

June 26, 2015

CAROLYN THOMASVice Provost and Dean
Undergraduate Education**RALPH HEXTER**Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Office of the Provost**RE: Special Academic Program Establishment Proposal:
International and Academic English Program**

The proposal to establish the International and Academic English (IAE) special academic program was forwarded to all Davis Division of the Academic Senate standing committees including school and college Faculty Executive Committees. Responses were received from Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council (UGC), the Committees on Planning and Budget (CPB) and Special Academic Programs as well as the College of Engineering Faculty Executive Committee.

While the Academic Senate believes it is very important to maintain and strengthen English language proficiency among international students attending UC Davis, the proposal review generated significant concern.

The proposal was initiated by the withdrawal of the Linguistics Department from teaching ESL writing and oral proficiency courses because lack of resources to deal with increasing numbers of international undergraduate and graduate students on campus (see enclosure). This triggered a sequence of events. Writing ESL courses were transferred to the University Writing Program (UWP). Undergraduate ESL writing courses were previously moved to UWP. UWP plans to develop a 220 series to serve ESL/multilingual graduate students. In order to meet the remaining oral proficiency ESL component for undergraduate and graduate students, the IAE Program is proposed. The proposal to establish IAE, if approved, would create a separate program with a focus on oral proficiency.

We do not agree with such a fragmented approach. The campus would be best served with a comprehensive and coordinated approach towards ESL instruction that includes both writing and oral proficiencies. Such an approach certainly allows the possibility of delegating responsibilities to units with expertise in specific aspects; such as writing courses to UWP.

The IAE proposal lacks a fully enumerated scope and resource needs (number of faculty and staff positions). The budget description should include the stated level of program funding commitment from the administration. These two items are of particular concern given that the Linguistics Department indicated that one of the reasons they are divesting themselves of the responsibility for ESL is due to the lack of resources (people and funding) to support such a program. The proposal outlined its hope for funding rather than providing a detailed budget request for the funding necessary to provide instruction and administer the program. ESL should be a priority for the campus, and funds must be allocated following a formal request in order to proceed with establishment. Doing so now is particularly important, given the campus has not sufficiently funded ESL instruction during the past few years. For example, UGC commented that the *“recent problem with LIN 391 has been primarily that funding was cut so severely that few students could take the course (and so it could not be made a requirement for international students serving as TAs). The proposal provides hopes rather than specifics that the funding will be increased. Suffice it to say that UGC does not approve proposals for new majors when funding for a key course restricts access. More generally, what insures that the IAE will not itself have major swings in funding?”*

The organizational form of a Special Academic Program must have explicit and meaningful involvement and oversight of faculty with relevant academic expertise. The proposal's description of the advisory board's composition failed to articulate involvement of Academic Senate faculty with expertise in ESL instruction. The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) went as far as stating that the *“faculty's role in delivering curriculum has been diminished with this Special Academic Program Establishment request.”* It

is proposed that the advisory board will be chaired by an Associate Vice Provost. UGC pointed out that, for the purpose of IAE oversight, appointment of an Associate Vice Provost is not viewed as equivalent to appointment of Senate faculty with ESL expertise. Establishing an ESL advisory board with oversight responsibility for both oral and written English language proficiencies could provide a coordinating approach to meeting campus ESL instruction needs.

There is an increased expectation that a Special Academic Program offers a level of academic rigor, not just by course but also as an overall program. UGC commented that the "idea of developing online versions of LIN 25 and LIN 391, to be taken before the students arrive at UCD, would seem to be moving in the opposite direction of academic rigor. Perhaps that is not the case. The point is rather that the proposal needs to include a system for monitoring the various courses. Will it be, for example, a sign of success or a sign of failure that all prospective TAs pass LIN 391?....The overall enrollment in LIN 391 will be strongly influenced by whether prospective TAs are made to pass an English proficiency exam. How will the IEA program encourage enforcement across all departments of the English proficiency? Conversely, how will LIN 391 be judged as preparing the TAs, such as when, after the fact, several TAs were inadequate despite having passed LIN 391? For that matter, what happens if a prospective TA fails LIN 391? Will that prospective TA lose funding? Should that decision be the responsibility of the Special Academic Program, and if not, how is academic rigor ensured?"

Programmatic changes may only be made **after** the policy is in place to support aspirations. The International Teaching Assistant Academy plan (phase II) is not in alignment with Graduate Council policy (GS2011-01). Any attempt to change policies, requires early and direct consultation with Graduate Council.

Graduate Council's discussion raised concerns regarding "wording that could indicate changes in the required English language testing of all graduate students; the current testing for international graduate students, while not perfect, is sufficient for the time being and does not require excessive resources. Careful deliberation will be needed to alter the current policies and practices."

CPB opined that the ESL program should have an academic home and had concerns with a graduate program being combined with an undergraduate program, and felt that it may be that Graduate Studies is a more logical home for the graduate component of the ESL program.

The proposal to establish IAE is not approved. We are cognizant that the Linguistics Department intends to cease ESL instruction after summer sessions 2015. We encourage development of an interim plan for instruction delivery for fall/winter 2015-16. We encourage the administration to prepare a proposal that will provide coordination and a comprehensive approach to all aspects of campus ESL instruction for review by the Academic Senate.

Sincerely,



André Knoesen, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor: Electrical and Computer Engineering

Enclosure
c: Chancellor Katehi (w/enclosure)



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ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616

May 6, 2015

To: Professor Andre Knoesen, Chair, Academic Senate
Gina Anderson, Executive Director, Academic Senate

From: Vai Ramanathan, Professor and Chair, Linguistics
George R. Mangun, Dean, Division of Social Sciences
Deborah Swenson, Associate Dean-Undergraduate Academic Programs, Division of Social Sciences
Steven Roth, Assistant Dean, Division of Social Sciences

Re: Transitioning graduate student ESL courses from Linguistics to Undergraduate Education

This memo addresses the proposed discontinuation of graduate student ESL courses offered in the Linguistics Department and their transition to the International & Academic English (IAE) program housed in Undergraduate Education. We are aware that ESL courses serve a very valuable need on campus and that they need to continue being offered. Our primary reasons for moving forward with this initiative include the following:

- The Linguistics Department does not have the faculty or support staff to deal with the increasing numbers of international undergraduate and graduate students on campus;
- The department has dissolved its MA-TESOL program (that trained teachers for this population and of which ESL was a part) because of seriously dwindling applications;
- The research focus of the department has shifted in the last few years.

The department voted unanimously on discontinuing MA-TESOL last year. The following are the courses we would transition to the IAE program:

Graduate ESL Courses:

1. **LIN 25: English for International/ESL Graduate Students:** (4) a multi-skills ESL course designed to help international/ESL students improve their English language skills for academic study. Emphasis on speaking, writing, reading and academic culture.
2. **LIN 26: Writing for International Graduate Students** (3) Focuses on writing needed for academic work, including summaries, critiques, research and grant proposals, memos, resumes, and research papers. Reviews grammar needed for writing with some focus on reading skills, vocabulary, and idioms.
3. **LIN 391: Oral English for ESL Students:** (3). Open only to non-native speakers of English with priority to international student teaching assistants. Course gives non-native English-speaking



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students, particularly international student teaching assistants, intensive work in oral English to increase fluency, accuracy, use of appropriate discourse strategies in academic settings (e.g. seminar, discussion, laboratory).

Summer Start and Undergraduate ESL Courses:

- 1. LIN 20 Oral English for Undergraduate ESL Students:** (3) Intensive practice in oral English for undergraduate ESL students. Students learn to identify and modify features of their pronunciation which limit their ability to communicate clearly. Students also learn and practice strategies for effective participation in academic tasks.
- 2. LIN 24 English structures and strategies** (4): offers practice in academic writing designed to prepare undergraduate students from language backgrounds other than English for successful academic work.
- 3. LIN 27 Academic Writing for ESL students** (4): Writing skills necessary for upper division courses, including skills crucial to writing lab and project reports, summaries, critiques, abstracts and responses to exam questions. Includes practice with syntax, grammar, and vocabulary characteristic of academic writing.
- 4. LIN 28 Reading in Scientific and Technical Subjects for ESL students** (4) Instruction and practice in reading scientific and technical texts. Includes techniques for comprehending and analyzing grammatical and organizational patterns as well as note-taking skills, summarizing, vocabulary enrichment.
- 5. LIN 96: Directed Group Study in English as a Second Language** (1-5, based on consent of instructor). May be repeated for credit by consent of instructor.

Of the above courses, LIN 26 and LIN 27 might be placed in the University Writing Program since they are writing courses that prepare students for upper division and graduate student writing. Undergraduate ESL writing courses have already moved to UWP.

With regard to timing, the Linguistics Department and its clustered support staff are prepared to assist with the logistics of courses offered in Summer Start 2015. Our goal is to have all relevant ESL courses be administered through IAE effective fall quarter 2015.

cc: Vice Provost & Dean Carolyn Thomas, Undergraduate Education
Associate Dean James McClain, L&S Undergraduate Education and Advising

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Associate Dean Rob Feenstra, Division of Social Sciences
Assistant Vice Provost Helen Frasier
Beth Floyd, Director, L&S Undergraduate Education and Advising
Chief Administrative Officer Cynthia Simmons
Academic Coordinator Dawn Takaoglu