



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

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To:

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**Review of the Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC)**

*Introduction*

The review team, David Ewing, Eleanor Kinney, Nancy Newton and John Swales, convened on January 31, 2005 to review the activities of the ICIC. Prior to this, we had all read the comprehensive Self-Study put together by the ICIC, and received some additional material during the review day, principally income-expenditure annual summaries since the ICC inception in 1998. We followed the prepared visit schedule (attached as an appendix) closely except for two small deviations. For the 10.45-11.30 meeting with faculty and graduate students, we divided into two groups because we thought the graduate students might be more forthcoming if their instructors were not present—as indeed turned out to be the case. We also added a short planning, meeting among ourselves following the 2.45-3.30 Concluding Discussion. Overall, we were very impressed by the way the ICIC had organized the review day and by the way numbers of busy and senior members of the university were willing to spend time with us.

The original core of objectives of the ICIC are listed on page four of the Self-Study and for convenience we repeat them here:

- To conduct and disseminate research grounded in linguistic principles that improves intercultural communication in the workplace;
- To build a computerized text bank of professional discourse, including business and fundraising discourse, for the purpose of facilitating intercultural communication and workplace training;

- To foster interdisciplinary research on topics applied to intercultural communication among IU and IUPUI faculty;
- To provide innovative model workshops and proprietary materials for intercultural communication training for local, national, and international clients.

More specifically, at the end of the Self-Study (p.20) we were asked to address a number of directed questions, as follows:

- Is the current balance between the center’s research and service activities appropriate to achieve the vision that ICIC sets forth?
- How can ICIC best continue its growth given the current reality of faculty appointments and course offerings? Are we approaching a resource development plan that could allow for growth and sustainability?
- What other areas of activity or emphasis need to be considered for long-term sustainability? What is your advice about the center’s positioning in a specific department as opposed to a school-wide affiliation? What are the pros and cons of those relationships, especially as they relate to sustainability?
- How can ICIC best communicate the relationship between scholarship and community service in ways both internal and external constituents can understand and support?

We will approach these questions in the order given and then offer a few further suggestions, mostly concerned with ways of making the ICIC more visible on campus.

### *1. The relationship between research and service activities*

The research profile of the ICIC faculty and its associates is very impressive. Certainly, here the role of Professor Ulla Connor has been exemplary, and the overall research production of the ICIC is comparable to that of larger and leading comparable units at major US public research universities, such as DEIL at Illinois at Urbana-Champaign or the ELI at Michigan at Ann Arbor. Ulla Connor’s 1996 monograph on Contrastive Linguistics in the prestigious CUP Applied Linguistics Series remains the benchmark work in this sub-field and since then she has remained both very productive and has diversified her approach into one that gives greater prominence to contextual factors affecting cross-cultural differences, as in the 2004 article entitled “Intercultural rhetorical research: Beyond texts”.

Another major research development has been the pioneering construction of a fundraising corpus and a strong series of research papers based on analyses of these texts. Here Ulla Connor has collaborated very well with Thom Upton (a rising star in the

corpus linguistics field) and with several others. Indeed, the recent volume co-edited by Conner and Upton contains as many as four papers related to the ICIC's corpus development work. Among these, a particularly interesting contribution comes from Elizabeth Goering from IUPUI's Department of Communication Studies, both intrinsically and for what it portends for interdisciplinary collaboration on campus.

A third development has been in the under-served and under-researched area of the academic socialization of international post-doctoral fellows on campus, whose numbers at any one time, we were told, now add up to some 250-300.

In the meantime, the Self-Study makes it clear that ICIC staff have been active in high-quality service activities on campus, such as summer programs of various kinds, and in the wider community.

We therefore feel that the balance between research and service is about right—and indeed it has probably been the high energy and high productivity on both these fronts that led the Chair of English to reiterate that he sees the ICIC as “the jewel in the crown” of his department. However, although we feel the balance is appropriate, we also gained a sense that the *relationship* between the two might become more synergistic to the mutual advantage of all parties. For example, all the fund-raising/grant proposal research papers close with comments about practical implication for practitioners and students of philanthropy, but these applications and implications have not yet fully filtered through to the Center for Philanthropy, nor to other professionals in this area throughout IUPUI and beyond. Since we do not think efforts to do this (via joint workshops or seminars and the co-authorship of guidelines and so forth) require a great deal of further time and effort, we believe this extension should be given a fairly high priority. Certainly, in our meeting with Dr. Patrick Rooney, Director of Research in the Philanthropy Center, we gained a sense that he remained both a little disappointed at some lack of applicable findings, but also open to re-explore relations between the two centers. It is always important to ensure that the research-service interface does not become a zero-sum game.

For our second example, we take the exciting research-service prospect of providing more help for international post as well as for international residents in the Medical School. However, we gained an impression from our separate meetings with Ulla Connor and her ICIC staff and with Mark Brenner that each felt that the current ball was in the other's court. One desirable outcome of this review would therefore be to re-activate this development. We recognize, however, that the difficulties surrounding the establishment of a well-founded program in this area are considerable. Nationally, the available research is very thin; gaining information about and access to the target population is complex; and establishing a program that this population will see as beneficial will doubtless involve some trial and error. We were heartened, however, by the thought that the Vice President for Research had given close consideration to possible funding mechanisms. We also appreciated the fact that the various parties recognized that a multidisciplinary approach would be needed in order to cover the various aspects of the program, such as lab safety, bio-ethics, cross-cultural issues of power and authority, and English language communicative competence in professional settings. In order to address

the “possible benefit” issue, we would like to suggest any emerging program also include post-doc support for their own research presentations, grant proposals, job applications, and publication, and also not necessarily exclude native speaker or near-native speaker post-docs and residents from the enterprise. Finally, on this topic, we note that many major public US universities are beginning to struggle with the same set of problems. Collaboration on research and exchange of experiences with other institutions, especially with those that are beginning to address this issue, would be helpful to and valuable to IUPUI. Professor Connor’s reputation and experience would make her an ideal leader of some informal consortium of this type.

## *2. Resources in straitened circumstances*

By all accounts, the ICIC is today in a better position than it was even a year ago, given the recent appointments of a regular secretary and an Assistant Director. For a humanities center dedicated to both research and teaching, the accounts of income and expenditure over the years have been growing and have remained largely in balance, and this, in our view, shows both a judicious use of resources and a determined effort to accrue revenue. The interest income in the endowment serves as a suitable and necessary “rainy day” fund in the event of exogenous shocks. We do not anticipate, in the current climate, any great and obvious opportunities for transforming this equilibrium by the winning of large external grants. That said, we would not wish, of course, to discourage grant applications of any kind, both large and small.

Meetings with the graduate students and the faculty associates have demonstrated how valuable ICIC experiences have been for those individuals who have participated in its activities, ranging from administrative know-how, research and publication partnerships, and teaching and materials production. These links have been of especial importance to the Department of English and its developing graduate programs. We would not like to see any diminution of these links, even though the mentoring load on the senior ICIC faculty may be onerous at times.

We noted in our discussions with Christian Kloesel his firm commitment to a further faculty position in applied linguistics, once the open position in film studies has been filled. Given the success of ICIC and the success of the MA and certificate in TESOL, we endorse this strategy in the strongest terms.

More generally, IUPUI’s intention to further develop its graduate programs – both to cater to growing demand in the metropolitan area, and to further diversify the campus population – was made clear to the review team by all the people we met. As a result, there should be emerging for ICIC advanced ESP/EAP opportunities, over and above the post-doc initiative. In this context, we believe that the teaching loads of Director Ulla Connor and Assistant Director Bill Rozycki might well be reduced somewhat, and a part-time faculty associate hired to undertake part of the R&D work alluded to above.

### *3. The ICIC's positioning*

We were asked to examine the pros and cons of the ICIC remaining within the English Department or becoming aligned with the School of Liberal Arts. We all agree that the present arrangement is, certainly for the foreseeable future, the better option. Our view is based on the following observations. First, the English Department is anxious to retain its close links with the ICIC, partly because of the prestige Ulla Connor's international reputation brings to the department, and partly because of the benefits of the link for its graduate students and junior faculty. Second, Ulla Connor and Thom Upton, who collaborate closely, are specialists in ESL and English applied discourse analysis. Third, major components of the graduate program in the English Department are those concerned with TESOL. Fourth, the current chair's desire to recruit a third applied linguist might well diminish if the ICIC should move to another administrative unit. Finally, we believe the current arrangement of dual administrative channels (some matters going through English; others directly to the Dean's office) is working satisfactorily.

Even so, we did detect something of a boundary dispute between the ICIC and the well regarded ESL program run by Thom Upton, occasioned by the need to provide more advanced instruction for graduate students. A new initiative to provide an English language support program for the LLM students in the law school is illustrative. According to the information at our disposal, the original understanding between the two units was for the ESL Program to run the credit courses for international students, while the ICIC was to devote itself to non-credit offerings both on and off campus. Meanwhile, the law school has contracted with ESL to defray the cost of one instructor to support the increasing numbers of NNSE lawyers enrolled in the LLM program. Clearly, this kind of specialized and more technical instruction is different from that targeted at raising the English proficiency of incoming international undergraduates.

In the light of the foregoing discussions regarding post training and graduate education, we think it might be time to rethink this division of responsibility, especially as it tends to balkanize ESP/EAP expertise on campus. Consider, for instance, a scenario wherein the Dean of Engineering asks the ICIC to develop a non-credit program for international graduate students in Engineering; then imagine that the program is such a success that the dean decides to make it a regular credit-bearing course. Would then the new course have to revert back to the ESL program?

Although we prefer to leave it to the parties to iron out the details, an alternative arrangement would be for the ESL program to remain responsible for the required foundational ESL courses it now offers. More advanced courses, i.e. those not mandated by the placement test, would then become the purview of the ICIC, but sometimes in association with the ESL Program, especially where its ESL lecturers have specialized expertise to offer. Even if this solution turns out not to be optimal, the issue is important because of some expected growth in this area – even more so if the suggestions of Dean Sutton are incorporated, such as the insertion of ESP components into major international projects funded by outside sources.

#### *4. Civic engagement and community service*

This was an issue that particularly concerned the ICIC Board, and indeed it is embedded in the founding mission of the ICIC and has continued to be a distinctive aspect of the ICIC's activities to this day. However, as we have seen the emergence of a "natural constituency" within the university, certain types of community outreach are becoming questionable. As Dr. Rooney observed, the opportunity-cost calculations for involving the likes of Dr. Connor and Dr. Rozycki in developing and administering small workplace ESP programs are not favorable, especially as there are increasing numbers of small commercial operators competing for this business in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. Larry Cimino's arguments that regular revenue flow for the Center is best ensured by regular larger-scale clients is well taken, one such client being the long-running program with Tsuda University. It is likely, however, that such clients will be international rather than local; further, Dr. Rozycki's Asian contacts should stand the ICIC in good stead in securing further such contracts.

On the other hand, it is clear that the ICIC cannot abandon its city outreach efforts with the local communities, especially as the ethnic demographics of the city are changing. Our suggestion here is that the best way forward is for the ICIC to restructure its resources in such a way that its efforts to support local communities become indirect and/or collaborative, rather than in the direct supply of ESL services. For the former, we would advocate a greater emphasis on the training of occupational, educational, and vocational language instructors, wherein the ICIC continues to play to its linguistic, discursive and rhetorical strengths, while collaborating with units such as World Language & Cultures or Anthropology, whose faculty often possess great cultural insight and experience. More generally, we are suggesting that ICIC aim for a greater "multiplier" role in the surrounding urban community, encompassing special courses and seminars for HRD trainers, NGOs, charities, and educational institutions. Greater use of graduate students could also help to extend ICIC's impact on the surrounding urban community, such as the involvement of one graduate student we interviewed with ESL tutors working for Catholic Social Services in Indianapolis. In all these ways, we believe that the ICIC will not only be able to preserve its civic engagement mission, but actually to enhance it.

#### *5. Publicity and visibility on campus*

A number of people during the day expressed some concern about the visibility of ICIC services on campus; these included in particular Dean Susan Sutton and review team member Professor Kinney from the Faculty of Law. For small specialized units on large campuses this is, of course, by no means a unique problem. As one English Language Institute director said at a recent conference, "Every time there is a change in the senior administration, there is an increase in ignorance about what we do". As noted by the graduate students we interviewed, the visibility of ICIC among graduate students in SLA and graduate student awareness of its benefits to their own coursework is weak. More

generally, increased visibility of ICIC in online and printed campus information would be helpful. For example, we would advocate better access to the ICIC webpage through the IUPUI homepage and clearer linkages with the international programs at IUPUI. In addition, whenever the ICIC has an opportunity to take advantage of publicizing an important contribution to the community, it should communicate its activity to the local media; the program that ICIC conducted with volunteers of the first Grand Prix race in Indianapolis could, for instance, have been more widely publicized. Spending a few hours every semester communicating information about ICIC activities to the IUPUI and community media outlets might be worth the time of the Center's Administrative Assistant, Alicia Añino. Finally, the ICIC Director might consider attending the meetings of center directors convened by Dean of Faculties, Bill Plater. This is an extremely useful group for sparking synergies on campus.

## *6. Student learning*

Dr Banta's memo of January 10, 2005 closes with a request for us to assess "the quality of student learning" in the report. Because of the nature of the ICIC and its complex of activities, we regret to say that, apart from our interviews with three graduate students, we have relatively little to say under this heading. These interviews did indicate that their work with the ICIC has impacted their graduate education including how their experiences with ICIC will help them with their thesis research. These experiences have also affected their career planning. The two TESOL students now plan to teach in a foreign country; the Communication Studies student hopes to combine her academic work and ICIC experience by focusing on communications issues facing large companies with a significant percentage of international employees. We note, however, that this review is a forerunner to an upcoming review of the English department as a whole; the larger review will provide a better opportunity to examine this issue in depth.

## *7. Closing comments*

The review team--perhaps surprisingly given the nature of its composition--reached a univocal position on almost all issues and topics. We were all impressed by how much the ICIC has been able to achieve in its six short years of existence. It has established a special position for itself in North America, primarily through its marriage of corpus-linguistic technologies/methodologies and philanthropic discourse. It is now poised to consolidate this position in more practical ways and to embark on another major and pioneering initiative. In addition, key members of the ICIC have played key roles in the English Department's graduate program, in bringing the university and the local community closer together, and in maintaining both the financial health of the center and a suitable balance of research and service activities. Even though we have made a number of suggestions for change, we remain of the opinion that the ICIC is not just a "jewel in the crown" of the Department of English, but also one in the university as a whole.

From our receipt of the Self-Study to the closing discussion with the Dean of SLA and others, it has become apparent that the role of Ulla Connor has been paramount in the successes achieved. It has been her dedication, her high standards as a scholar and educator, and her unrelenting industry that have led the ICIC to where it is today. We were not officially asked to think about the succession issue, but the question did come up on several occasions, including in our discussions with members of the board. This might also be something that the fuller review next year should consider.

Respectfully submitted

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Eleanor Kinney

Nancy Newton

John Swales (Chair)

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