January 13, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: James Harris
    Dean, College of Arts & Humanities

FROM: Phyllis Peres
       Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs

SUBJECT: Proposal to modify the curriculum of the Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition
         (PCC log no. 08013)

At its meeting on November 21, 2008, the Senate Committee on Programs Curricula and Courses approved the proposal to modify the curriculum of the Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition, pending minor revisions. A copy of the revised proposal is attached.

The changes are effective Spring 2009. The College should ensure that the changes are fully described in the Graduate Catalog and all relevant descriptive materials, and that all advisors are informed.

CWR/

Enclosure

cc: Carmen Balthrop, Chair, Senate PCC Committee
    Sarah Bauder, Office of Student Financial Aid
    Reka Montfort, University Senate
    Barbara Hope, Data Administration
    Denise Nadasen, Institutional Research & Planning
    Anne Turkos, Archives
    Linda Yokoi, Office of the Registrar
    Thomas Castonguay, Graduate School
    Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, College of Arts & Humanities
    Robert DeKeyser, School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
PROGRAM/CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

DIRECTIONS:
- Provide one form with original approval signatures in lines 1-4 for each proposed action. Keep this form to one page in length.
- Early consultation with the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Programs is strongly recommended if there are questions or concerns, particularly with new programs.
- Please submit the signed form to Claudia Rector, Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs, 1119 Main Administration Building, Campus.
- Please email the rest of the proposal as an MSWord attachment to pcc-submissions@umd.edu.

DATE SUBMITTED: March 25, 2008

COLLEGE/SCHOOL: ARHU

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM: PhD in SLA

PROPOSED ACTION (A separate form for each) ADD______ DELETE_______ CHANGE______

DESCRIPTION (Provide a succinct account of the proposed action. Details should be provided in an attachment. Provide old and new sample programs for curriculum changes.)

Change foreign language exit requirement to require 3 types of experience in a language other than English: learning, teaching, and use. The current requirement is based entirely on proficiency, specifying intermediate (written) or advanced (speaking) proficiency in two languages other than English.

JUSTIFICATION/REASONS/RESOURCES (Briefly explain the reason for the proposed action. Identify the source of new resources that may be required. Details should be provided in an attachment.)

The field of second language acquisition requires that practitioners master the empirical research literature on processes of teaching, learning, and practicing a second language. They are best served in their careers as researchers and teachers if they also have first-hand experience of these processes. Our new foreign language exit requirement will ensure that they have the range of experience necessary to be competitive for the high-level research-oriented jobs in government and academia that they will typically apply for.

=================================================================================================

APPROVAL SIGNATURES - Please print name, sign, and date

1. Department Committee Chair  
   Laurena Clough  
   4/10/08

2. Department Chair  
   Piero Verde  
   4/10/08

3. College/School PCC Chair  
   Thomas Moore  
   4/10/08

4. Dean  
   11/1/08

5. Dean of the Graduate School (if required)  
   11/26/08

6. Chair, Senate PCC  
   11/27/08
4/10/2008
7. Chair of Senate
8. Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

signature
1/13/09
Rationale:

The PhD in Second Language Acquisition prepares students for careers as researchers and teachers. They must master the theoretical and empirical literature (highly English-dominated) on the processes of teaching, learning, and using second language, and they must gain first-hand awareness of these processes through experience. Researchers must design realistic projects and empirically valid theories; pedagogy specialists must have a realistic sense of classroom and real-life learning patterns.

The original foreign language exit requirement does not adequately reflect the kind of knowledge of language our graduates need to exhibit; is vague in its proficiency expectations (the terms “intermediate” and “advanced” not being tied to an official standard), and may, in specifying two non-native languages, discourage some of our best potential students from applying to the program.

The majority of students in the program are bilingual (over 50%); of those who are not, all but one is functional in a second language, with many being proficient in 2 or 3 languages other than English. Our program will continue to attract students who are proficient in more than one language. What we propose taps this interest and skill and makes it field-relevant. We do not need to require this range of experience in more than one foreign language, as what matters is knowledge of process rather than multilingualism per se.

1. **Language Learning**

Students must have spent at least 2 semesters as a student of a non-native language in a post-secondary classroom environment (6 total credits minimum). Verified through transcript. SLLC will provide this experience for any student who needs it.

Rationale: we are requiring that the classroom learning experience be relatively recent and that it have continued for a period of time long enough to allow students to draw first-hand conclusions about effectiveness of method and materials, sense patterns and challenges for classroom learners and teachers, and develop empathy as future teachers and researchers on second language acquisition – from a student point of view.

2. **Language Teaching**

Students must have taught a language to non-native speakers of that language for at least 1 semester, or the equivalent of 45 hours. Verified through contract, letter, etc. SLLC will provide this experience for any student who needs it.

Rationale: we are requiring classroom teaching experience to allow students to draw first-hand conclusions on effectiveness of method and materials, sense patterns and challenges for classroom learners and teachers, and develop empathy as future
teachers and researchers on second language acquisition – from an instructor’s point of view.

3. Language Use

Students must show that they are able to communicate in a non-native language at the intermediate level according to an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Students whose native language is not English will be able to satisfy this requirement through their competency in English.

Rationale: we are requiring that students demonstrate success in learning a non-native language to a level that allows them to have a realistic sense of the requisite elements of communication in a non-native language and for the value it gives to their research and teaching portfolios.
Ph.D. Program in SLA

Changes Highlighted

Program Focus and Structure

The Ph.D. program in SLA at the University of Maryland, College Park has a strong cognitive science and research focus for students working in languages other than English. (For an ESL focus, please visit the College of Education.) The program draws upon the expertise of a distinguished cadre of faculty in the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, and in affiliate departments such as Linguistics; Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation; Hearing and Speech; Philosophy; Psychology; Sociology; and Curriculum and Instruction.

There are four areas of specialization: second language learning, second language instruction, second language assessment, and second language use. Students select two courses in each of two areas (for a total of four courses), plus two additional electives in the area of their proposed dissertation work. In addition, all students will take two courses in quantitative and/or qualitative research methods. The eight courses (total) represent the minimum coursework requirement; some students may need remedial coursework prior to undertaking the set of eight courses, and many will wish to take courses beyond the minimum eight, based on their interests. Additionally, all students are encouraged to take a course in the philosophy of science.

Existing Courses in Second Language Acquisition*

**AREA 1: Second Language Learning**
SLAA 610 Research And Theories Of SLA
SLAA 611 Fundamentals Of Language Acquisition And Instruction
SLAA 740 Research Issues In Second Language Learning
SLAA 741 Cognitive Processes In Second Language Learning
SLAA 742 Second Language Processing
SLAA 743 Interlanguage Studies
SLAA 744 Age Effects/Maturation Constraints
SLAA 749 Special Topics In Second Language Learning

**AREA 2: Second Language Instruction**
SLAA 750 Instructed SLA
SLAA 751 SLA Classroom Research
SLAA 754 Task Based Language Teaching
SLAA 759 Special Topics In Second Language Instruction

**AREA 3: Second Language Assessment And Research**
SLAA 620 Second Language Research Methodology
SLAA 760 Fundamentals Of Second Language Assessment

**AREA 4: Second Language Use**
SLAA 770 Sociolinguistics In Second Language Acquisition
SLAA 771 Developmental And Cross-Cultural Pragmatics
SLAA 772 Bilingualism And Multilingualism
SLAA 773 The Heritage Language Speaker

*In addition, the SLAA program is complemented by course offerings in language-specific areas, such as the following:

1. History of Language X (Spanish, French, German)
2. Structure of Language X (e.g., phonology, morphology and syntax of the language - Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Russian)
3. Language in Use: Sociolinguistics and/or Pragmatics of Language X (German, Spanish, Japanese)
4. Issues in the Research of X as a Foreign/Second Language (French)
5. Applied Linguistics of Language X (Spanish)

Prior to being accepted to candidacy for the Ph.D. (i.e., before writing the dissertation), students must write two papers deemed of publishable quality for a major refereed SLA journal by an examining committee of three faculty members. The papers will be presented publicly and must be approved by the committee after the presentation. One of those papers will be in the student's chosen area for dissertation research; the other should be from a second area. These papers are in lieu of comprehensive examinations.

Once admitted to candidacy, a student will write and then defend a dissertation proposal before five faculty members, who will serve as the dissertation committee. Once the proposal is approved, the student will register for SLAA899 credits while writing the dissertation, which must make a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the SLA field. The chair of the student's dissertation committee, in consultation with the other committee members, will determine when the dissertation is ready to be defended publicly at an oral examination. The dissertation must be approved by the five-member committee.

**Foreign Language Requirement**

All students completing the PhD in Second Language Acquisition must demonstrate three types of experience in a non-native language: learning, teaching, and use.

All three types of experience will be verified through official documentation and/or assessment as follows:

1. **Language Learning**

   Students must have spent at least 2 semesters as a student of a non-native language in a post-secondary classroom environment (6 total credits minimum).
Verified through transcript. SLLC will provide this experience for any student who needs it.

2. **Language Teaching**

Students must have taught a language to non-native speakers of that language for at least 1 semester, or the equivalent of 45 hours. Verified through contract, letter, etc. SLLC will provide this experience for any student who needs it.

3. **Language Use**

Students must show that they are able to communicate in a non-native language at the intermediate level according to an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Students whose native language is not English will be able to satisfy this requirement through their competency in English.

**Advising**

Students are required to meet with their advisor before they can register for classes. At the Ph.D. level, students are initially advised by the Director of the Program in SLA until they choose their own academic advisor (not necessarily the same as their advisor for their qualifying papers or dissertation). By the end of their second semester in the program, students should choose a permanent advisor and register this choice with the Director of the Program in SLA. In all cases, final responsibility for meeting Graduate School requirements and deadlines rests with the student, not with the advisor. Students should regularly check the graduate school website for all official deadlines. For more details on specific program requirements and procedures, please see the [PhD Advising Sheet](#).

**Financial Assistance**

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program may be eligible for funding in the form of graduate assistantships or research assistantships within SLLC or on grants and contracts from the UMCP-affiliated Center for the Advanced Study of Language (CASL) or the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC), depending on language expertise and the availability of positions. There may also be stipends for participation in special research projects. Please note that in order to be considered for any financial support, students must be full-time and their GRE scores must be on file. If you would like to be considered for support, please
indicate this on the graduate school application, downloadable at www.gradschool.umd.edu.

Some limited funds for travel to national conferences may be available through SLLC when the student is presenting a paper. However, students should also explore other possibilities for funding available through the conference organizers, external agencies or institutions, as well as the graduate school. For more information on travel funds available through the graduate school, please visit www.gradschool.umd.edu/Fellowship/travelgrants.htm.

Requirements for Admission

Note that prior to admission to the program, applicants must have successfully completed a master's degree from an accredited university in a relevant field, e.g., SLA, linguistics, psychology, or applied linguistics.

General information about the admissions process to the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) is available at www.gradschool.umd.edu. However, some details specific to our program differ from what is posted on that site, so please be sure to follow the instructions below regarding where these materials should be sent, and what is required for admissions consideration.

Deadlines

Fall admission deadline: January 15 (all documentation MUST be in by this date!)
Spring admission deadline: September 15 for domestic applicants.
NOTE:
For international applicants, deadline for Spring admission is June 1; for Fall the deadline is January 1.
Please see the Graduate School's SLPH webpage for details on international designations and their requirements.
Please note that our deadlines as noted above override those listed on the Graduate School page.

Materials Required for all UMCP Applicants

1. **An application form** is available at www.gradschool.umd.edu. Please use the code "SLPH" to indicate your choice of program.
2. **A non-refundable $60 application fee.** If you use a credit card, you can pay for the fee online when you submit your application. Otherwise please submit the fee to the Enrollment Services Office by regular mail. Their address is:

   University of Maryland College Park
   Enrollment Services Operations
   Application for Graduate Admission
3. **College/university transcripts** from all institutions previously or currently attended. These should be submitted to the Enrollment Services Office.

Each transcript must bear the signature of the Registrar and the seal of the granting institution, and should include the years of attendance, courses taken, grades received, class standing and the degree, certificate, or diploma received. [If you attended the University of Maryland, College Park, the Graduate School will obtain your records of courses completed on the College Park campus, but you must send the Office of the Registrar a written authorization to release the transcripts.] To facilitate the processing and review of an application, unofficial copies of transcripts from institutions other than the University of Maryland, College Park may be used for review processes. **Official transcripts are required before full admission can be granted.**

4. **A Maryland In-State Status form**, if you wish to apply for Maryland residency status. **Students who apply online do NOT have to submit this form in hardcopy as well.** Note that F-1 visa holders are not eligible for this status. For questions regarding eligibility, please contact the Residency Classification office at (301) 405-2030.

**Supplemental Materials Required by the SLA Program**

After submitting your initial online application through the Graduate School, you will be contacted by email within 2-3 business days with detailed instructions on how to log in and complete the Application Supplemental Form. The Application Supplemental Form (ASF) asks for academic information especially relevant to the graduate program to which you are applying, enables you to upload a Statement of Goals, Research Interests, and Experiences, and provides a space for you to enter the names and contact information of those writing Letters of Recommendation on your behalf.

**The SLA program requires the following supplemental materials to be uploaded as part of the ASF:**

1. **Three letters of recommendation**, preferably from faculty members who have taught you recently and who can attest to your scholarly potential in the field of SLA. References from those who know you professionally are acceptable as well. **Be certain that your full name is included on each recommendation.**

   You may download blank recommendation letter forms on the Graduate School website or set up electronic submission through the ASF.
2. **A statement of purpose**, in English, describing your academic and career background and future plans, specifying why you believe the UMCP program is suitable for you, and you for it, and how you would expect to use the training received at College Park. The statement of purpose is in lieu of the separate "Statement of Goals and Research Interests" and "Statement of Experiences" listed on the Graduate School website.

3. **Writing sample**: Evidence of an ability for, and desire to undertake, scholarly work appropriate for the heavily research-oriented Ph.D. in SLA, as demonstrated through a writing sample such as an excellent M.A. thesis, a seminar paper, or published articles.

4. **Verbal and quantitative GRE scores** are required for all applicants. Please have ETS send your GRE scores directly to the university; the institutional code for UMCP is 5814.

5. **A TOEFL score of 620 or higher on the paper-based version** [260 or higher on the computer-based version; 110 on the internet version] for students whose native language is not English, unless they completed their master's degree at an English-medium university within the previous three years. The TOEFL must have been taken within the last two years for it to be valid. Applicants should arrange for scores to be sent directly to UMCP by ETS; the institutional code for UMCP is 5814.

An admissions interview may be required and will be conducted in-person or by telephone. On your application, please be sure to provide a current telephone number and e-mail address where we can reach you.
Foreign Language Requirement ("Old")

Students who are native speakers of English must demonstrate proficiency in two languages other than English. They must demonstrate proficiency in one or both languages either at the "intermediate" level, as assessed through translation of a text in the field (with dictionary help), or at the "advanced" level, as assessed via an oral interview. Students who are non-native speakers of English must demonstrate proficiency in English, plus (with the same options as above) one other language that is not their native language.
Foreign Language Requirement (“New”)

Before graduation, all students completing the PhD in Second Language Acquisition must demonstrate three types of experience with non-native language: learning a non-native language, using a non-native language, and teaching a language to non-native speakers of that language.

All three types of experience will be verified through official documentation and/or assessment as follows:

1. **Language Learning.** Students must have spent at least two semesters as a student of a non-native language in a post-secondary classroom environment (6 total credits minimum). Verified through transcript. SLLC will provide this experience for any student who needs it.

2. **Language Teaching.** Students must have taught a language to non-native speakers of that language for at least 1 semester, or the equivalent of 45 hours. Verified through contract, letter, etc. SLLC will provide this experience for any student who needs it.

3. **Language use.** Students must show that they are able to communicate in a non-native language at the intermediate-low level on the ACTFL scale through an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Students whose native language is not English will be able to satisfy this requirement through their competency in English. These three requirements do not necessarily have to be met in the same language.