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June 6, 1949

President Robert Gordon Sproul
Administration Bldg.
Campus

Dear President Sproul:

The undersigned, comprising the Group in Linguistics, which is appointed by the Graduate Council to administer graduate programs leading to the master's and doctor's degrees in linguistics, respectfully and most earnestly recommend the establishment of a Department of Linguistics on the Berkeley campus, beginning, if possible, with the academic year 1949-1950.

In support of this recommendation the Group urges first the following more general considerations.

(1) Linguistics, as a field of activity appropriate for advanced study and research, is recognized in leading American and foreign universities. A strong department has been in operation for a number of years at Yale, and has been generally recognized as the leading department of linguistics in the country, with respect both to its staff and to the high caliber of its graduates. The University of Pennsylvania is currently strengthening and building up its linguistics department, and will soon be in a position to give competition to Yale at Yale's level. It is the conviction of our Group that we have in the faculty at Berkeley personnel with abilities and qualifications sufficiently high that, if appropriate organization can be given to them, the University of California will be able to train linguistic scholars in every way as good as those trained at Yale or Pennsylvania. The important thing is that the instruction and the guidance of research must be done by specialists with the specialist's point of view. The existing language departments center their advanced study around literature, and in general plan their programs with that end in view. Linguistics is not their interest, and appropriately so.

(2) The University of California has obligations to the world of learning in at least two fields of linguistics, which at the present time it is meeting not at all or in only a very limited way.

(a) Primary in importance and urgency are the American Indian languages, especially the languages of the Indians of California. In variety of native languages California can hardly be matched anywhere on the North American continent. These languages are rapidly dying out; Professor Kroeber has said that they will disappear in another generation. An organization which would provide the means for instruction and research in the languages of native California would not only bring credit to the University but would also pay the obligation, which we believe the University has to Learning, to fill these gaps in our knowledge before it is too late. The need is urgent.

(b) Of not such immediate importance, but nevertheless a concern and an obligation to the University, is the vast field of Pacific Islands languages. The University has indicated in more than one way that it regards the Pacific area as one of its legitimate concerns, and while the existing organization of departments can take care of the scientific, historical, sociological, and cultural parts of the total problem, there is no department wherein the languages of the islands can appropriately be handled.

There are also particular considerations of importance, applying to the situation as it exists at present.

(3) The existing arrangement of departments provides adequately for instruction in the specific languages required for advanced study in linguistics. The difficulties arise in providing courses in linguistics itself, as distinguished from courses in individual languages. This difficulty is particularly felt with strictly graduate ("200") courses which are open, by rule, only to qualified graduate students. Individual departments determine qualifications for their own courses, and only rarely will a graduate student in linguistics be able to meet these qualifications, since they normally require specialization in the language cultivated by that department. Thus a specifically linguistics graduate course given in an existing department cannot serve the needs of students not registered in that department. A linguistics department, with its own graduate courses, would resolve this difficulty.

(4) The Group in Linguistics has difficulty planning a suitable program of studies since it is in no position to set up appropriate courses, but must depend on the cooperation of existing departments. Language departments, however, draw a fairly sharp line between linguistic and literary studies, and their primary concern is with literature.

In view of these considerations both of larger and of more immediate policy, the Group in Linguistics respectfully urges your favorable consideration of the proposal to establish a linguistics department.

To work out, in a practical way, the proposal thus presented to you, the Group suggests a department to be composed of one full time person, with one or two members of existing departments giving part time service. It is suggested that the following courses be transferred to the new department.

- Classics 193. Introduction to General Linguistics, 2 units.
- Classics 195. Linguistic Analysis, 2 units.
- Classics 196. Introduction to Indo-European Comparative Grammar, 3 units.
- Oriental Languages 167. Phonetics for Students of Oriental Languages, 2 units.
- Oriental Languages 177. Types of Linguistic Structure, 2 units.
- Oriental Languages 197A-197B. Linguistics Laboratory, 3 units each semester.
- Oriental Languages 207A-207B. Seminar in Descriptive Linguistics, 2 units each semester.
- Oriental Languages 227A-227B. Seminar in Historical Linguistics, 2 units each semester.

The departments concerned are agreeable to transferring these courses. The Oriental Languages courses listed above would be released from their present limitation of subject matter to specifically oriental languages, and revised as courses in general linguistics. In addition, the following new courses are proposed.

- American Indian Linguistics, 3 units.
- Special Study for Graduate Students, units variable.

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Since this last course involves no instruction, the proposal actually involves adding only one course to existing offerings. With these courses as central, and supplemented by existing courses in the language departments, a strong program of graduate instruction can be offered, free from present difficulties.

In addition, the proposed department would provide a framework for utilizing to the full special knowledge possessed by members of existing departments. Under present conditions language departments limit themselves to fairly rigidly defined areas. A linguistics department would offer a means whereby a member of another department with training in an exotic language could occasionally, when his department consents, offer a course in that language, a language quite out of place in the professor's own department.

The Group realizes that the setting up of a new department means administrative expense, but believes that in a department of this size such expense, after the initial cost of permanent office equipment, could be held to about \$200 a year.

The Group also realizes that possibilities of future growth must be carefully assessed. It is our belief, however, that with respect to general linguistics courses the needs would in general be well met by the courses proposed above, and that development would mainly take the form of change and revision rather than addition. We do not foresee at this time any additional full time appointment.

In presenting this proposal to you, the Group in Linguistics is aware that the academic year 1949-1950 is close at hand, and respectfully urges that, if you cannot regard it favorably now, it be considered for the year 1950-1951.

M S Beeler

M. S. Beeler

P. A. Boodberg

P. A. Boodberg

A. G. Brodeur

A. G. Brodeur

Y. R. Chao

C. D. Chretien

C. D. Chretien

Professors Chao and Lowie joined in the unanimous vote approving this recommendation, but could not be reached for signatures.

Mary R. Haas

M. R. Haas

A. E. Hutson

A. E. Hutson

R. H. Lowie

O. A. Maslenikov

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R. K. Spaulding

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M. B. Emeneau

M. B. Emeneau, Chairman