

Greg Kremer, Chair
New Programs Committee
University Curriculum Council

Dear Greg,

Thanks for the feedback about our proposal for an “Interdisciplinary Certificate in the Empirical Study of Language.” Below please find our responses to the questions raised.

Danny Moates

9. New Certificate in the Empirical Study of Language

- a. 35 Credit hours
- b. 27 core plus 8 electives
- c. 3.0 GPA required for admission and for granting certificate
- d. Questions were raised by the Programs Committee that need to be resolved before 2nd reading:

> Is that an overall GPA for granting the certificate, or GPA in the certificate courses?

Response: The 3.00 GPA is the mean GPA required for the certificate courses. We would certainly hope that the overall GPA were at least 3.00 also, because anything less than that would compete poorly in graduate admissions.

> Provide more evidence of the need and demand for the certificate program.

Response: The application process for graduate programs in the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology has become more competitive in the recent years. Although a 3.0 grade point average is required to apply to most graduate programs, the students that are accepted into programs have GPAs that are much higher than that (e.g., 3.5 or above). In addition to grades, most graduate programs look favorably upon applicants who have unique undergraduate experiences, such as experiences with research. The reasons for this are due to an increasing emphasis on graduate research (e.g., thesis projects) and the need for more students to pursue doctoral education.

For the field of Linguistics, we sent a survey to the five Linguistics programs in the U.S. who have produced the largest number of Ph.D. graduates in recent decades. The survey briefly described our proposed program and asked if it is a needed program and if it would improve an applicant’s competitiveness for their program. All five department chairs were quite supportive (see email responses in Appendix.).

> Need evidence of support from Linguistics or some explanation of why it should be approved without the support of Linguistics.

Response: We invited Linguistics to support the proposal. Danny Moates appeared at a faculty meeting to present the proposal (they already had copies) and to answer questions. In a closed-session meeting that followed, the faculty could not reach “consensus” in supporting the proposal. We learned afterward that the sole dissenter was [REDACTED]. In an email, he stated

that the name of our certificate proposal implies that Linguistics does not train its students in empirical language study. He would support our proposal only if we changed the name of the proposal so that it does not reflect poorly on the Linguistics program. We believe that the name of the certificate program merely states what we do and does not reflect poorly on the Linguistics program. Linguistics is abundantly empirical; we don't see how anyone could doubt that.

We would very much like to have Linguistics sign off on our proposal. The proposal includes quite a number of their courses. Moreover, three of our IESL members are in Linguistics: Scott Jarvis, Liang Tao, and Zinny Bond (now in early retirement but very active in IESL). We did not want the certificate proposal to die, essentially for lack of support from one member of the Linguistics faculty, so we have brought it to you with the support of all but one of the Linguistics Department faculty.

> Clarify 'min 3 hours' for Individual Research experience

Response: We expect a student to register for one credit hour of research for each of three quarters. Each quarter is to be with a different IESL faculty member. The intent is to give the student a range of experiences with different research topics, methodologies, technology, etc. Students may continue working on a research project with a faculty member after they have finished the first quarter with that faculty member, but the continuation is not required.

> Thesis course hours do not seem to make sense relative to the 6 hour requirement.

Response: A student will typically register for thesis course hours in the program of the faculty member who is supervising the thesis. Different programs have different courses for providing such hours. If six hours are not available in the program of the supervising faculty member, the student can apply hours from another program to bring the total to six.

> Who are the IESL faculty?

Zinny Bond, Dept. of Linguistics
Bruce Carlson, Dept. of Psychology
Brooke Hallowell, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Scott Jarvis, Dept. of Linguistics
Chao-Yang Lee, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Sally Marinellie, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Emilia Marks, Dept. of Modern Languages
Danny Moates, Dept. of Psychology
James Montgomery, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Gary Neiman, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Liang Tao, Dept. of Linguistics
Li Xu, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Appendix

Survey sent to chairs of five Linguistics Departments

Dear Dr. (Chair of the Department),

The Institute for the Empirical Study of Language at Ohio University is developing a program for training undergraduates in empirical research skills for language research. Our goal is to make these students competitive for admission to doctoral programs in those language sciences that conduct laboratory research. For this program, students will take several courses in linguistics and other language-related areas plus a course in statistics and one in experimental design. They will also get involved in an independent research project with three different members of our institute to gain research experience. Finally, they will conduct a senior thesis. This project will require a literature review, hypothesis development, preparation of materials, collection of data, analysis of data, and write-up of the project for defense before a faculty committee.

Our university curriculum council must approve this program before we can activate it. The council has asked for documentation that such a program is needed, i.e., that graduates from this program would be competitive in applying to doctoral programs in the language sciences.

According to the LSA website, your program is one of the top five in the U.S. in number of Ph.D.s granted in Linguistics. In your judgment, is there a need for applicants to Ph.D. programs in Linguistics to have the kind of training described above?

Definite need Moderate need No need

In your judgment, how much of a competitive advantage would students coming from such a program have in applying to doctoral programs in Linguistics?

Strong advantage Moderate advantage No advantage

Any comments?

Many thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Danny R. Moates, Ph.D.
Director
Institute for the Empirical Study of Language

Response 1. UCLA

Dear Dr. Moates,

The training described above would provide excellent training for potential graduate applicants in my program. Since you probably need to quantify the responses you need, here is my input into the scales you provided:

>>In your judgment, is there a need for applicants to Ph.D. programs in Linguistics to have the kind of training described above?

Definite need Moderate need No need

In your judgment, how much of a competitive advantage would students coming from such a program have in applying to doctoral programs in Linguistics?

Strong advantage Moderate advantage No advantage

Good luck.

-Anoop Mahajan
Professor and Chair
Department of Linguistics, UCLA

Response 2. University of Texas at Austin

Dear Dr. Moates,

I think there is a definite need for such training and it would confer a strong advantage on applicants to a program like ours.

In recent years, my department has increasingly emphasized experimental approaches to linguistic research. This is true not only in areas like phonetics that have long emphasized experimental methods, but also in phonology (so-called "laboratory phonology"), in work in semantics and pragmatics (e.g. experimental work done here on how subjects interpret focus), and in work on first language acquisition and other areas of psycholinguistics. We are starting here to teach courses in statistical methods and in experimental design, although we have not yet made those courses a required part of graduate curriculum. A significant portion of our students take a graduate-level stats course as some point during their doctoral training. Other important departments are also placing an increasing emphasis on experimental training: the Linguistics Department at UCSD is a case in point.

A particular advantage of the program that you have outlined in your email is that it would provide rich opportunities for undergraduates to become involved in research.

So, I very much hope that your administration will support your initiative. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance in this matter.

Best regards,

Richard P. Meier
Professor & Chair
Robert D. King Centennial Professor in Liberal Arts.

Response 3. Georgetown University

According to the LSA website, your program is one of the top five in the U.S. in number of Ph.D.s granted in Linguistics. In your judgment, is there a need for applicants to Ph.D. programs in Linguistics to have the kind of training described above?

Definite need Moderate need No need

Strong to definite need, depending on the area of linguistics. In general, this background would be highly beneficial to applicants.

In your judgment, how much of a competitive advantage would students coming from such a program have in applying to doctoral programs in Linguistics?

Strong advantage Moderate advantage No advantage

Strong advantage if the research experiences were matched by a strong set of linguistics courses.

Any comments?

Best wishes in your endeavor!
Heidi Hamilton

Response 4. University of Michigan

Dear Prof. Moates,

See the check marks below: this sounds like a terrific program, and it would have to be of great use to your students. The main impact it'd be likely to have in the graduate admissions process is the production of really good writing samples -- that is, the training you will provide will help students craft papers that will impress admissions committees.

Sincerely,

Sarah Thomason, Professor & Chair
Department of Linguistics
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

From: Danny Moates [moates@ohio.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 01, 2010 1:04 PM
To: Thomason, Sarah
Subject: question

Dear Dr. Thomason,

The Institute for the Empirical Study of Language at Ohio University is developing a program for training undergraduates in empirical research skills for language research. Our goal is to make these students competitive for admission to doctoral programs in those language sciences that conduct laboratory research. For this program students will take several courses in linguistics and other language-related areas plus a course in statistics and one in experimental design. They will also get involved in an independent research project with three different members of our institute to gain research experience. Finally, they will conduct a senior thesis. This project will require a literature review, hypothesis development, preparation of materials, collection of data, analysis of data, and write-up of the project for defense before a faculty committee.

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According to the LSA website, your program is one of the top five in the U.S. in number of Ph.D.s granted in Linguistics. In your judgment, is there a need for applicants to Ph.D. programs in Linguistics to have the kind of training described above?

XXX Definite need Moderate need No need

In your judgment, how much of a competitive advantage would students coming from such a program have in applying to doctoral programs in Linguistics?

Strong advantage XXX Moderate advantage No advantage

Response 5. Indiana University

> According to the LSA website, your program is one of the
> top five in the U.S. in number of Ph.D.s granted in Linguistics. In
> your judgment, is there a need for applicants to Ph.D. programs in
> Linguistics to have the kind of training described above?

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> ___√___ Definite need ___Moderate need ___No need

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> In your judgment, how much of a competitive advantage would
> students coming from such a program have in applying to doctoral
> programs in Linguistics?

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> ___√___ Strong advantage ___Moderate advantage ___No
> advantage

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> Any comments?

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> If the student wants to be accepted directly into our P.D. program
> in Linguistics with just the BA, then the student would need these
> things to be seriously considered. On the other hand, this would not
> be necessary if the student were applying for our MA program, which is
> of an exploratory nature.

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