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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NSF Leader to Serve as Vice President of Linguistic Society**

(Washington, DC) -- [David W. Lightfoot](#), Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), will assume the Vice Presidency of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) on January 11, 2009. Lightfoot, who heads the NSF's Directorate of Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences, will serve a three year term on the Executive Committee of the LSA, first as Vice President in 2009, then as President in 2010, and finally as Immediate Past President in 2011. The LSA is the largest national organization in the world devoted to advancing the scientific study of language, and is the publisher of the prestigious quarterly journal, *Language*.

"I look forward to adjusting the dialog between the linguistics community and Federal funding agencies, in such a way that the agencies come to see linguistics as a lead discipline in areas like cognition, neuroscience, the learning sciences, and complexity science" noted Dr. Lightfoot. "For that to happen, we linguists will need to present our science somewhat differently", he concluded.

Dr. Lightfoot is an expert on syntactic theory, language acquisition, and historical change, which he views as intimately related. He has published eleven books, most recently *The Development of Language* (Blackwell, 1999), *Syntactic Effects of Morphological Change* (ed.) (Oxford UP, 2002), *The Language Organ* (with S.R. Anderson) (Cambridge UP, 2002) and *How New Languages Emerge* (Cambridge UP, 2006). He has also written more than 100 articles, book chapters and reviews. He is general editor for the *Generative Syntax* series published by Blackwell and serves on the linguistics editorial board at Cambridge University Press. In 2004 he was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and in 2006 a fellow of the LSA.

Dr. Lightfoot has held regular professorial appointments at McGill University, where he taught many undergraduates who went on to become major figures in linguistics and psychology; the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands; and at the University of Maryland. He was also the Associate Director of the Neuroscience and Cognitive Sciences Program there. In 2001, he

moved to Georgetown University as Dean of the Graduate School and in 2005 to the National Science Foundation as Assistant Director.

Lightfoot received a B.A. in Classics from the University of London in 1966 and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Michigan in 1971. His awards include a Fulbright Scholarship, a Ford Foundation Fellowship, an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, three National Science Foundation research grants, and various local research grants.

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