Purpose of Submittal:

In this interactive session, Dean Paqui Paredes Méndez, and Linguistics Program Director Kristin Denham will give a brief update on the state of the College and will describe planning for a transition from program to department for Linguistics.

Background:

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences serves the State of Washington by producing knowledge and engaging students in distinctive, diverse programs that develop their capacities as citizens, and creators and collaborators in the workplace. Emerging from a vibrant liberal arts and sciences core, CHSS is a key pillar supporting the cultural and intellectual life of the university via collaborative learning environments that foster individual, social, cultural, creative, and scientific exploration. Students, faculty, and staff engage in research, service, and creative activity to promote life-long, engaged learning that contributes to equitable, just, and sustainable communities. Members of the CHSS community critically examine their world and themselves, embrace divergent perspectives, and devise innovative solutions to critical societal concerns. We consider the ethical implications of our actions and communicate effectively in our professional and public lives. With 13 departments and three interdisciplinary programs, CHSS continues to hold the largest number of undergraduate majors, faculty and student credit hours.

Strategic Questions:

1. What was the Trustees’ level of familiarity with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences prior to this presentation?

2. Was the information about linguistics helpful to the Trustees in situating that area of study within the liberal arts?
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Mission

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Paqui Paredes Méndez
Dean
Vision

As an integral part of the liberal arts and sciences mission at Western Washington University, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences promotes collaborative learning, critical inquiry into diverse human experiences, and excellence in scholarly and creative activity.
13 departments and 3 interdisciplinary programs:

**Humanities**
- Communication Studies
- English
- History
- Journalism
- Modern and Classical Languages
- Liberal Studies
- Philosophy

**Social Sciences Departments**
- Anthropology
- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Health and Human Development
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology

**Interdisciplinary programs**
- East Asian Studies
- Linguistics
- Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
By the numbers

• **Number of undergraduate majors:** 4,000
  (approx. 35% of all majors on campus, and largest single percentage of all 7 colleges)

• **Number of SCH:** 91,388
  (44% of all university SCH)

• **Number of FTE faculty:** 269.6
  (295 headcount, of which 190 are tenured or tenure track. Approximately 30% of total WWU head count)
Research

• 17 books
• 162 refereed journal articles
  • 51 of which included student co-authors
• 76 creative works
• 69 book chapters
• 10 edited volumes
• 211 conference papers
  • 59 of which had students listed as co-authors

Community Service

• 123,457 hours of community service in over 80 organizations through internships, community engagement and other opportunities
Honors/Students

• All five 2018 Fulbright winners at Western were CHSS majors or double-majors

• Journalism: Mark of Excellence Award for in-depth reporting

• Political Science: Outstanding Delegation Award in National Model United Nations Conference

• Sociology: Western Libraries Undergraduate Student Research Award

• English: 2017 Sixfold Poetry Award
Honors/Faculty

- Fulbright fellowships
- 2017 Independent Book Publishers Awards (bronze medal)
- 2018 James W. Ray Distinguished Artist Award
- WWU Faculty Leadership Award
- Senior Fellow at the University of Virginia’s Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture
- Promising Professor award
- Joseph Wholey Distinguished Scholarship Award
- Guggenheim fellowship
Is there a crisis in the humanities and social sciences?

- Departments, programs, faculty and students are thriving at WWU.

- We are bucking national trends of decreased enrollments in the number of majors in humanities programs.

- Many of our majors in the social sciences have grown in the last few years and some are under severe access pressures.
Our strengths

- Talented, dynamic faculty and students
- Top scholars with deep commitment to teaching
- Strong programs that make crucial contributions to the general education program at Western and to the liberal arts and sciences mission of the university
- Strong majors that adjust to meet student needs and interests, as well as changes in the respective disciplines
- Strong global curriculum that prepares students for engaged citizenship and for success in their professional lives
- Strong student interest
Our challenges

• National narrative that questions the value of the liberal arts and sciences in general and the humanities in particular

• Fewer students going through our GUR programs, who in turn have fewer chances to experience our disciplines first hand

• Access pressures in certain majors

• Need for more tenure track faculty

• Need to increase recruitment of faculty and staff from historically underrepresented groups

• Space
What do our graduates do?

- Doug Massey (B.A., Sociology/Spanish/Psychology), Professor of Sociology at Princeton University

- Amy Harder (B.A., Journalism), Energy reporter with Axios

- Jesse Moore (B.A., Political Science), former Associate Director of Public Engagement at the Obama White House; Founder and Principal Consultant of Common Thread Strategies

- Karen Freeman (B.A., German), vice president of finance for commercial aviation services for Boeing Commercial Airplanes

- Hoby Darling (B.A., History), former CEO of Skullcandy; senior executive at Logitech

- Ijeoma Oluo (B.A., Political Science), freelance writer and speaker; author of *NYT* bestselling book *So You Want to Talk About Race*
Growth in CHSS Linguistics Department (Fall 2019)

- What is linguistics?
- Why do people study it?
- What’s its role at WWU?
- How does it help our students?
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Big Questions Linguists Ask

● How are languages structured with respect to sounds (phonetics, phonology), words, (morphology), expressions (syntax), and meaning (semantics)?

● How is language acquired, produced, and processed by the brain?

● How do languages change over time?

● How do languages vary by community, location, and situation?

● How did language evolve?
Linguists study language just like other scientists study other natural phenomena, applying the **scientific method** to language data.

Students of linguistics, therefore:

- Make insightful observations
- Formulate clear and testable hypotheses, generate predictions
- Make arguments and draw conclusions
- Communicate findings to a wider community
“I finally understand what science really means – that it’s not biology or chemistry, but it’s a method of inquiry. And it’s been so exciting to discover that using language data!”

“Studying linguistics has helped me to 1) analyze data, 2) become a better researcher, 3) appreciate diversity. I’m so happy I have come to learn more about this field.”
Tools for a multicultural, multilingual world

- Engages students in exploration of socio-cultural issues involved with regional, ethnic, racial, and economic diversity.

- Offers the skills and knowledge needed to be members of our increasingly multicultural and multilingual world.
More voices of our students

“Until I studied linguistics, I hadn’t ever thought about the place of language study in relation to cultural identity, sovereignty, and civil rights; they are so completely intertwined with language. I have gained a real understanding of the links between historical events and language change, and I want others to better understand these kinds of connections.”

“The knowledge I’ve acquired as a student of linguistics will play out in my future classroom in really important ways. Language and dialect are culturally embedded in who we are as people; they are part of our identity. Discrimination against someone’s language is discrimination against them. My future students must understand that.”
Students go on to...

- Careers in the tech industry; marketing; language documentation and revitalization; forensic linguistics; polyglot jobs (translator, interpreter, diplomat, humanitarian aid worker); education (K-12, university, TESL); editing, publishing, and journalism, etc.

- Computational and clinical linguistics are among the newest, exciting career paths that have opened up to linguists.
BAs in Linguistics continue to rise
Steady growth of advanced degrees too
Why a Department at WWU?

- Faculty Recruitment and Retention
- Improved Curricular Offerings
- Evaluation of Faculty
- Potential for Graduate Program
- Student Success
- More Equitable Faculty Service
What wouldn’t change

• The basic experience for students

• Connections to other departments, its interdisciplinarity
Broad Impacts

Departmental status will allow for stronger advocacy from faculty and students for the study of language, for the value of linguistic diversity on our campus, for the protection of linguistic minorities, for pedagogical partnerships between linguistics and other disciplines at WWU, and for partnerships with other institutions, including Northwest Indian College and Whatcom Community College.
In line with Strategic Plan

Linguistics deepens one’s understanding of language, sharpens inquiry skills, and develops critical thinking. It is a STEM-based discipline that also offers an important liberal arts underpinning.

Linguistics is an exemplar of a discipline that addresses critical needs in the State of Washington. Helping students to understand, explore, and navigate issues related to multilingualism, bilingualism, and linguistic discrimination which arise even more of late due to the changing demographics are examples of quite specific applications for the kinds of knowledge students acquire as Linguistics majors and minors.
Thank you!

Questions?