LSA Linguistic Institute 2023
Request for Proposals

Introduction

The Linguistic Society of America is seeking proposals from interested academic institutions to host the 2023 Linguistic Institute. Preliminary expressions of interest are requested by December 13, 2019. Full proposals are welcome at any time, but should be submitted no later than February 28, 2020, in order to allow sufficient time for advance planning. Specific submission instructions may be found at the end of this document.

History

The LSA has sponsored the Linguistic Institute since 1928, when the first program was organized by Edgar Sturtevant at Yale University. The purpose of the Institute is to “provide advanced training in linguistics that is not readily available through the regular course offerings of any single academic institution.” Over the years, the Institute has been held at a diverse array of universities and colleges, primarily in the U.S. but occasionally outside North America. For more information on previous Institutes, please visit the LSA website:
http://www.linguisticsociety.org/meetings-institutes/institutes/archive

Advancing Linguistics at the Host Institution

The Linguistic Institute is perhaps the most important scholarly activity of the LSA. In focus groups, surveys and other feedback mechanisms, participants, both faculty and students, tell us that the Institute is the “best thing the LSA does.” Appendix A contains further testimonials from former faculty and students about the value of the Institute to their scholarly and professional lives. Those whose campuses have hosted previous Institutes report that organizing this signal event enhances prestige, influence and respect for the linguistics program at the respective department(s) that serve as co-sponsor(s). It is an opportunity for the host institution to put its stamp on the field of linguistics. The Institute attracts the best and brightest students to both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in linguistics. Hosting an Institute places the department in a prominent location on the international map of linguistics scholars. It offers the hosting department an opportunity to showcase its linguistics students, faculty, campus facilities, surrounding community and broader impact on the discipline.
Institute Data

The Linguistic Institute is typically held for 4-6 weeks during the summer months, in odd-numbered years. The Institute consists of courses, workshops, lectures and related special events. It is attended by 400-600 participants from around the world. Anywhere from 75 to 100 courses are offered. The number of workshops and lectures will vary based on the preferences of the host institution. Visiting faculty may be invited, or there may be an open call for course proposals, or a combination of the two. A listing of course offerings at previous Institutes may be found via various external links at: http://www.linguisticsociety.org/meetings-institutes/institutes/archive.

Components of a Successful Proposal

Hosting an Institute is a complex undertaking. It requires the commitment of significant institutional resources: faculty, graduate student and staff time; classroom, lab, office, residential and dining facilities; administrative and technical support; and many other related services. Expenses for previous Institutes (both direct and in-kind) have ranged from $500,000 to $700,000. With careful planning, a balanced budget is generally achieved and, more often than not, there might even be a surplus. Sample budgets from the 2013 Institute held at the University of Michigan are available at: https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/Budgets.pdf. Copies of the final narrative and financial reports from other Institutes are available from the LSA upon request.

We recommend that prospective hosts obtain informal commitments of support for the Institute from administrators such as Deans, Provosts and relevant Department Chairs. The exact level of financial support secured at the time of submission will vary, but without these early commitments, effective planning cannot move forward. Hosts will also need to verify the availability of the necessary facilities during the time period proposed for the Institute to occur.

The issue of course credit is also a central question to be addressed. Will students attending the Institute be offered official course credit from the host institution, or some other form of credit by the LSA (which is not an accredited academic institution). For example, institutional credit was offered at the Berkeley and Colorado Institutes, and LSA credit was offered at the Michigan, Chicago and Kentucky Institutes. Recent exit surveys indicate that earning course credits is not a significant concern for students attending the Institute. Organizers should also consider how the credit decision will affect the tuition and fees to be charged. While tuition fees paid by students have been used in some instances to defray the general operating expenses of the Institute, in other cases these funds are controlled by other administrative entities within the university.

The proposal should also address how courses will be chosen: by invitation, via a competitive submission process, or both.

Copies of successful proposals for previous Institutes are available from the LSA, upon request.
**LSA Support**

The LSA provides significant financial and in-kind support for the Institute. A planning grant of $15,000 is provided in the year preceding the Institute, and the LSA covers the costs of all named professorships and all named fellowships. Additional financial support from the LSA may be negotiated by the host institution as part of the proposal submission process.

Tuition fees paid by attendees are typically used to underwrite the cost of un-named fellowships. The LSA will ensure that at least $30,000 is available for these fellowships, even if the applicable revenue from registration fees should be less than that amount. If net revenue from fees is less than $30,000, the LSA will provide the balance of funds needed to reach this minimum amount.

The LSA also provides extensive promotional and administrative support for the Institute, which may include hosting online content, managing the registration process, handling transcripts, course evaluation, and disseminating information through a broad array of communication channels. In addition, the LSA provides assistance with external fundraising through the solicitation of sponsors and individual donations for the fellowship program.

As a sponsor of the Institute, the LSA approves the proposed faculty, courses and student fellows, including the four named professorships and the forum lectures. The host institution provides semi-annual progress reports to the LSA Executive Committee to ensure that the plans for the program are consistent with the larger purpose of the Institute.

The LSA has invested in course-management software which was customized and used by the Davis Institute. This software license can be renewed and further adapted for use by future Institutes as desired.

**Submission Instructions**

Prior to preparing a formal proposal, we suggest you contact the LSA staff to discuss your interest in hosting an Institute. The staff can answer questions, provide informal guidance and additional sample materials, and connect you with the directors of previous Institutes. Once you have obtained all of the necessary internal commitments from within your institution, we ask you to submit a formal, one-to-two-page proposal outlining: 1) the proposed timeframe; 2) the theme of the event; 3) the facilities to be used for the event; 4) the plans for awarding course credit; and 5) documentation of any confirmed financial and in-kind support available from your institution. This should be submitted to the LSA staff via e-mail and will then be circulated to the Executive Committee for discussion and approval. In the event that more than one proposal is received for the same year, any hosts not chosen will be considered for subsequent Institutes.

LSA Staff Contact: Alyson Reed, Executive Director; areed@lsadc.org; 202-835-1714.
Appendix A

The Value of the Linguistic Institute: Testimonials

“The first Linguistic Institutes were held due to a need for Linguists, who worked throughout the year in different home departments far from collaborators, to come together to learn from and work with each other. While the professional context for Linguists has changed in many ways since that time (e.g., there are more Linguistics departments now than there was in 1928), the nature of the field as being interdisciplinary, and being informed by many different scholarly perspectives, has not changed. Since they bring together so many different people and approaches, Institutes are very popular and a milestone of many of our professional lives. In designing the 2019 Institute, the impact of the Institute on attendees’ professional development pervaded our decisions: choosing the theme, the courses, and instructors (with input from the EC), evaluating the student applicants for fellowships (with help from CLIF), and creating the program of events and activities with our staff. Interdisciplinarity, diversity and representation, collaboration, and progress was our vision for the Institute. For me, organizing the Linguistic Institute as a junior faculty member was an enormous challenge -- juggling the immense planning tasks while maintaining an active research program and teaching. Yet, the benefits of hosting the Institute was a strong catalyst during even the most difficult challenges. One of the most rewarding aspects of hosting the Institute was meeting all the people who come: The Institute attracts scholars from many different generations of Linguistics who are willing to learn from each other. Institute attendees, both students and faculty, participate because they are passionate and committed to Linguistics and excited to make the event a great experience. Additionally, hosting the Linguistic Institute was a unique way to highlight our department to the field. The UC Davis Linguistics Department is distinguished by its high degree of collaboration with related disciplines. This was reflected our design for the Institute, as well. Our colleagues were excited to teach and participate in events. The students in our department were incredible ambassadors for our program and they took great pride in representing our department to the field. Scholars from around the world got to know us, our colleagues, and our students. Hosting the Institute was epic and an extremely rewarding experience.”
--Georgia Zellou, Institute Co-Director, 2019

"It's hard to overstate the benefits of hosting an Institute but the most important benefit I experienced was the ability to watch as the discipline was re-defined and new relationships to the discipline were forged. Knowing that Andries and I had a hand in seeing the next iteration of the discipline emerge made all the work that went it to making it happen worthwhile. It can be daunting to take on such a challenge and the necessary resources are significant. At the same time, no other discipline has anything like an Institute and being able to take a formative role in something so unique is a rare opportunity for any academic. In addition to being able to showcase our department for other linguists, hosting the Institute also helped our institution understand Linguistics better and positioned our department favorably with the higher levels of administration. The fact that we ran a budget surplus opened opportunities to further support our graduate students, including for attending the next Institute."
--- Robin Queen, Institute Director, 2013
“Organizing an Institute is an immensely complicated and time-consuming task. Even so, the rewards (personal and professional) of organizing an Institute outweigh any drawbacks by a very large margin. In my nearly two decades in academia, being co-director of the 2013 Institute stands out as the most rewarding professional experience I have had. There is no other activity that affords one the same opportunity to step back and take a "big picture look at the field". Never again will you have the opportunity to interact with so many leading scholars from all over the US and the world, or to meet so many young and vibrant scholars just entering the field. It makes one excited for the future of our discipline. It also, of course, offers a better platform than anything else to showcase your Department to the rest of the Linguistics world. One important thing to keep in mind is that the director (or directors) does not do the Institute alone. You will get support from your colleagues and students (graduate and undergraduate). You will appoint expert and dedicated staff. And you will have the full support of the LSA, and advice from an experienced cadre of previous Institute directors. Had I known in 2011 what goes into directing an Institute, would I still have done it? Most definitely YES.”
--- Andries Coetzee, Institute Director, 2013

“For me the LSA Summer Institutes are about the most exciting thing going in terms of linguistics gathering—four weeks of intense interactions, centered around courses right at the cutting edge, with people from all over the world living in a transplanted college-like environment where you get to talk over meals every day.”
--- Nick Evans, Hale Professor, 2011

“Participating as a faculty member in the LSA Summer Institute was a wonderful experience, for myself and for my family who accompanied me. We got to spend time with a large and diverse group of linguists, both old friends and new ones. The students in my class were smart and motivated, and certainly kept me on my toes throughout the institute, leading me to think about some problems in new ways. Many faculty brought their families along, so the kids got to make new friends too. This was the best summer that we've had in a long time."  
--- Colin Phillips, Linguistics Department/Cognitive Neuroscience of Language Laboratory, University of Maryland

“The LSA Summer Institute 2011 in Boulder Colorado was the third Institute that I attended, and at which I co-taught a course. It was a deeply enriching event. The feedback that my co-instructor and I received from students and colleagues on material that we have recently published in a new monograph has been invaluable to our current research. In addition to providing the opportunity to meet old friends and valued colleagues, the Institute offered a remarkable array of courses and workshops at which cutting edge work was presented. I learned a vast amount from these programs, and I came away with important new insights into a variety of issues central to my work. I also met wonderful new colleagues who have greatly expanded my horizons through discussion of their work. Participating in a Summer Institute is a unique experience that I strongly recommend to anyone interested in linguistics.”
--- Shalom Lappin, Professor of Computational Linguistics, King's College London

“The LSA Institute at University of Colorado-Boulder was an intellectual banquet of courses, workshops, invited lectures, and special events, bringing together the finest minds in the field of linguistics for a month of profound reflection on the issues, both classic and cutting-edge. I
was particularly pleased with the extended opportunities to have personal conversations with dozens of colleagues about a range of issues. It was a great idea to have us all living in the same housing complex and eating at the same dining halls – this provided repeated moments for serendipitous encounters and discussions. Congratulations to the LSA, and especially to the faculty and staff of Colorado University for making this possible.”

--- Gregory R. Guy, Department of Linguistics, New York University

“The LSA Institute is nothing less than intellectual summer camp for linguists. The friendly, informal atmosphere makes it easy to meet people, exchange ideas, and explore new directions--not to mention the chance to get to know major scholars as real people over breakfast or in a walk across campus. Both as a graduate student attending past Institutes and as a faculty member teaching classes, I've made lifelong friends, gained supportive mentors, been exposed to cutting-edge research in other subfields, and learned much more about my own specialization. Every student and faculty member in linguistics should take advantage of the opportunity to attend the LSA Institute.”

--- Mary Bucholtz, Professor, Department of Linguistics, University of California, Santa Barbara

“This summer (2011) is the 20th anniversary of the 56th LSA Linguistic Institute, which was held on the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California in 1991. As a faculty member of the 1991 Institute (and a member of UCSC’s Linguistics department), I have vivid memories of the intensity of that summer. Exciting courses, conviviality, lectures by Barbara Partee (the Sapir Professor) and Jay Jasanoff (the Collitz Professor), the dancing coyote T-shirts, the sunshine at College 8, and spectacular views of the Monterey Bay—those six weeks were an unforgettable combination of intellectual experiences and social interaction. The Institute’s mix of theoretical courses and computational courses (funded by AT&T Bell Labs, Xerox PARC, and Apple) was particularly heady. The Institute also incorporated the first Chinese Linguistics Institute, directed by C.-T. James Huang, and I vividly remember a Chinese singing event that Jim organized one evening.”

--- Sandra Chung, LSA President, 2011

“The academic advantages of the Institute are easy to identify: the chance to work with linguists from around the world with various backgrounds and domains of expertise; the chance to learn new skills and methodologies to advance one's research; the chance to gain exposure to different frameworks, subfields, and perspectives within the discipline. But what ended up being the most special (and surprising) aspect of the Institute was the incredible camaraderie. It's an opportunity to do linguistics in a singularly social environment. When I applied for the Institute, I knew that there would be many opportunities to meet new people in the field and "network". But I never could have imagined just how much of the Institute experience takes place outside of the classroom: in regular subfield pub nights, backyard barbecues, karaoke nights, impromptu group excursions to town or nearby Denver, hiking trips, etc. (There's a reason why many of us took to calling it "Linguistics Summer Camp"! I) Some of the most interesting and educational conversations I had with colleagues during the Institute took place not in classrooms but at these impromptu social events. Although everyone was working hard in classes, the atmosphere was always convivial and fun.”

--Rebekah Baglini, LSA Bloch Fellow, 2011
Selected comments from students about the 2011 Institute Facebook page:

"I gained not only knowledge, but many wonderful friends! The Institute helped me focus my interests in bit better. I was able to verify my interests in specific graduate Linguistics programs. And today, I met someone who has worked with Lakota, which I studied at the Institute. Overall, it has been one of the best things I've ever done."

"The Institute gave me a lot. First of all, I didn't have to spend my summer in 115° weather in Missouri. And I made tons of new friends. There's honestly nothing like being surrounded by people who you can talk to about anything, no judgment. Since I've been back, I've been way more social and willing to go out on a limb more often, thanks to those people!"

"Yep! I got to stay out of Arizona's ridiculous heat for three months, had a great social life, and could GEEK OUT WITH LINGUISTS!"

"I gained perspective. Who is leading which ideas and how those ideas are perceived by others. That's really useful when you're trying to choose a methodology, implement it, and then dodge the impending doom of Q&A!"