Linguistics in the Public Sphere: An Advocacy Workshop

July 26, 2017
Presenters

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• Bill Ladusaw, Professor Emeritus, UC Santa Cruz
Overview of Agenda

• Review of Goals and Materials
• Linguistics and the Social Science Policy Agenda
• Linguistics and the Humanities Policy Agenda
• Linguistics Research in Support of Public Policies
• Linguistics in the context of STEM and Higher Education
• Q&A on policy issues
• Developing a relationship with your elected officials (and staff)
  • Making the case for the value of linguistics
  • Letters, e-mails, faxes, phone calls, office visits, town halls
• Role-playing demonstration for office visits
  • Small pairs do role play
• Q&A on relationship-building and related topics
Goals

• To equip linguists with the information and tools they need to engage in effective advocacy on policy issues affecting the field and profession of linguistics.
• To raise awareness among policy makers about the value of linguistics research to advancing the national interests of the U.S. (and other countries where appropriate)
• To place linguistics within the broader context of U.S. federal funding for STEM and the Humanities.
• To engage linguists in forming and building relationships with members of the U.S. Congress (and their staff) and other public officials, for continuing support of linguistics.
• To influence legislation and funding decisions made by Congress (and other elected bodies) in 2017 and beyond
Overview of Resource Materials

Most of what will be presented is available online and we will send you our slides as well.

Handout
- Linguistics: Lg in the Humanities and Lg in Science

LSA Online Resources
- https://www.linguisticsociety.org/public-policy

Other Online Resources:
- COSSA: http://www.cossa.org/resources/
  - State Fact Sheet: Federal Investments in SBE
  - Advocacy Handbook
- NHA: http://www.nhalliance.org/advocacy_resources
  - Grant finder
  - Advocacy Guide
Linguistics in the Public Sphere

Primary sources of U.S. federal funding and research:

- National Science Foundation (NSF)
  - SBE Directorate
    - Linguistics Program
    - DEL Program (a joint program with NEH)
    - Cross-disciplinary and other directorates
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
  - Research Programs
    - Documenting Endangered Languages Program (joint with NSF)
- National Institutes of Health (scattered)
- Departments of Defense, State, CIA, NSA, DARPA
- Smithsonian and National Archives
- Administration for Native Americans (HHS)
NSF & Linguistics

• Part of the SBE Directorate, which is the newest of the NSF Directorates and a frequent target of critics for consolidation or elimination.

• The fate of the linguistics program at NSF rises and falls with the fate of the SBE Directorate (more on this in a moment).

• The Directorate head rotates every five years. From 2005 – 2009, it was headed by David Lightfoot, a linguist and former Dean at Georgetown University.

• Because the DEL program is jointly funded with NEH, it is even more vulnerable to budget cuts than other NSF programs.
  • Some non-linguists have questioned whether DEL projects are actually “scientific research.”

• The Education and Human Resources Directorate
  • “STEM education does not include SBE or linguistics.”
Attacks on Social Science (including Linguistics)

• Handful of Members of Congress remain critical of SBS as “wasteful”
• Issue “wastebooks” decrying waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars
• Pick on individual grants as poster children for wasteful spending
• Seek funding cuts for social science accounts at NSF, NIH, etc.
• Some attacks more generally on peer review
• BUT, these attacks have not resonated with the Trump Administration or Congressional leadership (so far)
NEH & Linguistics

- Documenting Endangered Languages program (jointly funded with NSF)
  - Five year average: 38 awards per year for 80 applications
- Scholarly Linguistics Research
- Other Programs that might include linguistics, depending on submissions
- Long-term trend of funding reductions
  - Twenty percent decline since 2010
- Targeted by some Republications in recent years for complete elimination
- Trump budget proposal for FY18 (more on that in a moment)
Linguistics and the Humanities

Focus on Capitol Hill and Executive Branch

• Fighting proposed cuts and promoting increases to federal humanities funding streams.

• Primary foci have included:
  • National Endowment for the Humanities
  • International Education Programs in the Department of Education (Title VI and Fulbright-Hays)
  • National Archives
  • Library of Congress
  • Smithsonian
Responding to Critics of the Humanities (and Linguistics)

In addition to its work in Washington, in recent years advocates have focused on generating increased understanding of and support for the humanities in communities around the country.

- The LSA has been a part of this effort

This work is aimed at influencing the broader context in which policymakers operate.

- This is necessary because the narrative about the place of the humanities in higher education exemplified by Marco Rubio’s frequent comments about the utility of majoring in the humanities influences the debate about the humanities on Capitol Hill.
- While the members of the public have enthusiasm for specific humanities projects (books, films, museum exhibitions, courses), they don’t relate these to the humanities more broadly.
Tactics

• We need to move the conversation about the humanities beyond financial return on investment to one about the transformative power of engagement with the humanities for individuals and communities.

• You can play an important role in this shift by talking in specific terms about linguists work and how it benefits communities and society as a whole.
Federal Support for Native American Language Revitalization

- The Native American Languages Preservation and Maintenance (P&M) grant program
- The Esther Martinez Initiative (EMI) grant program
- Sec. 6133 of Title VI of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grant program

In 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This bill is the most recent reauthorization of the 1964 Elementary and Secondary Education Act since the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA includes an amendment that supports the ongoing effort to revitalize Native American languages. This amendment was introduced by Senator Franken (D-MN), and the LSA was one of the leading organizations in support of it, working with groups to raise awareness of the issue.

- Sec. 6133 of Title VI of ESSA establishes a new grant program for schools and academic institutions that represents a leap forward for Native American language preservation and revitalization. These grants are intended to support Native American language immersion programs or otherwise support schools whose primary language of instruction is a Native American language.
This legislation aims to extend and update two grant programs administered by the Administration for Native Americans at the Department of Health and Human Services. These grant programs, the Native American Languages Preservation and Maintenance (P&M) grant program and the Esther Martinez Initiative (EMI) grant program, provide opportunities for tribal communities to assess, plan, develop, and implement projects that ensure the survival and continuing vitality of Native languages.

The legislation reauthorizes both programs through FY2022 and makes some key modifications: it increases the maximum possible duration of all Esther Martinez grants from three years to five, and it decreases the required minimum number of enrollees in Native American language nests funded by the grant program from 10 to 5 enrollees, and in the Native American language survival schools from 15 to 10 enrollees.

This legislation would make it possible for more Native communities to receive resources to revitalize and maintain their mother tongues.

Action in 2017
- On February 8th, 2017, S.254 passed the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. The committee also approved this legislation in the last Congress. S.254 had 7 co-sponsors upon introduction.
- A companion bill to S.254 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives as H.R.1169. The bill had 25 co-sponsors upon introduction. It is currently pending with the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.
Linguistics and related policy issues

• STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
  • Federal definitions and applications
  • Internal tensions within linguistics community about classification of our discipline

• Higher Education
  • Funding and regulatory issues

• Immigration Policies
  • Trump travel ban

• Research Enterprise
  • Human Subjects Research

• International Relations

• Foreign Language Study/Research
Lx in the Public Sphere II

Primary areas of policy influenced by linguistics research:

- K-12 Education
  - STEM education (social science and Lx usually excluded)
  - Language acquisition
    - English language learners
    - Bilingual education
    - Foreign language instruction
  - Teacher training/pedagogy
- Native language immersion/revitalization
- Higher education
  - International education
  - Foreign language scholarship
- English-only and official language laws
- Human rights and criminal justice: language issues
Linguistics & Our Policy Partners

LSA is a founding member (1981) of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) and serves on its Board of Directors.

- represents the shared policy interests of all fields of social & behavioral science research
- provide professional lobbying services on behalf of the LSA’s advocacy agenda, in collaboration with like-minded organizations and institutions.

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Other partners and allies:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
- Joint National Committee on Language (JNCL)
- Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
- March for Science
The Political Climate & Linguistics

• 1st Session of the 115th Congress began Jan. 1, 2017
• Republicans continue to hold majorities in House and Senate
  • R’s control all committees (including funding), dictate which bills are considered/voted on, drive the Congressional agenda in general
  • D’s focused on stalling progress on bad bills
  • Congress still log jammed, even with the same party in control due to party in-fighting
• Policy makers are focused on high priority issues:
  • Health care reform
  • Immigration
  • Infrastructure
  • Reducing the deficit (cuts in spending overall)
What does this mean for Linguistics?

- **Glass half full** – Policy makers aren’t focusing on/don’t care about smaller ticket items (i.e. social science research funding), **not a target**

- **Glass half empty** – No new money for research for the foreseeable future, **zero-sum game**

- **BOTTOM LINE** – Flat funding for research is a win!
Q & A on Policy Issues

- The next section of the workshop will focus on Congressional communications in support of these issues.
- If you are unclear about any of the issues we have presented this morning, please ask us for clarification.
- There will be time for additional questions at the end of the workshop as well.
Advocacy Strategy in this Environment

- Protect **non-defense discretionary** spending (NDD) – Don’t let domestic programs (including research) become bank for defense increases
- **Join forces** with other NDD interests (housing, education, humanities, law enforcement, infrastructure, etc.)
- **Be realistic** – Don’t ask for unrealistic budgets (remember: flat is a win!)
- Talk about **real-world relevance** of linguistics scholarship in terms of “national interest”
- Express support for funding for ALL federal R&D – Keep the sciences together and don’t let politicians pick winners and losers
- This strategy can be used in DC advocacy or at home.
Congressional Messaging

• In your communications with members of Congress:
  • Explain your work as a linguist in a way that is accessible to a non-specialist.

  • If you have received funding from NSF, NEH or other federal program, talk about your project and explain why it is important.

  • If federal agencies have provided funding to a linguistics project in your state, learn more about it so that you can talk about its value in specific terms. If the government has funded multiple projects, use an example that is particularly compelling in terms of local impact.
What to Expect – In General

• While the Trump Administration has proposed the elimination of the NEH in its FY 2018 Presidential Budget Request, appropriators in Congress have been clear that they are the ones that set funding levels.

• While some in Congress have sought to eliminate the NEH in the past, the NEH enjoys bipartisan support in Congress. Many in Congress, including Republican members of the House and Senate appropriations committees, support funding for the NEH.

• Congress has modestly increased the NEH’s funding both of the last two years.

• Still, the NEH faces two main threats in Congress:
  1) Unless Congress raises its mandatory spending caps, appropriators will need to decrease domestic, discretionary spending below FY2017 levels, resulting in a non-targeted cut to the NEH.
  2) The elimination of the NEH could be proposed on the floor of the House as part of an amendment process that could challenge NEH’s level of support.
Congressional Messaging III

- If the Member is unsupportive:
  - Try to identify why the member is unsupportive and if any misperceptions exist.
  - Politely dispel any misperceptions that come up. Common misperceptions include:
    - That NSF/NEH grants are awarded by government bureaucrats. *Explain that experts from around the country serve as peer reviewers for all grants.*
    - That government funding crowds out private investment. *Explain that many NEH grants require private matching funds that incentivize and facilitate private support.*
    - That the humanities use tax money for programs that only benefit wealthy Americans. *Point to examples of the diverse populations that benefit from NEH.*
  - Don’t give up. Try to tailor the discussion to their concerns.
Talking About your Research

• This is not a classroom lecture or a recounting of your data and methodology
• Knead your research story down to its essence – you can expand or contract as necessary
• Tell them why YOU care about this work and think about why THEY should care.
Breaking Through…

Consider arguments like:

- Jobs provided by the research (e.g. do students contribute?)
- Number of people potentially affected by your research/findings/applications
- Dollars to the state/district as a result
- Local connections and/or real-life stories
- Correct a common misconception about your area of research
...Without Breaking Up

What if they Disagree with Me?

- Be respectful and pay attention to their reasons – information on opposing views can be just as valuable as enthusiastic support
- In a meeting, allow yourself one rebuttal, then move on – this is not a debate
- Remind them of any local impacts ($, jobs)
- Offer to continue working with them
- Leave an opening for future interaction – you NEVER know when you might need their vote
Keep it Simple

- **Your job** – Make the case for why linguistics research funding is in the national interest and why you should be considered a resource.

- **Not your job** -- Be an expert on federal agency/program funding levels and pending legislation or the intricacies of policy making.
Give Them What they Want

Members of Congress and staff are thinking:

1. How does this help the Member of Congress, the state, or the district?
2. What exactly are they asking me to do?
3. Who else cares about this?
Your Requests to Congress

1. Support federal agencies that fund linguistics and language research in FY 2018 (or whatever FY is currently being debated).

2. Consider me, a linguist in your district, as a resource on any issue relating to language.
Getting Involved

• Similar tactics and messages can be used whether you are coming to DC for a meeting, meeting in the state, or making a phone call.

• Congress is about to head home for its August recess.
Goals of Grassroots Advocacy

1. To advocate in support of federal funding for linguistics scholarship across the federal government.

2. To educate policy makers and their staff about the value of linguistics research and the important role of federal support.

3. To become resources that elected officials and staff can depend on.
Why Advocate at Home?

• Members of Congress are often less busy at home and more focused on engaging with constituents
• To build on any positive momentum and relationship building from a visit that took place on Capitol Hill
• Local engagement gives congressional staff a better understanding of constituent concerns
  • Ability to see how federal dollars support local programs/projects
  • Opportunity to meet with voters affected by decisions made in Washington
• Can provide positive local press
Steps to Get Involved in Local Advocacy

- Tell your story!
  - Email your Senators/Representative
  - Invite your elected officials to visit your lab or program
  - Visit their state/district office
  - Follow them and interact on social media
- Get the word out to the public in your community
  - Write a letter to your local newspaper
  - Be a resource for local reporters
  - Use social media to write about language/linguistic policy issues
- Get involved with community institutions: museums, science fairs, high schools, etc.
- Involve students and community partners in advocacy
### Advocacy Best Practices

**DO**
- Make your research relatable
- Identify connections with your elected officials – college, church, hometown, volunteer group, etc.
- Get contact information for key staff aides in Washington & local/state offices
- Subscribe to newsletters from your elected officials
- Connect with your elected officials on social media
- Attend town hall meetings
- Document visits with elected officials (with photos!)

**DON’T**
- Give a linguistics lecture or “pop quiz”
- Recite your CV
- Use jargon/overly technical language
- Rely on stereotypes based on political affiliation or past statements
- Argue
- Get discouraged
Conducting a Successful Meeting

Structure of a Typical Constituent Meeting

1. Arrive 5-10 minutes early
2. Check in with the staffer at the front desk by telling them your name and the name of the person you are meeting – you will be escorted to the meeting location
3. Begin the meeting by thanking them for taking the time
4. Introduce yourself as a constituent (tell them your name, affiliation, even your home neighborhood), exchange business cards, and provide handouts
5. Explain the purpose for the meeting – “To discuss support for federal agencies and programs that fund linguistics research and the value of linguistics research as a STEM discipline”
6. Explain your work, using the guidance provided earlier, and tie it into the need for sustained federal support.
7. Ask if they have any questions or would like additional information
8. Offer yourself as a resource
9. Say THANK YOU again
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<tr>
<th><strong>DOs</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’Ts</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Be 5-10 minutes early</td>
<td>• Don’t worry about being an expert on legislation, Congress, NSF, NEH, or politics – talk about what you know</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be courteous, no matter how they act</td>
<td>• Don’t assume staff are familiar with linguistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be a good listener</td>
<td>• Don’t use jargon</td>
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<td>• Be okay with not knowing an answer – offer to follow up later</td>
<td>• Don’t dominate the meeting</td>
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<td>• Send a thank you email</td>
<td>• Don’t prolong the meeting if it feels forced</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Let the LSA know about the meeting and how it went.</td>
<td>• Don’t play with your phone or look at your watch</td>
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<td>• Don’t write off anyone – enemies can be softened</td>
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<td>• Don’t expect this to be a one-time activity – trust and relationship building takes time</td>
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Other Tips

• Business dress is expected
• Bring plenty of business cards (assume 2 for each appt)
• It is completely appropriate to ask for a photo with the staffer or Member of Congress
• Feel free to take notes during the meetings, but maintain eye contact with staffer
Survey Data on Congressional Communications

Activities that Influence (“Somewhat” and “Very Effective”)

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Congressional Staffers</th>
<th>Lobbyists</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reliable information</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<td>Concise arguments</td>
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<td>Opposing views</td>
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<td>Constituents</td>
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<td>Face-to-face meetings</td>
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<td>CEO meetings</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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Access & Influence

- Providing credible, reliable information: Congressional Staff 46%, Lobbyists 39%
- Existing relationships among Member/staff/lobbyists: Congressional Staff 38%, Lobbyists 28%
- Reputation of individual seeking the meeting: Congressional Staff 12%, Lobbyists 12%
- Previously worked for Legislator: Congressional Staff 11%, Lobbyists 8%
- Reputation as a powerful lobby: Congressional Staff 2%, Lobbyists 6%
- Whether PAC has supported Member: Congressional Staff 2%, Lobbyists 4%
- Other: Congressional Staff 27%, Lobbyists 14%
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<td>CRS</td>
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### Sources ACTUALLY Consulted

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Legend:
- Almost Always
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

Source: www.congressionalcommunicationsreport.com (2014)
Q & A
Role Play

• Bill and I will demonstrate a short (5-minute) conversation between a linguist and a Congressional staffer
• Each of you should pair up and do the same afterwards
• Then switch roles, so each person has a chance to be “the linguist.”
• Debrief: reflections on what you might do differently in “real” life.
• Have fun!