

Approved by the Board of Trustees  
January 21, 2021

Board Meeting  
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ESTABLISH THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES IN  
LINGUISTICS AND TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE,  
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, URBANA

**Action:** Establish the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Linguistics and Teaching of English as a Second Language, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**Funding:** No new funding is requested as existing infrastructure in the Department of Linguistics is sufficient to support the program. In the event enrollment exceeds expectations, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences stands ready to provide financial support as necessary.

The Chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois System with the advice of the Urbana-Champaign Senate recommends approval of a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to establish the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Linguistics and Teaching of English as a Second Language (BALAS in Linguistics and TESL).

The curriculum of the proposed BALAS in Linguistics and TESL is organized to introduce students to both general linguistics and educational linguistics such that they will gain a solid understanding of linguistic principles and linguistic developmental trajectories as well as a practical training in English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) teaching, assessment, and material development. The proposed program will expand students' critical awareness of the English language and its status,

acquisition, and use around the globe. Graduates will be positioned to pursue careers in areas such as ESL/EFL teaching in the United States and abroad; ESL/EFL textbook publishing, language testing, technical or professional communication, material development in English for academic, legal, and medical purposes; and/or language-related research.

Teaching of ESL/EFL-related (TESL) degrees are usually only offered at the graduate level. As a leading institution with a long history of offering teaching of English as a second language courses and programs, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign will be the forerunner in offering a comprehensive undergraduate degree in TESL in conjunction with Linguistics. Capitalizing on the university's comprehensive linguistics program, the proposed program represents a merger of disciplines that offers students a unique opportunity with a bachelor's level program that combines linguistics with TESL. The BALAS in Linguistics and TESL will increase the number of post-secondary degrees in fields of critical skills shortages to meet the demands of the economy and an increasingly global society. With the number of English learners in the state, the nation, and around the world increasing, demand for TESL is on the rise. In the past, it was often enough to simply be a native speaker of English to gain employment in English language teaching. The types of jobs available to individuals without adequate training are often now at a much lower level of pay with a higher workload. The proposed program will give University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign graduates a significant advantage over almost all other entry-level bachelor's degree-holding applicants in this field.

Significant impact on faculty resources, student-to-faculty ratios, library, and other instructional resources is not expected. The School of Languages, Cultures, and Linguistics, which will house this program, recently hired an undergraduate academic advisor who will work with students in this proposed program. Existing infrastructure in the Department of Linguistics is sufficient to support the program. Should enrollment exceed expectations, proportional changes in student-to-faculty ratios and class sizes will be expected, and seats may be added to existing sections of Linguistics and TESL courses to meet this demand. In the event enrollment exceeds expectations, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences stands ready to provide financial support as necessary.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.