevant to ESL and have the appropriate prerequisites are regularly offered. See also the response to *Recommendation 10* on page 4.

8. *A course on English grammar be introduced at the 200-level and be required for the ESL programs.*

This is an important need which is already being addressed. A single 200-level course limited to English will not serve the range of needs seen by the Department, however. Development of a 100-level course, *The Elements of Grammar*, is already under way. This course will consist of a survey of grammatical structures and terminology referencing a variety of languages, including English. A separate 300-level course on pedagogical grammar of English for Teaching English as a Second or Other Language is being developed as well.

9. *Linguistics-related courses in other specified departments and faculties be allowed to count towards satisfaction of the major requirements.*

This has always been explicitly allowed (see the major program requirements on p. 115 of the 1993/94 Calendar.)

10. *The department explore ways of overcoming the scheduling problems experienced by students.*

Work on this problem is already under way, although there are limits to what can be addressed without new resources. The Department recognizes that this point is motivated by students' perceptions that it is difficult to construct a program containing their first choice of courses in the upper division for majors and minors. The Department has examined the program requirements, and finds that since the major specifies only 12 of 30 credit hours in upper division (of which 6 are taken from an option list), there is sufficient room for electives. The minor requirements are virtually wide-open. The major cause of this perceived problem is in all likelihood the prerequisite structure. There are a number of 400-level courses, for example, with three or four 300-level courses as prerequisites. There is an impression among faculty that they receive a large number of requests for entry into advanced courses without the prerequisites. The Department has recently reviewed the prerequisites and forwarded recommendations streamlining them; changes were made to the prerequisites of LING 400, 408, 409, 430, 431, 432, 440, and 441.

The remainder of the problems relating to course access are likely attributable to discontent over choices available at some particular point in the rotation of elective courses (some of which are offered only every other year). This is evident in the comments on p. 3 (sec. 3.1.1) of the review report, where it was claimed access to upper-division courses was difficult. The claim there that there are upper division enrollment caps must refer to 300-level courses, which are enrolled as much as space and teaching resources permit, usually to the limit of room size. There are no formal enrollment restrictions. This is purely a resource limitation, and is similar to problems experienced by other departments all over the University. Like most departments in the University, the Linguistics Department has also found that recent growth and continuing student demand in other parts of the curriculum make it difficult to provide the selection of electives students would like to have at the time they want to take them. There are, however, enough 400-level electives available each year to finish a program.

Aside from adjustments to prerequisites, this problem can be alleviated by careful advising and the development of 'streams' which would help students plan their course selection in advance for particular emphases within the program (e. g. Audiology/Speech Science, ESL). These will be developed and put into the advising brochure of the Department's programs.

11. *Sample programs be provided to help students plan their schedules.*

The Department agrees this would be useful, and will proceed in connection with the stream concept mentioned above under *Recommendation 10*.

12. *Most of the current 400-level courses be listed as graduate only courses, with special provisions for undergraduates to take them.*

The intent of this proposal seems to be to take teaching resources from what are perceived as unnecessary advanced courses for undergraduates and move them to the graduate level (see *Recommendation 18* on page 5). The Department's position on the restructuring of the undergraduate program has been delineated in part under the comments to *Recommendation 6* and *Recommendation 7* above. Essentially, the Department believes that the coverage of the field provided in the present curriculum is optimal, given the resources available. In fact, with respect to ESL, the faculty complement is already overextended. The review report suggests that the material in the present 400-level courses is not relevant to the goals of students in the program, except for those wanting to pursue graduate studies in Linguistics *per se*, and hence the material in them could be deferred to the graduate level. As a consequence, the elective curriculum should be diversified to include courses on material more relevant to other student goals, such as ESL or language teaching, or speech therapy. The Department sees this as desirable, too, but does not consider, as stated above, that scrapping the present set of elective courses in favor of new ones can solve the problem. Consider an example. It would be useful to provide a course on neurolinguistics for students planning on a speech therapy career -- such a course could introduce them to aphasia and other pathologies that they would later encounter in Audiology/Speech Science graduate study. But the Department does not have the faculty expertise to design and mount such a course; it has to remain one of those desirable future developments that has to await the opportunity to attract new faculty. On the other hand, there are opportunities to propose new courses and redesign old ones so as to use present faculty expertise in new ways to address this issue. The department is presently developing a course on pedagogical grammars of English for ESL that draws on current faculty expertise but has a highly career-relevant orientation. In a similar vein, student feedback has shown that the course on typology (LING 441) has proven highly useful to ESL students; this aspect of the course can and will be developed and highlighted for the benefit of students in this stream. The Department prefers to pursue this avenue to redress the perceived problems with the content of the general curriculum for specialty areas pursued by undergraduate students. This issue will be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee for study as part of a full review of course content.

The Department does not see how this suggestion can contribute to the flexibility advocated under *Recommendation 6* and *Recommendation 7*; in fact they seem to be in conflict. If the Department were to drop the present 400-level courses in favor of courses with more specialized scope, the result would be less flexibility for student programs. The elective courses would become compartmentalized; students interested in computational applications would not likely want to take courses designed for ESL, etc. The Department believes the best interests of students will be served by the strategies for improving the relevance of program content outlined above.

13. *The requirements for the ESL program be rethought to better cover the area and better meet the needs of the students.*

Both the Certificate in ESL Linguistics and the Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in ESL (PBDESL) are relatively new programs and are under constant review to this end. As experience in these areas is gained, adjustments will be made wherever feasible. This recommendation will be referred to the Steering Committee on the PBDESL and the department's Undergraduate Studies Committee for explicit attention.

14. *A person with a Ph.D in ESL be hired to define and run the ESL programs.*

The Department has identified this as its highest priority in faculty recruitment. The three-year projections developed in 1990 foresaw that such a position would have been in place by Fall 1992 at the latest, and so development of ESL programs continued. In this projection, the planning was based on a total annual headcount enrollment in undergraduate Linguistics of 2,315 student places, representing 93 majors and minors, in 1992/3; the actual figures were 2,680 headcount and 129 majors and minors. Opportunities to hire new faculty under the provincial Access program came to an abrupt end before an appointment could be made.

The Department considers that 'define and run' is too strong a mandate for one person. There is an inter-Faculty steering committee for the PBDESL and other faculty in the applied linguistics area who are presently involved with the ESL programs and should continue to participate in the shaping of these programs.

15. *The administration explore ways to permit greater cooperative efforts between Linguistics and Education.*

This is a puzzling misconception. The review panel was clearly referring to historical conditions rather than present fact in this recommendation. (There was a cooperative Linguistics/Education M. A. program in ESL in the early 1980s that failed for various reasons). The present programs are the result of careful collaboration between the Department and the Faculty of Education, and no 'turf battles' are clouding the

cooperation in the ongoing management of the programs. There is an inter-Faculty steering committee to supervise the PBDESL, and all curricular developments are the result of thorough consultation between the two academic units. The department has no ambitions toward mounting a graduate program in this area. In short, cooperative efforts between Linguistics and Education are functioning quite well.

16. *A more detailed brochure be developed to help students better navigate through the program.*

The Department accepts this recommendation and will implement it.

17. *Close contact be maintained with postgraduate programs that interest SFU undergraduates.*

The Department already does this to some extent (e. g. with UBC Linguistics and Audiology/Speech Science), but is prepared to broaden this activity and undertake pro-active counseling and placement with respect to a selected group of programs.

*C. Recommendations concerning the graduate program:*

18. *One semester graduate courses in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics be required for the M.A., with courses scheduled so that they can be completed in one year if a student enters with the prerequisite background.*

The graduate curriculum already requires phonology and syntax at the M. A. level, leaving 12 of 20 credit hours of course work open. This requirement was instituted for Fall 1993 as a replacement to a previous, more permissive, requirement. [the review committee was working with an older edition of the calendar]. In considering the requirements, the Department concluded that some latitude in course selection was required at the M. A. level in order to allow some focus on a branch of the discipline in which the thesis was to be written. For a student in phonetics, for example, a course in semantics is not a priority. The requirement of a thesis legislates to some extent against too rigid breadth requirements. Syntax and phonology represent clear choices for required courses, since they deal in part with the other two core areas as a matter of course. The Department experiences some very low-intake years (2-3 students), and this is likely to be the situation for the next few years as the graduate program is presently over capacity at 35 students. It would be difficult to provide resources to offer 4 required M. A. courses on an annual basis along with everything else in the graduate program, especially in the face of acute undergraduate pressure on faculty resources. The Department considers that this requirement would neither be desirable nor feasible.

19. *The department consider requiring a field methods course.*

This recommendation has been received with sympathy by the Department and will be given serious consideration.

20. *The M.A. thesis be required for all M.A. students, and students not be allowed to transfer from the M.A. program to the Ph.D. program without completing the thesis.*

The Department is not in a position to forbid this possibility entirely, as it is provided for in the Graduate General Regulations [sec. 1.3.3 a) iii)]. It is not a common practice in any case; only three students have been transferred under this clause in the past fifteen years, and the Department does not foresee it becoming usual. The Department will consider adopting a more restrictive policy than the minimum requirements contained in the General Regulations.

21. *The department consider having M.A. theses read and approved by more than one faculty member.*

This is a puzzling misconception; M. A. theses are read and approved by a supervisory committee of at least two faculty, an external examiner, and the defense is attended at least by the graduate chair and typically other faculty. Recently, the Department has begun publishing theses in the departmental working papers as well.

22. *The department adopt a more objective standard for how the language requirements can be satisfied.*

This suggestion will be given serious consideration.

23. *Course work be required at the Ph.D. level, with writing of professional quality papers stressed.*

The Department's aim is to offer as tailor-made a Ph.D. program as possible, providing individual attention and small group settings for the students. The 16 credit hours of course work for the Ph. D. contain no specified required courses for this reason. Ph. D. level courses -- all with major papers -- are in fact offered, and have proven fruitful with respect to the production of high-quality papers that appear on con-

ference programs and in the Department's working papers. Particularly in the past year, Ph. D. students from the Department have been successful in appearing at peer-refereed conferences; the SFU students on the program of the 1992 Canadian Linguistics Association annual meeting and the fall 1992 Northwest Linguistics Club Meeting represented a strong student delegation in comparison to other Canadian departments. Likewise, one student from the department recently won a Centre for Systems Science graduate student paper prize. Students can avail themselves of the opportunity to take part in abstract and paper-writing workshops offered from time to time by faculty. The Department has furthermore developed a new graduate course, *LING 897-4 Research Seminar*, in the Calendar for the first time in Fall 1993, which is intended to provide just the sort of opportunity to produce scholarly presentations and papers foreseen here. The Department considers that the opportunity to satisfy the intent of this recommendation can and is being created without imposing course requirements in the Ph. D. program.

24. *The department consider requiring a generals paper in an area outside the major focus, and that such a paper be evaluated by the faculty.*

The Department considered and rejected such a proposal in developing the curriculum revisions appearing in the Fall, 1993 calendar. The Ph. D. is seen in principle as a specialist degree, with no need for breadth clauses. It was felt that such a requirement represents an unnecessary distraction from the work toward the thesis. In considering the proposal, the Department considered the experience of the Linguistics Department at UBC, which does have such a requirement. The requirement of writing outside the student's main field of interest for a universal faculty audience results in far too much faculty and student energy being expended on a topic which does not contribute to the eventual thesis even peripherally. As a result, the generals paper appears to be over-emphasized in terms of effort required, relatively speaking. The Department now requires a publicly-presented Thesis Proposal, which is much more to the point for the student, yet satisfies the intent of the recommendation to expose students to review by all faculty.

25. *The department facilitate the choosing of a supervisor and committee by having an orientation session each fall at which all faculty presented their research interests.*

The Department already offers an orientation session for new graduate students every fall and will consider modifying it in the way suggested.

*D. Other recommendations:*

26. *The students be involved in organizing the colloquia.*

Students are involved in organizing the colloquia. A faculty member coordinates the colloquium series but is assisted by graduate students. This practice will be continued and expanded where feasible.

27. *Faculty present colloquia on a regular basis.*

The Department agrees; although a requirement to do so might be too strong, the Colloquium coordinator will strongly encourage faculty to appear regularly. It is already a regular practice for many faculty to appear in the Departmental Colloquium.

28. *The policy on teaching loads be clarified.*

The Department concurs. This is already being done on a Faculty and University-wide basis, and the Department looks forward to implementing a clear policy in this area.

29. *The lounge be made more accessible to all.*

The Department does not have a lounge. The present meeting/seminar room is also used as a small departmental library, and is used for course-related purposes. The Department will seek other avenues to provide opportunities for informal contact among faculty and students on a regular basis.

30. *Students serve on departmental committees.*

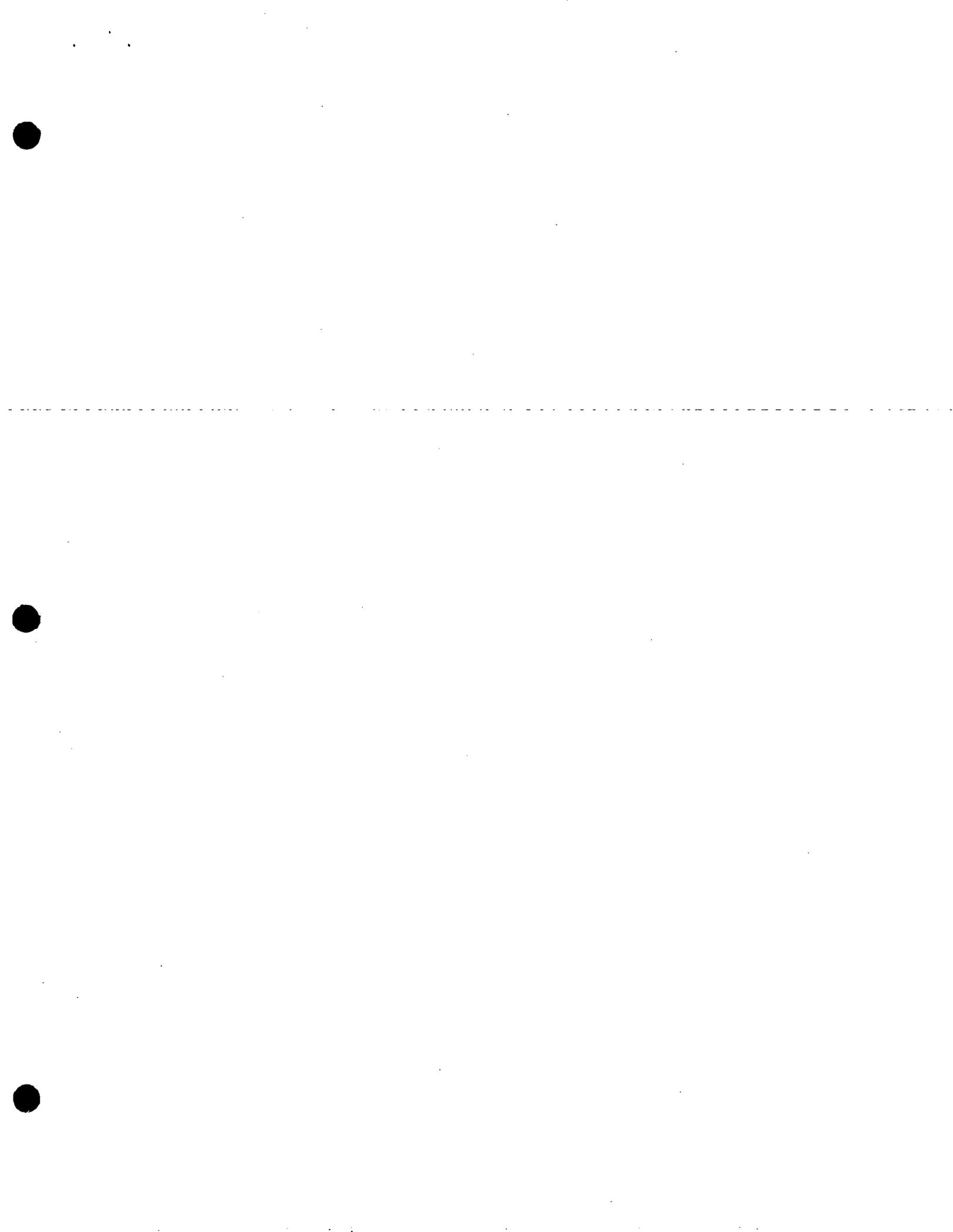
The Department concurs. To the extent that there are committees, students already do. There are working committees on the Newsletter, Colloquium, Applied Linguistics, and Working Papers, all with significant student involvement. There are both graduate and undergraduate student representatives to departmental meetings. The new Graduate and Undergraduate Studies committees to be constituted in Fall 1993 will have regular student representation.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Linguistics at SFU defines itself as committed to empirical work rooted in the study of languages. Its large undergraduate population consists mostly of students who plan careers in language teaching or speech therapy. The department expects that its graduate students will compete for jobs as generalists, in departments such as English and languages. Training students for these purposes is laudatory.

However, we found the department lacking the sense of community needed to carry out its stated objectives. Individual faculty members largely set their own agendas independent of larger department needs, and graduate students are typically guided by a single faculty member. The undergraduate curriculum is not well tailored to the career goals of most of its students.

A number of suggestions are made to help change this situation. These include the hiring of a distinguished scholar as chair, in order to provide the vision that will lead the department from its recent period of expansion to a period of defining goals that make it an outstanding and unique program within Canada (if not wider). We recommend the restructuring of the undergraduate program to allow for greater flexibility, with special attention to the English as a Second Language curriculum. We likewise recommend the restructuring of the graduate program to allow for greater systematicity in training. Finally, we propose a redistribution of administrative work load among members of the faculty.



## REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

1. The external review committee, composed of Professors Victoria A. Fromkin (UCLA), Thomas Wasow (Stanford University), and Keren Rice (University of Toronto), serving as chair, spent two days from March 11 to March 12, 1993, at Simon Fraser University. During that period, we met with the following individuals and groups:

Dean Evan Alderson  
Dwight Gardiner  
Professor Donna Gerdts  
Professor Hector Hammersley  
Professor Nancy Hedberg  
Professor Paul McFetridge  
Professor Zita McRobbie  
Professor Neville Lincoln  
Dr. Deborah Osborne  
Professor Tom Perry  
Professor Wyn Roberts  
Professor Ross Saunders  
Alison Watt  
undergraduate student representatives  
graduate student representatives  
staff Georgina Carlson and Tanya Beaulieu

We later received further comments by e-mail from several members of the department, including both faculty and students. This report is based on materials prepared by the Department and the Office of the Vice President, Academic that we received both before and during our visit and on our meetings with the above individuals and groups.

### 2. General remarks

#### 2.0. Introduction

The Department of Linguistics has eleven tenured or tenure-stream faculty. In its five years as an independent department, following its separation from the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, the Department of Linguistics has made four tenure-track appointments which have greatly strengthened the linguistics program at SFU. Associate Professor Gerdts brings strength in syntax and morphology, and Assistant Professors Hedberg, McFetridge, and McRobbie in semantics/pragmatics, computational linguistics, and phonetics/phonology, respectively. The new faculty thus complement and extend the areas covered by the more senior faculty. In these theoretical areas, the department stresses its commitment to empirical studies rooted in the study of a variety of languages. The languages of the Pacific Rim and the Native Languages of British Columbia are singled out for emphasis, which we believe is a worthwhile goal.

While the Self Review suggests that the Department sees itself as providing theoretical strength with a strong empirical base with a focus on these languages, we found the faculty in reality to be rather fragmented. Despite the stated common goals, with some exceptions, there seems to be the feeling that the only way to build the program is for faculty members to "do their own thing". A recent department retreat did discuss a number of proposals which should help to correct this problem to some degree, however.

For example, it was agreed that the department colloquium be regularized; activities such as this can help to bring the department together.

The fragmentation reflects what we perceived to be a lack of vision as to what the department should strive for in terms of emphasis and future directions. We did not get any sense of intellectual excitement about the department or its goals, which one would expect in a new department. This may be due to its history and problems which were present in the department from which it was formed as exemplified by the reference of one faculty member to "the battle scarred faculty".

## 2.1 Department Head

Given this situation, the present department head, Professor Perry, has done an exemplary job in making four outstanding appointments, in establishing the undergraduate ESL program, in making major revisions in the curriculum, and in revitalizing the graduate program. All the faculty expressed great respect for him, one member stating that "Tom Perry's role in managing (and probably saving) the department has been heroic" following the loss of four positions to retirement and an unfortunate death during the first half of the 1980's. There was also the view expressed, however, that now that the department is established, a new head should be recruited who is unencumbered by the past history. Up until now, Perry assumed most if not all the administrative duties without any delegation to other faculty members which gave him little time to provide the academic leadership required in the formation of a new department. Had the University Chair appointment of a distinguished senior linguist gone through, the need for a new external chair might not have arisen. We strongly recommend recruiting a scholar of international standing to lead the department in the period ahead.

## 2.2 A mission

The Departmental Self Review does not discuss the substance of its program or the research areas covered by its faculty except in listing faculty grant projects and research teams. How these research projects relate to the degree programs is unclear. We were led to understand that the faculty did not contribute to or see the Self Review; had they been involved in its writing this problem might not have arisen. There is, however, a pervasive view among the younger faculty that the key to a strong graduate program (which will be discussed below) is the formation of teams of students with individual faculty members in the different areas of the field, e.g. a syntax team which was formed following the retreat. While such faculty/student research groups can be important in the training of students, they should not be viewed as fulfilling the need for a cooperative department effort.

What is clearly missing is a departmental focus which is shared by faculty and students. Such a focus might include the study of the Native Languages of British Columbia, an area which we believe to be key given the department's commitment to the study of languages as the basis of all linguistic research. Despite this stated philosophy, there has not been a single completed doctoral dissertation in the area of the Native Languages of the area among the 19 Ph.D.'s awarded since 1970. (The only dissertation on a Native Language was one on proto-Mayan, an historical linguistic topic.) We were pleased to note that one doctoral student, Dwight Gardiner, who also teaches in the SFU Secwepemc Program in Kamloops, is in the process of writing a dissertation on the Interior Salish language, Shuswap, spoken there. Gardiner referred to the British Columbia area as a descriptive linguist's dream area because of the richness of the Native languages. We agree with this view and believe that a focus on these languages would be to the advantage of the department as a whole as well as to the entire field of linguistics. We also note that

Professor Lincoln directs a Kwakwaka Dictionary, Morphophonology, and Texts Project, which we think would attract some of the doctoral students to conduct research on this language or other Wakashan languages. Professor Gerds continues her research on Salishan languages as well.

Another possible focus for the department would be computational linguistics, which already has real strength at SFU in the Cognitive Science/Linguistics interface. This is not to suggest that everyone be committed to such programs, but that the department needs an identity which it now lacks.

While the department might not choose any of these particular areas as a focus, we stress that we believe it to be important that the faculty in its entirety discuss the strengths of the department and define them in such a way that they are visible to the outsider and to the graduate coordinator recommending to a student where s/he should apply.

### 3. Undergraduate Program

#### 3.0 General

The size of the undergraduate linguistics program at SFU is impressive. Linguistics departments often have trouble attracting undergraduate enrollments, largely because students tend to view the discipline as esoteric and impractical. SFU has avoided this problem by attracting considerable numbers of majors and minors who have language-related career plans. Specifically, the ESL certificate program is the biggest single source of undergraduate students: because a substantial number of basic Linguistics courses are required for the certificate, many students pursuing a certificate opt for Linguistics as their major or minor field. Additionally, a substantial number of students are seeking careers in speech therapy, and major in Linguistics as preparation for UBC's excellent graduate program in speech pathology.

SFU's Linguistics Department deserves credit for looking beyond the theoretical core of the discipline to see how its students could put their training to productive use. While making provisions for those few students interested in going on to graduate study in linguistics, the focus of the department at the undergraduate level is on the much larger population for whom linguistics is a tool, rather than an end in itself. This is a strategy that other linguistics departments in North America would be wise to imitate.

There are, however, some problems. Indeed, the undergraduate students we met with (about a dozen -- hence, a very small and possibly unrepresentative fraction of the total population) were quite outspoken in their criticisms of the department. The unifying theme of their remarks was that the structure and content of the undergraduate program did not adequately accommodate the needs of those students whose interests were primarily ESL or speech pathology. Many of their concerns appeared to us to have merit. In the next few paragraphs, we discuss ways in which the undergraduate program could be made to serve its constituency more effectively.

#### 3.1 Curriculum

##### 3.1.1 Course Size and Scheduling

The first complaint we heard was that a number of the more advanced (300 and 400 level) required courses for the major are hard to get into because they have enrollment caps and are only infrequently offered. Some students said they would have trouble finishing the major in four years, even if they attended classes three semesters a year. We were also

told that the scheduling of the required courses was "a mystery," making it hard for students to plan their programs of study.

Our recommendation on how to address these problems involves a fairly substantial restructuring of the undergraduate curriculum and major requirements, but we think such changes make sense for a variety of reasons. In essence, we recommend more diversity and flexibility in the undergraduate curriculum -- recommendations to which we return shortly.

### 3.1.2 Flexibility

There are currently required courses at the 200, 300, and 400 levels in each of three areas, namely, phonetics, phonology, and syntax; the lower level courses in each area are prerequisites for the higher level ones. We know of no other undergraduate linguistics program with so much vertical structuring -- or for that matter, with so many required courses in any of these three areas. In light of this highly structured program, we were surprised to hear Donna Gerdts assert (without contradiction from any of her colleagues, who were present) that the most important thing about an undergraduate linguistics program is to convey enthusiasm for the discipline, not to transmit any particular body of knowledge.

Taking such a philosophy seriously, we suggest that the number of specifically required courses should be very substantially reduced, giving students more flexibility as to which courses to take to satisfy the major. One semester each of theoretical work in phonetics, phonology, and syntax is as much as most undergraduate programs stipulate. Instead of the vertical structuring of the present requirements, we recommend offering courses with a variety of different foci. For example, in the area of syntax, a course on English grammar (taught from a fairly traditional, descriptive perspective) would be very useful for the ESL students, and a course on syntactic typology might likewise serve them well. Analogous modifications in the areas of phonology and phonetics would also be possible.

There are many topics in linguistics that can be addressed at the undergraduate level which could impart enthusiasm for the subject matter as well as useful information to future ESL teachers and speech pathologists. These include language acquisition, biological foundations of language, and sociolinguistics. It makes sense to give SFU's Linguistics majors the option of taking these to satisfy their requirements, even if some of the courses are offered in other departments (e.g., Education or Psychology). The increased flexibility should ease scheduling problems as well.

We are proposing a general strategy for revising the undergraduate program, not a detailed alternative curriculum. Final decisions on requirements and course offerings must be left to the department itself. It is evident to us, however, that the needs of SFU's undergraduates can be more effectively met by a program that is broad and flexible, rather than the rigid vertically structured major now in place. The added flexibility, moreover, should alleviate the scheduling problems students are currently experiencing.

If the requirements for the undergraduate major are made more flexible, we suggest that the department consider defining sample programs that students might follow (e.g. linguistics and philosophy, computational linguistics, linguistics and particular languages, social aspects of language, linguistics and theory) to help guide the students through the program.

### 3.1.3 Advanced Courses

Relatively advanced theoretical courses (including most of the present 400 level courses) should be listed as graduate courses, with provisions made for adequately prepared undergraduates to take them. This would reverse the current situation, in which most course work done by graduate students is in undergraduate courses with an extra hour per week of class for the graduate students.

### 3.1.4 ESL Curriculum

Another part of the curriculum that students criticized is the 360-363 series, focusing on issues in language teaching in general and ESL in particular. Students complained of redundancy among these courses and of too little "hands-on" practice in language teaching. Students and faculty alike noted the desirability of adding coverage in the curriculum of the teaching of reading and writing -- and possibly some other topics such as classroom methods, testing, and language teaching technology.

It struck us as remarkable that a program that draws so many students concentrating on ESL (through the certificate and diploma programs) has nobody on its faculty whose primary area of specialization is ESL. Both students and faculty commented on the problems created by this lacuna, and the internal report lists an ESL specialist as one of the department's most pressing needs. We agree, and recommend that a full-time ESL specialist be hired. This need not be a tenure-line faculty position, but it should be someone whose primary training is in ESL and who has a multi-year contract. The incremental cost could be quite small, since the Department has for years been hiring sessionals and making other short-term appointments to fill some of the needs in ESL. Consolidating these resources into one person who has the requisite expertise and stability of appointment would make it possible to rethink and restructure the ESL curriculum to serve better the numerous students in this area.

In the course of our discussions, several people indicated to us (with varying degrees of explicitness) that there were some turf problems between Linguistics and Education regarding some aspects of the ESL curriculum. Tensions between departments over interdisciplinary areas are commonplace, but they rarely serve the interests of the students. We had no meetings with Education faculty, so we cannot claim a full understanding of the problem. However, we heard enough to suspect that there may be a need for administrative intervention. We urge the Deans of the Faculties of Arts and Education (and, if necessary, the Vice-President, Academic) to determine whether the ESL programs in the two units could be improved through greater cooperation between them.

### 3.2 Non-curricular Matters

In addition to the curricular issues addressed in the preceding paragraphs, students voiced concerns about advising and related matters. They expressed frustration with the difficulty they had getting answers to questions about requirements or curriculum. We understand that this function is typically assigned to staff at SFU, but in light of the level of alienation apparent in some of the Linguistics students, we would recommend that the faculty make itself more accessible to undergraduates. Perhaps one (or more) faculty member could be designated as an undergraduate advisor and have office hours for that purpose. See the discussion in section 4 as well.

In addition, an informational brochure explaining requirements and options in more detail than the University Calendar provides might be very useful. (The curricular changes suggested above should precede the preparation of such a brochure).

Finally, we recommend the maintenance of close communications with postgraduate programs (notably UBC's speech pathology program) that substantial numbers of SFU undergraduates are interested in. Students should know what will be expected of them in these programs, and the SFU faculty should make sure that their course offerings will provide appropriate preparation. We note that the undergraduates were very grateful for the meeting with Professor Carolyn Johnson of the UBC Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology who spoke to them of the UBC program and answered the students' questions.

### 3.3 Summary

SFU's undergraduate program has great potential. Its practical orientation and large enrollments deserve praise. But the undergraduate population is not being served well by the present curriculum. We urge a serious reappraisal both of what is required and of what is offered, and we recommend a broader, more flexible undergraduate curriculum. We also propose the hiring of an ESL specialist and revisions in the ESL course offerings. Finally, we suggest that the faculty make a greater effort to provide students with high-quality guidance in their course selection and career planning.

## 4. Graduate Program

It is expected that the M.A. and Ph.D. programs which are currently in the Program in Languages and Linguistics will soon be part of a new program in the Linguistics Department. It is stated in the proposal that M.A. course requirements will be made more specific, that "a thesis prospectus requirement (be instituted) in place of the Ph.D. comprehensive examination, (and that) a small number of courses (be added) to the existing list." (p 36. Linguistics Department Review). Basically, these programs are already part of the Department with 9 M.A. and 8 Ph.D. students concentrating in the linguistics field.

### 4.1. MA Program

We agree with the Self Review that the M.A. course requirements should be made more specific. The M.A. degree program now requires a minimum of 20 credit hours, 16 of which must be in the 800 through 808 series (unspecified) These 800 level courses, however, "piggybacked" on undergraduate courses.

As stated in Section 3. above, we recommend that most of the 400 level theoretical courses be restructured as graduate level courses and that a structured set of requirements be established for the M.A. including a minimum number of courses in syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics. Undergraduate courses can (and in some cases should) be set as prerequisite to be taken by entering graduate students who have not had the equivalent courses elsewhere. This would for example include phonetics as a prerequisite for the graduate course in phonology in addition to an undergraduate course in phonological analysis. We would also suggest that the department consider requiring a field methods course, particularly given the department's view that all their theoretical work be firmly grounded in the study of languages.

The required courses need to be scheduled so that entering M.A. students can take them in one year and then go on to write their M.A. theses, which for those wishing to go into the doctoral program will have to be approved for such entry. For students who have fulfilled all the prerequisites, it may even be possible to do the course work and the M.A. thesis in a single year.

An additional requirement for the M.A. degree is a thesis acceptable to the Supervisory Committee. Given the lack of any course requirements, the faculty as a whole has no role in maintaining equivalent standards for M.A. students, and the amount of linguistic background may vary dramatically from one M.A. student to the next. We recommend that the thesis requirement be maintained, even if the changes in course requirements that are suggested are implemented. Along with this, we recommend that the current process of transferring outstanding M.A. students into the Ph.D. program without requiring the thesis be eliminated. Finally, we recommend that the department consider having the theses read by the entire faculty (or minimally by a committee of qualified members of the faculty who has not been involved in the preparation of the thesis). The department (or committee) and the advisor together will be responsible for making the decisions as to whether the thesis is acceptable for the M.A. degree. The group responsible for admissions to the Ph.D. program should independently make the decision as to whether the student qualifies for admission to the Ph.D. program.

#### 4.2. Ph.D. Program

Like the M.A. Program, there are no specific requirements for the Ph.D. beyond the minimum: 16 credit hours of Linguistics courses and a Research Proposal for a thesis. Approval of both the courses and the dissertation prospectus is left to the Supervisory Committee. Once more, we find that there is no overall department responsibility for its doctoral students, which we believe can lead to great variability, and in the worse case, no requirement for uniform background or accomplishments. If the M.A. requirements were more structured this might not constitute a problem, but even given a stronger set of M.A. requirements one would like to see a strengthening of requirements at the doctoral level. This is particularly important since the faculty expressed the view that they would prefer to admit students to the Ph.D. program with M.A.'s from elsewhere, expecting them to have a strong background in linguistics sufficient to permit them to immediately begin on independent doctoral research. The general view is that the students will get their major training by working with a faculty supervisor in one of the research teams. While this kind of training is excellent, it does not take the place of overall background in the field and as presently structured intensifies the fragmentation in the department. We strongly recommend that graduate seminars in the core areas of linguistics be instituted with students required to take a minimum number of such seminars. Furthermore, seminars give students the opportunity to write papers which can serve as the basis of publishable papers, an important ingredient of doctoral training. Such seminars should be offered on a regular basis, and students should not have to rely on reading courses for all their Ph.D. course work.

We were told that the most likely jobs for Ph.D.s will be in departments requiring generalists, yet the lack of breadth requirements in the core areas of linguistics will make it difficult for the students to be strong candidates for such positions.

In keeping with what appears to be the general philosophy of the department, how a student is to satisfy the language requirements for the Ph.D. ("a high degree of competence in two languages besides English .... (and) some knowledge of at least one non-Indo-European language") is left to the Supervisory Committee. We recommend that the department establish the specific ways that a student must meet these

requirements. Otherwise, there can be inequitable treatment of students in the program, and no generally agreed on standards for the degree.

Some members of the faculty expressed the view that their doctoral students need more experience in the writing of publishable papers. The seminars mentioned above should help solve this problem. In addition we suggest that a 'generals paper' be considered as an additional requirement for the doctoral program. This will not only help students improve their writing ability, but will give the faculty a means of evaluating a students' background knowledge. We suggest that such a paper be evaluated by the entire faculty rather than by the student's Supervisory Committee.

The opinion was expressed that the graduate program needs to evolve and the approach to training of students through the teams of faculty and students will help establish the program. While we appreciate the importance of this, we do think not think the faculty should wait before discussing the proposals raised above.

#### 4.3. Graduate Students

We met with fifteen graduate students, the majority of whom were extremely enthusiastic about the doctoral program and the flexibility it offered. Many of the students are older than the average doctoral student and came into the program after a number of years of work experience and therefore were already prepared for independent work. While understanding the positive views toward a program with no specific course requirements and little structure, we question, for the reasons discussed above, the advisability of what appears to be a fragmented and unstructured program.

The students did complain about the lack of separate graduate level courses. Some also expressed the difficulty they faced since students were left pretty much to themselves, with their education depending on how much help their supervisors were able to provide. Departmental (or university) guidelines outlining the responsibilities of the student, the supervisor, and the department through the Ph.D. process would be useful in helping to remedy this problem.

Students are given three semesters to set up their Supervisory Committees. The fragmentation already discussed makes this a problem in that students often do not know faculty other than their supervisors or what kind of research is going on in areas other than their own. If more graduate courses and seminars were offered in their first year, students would be better able to choose a Supervisory Committees. In addition, we recommend that an orientation workshop or series of orientation talks by faculty be conducted each year for new graduate students.

Students do not serve on department committees (except for one representative at faculty meetings) nor are they given responsibilities for the colloquium or other department activities. They request that the administration and organization of the department colloquium be turned over to them. We endorse this request. The colloquium could also help solve the problem of acquainting students with the research interests of the faculty if faculty are required to present colloquia on a regular basis.

We further recommend that the department newsletter be continued, being prepared by a committee composed of faculty and students. A newsletter will help establish a cohesive department and inform the students of department decisions and activities.

## 5. Staff

### 5.1 General

We met with two members of the administrative staff, Georgina Carlson, the Departmental Assistant (DA), and Tanya Beaulieu the Chair's Secretary. We did not meet Carol Jackson, the half-time graduate studies secretary to Linguistics, French, and Spanish.

The staff members have considerable and wide-ranging responsibilities. Georgina Carlson is in charge of all aspects of the undergraduate program that are not specifically the responsibility of the chair and handles the budget and payroll as well. Tanya Beaulieu is officially secretary to the chair, but has many of the responsibilities of a general departmental secretary as well since there is no staff member who is specifically assigned these duties. In addition to her responsibilities to the chair, she does photocopying for courses, book orders, mail, prepares course outlines, and does department minutes.

We were impressed with the dedication of the staff to their jobs and to the department. They seemed to care about the faculty and students, and both were willing to take on responsibilities that they viewed as being outside of their job descriptions in order to make the department work as well as possible.

### 5.2 The overwork situation

Both members of the staff as well as several members of the faculty and some of the students commented that the staff situation as it is now is unworkable, and that the staff are overworked. Many people voiced the need for a departmental secretary and receptionist to carry out routine jobs and allow the current staff to carry out the work that they are officially responsible for under their job descriptions. Students complained that they could not get the attention that they needed and were often given a run-around when they went for assistance, faculty complained that work that they would like to give to the staff could not be given to them, and staff complained about having too many responsibilities to carry their jobs out well. There was thus a general feeling of dissatisfaction with how the work of the department was getting done. It was also mentioned that the graduate secretary, who works part time, serving the needs of both linguistics and French, could use more assistance, and that perhaps this job should be fully dedicated to linguistics. The general sense of fragmentation noted elsewhere in the department also appears to exist with the staff.

The three members of the review committee felt that 2.5 staff should in principle be adequate for a department the size of that at Simon Fraser. However, we sympathized with the complaints of the staff. It struck us that there is little distribution of administrative work among the faculty in the department, and that the current administrative structure is extremely top-heavy. We recommend that the Chair consider redistributing the work load. For instance, at the moment the DA handles all work involving undergraduate students except for serving as a liaison to the faculty, a task assigned to a faculty member. It might be useful to have an undergraduate advisor take on some of the functions of this position, particularly the advisory responsibilities and other substantive (as opposed to implementational) responsibilities. Given the size of the undergraduate program, two faculty might better be used, one for students in the ESL certificate program and one for other students in linguistics. The creation of a more detailed department brochure, as suggested in section 3.2, might also help in that students might be more aware of their responsibilities.

While we did not meet the graduate studies secretary, based on the Departmental Review prepared by Tom Perry we understand that similar problems of overwork arise in this area as well. It appears that some steps have been taken to alleviate some of the workload of the graduate studies secretary. For example, graduate students are now being admitted in March and April only to begin in the September term. If this move is successful, the year-round pressure for dealing with applicants that is described in the Self Review should decrease. We would also suggest that the responsibilities of the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee be rethought. We were unable to meet with the current Chair of Graduate Studies during our visit to Simon Fraser as he was at a conference. However, based on the description in the Departmental Review, it appears that the responsibilities of this position largely involve interacting with university level officials and committees and supervising the admissions process. We suggest that this job also involve a counselling function.

In short, we suggest that one way of alleviating the work load problem is to create a less top-heavy structure, with more delegation to faculty members of administrative work.

Some of the administrative problems that were described to us also seemed to arise from the lack of a centralized system for dealing with undergraduate enrollment, undergraduate petitions, and the like. While this is certainly beyond the realm of an individual department, we felt that higher levels in the University might reconsider the responsibilities assigned to departments, and think of creating some centralized offices.

## 6. Faculty

Of the eleven tenure-line faculty, six were appointed within the first two years of the university's existence, and four were appointed in the past three years; only Perry was appointed in the intervening decades. Not surprisingly, the profiles of the older and younger faculty look quite different in a number of respects. In general, the research of the newer faculty tends to be more directed at currently fashionable theoretical issues, and, correspondingly, they seem to be more visible on the conference circuit and in refereed journals. They likewise appear to be more active in interdisciplinary collaborations, such as participation in the Cognitive Science Program. It is clear that these recent hirings (along with the separation from the language departments) have done a great deal to reinvigorate linguistics at Simon Fraser. The Department must now take care to insure that the demands on these excellent young people are realistic. This is especially important for the three untenured Assistant Professors. Their time commitments to administrative tasks must be carefully limited, and their teaching assignments should, as much as possible, be designed to facilitate their research. Such nurturing of talented young faculty will benefit the department in the long run, even if it means that senior faculty must occasionally take on administrative duties or teaching assignments they would rather not have.

In terms of research, we note a difference in the CVs between the younger and many of the older members of the faculty. While the department sees itself as team-oriented, in fact, it is a relatively small percentage of the faculty who hold research grants at this time (four faculty members, three of whom hold grants large enough to allow for significant employment of students; one more faculty member is in the current SSHRCC competition). Given the research team approach to supervision outlined above, we would hope that the burden of supervision would not fall only on those faculty members holding grants. We note that there exist already significant differences amongst members of the department in supervisory responsibilities. We would encourage some of the faculty to become more involved in active research so that the responsibilities of supervision can be

spread more widely and so that the students have a range of good role models before them. Alternatively, those faculty least active in research could be expected to carry a disproportionate share of the administrative and advising duties discussed above.

## 7. Other

We have a few observations and recommendations that do not fit in naturally under any of the general headings above, but which we consider worth raising in this report.

The first observation concerns teaching loads. In our interviews with department faculty, we heard several different stories about how teaching loads are computed. While there was general agreement that the normal load is two courses over two semesters per year (a figure we find quite reasonable), the perception among some faculty is that their graduate teaching is not counted towards this obligation. Others claimed that graduate courses were counted, but only fractionally. Apparently, this confusion is due in part to the fact that almost all graduate courses are actually special (one hour per week) sections of advanced undergraduate courses. The curricular modifications we have suggested in earlier sections should resolve some of this ambiguity, but it is important for the faculty's morale that a clear policy be articulated (and followed) regarding how different types of teaching counts towards the teaching load.

The second set of recommendations concerns some things which the department might experiment with in order to help overcome the fragmentation that we observed. First, we understand that there is a linguistics lounge, but that it is not easily accessible by graduate students. We recommend that the lounge be made more accessible.

Second, the newsletter should be used to make all members of the department aware of activities that are going on in the department and to profile an individual faculty member in each issue, helping people to learn more about each other.

Third, departmental committees, both academic (e.g. phonology, syntax) and administrative (e.g. admissions, colloquia, curriculum), consisting of subsets of the faculty and students, might also help to create a sense of community, as well as spreading the work load around.

The problems with developing a sense of overall community in some ways seem built in to the structure of the University. It was mentioned to us that since faculty choose two of the three semesters to teach, it is seldom the case that the faculty are at full strength. We have no particular suggestion regarding this, but feel that it is an important point to take into account in trying to find ways of creating a sense of cohesion.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are divided into several groups.

We recommend that:

### A. General recommendations

1. •a scholar of international reputation be recruited to chair the department.
2. •a departmental focus (or small number of foci) be defined, with the department building its strength around this/these.
3. •a faculty member be designated to provide undergraduates with guidance in course selection and career options.
4. •the current top-heavy administrative structure be reexamined with the aim of spreading the administrative work more across the faculty.
5. •the special needs of non-tenured faculty be recognized and that these faculty not be overloaded with administrative work.

### B. Recommendations concerning the undergraduate program

6. •the undergraduate program be restructured so as to reduce the number of required courses to allow for greater flexibility.
7. •the undergraduate major requirements be made more flexible and a reduction in the number of courses in the core areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax be instituted.
8. •a course on English grammar be introduced at the 200-level and be required for the ESL programs.
9. •linguistics-related courses in other specified departments and faculties be allowed to count towards satisfaction of the major requirements.
10. •the department explore ways of overcoming the scheduling problems experienced by students.
11. •sample programs be provided to help students plan their schedules.
12. •most of the current 400-level courses be listed as graduate only courses, with special provisions for undergraduates to take them.
13. •the requirements for the ESL program be rethought to better cover the area and better meet the needs of the students.
14. •a person with a Ph.D. in ESL be hired to define and run the ESL programs.
15. •the administration explore ways to permit greater cooperative efforts between Linguistics and education.