13 June 2019

TO: Cathy Stafford, Professor and Director, Doctoral Program in Second Language Acquisition

FROM: John Karl Scholz, Dean

RE: Completion of Academic Program Review, Doctoral Program and PhD Minor, Second Language Acquisition

CC: Wendy Johnson, Program Coordinator, SLA
    Elaine M. Klein, Associate Dean for Academic Planning
    Lisa Martin, Associate Dean, Graduate School
    Jocelyn Milner, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
    Dianna Murphy, Director, UW Language Institute
    Parmesh Ramanathan, Associate Dean, Graduate School
    Nicole Wiessinger, Academic Planning & Institutional Research
    Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities

Attachment: Review Committee Report, Second Language Acquisition

On February 5, 2019, the L&S Academic Planning Council considered materials submitted for the review of the graduate program in Second Language Acquisition. In the course of the council’s deliberations, members were provided with the self-study you and your colleagues prepared. They also reviewed the report submitted by a "blue-ribbon" program review committee, which used your self-study as the foundation for assessing the SLA program. We also provided the APC with your response to the report. Associate Dean Susan Zaeske led discussion of these materials, which she observed reflected a thorough and useful review of the program.

Dean Zaeske noted that this program is a unique non-departmental interdisciplinary program that has no faculty lines dedicated to support it, and which therefore relies on the participation of faculty affiliates who participate from homes found in thirteen departments and units on campus. She stressed the review committee's findings that the SLA program provides an important second intellectual home for faculty and a strong intellectual community for graduate students. The review committee learned, moreover, that other departments and units benefit from the presence of SLA graduate students in their seminars and that SLA has proven critical to the Language Institute's ability to secure outside funding. The committee reported, further, that the SLA
program it serves its students well, has “exemplary” procedures for assessing student learning to ensure effective coordination and calibration of learning across the participating fields of study, and overall enhances the offerings of departments that cannot provide rich study of language acquisition without the program.

While the review committee and APC recognized the many strengths of the SLA program and that it is competitive with other Big Ten institutions, two key concerns were discussed.

As noted in the review committee report, the non-departmental structure of the SLA program imposes extra work on the faculty that is, “for the most part, uncompensated and unrecognized by their home departments.” This finding is troubling, but it would be more so were it not the case that the review committee also reported that the SLA faculty regard this work as highly rewarding, and that the program adds value to the UW-Madison program array. Faculty teaching assignments in the SLA program could be better coordinated with home departments, and the program should rely less on faculty overloads to function.

Much of the discussion focused on the need for the SLA program to be able to provide more up front five-year graduate funding packages rather than having to cobble together graduate funding at the last minute each year. SLA graduate students can teach many language courses as well as in the ESL program and can serve as a PA for the Language Institute. Both the review committee and the L&S APC urged program leadership to work with the College to find ways to regularize funding for SLA graduate students. I understand that these efforts are underway as the SLA Director has met with Associate Dean Zaeske about this issue.

The L&S Academic Planning Council approved a motion to accept the review committee report, with encouragement to heed the recommendations of the review committee including the recommendation that the program be continued.

This completes the L&S portion of the review, which will be followed by discussion of the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee. Thank you for all the work you have done – and continue to do – for this program.
Review Committee Report for PhD Degree–Second Language Acquisition

Review Committee Members:
Susan Ellis-Weismer (Communication Sciences and Disorders, Chair)
Christa Olson (English, GFEC representative)
Tom Purnell (English)
Farid Masrour (Philosophy)

A. A summary of the activities of the review committee and materials reviewed

The review committee received its written charge from L&S Dean Karl Scholz on October 17, 2018 and met with Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities, Susan Zaeske, and Associate Dean for Academic Planning, Elaine Klein to clarify their charge on October 28, 2018. According to the written charge, the committee was asked to focus on “evaluating the quality of the academic program and students’ experience in it.” The committee reviewed the charge for self-study and the completed self-study report (dated March, 2018) from the interdisciplinary SLA PhD program. Additional materials that were considered by the committee included the originating documents for this program, prior self-study from 2008, and review in 2010 that lauded the program and recommended its continuation. After reading the SLA PhD Program self-study, the committee generated a list of additional questions on various topics (e.g., student funding, structure of program, student productivity and placement) that were sent to SLA program leadership and discussed in the individual meetings.

Following a planning meeting, the review committee held individual (hour-long) interviews with Catherine Stafford (Director, SLA Program), Wendy Johnson (SLA Program Coordinator), Junko Mori (Former SLA Program Director), and Dianna Murphy (Director, Language Institute), as well as group interviews with core SLA faculty and with SLA PhD students. Additionally, written questions were submitted to Eric Raimy and his comments were solicited (Director, Language Sciences).

B. An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the program

1. Nature and contributions of academic program

Overall, we find the contribution of the SLA program to UW-Madison highly valuable. It attracts students, faculty and resources to UW, it enhances the University’s academic profile and it positively contributes to faculty and student experience. The SLA Program is an intellectual community based on shared interdisciplinary interest. SLA faculty and staff are based in thirteen departments and units at the UW campus but have common research and teaching interests in the field of Second Language Acquisition. The program enables faculty to pursue these interests in a formalized manner. It also provides them with an interdisciplinary venue for exchanging ideas with other faculty and students in L&S and beyond who share their interests and approaches. SLA faculty see this program as their second intellectual home. This is highly appreciated by the faculty, especially by those whose home departments lack an official linguistics track (German, Japanese and Spanish & Portugese departments, to mention a few).

The SLA program has a similar effect on SLA students who, in the absence of the program, either would not be at UW-Madison or be scattered across campus and isolated in several separate departments and units where they would, in some cases, struggle to find appropriate courses and mentors. SLA students form a strong community and cherish the opportunities that the program gives them for interaction with a wide range of faculty and peers. They also highly
appreciate that SLA provides them with both the resources and the freedom to shape their own intellectual identity.

Other departments and units also benefit from the SLA program. Faculty report that the presence of SLA students in non-SLA doctoral seminars adds an interdisciplinary perspective that heightens the educational value of these seminars for non-SLA students and benefits the instructors. SLA Graduate students describe themselves as making connections among peers in multiple departments. SLA also offers one of the largest graduate-level minors in L&S. We also learned during our interviews with the SLA faculty that their home departments have often benefitted from emulating creative reforms and ideas that originated in the SLA steering committee. Finally, SLA faculty have proved critical to the Language Institute’s ability to secure outside funding.

For these reasons, we are not surprised that despite the fact that affiliation with the SLA Program imposes extra work on the faculty and this extra work is, for the most part, uncompensated and unrecognized by their home departments, SLA faculty find their contributions to this program highly rewarding. Consequently, they continue their affiliation with SLA on a voluntary basis.

2. Program structure at UW/national comparisons

The SLA PhD Program at UW-Madison is an interdisciplinary program that is situated within the Language Institute in the College of Letters & Science. This interdisciplinary program is focused on studying the process by which individuals learn second or additional languages either in instructional or naturalistic contexts; it is typically considered to be a subfield of applied linguistics. The field of SLA is distinct from programs devoted to teaching English as a second language (ESL) which are directed at pedagogical issues surrounding the teaching of English and draw on the discipline of education. SLA is also distinct from the various language departments with which it is affiliated; while language departments have a language teaching component, they also place a strong emphasis on the study of literature (within a particular language). Relatively few language departments at UW-Madison support a linguistics component and in those that do, only a subset of the linguists focus on language acquisition. Given its interdisciplinary nature, SLA addresses a broad array of social, cognitive, and political issues related to the acquisition of second languages and the maintenance/loss of bilingualism, using diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. SLA research guides language policy, informs pedagogy, and enlightens matters of social justice for linguistically diverse populations.

SLA is a relatively new area of study. The first graduate program to offer a PhD in SLA was founded in 1988 (Thomas, M. 2013. The doctorate in second language acquisition: An institutional history, *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*. John Benjamin Publishing Co.). UW-Madison was the sixth institution in the country to establish a PhD degree in SLA. Like UW-Madison, most of the Big-Ten universities currently offer a PhD degree in SLA, including Penn State University, Indiana University, University of Minnesota, University of Iowa, Michigan State University, and University of Maryland (see Appendix: Universities with PhD Programs in Second Language Acquisition). Other notable SLA PhD programs are offered at Carnegie Mellon University, University of Arizona, and University of Hawai’i at Manoa. Several additional universities offer coursework in SLA, but not a designated PhD degree, including: Georgetown, Rutgers, University of Pittsburgh, and University of California-Davis. Consistent with the UW-Madison SLA Program, most of the other universities that offer a PhD degree in SLA are constituted as programs rather than departments (only Indiana and Hawai’i have departments).
and most are situated within Colleges of Arts & Sciences. Similarly, most of the SLA programs of study appear to focus at the graduate level (rather than including an UG degree), building on undergraduate backgrounds in languages, linguistics, psychology or other related disciplines.

There appear to be both pros and cons of the current structure for the SLA Program. As described above, the pros include the interdisciplinarity and strong sense of intellectual community, a broad array of theoretical and methodological approaches that are brought together for a common purpose, and the collegiality of a group of faculty working outside their own individual departments alongside peers with shared research interests. The link between the SLA Program and the Language Institute is another strength of the current structure; it seems to be mutually beneficial and supportive. Yet, there are also challenges posed by the current structure. All of the core faculty in SLA have tenure appointments in other units, i.e., various departments within L&S or the School of Education. The SLA Program has no designated faculty lines, TA slots, or independent courses. It appears that SLA is unlikely to become a revenue-generating program (by definition) since all of its coursework is controlled by affiliated departments and thus receives no credit for student enrollment. Further, without designated faculty lines, additional teaching by SLA core faculty during summer session would not be credited back into the program so there is not really a mechanism to support revenue development or the capacity within the current cadre of SLA faculty whose entire lines are designed to their home department. Any attempt to develop a certificate program (professional master’s level) as a revenue-generating proposition would require an additional infusion of resources from the College and it is unclear whether there would be a market for such a program.

3. Benchmarking against other programs nationally
It is difficult to evaluate the UW-Madison SLA PhD Program against other programs nationally given the relatively short time it has been in existence, the small size of the program, and the lack of appropriate metrics. In 2010 the National Research Council (NRC) published (in the Chronicle of Higher Education) its ratings of doctoral programs in Linguistics based on five major metrics (summarizing 21 different criteria). In that set of ratings only four programs were evaluated within the subfield of Second Language Acquisition (Studies): Indiana University-Bloomington, University of Iowa, University of Hawai’i at Manoa, and University of South Florida. The UW-Madison Linguistics doctoral program was rated in the 2010 NRC report but there was no separate consideration of the SLA PhD Program. Typically, the NRC requires a minimum number of PhDs to have been produced within a given time frame to include a program within its rating system, which may have been a factor in why the UW-Madison SLA Program was not rated.

Based on self-assessment by the UW-Madison SLA leadership and core faculty, the program is somewhere in the upper middle of the pack currently. Most faculty agreed that Penn State University has one of the strongest SLA PhD programs in the country. The PSU program is situated in the Department of Applied Linguistics and reportedly has historically had strong institutional support. UW-Madison SLA faculty noted that its PhD program was more robust (enrolling 7-8 students per year rather than 2-3 per year recently) and had higher national prominence in its heyday in the early 2000’s. Currently, the SLA Director named UC Davis, University of Arizona, and University of Hawai’i at Manoa as peer programs. The former SLA Director indicated that the SLA PhD Program at UW-Madison would be ranked ahead of the program at University of Iowa.
The review committee was asked to consider rigor and excellence and research quality of the SLA PhD Program. The committee had a lively discussion regarding the extent to which these issues fell within our purview given the shift at UW-Madison from departmental reviews (which included a focus on research) to program reviews (which focus on academic programs and the student experience). The SLA self-study report did not include faculty or student CVs, though summary descriptions of notable accomplishments were included for students, alumni, and SLA faculty. Ultimately, we restricted our evaluation to the quality of the academic program but took note of indirect indices of research quality and excellence. One measure of research stature of the program (and faculty comprising the program) is the extent to which it is capable of recruiting qualified PhD applicants. The SLA Program attracts many more PhD applicants than it can accept (2007-2017 acceptance rate averaged 14% of applicants, based on UW-Madison Graduate School data). These students are presumably interested in the UW-Madison SLA PhD Program because of their exposure to published research or conference presentations by SLA faculty members or the positive reputation of the training program. Another indicator of excellence is the degree to which alumni of the program are hired by other institutions. Of the 33 SLA alumni (at the time of 2018 self-study report), 31 currently have professional positions: 30 are in academic positions and 1 is in industry (Amazon). According to SLA faculty, student scholarly products upon graduation include research presentations at conferences, teaching portfolios, and occasionally published articles (though the ability to secure tenure-track SLA positions does not appear to be linked to publications).

4. Learning objectives and assessment
The SLA Doctoral Program’s assessment and review process is exemplary. Indeed, some of the core faculty mentioned that they had taken structures from the SLA program and introduced them into the graduate programs in their home departments, having found them so effective. As the self-study indicates, SLA faculty and students developed new, collaborative rubrics in 2016-17 that are designed to guide evaluation of preliminary exams, proposal defenses, and final dissertation defenses. Those same rubrics also aid students in preparing for those major steps, as they clearly lay out expectations and criteria for assessment. These explicit structures and expectations for evaluation are particularly important in an interdisciplinary graduate program like SLA, where typical variation among how faculty advisors approach their role can be exacerbated by dispersion and disciplinary difference. The program does not require the use of IDPs, but did offer a workshop on them as part of last year’s professional development series.

5. Student recruitment, funding, and placement
The SLA admissions model is a hybrid of individual and committee review. In the first stage, a sub-committee of the SLA Director, program coordinator, and two additional faculty review the pool of applicants and divide them into groups so that each applicant gets a close review from 2-3 faculty members, at least one of whom is clearly in the applicant’s area of research. Those readers assess overall strength of the candidate, faculty willingness to advise each candidate, and funding possibilities. Then, the SLA core faculty convene to discuss the strongest applicants and work toward a high-quality, diverse, and funded cohort. Graduate students and faculty all described the program’s recruitment process as a strength. As soon as students are admitted, SLA faculty contact them and begin building a relationship, showing interest in the student and their research. Graduate students specifically mentioned this personalized and engaged recruitment process as crucial in their decision about where to attend. Some had multi-year guaranteed funding elsewhere, but chose to attend UW-Madison because of the investment the faculty were already making in them. Even so, faculty and administrators in the program noted that they regularly lose talented admits who receive more financially competitive offers elsewhere. In the past 5-6 years, the SLA program has “right sized” its graduate student cohorts, responding primarily to the difficulty of securing consistent funding for graduate
students (see section B.7.). While the applicant pool remains strong, the program now only admits students for whom they can envision a clear path to multi-year funding, meaning that they choose not to admit some excellent candidates when their language skills and/or area of research suggest they would struggle to secure TA-ships.

With regard to diversity in the program, the SLA program student population over the past several cohorts has been about half international students and half domestic students. Of the domestic students, only a very small proportion have come from targeted minority groups. Last year, program leaders met with LaRuth McAfee, Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Funding in the Graduate School, to discuss means to diversify their applicant pool, and this year they did a targeted mailing to academic partner institutions in an effort to increase program visibility and also reached out to Hispanic-Serving institutions through core faculty. The program has also considered McNair scholar and summer research fellowship opportunities, but those are more complicated because the program is PhD-only. At the time of the review it was too early to tell if these efforts have had any effect. Wendy Johnson, the SLA program coordinator, noted that lack of domestic diversity is an issue in language teaching nationally, so there may be a larger pipeline challenge to confront.

Student placement in full-time positions post-graduation is reasonably strong and appears on par with national peers. The SLA Self-Study reports that 31 out of 33 program alumni have positions, 30 of which are at academic institutions – 15 of those are in tenure-line positions. Program faculty and students mentioned that institutions vary in how they classify language program director positions, which partially accounts for the number of graduates in non-tenure-line roles. In an informal survey of the students who met with the committee, it seemed that most would be interested in a tenure-line job but would be equally happy to have a non-tenure-line language program director position. It was the type of work that mattered most. Students on the market reported feeling that they had a variety of options available to them.

6. PhD student experience (recruitment, mentoring, climate, resources)

SLA program leadership has been intentional about providing community space for graduate students. They hold regular “coffee chats” about research and professional development, host dinners and brown bags with visiting scholars, and promote writing groups. The review committee met with eleven graduate students. They generally reported a positive experience in the program, appreciating the community, educational experience, and supportive faculty. They remarked on the positive experience of having been recruited to the program and most felt that the faculty investment in them had continued into their program experience. A few students noted, though, that feeling supported can depend a great deal on one’s faculty advisor, and while all felt that the vast majority of core faculty were deeply engaged with the program and supportive of graduate students, a few had initially experienced faculty advisors who made clear that their SLA work, including graduate advising, was “extra.” Students reported that changing advisors had fixed the problem, but the experience was unpleasant in the moment. Several students noted that varied investment from advisors is typical in departments as well, but agreed that SLA’s interdisciplinary status was often the reason cited when faculty explained their choices with regard to the program.

The SLA graduate students saw the program’s interdisciplinarity as a strength and saw themselves as bridge-builders and connection-makers for their graduate student peers in more department-focused programs. They appreciated the program’s flexibility—to take courses across campus and work with a wide group of faculty—and generally felt that they were able to find the courses they needed to complete their studies. They noted that the program puts
together a list of possible courses each semester but also described doing their own research to find additional opportunities.

Students were aware of funding available for conferences and research travel and made use of it, but they felt that it did not stretch as far as would be ideal. They also saw this as a common problem across programs at UW-Madison. Like the faculty, graduate students cited program community as a significant strength. They felt like they had a mix of professional and social events and also had opportunities for leadership in the program. Though the graduate students noted that the program provides regular professional development support, they also expressed a desire for more direction, especially early on in the program. They felt that the most successful students had a clear career plan from the beginning and built their coursework, TA-ships, and research to prepare them for that outcome (this point echoed one that Wendy Johnson, SLA coordinator, made earlier in the review process). They felt, though, that advisors varied in how they encouraged students to approach their first few years, and they suggested that clearer program-wide investment in early professional development—either through an initial orientation, an ongoing professional development series, or a professionalization course—would be helpful.

7. Student funding
Student funding is an issue that was mentioned repeatedly by SLA PhD Program leadership, by core faculty, and by graduate students as a challenge for this program. Currently, the SLA PhD Program only admits students for whom they have available funding during the first year and a strong sense of sources for subsequent years of funding. Most funding is 33.3% but the program is striving to increase this to 50% funding for all students. The consistent view was that lack of designated funding is an impediment to recruitment, results in loss of ‘star’ applicants, and consumes considerable faculty and student time and effort. Some faculty also suggested that the ongoing need to seek funding added to student stress and distracted from focus on their studies. It was noted that whenever possible the SLA PhD Program does offer multi-year funding packages as part of acceptance into the program. Because the program does not have any designated TA positions, this is only possible at the beginning of multi-year grants. Despite these concerns, SLA leadership and core faculty indicated that funding is typically secured for each student and that it was not the case that students leave the program due to lack of funding though some do accept positions prior to completion of their dissertations. Surprisingly, in our meeting with the PhD students there was a generally more positive view of funding. Students recognized that they were all funded differently but expressed the view that even without a multi-year guarantee, funding ‘worked out’ and their situation was not necessarily any different than their classmates enrolled in PhD programs within departments. Several of the students we interviewed had received 3-year guaranteed funding packages with their offer letters, all students noted that the program coordinator checked with them about their funding needs each semester and commented that they felt well supported by their advisor’s attempts to assist with funding. Two dissertators were in the seventh to eighth year of their program and had been able to secure continuous funding. There was only one student who reported a lapse in funding (but currently has a TA position) and the rest of the students said they were not aware of other cases of students who were not able to secure funding at certain points during their program. Students also mentioned some difficulty in securing opportunities to teach in their language of specialization, given enrollment pressures in some language departments. The program coordinator indicated that, to her knowledge, there were no cases of students leaving the program due to funding issues.
According to Academic Planning and Institutional Research (APIR) data reported by the UW-Madison Graduate School for 2007-2017, an average of 72% of students who were enrolled in the SLA PhD program during any given year had funding (with funding ranging from 55% to 83% across the years). An average of 28% of SLA PhD students were designated as having “no/low/other funding” throughout this time span. This would include students who were still enrolled but may be off-site doing work overseas and those who were still enrolled past their guaranteed funding period, as well as students who may have funding through other sources (e.g., international students with scholarships from their home county). The level of funding for SLA PhD students is equivalent to that of PhD students across the Arts & Humanities at large. Based on APIR data for 2007-2017, an average of 71% of Humanities PhD students were funded (range of 65% to 77%). These data suggest that PhD students in this interdisciplinary program are not disadvantaged with respect to actual funding received compared to those enrolled in departmental programs that comprise the bulk of the Arts & Humanities division. Where the problems arise, they are with the differential process of securing funding and the increased stress with “just-in-time” appointments.

C. Recommendations for future directions

1. Continuation of SLA PhD program
The review committee is in strong agreement that the UW-Madison SLA PhD program makes unique and valuable contributions and should continue. We reached this decision through interviews with key faculty, staff and students associated with the program, and with the backdrop of university program statistics and the written material that the program submitted to the committee. As noted above, the SLA program is successful in placing students in appropriate post-graduation positions (tenure track research, non-tenure track teaching, and language teaching program leadership), and demonstrates good assessment practices. Moreover, the faculty have taken steps to sustain and improve the program with little to no recognition by their home academic departments. The motivation for their efforts comes from the rewards that such an intellectual community provides. In this report we have identified numerous programmatic strengths. As such, we recommend avoiding any changes that could adversely affect the program. Nevertheless, our review of the SLA highlights a few challenges. First, the faculty in the program are dispersed across multiple departments, which is inherent in its interdisciplinary structure but means that all program faculty have their focus divided. Relatedly, the program lacks a budgetary center from which the faculty could request hires, seek institutional support directly for the SLA program (as opposed to going through a home department or the Language Institute), or even bolster recruitment. This lack of a budgetary center prevents recognition for faculty and appears to be a drag on the success they experience. Second, students are indeed funded, but the current funding process and practices depends on the largess of the Language Institute and academic departments. Discovery of these problems led the review committee to make inquiries of faculty and students related to the feasibility and efficacy of hypothetical structural changes to the program.

2. Program structure and how it is situated within the College
Our investigation revealed areas in which the SLA leadership and the college could improve the situation for the SLA graduate program. As noted above, one of the issues is what course of action would be best for the program to facilitate strengthening the faculty and support graduate students.
Options considered but not recommended:
a) **Combine the SLA program with Language Sciences.** We posed the idea of alternate configurations and of the range of possibilities, the combining of SLA somehow with the newly configured Language Sciences was the most common. Moreover, it was also broached at one point in the past during the restructuring of Linguistics into Language Sciences. One model of incorporation would be that SLA would be a named option within Language Sciences. The immediate advantage of this is that SLA would gain a budgetary line and could appeal to school and university instruments for hiring, funding, etc. Unsurprisingly, many of the current SLA leadership faculty are open to this option, seeing the benefits to the program, though most noted that there would be logistical difficulties involved. In addition, a discussion by one member of the committee with Eric Raimy, director of Language Sciences program, suggests that this move could potentially disadvantage both the funding of Linguistics graduate students as well as the collegiality that Raimy has been careful to instill in the more expansive Language Sciences Executive Committee.

b) **Move SLA PhD to a single language department.** As an alternate to moving the program into Language Sciences which has a similarly broad scope of research foci among faculty and could co-exist well with the field of SLA, one could likewise imagine moving SLA into one of the language departments, for example, Spanish, Japanese, or English. While this option might stabilize the program and provide a way to request new hires, etc., we do not recommend this option. The downside is that the effect would be to privilege researchers in that language and could impose restrictions on SLA researchers focusing in other languages. It would also fail to solve the problem of TA positions, as not all SLA graduate students are able to teach in the same language. In short, this option would cause damage to the SLA program without solving its existing challenges.

**Recommended options:**

c) **Restructure opportunities for graduate student funding.** One finding of our review is that student funding occurs for SLA students at the same rate as students in similar departments. Yet there is a fundamental difference between SLA funding and funding of students in a language department: having to wait for appointments because SLA students are at the end of every department queue produces stress and might appear precariously *ad hoc* to the students. Though program faculty describe SLA students as exceptional teachers, those not in high-demand language areas (and there are a few) are at the mercy of other departments having to fill empty TA slots. Note that this is only relevant when the potential TA is competent in teaching a particular language. While the question came up as to whether other departments would support memoranda of understanding to regularize the TA-ships, a general sense is that these departments would balk at the idea. A more sustainable approach would have to come at the College level. It has been observed that certain departments have more sections that need instructors than they have instructors available within that department. Since this overage varies over time between units, the body that determines teaching assignments should be outside any one department (specifically, the College) that pools the TAs for all the language classes. This would also benefit language departments that experience ebbs and flows of students based on federal funding (e.g., Arabic, Russian, Korean). Thus, the solution becomes one of matching smaller graduate programs with the needs across campus. Within this pooling process, the College would then make a small investment in strengthening the SLA Program by designating two of these pooled TA/PA positions each year, eventually reaching a total of six ongoing TA/PA-ships at any one time.
d) Leave the program as a program, but make select improvements. While we encountered mixed views among current leadership about the sustainability of leaving the SLA program as such—primarily over the program’s future when faculty leave or retire—we suggest that this is presently the most feasible situation. However, we stress that leaving the SLA as a program does not imply that the College actively ignore the needs of the program. As noted above, this program has stature among other universities at the national level and is competitive with other Big Ten institutions. Even though there is no designated budget line for the SLA program, we observe that the College is currently investing (albeit minimally) in this program by covering the Director’s teaching release time, paying a portion of the program coordinator’s salary, and allowing the program to share space with the Language Institute. Additional investment in support for graduate students would help secure an already strong program.

3. SLA program improvements
Given the recommendation to maintain the program status of SLA, we make the following program-improving recommendations.

a) Count teaching/service load in home department. Faculty service through program direction and student mentoring should be acknowledged. Although faculty find personal fulfillment in the SLA program (the ‘oxygen’ to one faculty member), the home departments generally do not recognize the service work that accompanies faculty commitment to the program. Ways in which commitment could be manifest is through reduced service in home departments and at the university level.

b) Continue to invest in building professional development infrastructure. Without continued investment in the program, the College elevates the risk that students fall between the cracks with regard to funding and faculty mentoring. We feel it is in the College’s best interest to attempt to reduce time to degree so that resources can be distributed to more students (the director indicated they are trying to do this). The review committee applauds the SLA program for its clear and carefully structured rubrics for assessing student progress in the program. We note, though, that such structure is especially important in an interdisciplinary program that does not have dedicated faculty lines and where core faculty are drawn from different departments and disciplines. In such a context, even with the clear skill and investment of the program coordinator, the director, and the core faculty, it would be easy for a student to slip through the cracks. For that reason, we encourage SLA program faculty to continue to invest in program structures that provide clear guidelines and expectations for students and faculty and that also create consistent models and systematic follow-up for all students.
Appendix

Universities with PhD Programs in Second Language Acquisition
(Selected list compiled 10/26/18 via web search by S. Ellis Weismer and input from C. Stafford)

*University of Wisconsin-Madison – SLA Program, College of Letters & Science; https://sla.wisc.edu/

Carnegie Mellon University – SLA Program in Department of Modern Languages, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/modlang/graduate/phd/index.html

University of Maryland – SLA Program in School of Languages, Literatures, & Cultures, College of Arts and Humanities; https://sllc.umd.edu/sla/phd

University of Iowa – SLA Program in FLARE (Foreign Language Acquisition Research and Education), College of Liberal Arts and Sciences https://flare.uiowa.edu/second-language-acquisition-phd-program

University of Arizona – SLAT (Second Language Acquisition and Teaching) Program in Center for English as a Second Language, Graduate School https://grad.arizona.edu/catalog/programinfo/SLAPHD

Indiana University - Department of Second Language Studies (SLS); College of Arts and Sciences; https://dssl.indiana.edu/programs/graduate.html

Michigan State University – Second Language Studies (SLS) Program, College of Arts & Letters; http://slls.msu.edu/

University of Hawai’i at Manoa – Department of Second Language Studies (SLS); http://www.hawaii.edu/sls/

Penn State University – SLA Graduate Major in Applied Linguistics; SLA Graduate Minor; Graduate School; https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/minors/second-language-acquisition-graduate-minor/

University of Minnesota – SLA PhD in Department of Curriculum & Instruction, http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ci/academics/SLE/PhD-SLE.html

Universities with Coursework in SLA (not designated SLA PhD degree):

Georgetown University – SLA program in Department of Linguistics, https://linguistics.georgetown.edu/sla

University of Pittsburgh – SLA Program in Department of Linguistics, https://www.linguistics.pitt.edu/research/second-language-acquisition

Rutgers – Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) concentration is part of Graduate Program in Spanish, School of Arts and Sciences https://span-port.rutgers.edu/ph-d-in-bilingualism-second-language-acquisition-lab

UC Davis – SLA Program is in Graduate Studies (minor); https://grad.ucdavis.edu/programs/designated-emphases/gdsl
Dear Sue and Elaine,

Thank you for the opportunity to verify the factual accuracy of the review committee's report on the SLA PhD Program. I found just a couple of details to adjust.

On p.1, section B.1., end of the first paragraph, I would remove Spanish & Portuguese from the parenthetical list (SpanPort does have an official Hispanic Linguistics track).

On p.3, Section 3, in the second paragraph, I would like to clarify that I named those three institutions in the context of having recent success recruiting students to the SLA Program who also had offers from those universities. While I *would* name Arizona and Hawaii as comparable SLA grad programs, I would not say the same for UC-Davis, which offers only a PhD minor in SLA (the student we recruited would have studied Spanish applied linguistics at Davis).

If I can be of additional assistance, please feel free to give a shout.

Best,
Cathy

Catherine Stafford
Associate Professor of Spanish
Department of Spanish & Portuguese
Director, PhD Program in Second Language Acquisition
University of Wisconsin - Madison

pronouns: she/her/hers or they/them/theirs

From: Susan Zaeske
Sent: Wednesday, December 19, 2018 3:41:43 PM
To: CATHERINE A STAFFORD
Cc: ELAINE M KLEIN
Subject: SLA PhD Program Review

Dear Cathy,

Attached please find the report of the review committee on the SLA program. At this point, I write to ask you to inform Elaine and me of any factual errors in the report (and the correct information). Please limit your response to pointing out factual errors. There will be an opportunity for further response after you receive not only the report but also a memo from the Dean after the L&S APC discussion.
Thank you in advance for submitting an email message about factual errors to Elaine and me on behalf of the SLA program committee.

Best wishes,
Sue

Susan Zaeske
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Pronouns: she/her