January 16, 2017

To the External Review Committee:

On behalf of the College of Arts and Sciences, please let me express my sincere appreciation for your service as external reviewers for the Georgia State University Department of Applied Linguistics and English as a Second Language. We understand the demand on your time and very much appreciate your willingness to help. Your expertise and insights into the state of the department and its future directions will be critical to our effort in formulating a strategy to move forward.

We have enclosed the department’s self-study report, which provides a comprehensive summary of the state of the department consistent with the strategic directions specified in Georgia State’s current strategic plan (http://strategic.gsu.edu/gsu-strategic-goals/) and in the recently adopted strategic plan of the College of Arts and Sciences (http://cas.gsu.edu/about/college-strategic-plan). We appreciate the evident hard work of the self-study committee (Alison Camacho, Scott Crossley, Stephanie Lindemann, and committee chair Sara Cushing) and the department chair, Diane Belcher. We believe the report clearly demonstrates how Applied Linguistics and ESL has made important contributions to the university’s strategic planning goals, and it helps shape a pathway for future sustainability and accomplishment.

We congratulate the department on its progress during the review period. Applied Linguistics and ESL has achieved steady enrollments in its relatively young Ph.D. and B.A. programs and in graduate and undergraduate certificate programs, although the number of students pursuing the M.A. has declined recently. The department has a history of entrepreneurship, and has used revenues from its non-degree Intensive English Program and, until recently, its GSTEP services to fund graduate assistantships and other program-support ventures. The ESL and IEP programs have continued to enhance the English competencies of pre-enrolled and degree-seeking GSU students, with the latter program forging new partnerships with the College of Law and the Robinson College of Business during the review period.

The Applied Linguistics and ESL faculty have been increasingly successful in securing external funding, and have seen improvements in both the quantity and quality of research publications. Citation analyses noted in the self-study indicate that the department is producing influential scholarship. With its expertise in cross-cultural understanding and language acquisition, Applied Linguistics and ESL is poised to contribute more centrally to college and university strategic goals relating to globalizing the institution and understanding the complex challenges of cities. However, faculty retirements and resignations, as well as faculty serving the college and
university in administrative roles, are creating challenges for the unit, particularly if it aims to
grow enrollments and implement new instructional approaches.
The Dean’s Office agrees with the general goals outlined in the Applied Linguistics and ESL
self-study, although there may be competing goals that will need to be prioritized over the course
of this review process. In the context of Georgia State University’s revenue-neutral budgetary
climate, we essentially have three options for developing the strengths of our programs: 1) redirection of resources within existing departmental budgets to maximize programmatic impact, 2) entrepreneurial pursuit of opportunities for external funding, and 3) lateral redirection of resources from other units within the college where we are convinced that the value added in a particular unit or focus area is an effective way of achieving the goals of the college and university strategic plans. In keeping with these parameters, we ask that the external review team members consider the following:

- What opportunities for interdisciplinary, collaborative research can the Department of
  Applied Linguistics and ESL pursue that would shape internal requests for faculty hiring, enhance prospects for external funding, and enrich its academic programs?
- In addition to the TEFL/TESOL certificates, are there other professional programs or certificate programs that the department could develop to attract new students seeking professional training and employment? In addition to developing new programs, how can the department adapt its existing curriculum to emphasize the acquisition of career competencies in support of college and university career-readiness goals?
- What are the prospects for developing a fully online TESOL program, and are the support resources proposed by the department appropriate to this task?
- Are there opportunities for building partnerships with city and community agencies, non-profits, and businesses that can develop into funded research projects, internship/practicum opportunities, or other mutually beneficial relationships?
- What else can Applied Linguistics and ESL do to advance college and university goals relating to understanding the complex challenges of cities and globalizing the university?
- As a research university, our Ph.D. programs are critical to our research success. What are the current strengths and weaknesses of the Applied Linguistics doctoral program (recruitment, funding, mentoring, time to degree, and job placement), and how can we support continued strength of the program?
- Are there any other recommendations or suggestions for increasing undergraduate and graduate enrollments, improving academic programs, and/or enhancing faculty research productivity?

We look forward to your analysis and insights on the state of the department and its future directions.

Sincerely,
Sara Rosen, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences