New Year’s Day marked the first day of my second term as Head of Linguistics; my previous term ended in 2001. So I immediately celebrated by appointing an Acting Head and leaving town – off to the Linguistic Society of America Conference in Portland. I must admit that embarking on a second term was a bit of a surprise to me because I thought my administrative days were behind me. What is interesting, however, is how the Department has changed since 2001. Although a few of the faces in the Department are the same as ten years ago, the Department has undergone some rather momentous changes, growing from five members in 1998 to fifteen currently.

So when asked as new Head to write a few words for the newsletter, my first thought was that I should call Edna. My first thought when anyone asks me anything since January is “Call Edna!” Edna Dharmaratne, the department administrator, has been with Linguistics since 1998. To say that she is a phenomenal resource is to both state the obvious and reduce the scope of her contribution. Being Head involves a variety of jobs. At the core, the Department’s research and teaching initiatives need to be supported. My job in this is in many ways very simple: work with Edna. There is more to this statement of simplicity than my wish to express appreciation. I do wish to express my appreciation to Edna, and I am certainly trying to do so here. But the essential reason that “working with Edna” is the right thing to do is because she brings a deep understanding of the departmental and university goals to her job. Although I am about to put words into her mouth without consultation, I think there is no doubt that the most important aspect of Edna’s approach to her work is to focus on people. And by “people”, I mean everybody involved in the ambitious exercise we are all involved in. It is important for Edna that students, faculty and staff be treated fairly, that their needs be our administrative focus. Phrased succinctly: Take-care-of-people >> Worry-about-bureaucracy. (If this notation is not 100% clear to you, you are more than welcome to stop by my office or attend a complimentary class or two in LING 311 or LING 510…) Whenever a choice needs to be made between dealing with a faculty member or student in need and some administrative deadline, the people come first (though the deadline is usually met too). Edna deeply understands that departmen-
tal administration constitutes a kind of hub between “frontline” research and teaching initiatives and “back-end” institutional support. For our collective enterprise to function at its best, both of these complex aspects of our work must be cared for. This means working well with people at Finance, with the custodial staff, with Plant Ops, and on and on. Edna’s very real concern for students can be seen in so many ways: working with Shaine Meghji to provide an effective and efficient graduate administrative structure, setting up a food bank and a clothing bank in the Department, in her support for LGBTQ activities on campus, and on and on. The point underlying all of this is that Edna focuses on what people can accomplish and does her best to create a structure where people can effectively work on their academic goals, and do so in an effective and supportive environment.

For me personally, it’s easy to work with Edna because her goals are goals that I share. I can work with Edna on establishing priorities, knowing that she will then structure administrative concerns to reflect those. A good example is the way she structured the workload since January to facilitate the search that has resulted in our biggest news this semester. The Department is very excited to welcome Dr. Kathleen Currie Hall. Completing our search for a new phonologist, the Department was able to attract Dr. Hall from the City University of New York, College of Staten Island. We are all looking forward to working with Dr. Hall, no one more than me – I will have the opportunity to co-teach a graduate seminar with her in the fall. I would put more about Kathleen here, but she is being introduced elsewhere in this newsletter. So let me return to my overall topic for this note.

Whenever Edna finds out that I am working on something “linguistic” (as opposed to administrative), she steers me towards doing the linguistic work. She takes charge of those administrative jobs that she can do single-handedly (many/most jobs), consults with me where appropriate but makes it clear that if I am working on a paper then I am doing the right thing. So although I confess to still feeling a bit swamped as we near the end of my fourth month in the headship job, Edna has nevertheless put things in place for me to present a paper at a conference (organised by Olanike Ola Orie, a UBC grad from 1995!) and finish up three papers. Her goal in this respect is my goal, to make the Department a place where people can engage in a dynamic atmosphere of teaching and research.

So overall, there is lots of exciting work going on in the Department: formal teaching is drawing to a close for the winter term, informal teaching (on research projects, in labs, in directed studies, etc.) is gearing up, new grant research is being undertaken, a host of outreach activities are being planned and implemented, a new research agreement with the Kwakiutl Band Council is in place, construction is about to start at both Totem Field Studios (new offices) and Stores Road (new labs), and on and on. (Incidentally, how many departments at UBC occupy two entire buildings?! – okay, maybe not the largest buildings on campus, but definitely up there in terms of class and history). Anyway, before converting this note into blither, three final points: (1) Congratulations to the faculty member who stepped well outside of established comfort zones during our visit to the canopy walkway at the UBC Botanical Gardens; (2) Congratulations to the amazing sports talent we all discovered at our invasion of the Vancouver Curling Club earlier this month; (3) Thanks to everybody for making the first few months of my new headship as smooth as they could possibly be (and for ignoring the hiccups).

Our newest faculty member is Kathleen Currie Hall, who comes to us from CUNY, where she is currently an assistant professor in the English Department at the College of Staten Island and the Linguistics Program at the Graduate Center. She earned her PhD from the Ohio State University in 2009, and her BA in linguistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is looking forward to joining the UBC Linguistics Department this summer, a place she sees as vibrant and dynamic with lots of interesting research going on.

The Gosling: What initially drew you to UBC?

Kathleen Currie Hall: I was interested in being part of a solid linguistics research community. I look forward to working collaboratively with both students and faculty at UBC.

TG: How did you first get interested in linguistics?

KCH: I was first attracted to linguistics and language in kindergarten. We had to do an art project that involved the instructions “Take two mini marshmallows.” In my dialect, “two mini” and “too many” are homophonous, and I thought it was really funny that the instructions made it sound like we were to take “too many marshmallows.” Hey, I was only six…!

TG: What kind of work specifically interests you?

KCH: My research focuses on
answering questions in theoretical phonology using techniques from a wide variety of areas, including experimental phonetics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and semantics. I have done a lot of work on the best way to define phonological relationships and the extent to which phonological relationships are psychologically real. I am also interested in how information theory can inform phonological theory. And I’m looking forward to expanding my research into the fieldwork domain!

TG: Have you ever been to or lived in Canada before?

KCH: I have never lived in Canada before, nor do I know much about Vancouver, but I am excited to be coming here! In my spare time, I am involved in Scottish dancing, and BC has a very vibrant Scottish arts community. I also already feel somewhat connected to Canada as my brother, Daniel, has been living in Canada for 19 years. He is also a phonologist and works at St. Mary's University in Halifax.

TG: Have you and your brother ever collaborated on anything?

KCH: No, not yet... but hopefully one day!

Grad Spotlight

Blake Allen

by Laura Sherer

The Gosling: Where are you originally from, and how did you get interested in linguistics?

Blake Allen: I’m from Macon, Georgia originally, and I used to be a classicist. In high school I did five years of Latin, and I thought that I was going to go into classics, but then after I graduated I read a book by Stephen Pinker, The Language Instinct, and that got me thinking about linguistics. It was sort of tied into the things that I found interesting in the classics, but it seemed to be a better choice for me in terms of my career goals.

TG: Where have you gone to school before, and why did you want to come to UBC?

BA: After I went to high school and such in Macon, Georgia, I went to Harvard from 2007-2011, and after that I knew that I wanted to go to a relatively large linguistics program, but there are various reasons why I wanted to come to UBC. First of all, like I said, I wanted to go to a big program, but I wanted to go to a big program that would let me pursue somewhat less conservative avenues within phonology. So I knew that if I went, for example, to MIT, then, well, first of all I’d be living in Boston for another five years, and I like Boston, but that’s just too much. There are many more types of research being done under the umbrella of phonology in Canada generally than in the US, I have found, and especially at the big places of course, like UBC. So there’s that. Plus, I graduated from Harvard with a Master’s degree, so I loved the fact that UBC allowed me to start in as a PhD candidate, without having to do another Master’s.

TG: What do you think of UBC, Vancouver, and Canada?

BA: I love Canada. Several of my closest friends in college were from Canada, and so I came to visit them up here, unfortunately only in Montreal and Toronto, but several times, and I really adored both of them. So I had a hunch from that, and my knowledge of the West Coast more generally, and my knowledge of the Pacific Northwest, that I would really love living in Vancouver. And sure enough, it’s great. I really, really like rain, actually, so it works well for me, and I like that it’s not ever too cold or too hot, which I have experienced both of since I have lived in Georgia and in Boston. UBC is super cool. The campus is probably the most beautiful college campus I’ve ever been to, and so every day walking anywhere is always a joy. And I can’t wait for the cherry blossoms to bloom soon. And also our department here is super super fantastically incredible, so I’ve been really enjoying picking up everything that I know from them, and pretty radically changing my perception of what sort of research I want to be doing, not only through input from the phonologists here but also through classes and dialogue with other faculty.

TG: What are you interested in researching?

BA: When I was applying to grad school, my idea of what I wanted to study was sort of applying the minimalist program to phonology in a way that had been done somewhat by a person named Bridget Samuels, who’s a good friend of mine and who graduated with her PhD from Harvard three or so years ago, and that sort of tied in for partially historical reasons and partially theoretical reasons with biolinguistics. So I was really interested in that whole angle, sort of more biologically and minimally implemented phonological theory. But since I’ve been here at UBC, I’ve gotten a lot more interested in, well, multiple things that aren’t necessarily related. I’ve gotten a lot more interested in modeling of various types, and especially computational modeling I’m starting to get really, really intrigued by. Also, thanks a lot to interactions with Gunnar and with Doug, I’ve gotten super interested in the problems that are posed by long-distance dependencies, and by the cross-linguistic patterns that emerge with respect to those. Talking then about long-distance dependencies bring me to another issue, which is acquisition. Thanks not only again to phonologists, but also to people like Carla, and really everyone – because it’s an issue for everybody even if it isn’t in their everyday research – are the questions of not only how do people acquire things, but how
is it even possible to acquire certain things, and then that ties in nicely with the computational modeling because then you can actually test your different hypotheses for how some of these learning algorithms go against real data that you get from real humans.

TG: You’ve been organizing some workshops for grad students this year. What are they all about?

BA: I was chosen at the beginning of the academic year to be the skills workshop organizer. And by “was chosen,” I mean that I raised my hand really, really high or sounded really excited or something, because I really wanted to do this. I’m not ordinarily the sort of person who is very good at organizing other people to do stuff, but I had a lot of somewhat technical interests that I really, really wanted to make sure not only that I could learn, by bringing in resident experts and having them explain them to me, but also making sure that the department as a whole is endowed with these sorts of knowledge, these technical skills, which are really valuable for anybody to know, at the very least know the basics of, if you’re in the field of linguistics, even if you’re not actively using certain techniques. So things like LaTeX; obviously not everybody has to use LaTeX, but it’s great to understand what’s going on, not only so that you can get an idea of whether you want to switch to it, or know the limitations or whatever, but also so that you can just sort of understand how the process of putting a document together works, because I think it’s very useful from an organizational standpoint. And then things like R. I mean, if you’re doing lexical semantics, you’re probably never going to need R, for example, perhaps, but it’s a super, super useful tool, and I think it’s extremely fun to learn. And increasingly it seems it’s hard to be a phonologist without having some at least basic understanding of how stats works, and not only can you implement those in R, but it’s also an incredibly useful sort of learning tool for these basic stats concepts.

TG: Are you planning on continuing them next year?

BA: I’m planning to put together a reading group for the summer, and maybe continuing the skills workshops into the summer, depending on the turnout and interest and other topics that people seem to want to know about. The reading group for the summer is probably going to be on R, or rather, on stats by way of R. You notice we haven’t had any stats or R related skills workshops, which is because I’ve sort of been running the whole time to make the summer sort of a big learning experience for us where we all go through this. I actually somewhat recently found the perfect book for this, which is R. H. Baayen’s textbook Analyzing Linguistic Data. A Practical Introduction to Statistics Using R, which uses real language data to not only teach how to use R, but also teach basic stats. And so my idea is that we’ll be having reading group meetings every week, maybe two weeks, in which we’ll all discuss some chapter of the book, bring in our laptops, fiddle around with it, try out any data that we happen to have, or if not, some dummy data, and hopefully all really gain these useful skills. So that’s this summer. And there may be more reading groups, too, possibly not one for this summer, but I’m hoping to have one or two next fall, because it seemed like there was a space in people’s schedules for one last fall, but nothing really ended up happening. And there’s so many great topics. Even some that are on the current website, like there used to be a reading group for exemplar theory, which I think would be super fun. Anyway, there’s plenty of stuff. Obviously, no matter what you want to learn about there’s plenty of readings for it, and reading group is a great way to sort of collaboratively learn together. As for next year, that will depend. I am imagining right now I’d kind of like to continue being the skills workshop leader because I have found that, you know, they’ve been a pretty good success this year so far, and I already know kind of who can do what, and how to put them together and things like that, so maybe me and one other person could work as collaborators to put more of them together. And it’d be great if we could make them sort of a semi-official thing, have a regularly scheduled spot on the calendar for it or something like that. But everybody’s always so busy, I don’t know how that would work.

TG: What other kinds of workshops would you like to see?

BA: The best thing for skills workshops is definitely technical skills. Like computer-y skills, like R and LaTeX. But also, for example, one of the workshops was Jon Strang’s on presentation skills. Things like that, you know, it doesn’t just have to be computer-y technical skills, it can be any sorts of skills, and the workshop is a good structure because it’s kind of like a mini class.

Undergrad Spotlight

Jamie Russell

by ANDREA PEREZ-LEON

Jamie Russell is a UBC Speech Sciences student currently studying at Cardiff University in Wales, on exchange.

The Gosling: What made you decide to study abroad?

Jamie Russell: My choice to do Go Global was mostly fueled by a desire to kick-start some much-craved personal growth—some “learning outside the classroom,” as
cliché as that may sound. Being abroad has forced me out of my comfort zone, sometimes numerous times a day. I was ready for a change of scene, and Cardiff has certainly offered it! I also love to travel, and I’m so close to everything here. I chose Wales because I wanted to study somewhere in the UK that I hadn’t been before. I was also quite interested in learning about Welsh, and how it’s been surviving when so close to England. The courses that are offered here in the linguistics department are also quite focused on the sociolinguistics side of things, which is one of my interests. I originally applied to Cardiff Uni because I was looking to take forensic linguistics, but sadly it hasn’t been offered this term. That being said, the classes that I am taking are fabulous, and it has been great to fulfill elective credits while in a different country!

**TG:** What has been your favourite experience studying in Wales so far?

**JR:** I joined the Hiking & Rambling Society (club), and I went on an amazing hike a few weeks ago. We had the most brilliant sunshine (it rains less than Vancouver here! much appreciated on my part), trekked through fields of mud, ate lunch in some castle ruins, crossed a river via stepping stones, and hiked Europe’s steepest sand dunes at Merthyr Mawr, which happen to be in the middle of the forest. Rumour has it it’s where they filmed scenes from Lawrence of Arabia! I’m quite into photography, so it’s been great to be able to have my camera out to capture the country. It’s also been really interesting for me to try to learn a language after learning the IPA. It’s been good to review to write out pronunciations as we learn them in class.

**TG:** Have you noticed anything cool about the use of language in Wales?

**JR:** Welsh really is the first thing you notice when you arrive in Wales. All the signs are bilingual, and the orthography looks really foreign, especially for a place so close to England. Once you learn the corresponding phonetic symbols, it’s actually really fun to go about town reading signs aloud. (At least, for me it is!) It’s also been really fun to use lateral and velar fricatives, as well as trills, in everyday words! I’m learning a lot about language policy, which is something I’ve never really thought about before. Supporting a minority language clearly comes with its challenges, and I’m going to be writing a paper about it in a few weeks. You’re taking men, women, and language, and nonverbal communication.

**TG:** What are some of the interesting things you’ve learned so far?

**JR:** LOTS! Nonverbal communication is a brand-new subject for me, and I am enjoying it immensely—we’ve recently been talking about silence and its functions—something I haven’t really ever stopped to think about. We’re also beginning to talk about space—personal and public space—how we shape them, how the government shapes them etc. Gestures have also always fascinated me, and there has been some neat crossover between my ultimate goal, a master’s in speech pathology, and our lecture material: we watched a clip between an audiologist and a patient in a clinic here at Cardiff, and were asked to analyze all forms of nonverbal communication that were occurring within a 2 minute window. Once you start paying attention to these things, it’s as if a whole other world opens up to you; one that is constantly in play with the verbal world, for the most part, so minutely that we take it completely for granted. Men, Women and Language is essentially a review of work done on gender in language and communication thus far. It’s been interesting to look at studies done 20 years or so ago, and compare the authors’ conclusions with the ways I personally perceive those topics today; sometimes it is frustrating for me how little it seems things have changed. We’ve talked about sexism, masculinity/masculinities, the construction of gender in talk, gender and ageing… it’s been fun! I loved taking Ling 445 (Sociolinguistics) at UBC, and it’s been wonderful to expand upon that knowledge base.

**TG:** What other language/linguistics-related courses are you taking, and what are they like?

**JR:** Wales and the Welsh Language! Half of the lectures are basic Welsh lessons and the rest are on background information such as history, policy etc. We’re going on a field trip next week to the Welsh Assembly government to learn more about what they’re doing to foster the language here. I’ve found that it a little embarrassing how little I know about language policy in Canada; I think it would be very interesting to compare our system with that of Wales.

**TG:** What do you plan on doing (UBC/linguistics-wise) when you return to BC? Are you working on any research?

**JR:** I would really like to do a directed studies course relating to some aspect of sociolinguistics—I love speech sciences dearly, but I can’t ignore how exciting I find sociolinguistics! I also need to finish up some psychology and elective credits before I can graduate. This summer when I return home I hope to begin volunteering with stroke patients, as well as help out in a lab at UBC if I can. I have some very vague ideas that I might like to turn into a research project sometime soon as well... :)

**TG:** What would you like to do with your degree in the long-run?

**JR:** My dream is to be a Speech-language Pathologist. I have always felt a pull towards the health-care sector, and I am so lucky that my love of singing, language and science all fell together in field that I am passionate about. Right now I think I would like to specialize stroke recovery or voice disorders (especially for singers), but I will see where the future takes me.

**TG:** You’ll be on the SALSA executive committee next year for the first time. What are you looking forward to?

**JR:** Yes! I’m very excited to work with the new executive for the upcoming year! Valerie Marshall and I are set to be co-presidents, and we’re thrilled to have the opportunity to...
share our excitement and love for linguistics with SALSA!

Victoria Wong
by Kimbley Su

Victoria Wong is a fourth year double major in Speech Sciences and Psychology.

The Gosling: What first made you decide to major in Speech Sciences?

Victoria Wong: I was looking to switch out of my Science major, and read through the list of all the majors at UBC. Speech Science looked interesting, and when I found out more about what it was, I decided it was what I wanted to major in.

TG: I understand that you've volunteered at a hospital and worked with a speech therapist. What was that experience like for you and what did you learn?

VW: It was a great experience. Most of the patients were elderly stroke patients with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties), so the majority of the speech therapist's work revolved around swallowing management. I got to watch speech therapists use assessments like the Flexible Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES), and Video Fluoroscopies (VFS). I learned a lot about speech therapy in a clinical setting. I've heard a lot about speech therapy in terms of communication, especially with pediatrics, so it was nice to see a different side of what speech therapists do.

TG: What was your favorite linguistics class?

VW: My favourite linguistics class was 311, Optimality Theory with Dr. Pulleyblank. He was a really engaging professor and the course content was very interesting as well.

TG: I also understand that you've recently done a project in LING 447 regarding a certain language. What was that language and what was the project about?

VW: Right now my group in LING 447 is currently completing a research project about reduplication in Tagalog. We aim to show the relationship between sound, meaning, and category, as well as anything else we come across. It's been really fun because we get to explore where our research takes us, something I haven't experienced in other classes.

TG: Since you're in 4th year and about to graduate, what would you have done differently as an undergraduate?

VW: I would have majored in Speech Science starting in first year, instead of waiting until second. I would also make an effort to be more involved, and get to know more professors and their research.

TG: What will you take away from your university experience? What are some things that you have learned that you think will help you in terms of what's to come in your future?

VW: I have learned so much from my university experience. I think ultimately what will help me in the future is the amount of life experience I've gotten. I had the chance to meet many different types of people and made some amazing friends. Hopefully I will be able to use my degree in Speech Science as well and study to be a licensed SLP someday, but for now I plan to work for a while and see where life takes me.

SA: I got my BA at Vilnius University (Lithuania), in philology of Lithuanian and Scandinavian. Historical linguistics and literature were the focus. I have many fond memories of reading the New Testament in Gothic, and studying runes. The Soviet Union was falling apart, and we had the first breath of freedom and a taste of the West at some point, Soviet tanks were rolling down the streets, and we split our time between memorizing runes and distributing anti-Soviet leaflets. Later I spent an entire term on Strindberg playwriting, in Sweden. At some point I worked for the Royal Swedish theater, as an interpreter for Ingmar

Previous Grad Spotlight

Solveiga Armoskaite

The Gosling: Where are you from originally, and how did you get interested in linguistics?

Solveiga Armoskaite: I am from Lithuania. I got interested in linguistics early on, growing up in an old apartment building, roaming the common yard with a bunch of kids. We all were kind of left to our own devices while our parents toiled for the better communist future. The kids spoke Russian and before I knew it, I could speak it too. Only when I joined kindergarten, I realized that Lithuanian and Russian were two separate languages. I never knew there was some sort of barrier. It felt natural so that separation came as a kind of shock. That sense of wonder and fascination with languages never disappeared. Yup, early childhood trauma, what can I say.

TG: Where did you go to school before UBC, and what did you work on there?

SA: I got my BA at Vilnius university (Lithuania), in philology of Lithuanian and Scandinavian. Historical linguistics and literature were the focus. I have many fond memories of reading the New Testament in Gothic, and studying runes. The Soviet Union was falling apart, and we had the first breath of freedom and a taste of the West at some point, Soviet tanks were rolling down the streets, and we split our time between memorizing runes and distributing anti-Soviet leaflets. Later I spent an entire term on Strindberg playwriting, in Sweden. At some point I worked for the Royal Swedish theater, as an interpreter for Ingmar
Bergman’s play on Marquis de Sade. That was wild, coming out of a Soviet school and interpreting de Sade as seen through Bergman’s eyes.

TG: What made you want to come to UBC?

SA: Chance, really. I had no idea how carefully grad students here in North America select for a grad school. I had been exchanging letters with a couple of schools and Edna Dharmaratne with Martina Wiltschko kept in touch with me. Their emails stood out in the pile of other letters as being very down to earth and human, not some cliché formalities I got from other schools. And then I read online that Vancouver is the best place to raise the kids (it is true, I can attest!). That sealed it.

TG: How did you find your experience here?

SA: Good times, overall, if one forgets the last crazy stretch of the “birthing.” Meeting Beatrice Bullshields was special. It opened my eye to entirely new world, seeing the white culture through First Nations’ eyes. Then the maddening and rewarding intellectual tensions, that hive of faculty and students is nothing that I have ever seen before or since. It is a mystery how it all holds together for so long, without losing its magic. I think having a department a few steps away from Wreck Beach and Pacific Spirit Park has cast a spell on us all. One can’t get too self-absorbed when there are these naked hippies on one side, and ancient moss on the other side, and geese wander right outside research seminar room. Keeps you grounded. You talk about Blackfoot with Beatrice, and she interrupts the elicitation to count the bald eagles flying by. Being open to all this makes Vancouver life.

TG: What have you been doing since graduation? How are you enjoying it?

SA: I spent a year at UCLA, it was rewarding, inspiring and amusing. It has been instructive to observe and interact with the rock-star linguists, the grand linguists, the raw ambition of the grad students of the rock star linguists and all that jazz. And now I am at Carleton University (Ottawa), for a year of sessional grind, which feels like a purgatory of sorts: you are neither here nor there, applying right and left, hoping for chance to find a place under the sun. I love what I do, and I am trying to hang in there, but it is tough if one is married with kids and has no idea what awaits around the corner.

TG: Is there anything you miss about UBC/Vancouver?

SA: I miss everything about Vancouver, even the buckets of rain. I do not miss UBC financial services - that is one surreal department, and will cause your grief at some point or other, so beware. I miss the Linguistics department hive, especially the research seminars, that let’s-talk-about-our-research-in-the-kitchen feel. And Martina, of course (but she now lives in my head).

TG: Any advice for current linguistics students at UBC?

SA: Current students should enjoy it while they can. And publish before your apply for postdocs. Go see Bard on the Beach at least once. Climb the Chief. Ride the waves on Tofino beach. Pick out a yoga mat. And eat sushi, lots of it.

Alumni Spotlight

Alyssa Satterwhite

by Becky Laturnus

Alyssa Satterwhite is a recent UBC graduate who majored in linguistics and Spanish. She continues to use her linguistics training, both in the work she is doing in collaboration with members of the department, and in her part-time job as an ESL teacher.

The Gosling: What initially drew you to UBC (why did you choose to do your undergrad here, instead of elsewhere)?

Alyssa Satterwhite: I was interested in UBC because I wanted to go to university outside of the U.S. but still within reach. Mostly to be at a university with a non-American perspective and one that is very international. Also, UBC did a good job of marketing, and I liked the amount of options I had at UBC that I was interested in – 30+ languages, anthropology, international relations, etc. since I didn’t know what I would study but I knew I wanted to learn other languages.

TG: How did you first get interested in linguistics?

AS: I was always a “language nut” (that’s what my family called me), but at first people scared me off from linguistics saying it was “too science-y” or it took the personal part out of language. Little did they know that I am a big puzzle person and would love combining science (inquiry) and language. I took LING 100 in spring of my second year and felt like continuing – took 200, 201 and 300 that summer to have prereqs for further classes without using up a whole year.
TG: With whom are you still working in the department and what are you doing for them?

AS: I am still working with the Gitxsan team (Dr. Henry Davis, Dr. Lisa Matthewson, and several students) supporting new students in their work on Gitxsan and continuing my research on rhythm in Gitxsan.

I am also working with Molly as she is helping me with experiment design and analysis. I am also still around the lab periodically helping finish run subjects for Michael McAuliffe’s Spanish study. I am also working on digitizing and transcribing many hours of video in Gitxsan with Tyler, which we hope will be useful for educational resources and perhaps an exhibit in the Ksan Museum in Hazelton, BC.

TG: What kind of work specifically did you do up north? (what kind of experiments/fieldwork?)

AS: When I was up north I conducted a rhythm perception experiment, and helped elicit data for Tyler Peterson (who is currently doing a post-doc in the Netherlands), Lisa Matthewson, and Henry Davis. I also helped record songs and stories for our participants to be able to keep.

TG: Are you planning on going to grad school in September? What about your trip up north caused your plans to shift more towards language revitalization?

AS: I am still not sure when I will start grad school. I am interested, though, in University of Victoria’s new Masters in Aboriginal Language Revitalization – my trip up north furthered my interest in the program because it made very clear the need for more collaboration, support (grants, etc.) and organization in the community working on the language. There are many people in the communities who are very concerned for the language and have done great work, but very little collaboration between communities, so often a lot of work gets done again and again by different individuals, rather than collaboratively getting much further. I also connected with people in the community, which makes me more motivated to help, having met the people that this work impacts.

Faculty News

Curling at the faculty retreat

Grad Student News

by LAURA SHERER

James Crippen

presented a paper at the 2012 Tlingit Clan Conference on the use of Chinook Jargon in Tlingit.

Heather Bliss

presented paper at WSCLA 17 in Chicago called “Marking the Boundaries: Blackfoot Preverbs in Narratives and Elicitation.”

Murray Schellenberg

presented a paper entitled “Contour Realization in Sung Cantonese” at The 17th International Congress of Phonetic Sci-
ences (ICPhS XVII) in Hong Kong last August.

Murray Schellenberg’s paper entitled “Does Language Determine Music in Tone Languages?” was published in the spring/summer 2012 issue of *Ethnomusicology*.

Patrick Littell is working with a group of high school students participating in the International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL). Their next competition will be in Slovenia this summer.

Joash Johannes has begun working on UBC’s Online Linguistic Database of Nata, a Bantu language of Northern Tanzania.

Joash Johannes has organized a Swahili language class at UBC, for which 23 students enrolled. More information, including details on future classes, can be found at http://www.karibu.com.

UBC graduate students were strongly represented at the Workshop on Structure and Constituency in the Languages of the Americas in March. Presentations included Heather Bliss on Blackfoot preverbs, Patrick Littell on focus in Kwak’wala, John Lyon on Okanagan small clauses and copular clauses, and Meagan Louie on Blackfoot temporal structure.

Anita Szakay, Michael McAuliffe, Heather Bliss, and Jennifer Abel were all adjudicators at UBC’s Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Research Conference (MURC) on March 24, in which a number of linguistic undergraduates presented.

**Undergraduate News**

by Andrea Perez-Leon

It’s been a busy semester for undergraduate students! The UBC Speech and Linguistics Student Association (SALSA) began the year with a games night during Arts Week. Undergraduate students had a lot of fun enjoying a pizza lunch and coming up with possible English words in a game of “Phonotactic Scrabble.”

Our second movie night took place in February, where we screened Project Nim, a documentary about a chimpanzee raised by humans and taught to learn language. Shortly after, we sent out orders for our annual T-shirts. This year’s shirts were a cranberry colour, and featured a pun regarding a particular allophone in English.
The undergraduates were also very involved in the search for a new faculty member in the department this semester. Several students attended meetings, job talks, and undergraduate lunches with the candidates. This allowed us to get to know them, and provide feedback on the candidates that were taken under consideration by the search committee when making a decision about whom to hire.

To wrap up the year, SALSA will be hosting a dinner at Steamworks Brewing Company on April 12th, honouring all students who are graduating this year. This dinner is open to all undergraduates, but we will be covering some costs for graduating students as a final congratulations!

It’s been a fantastic year for SALSA, and we appreciate all our members for being involved in making our jobs as executives fun. Thank you to the Department of Linguistics for supporting the involvement of undergraduate students in the department. We would like to welcome a brand new executive for next year: Valerie Marshall, Jamie Russel, Joyce Tull, Naomi Francis, Anna Klenin, and Winnie Eng. We know the club will be in great hands, and we wish you the best for the 2012-2013 school year! Thank you, from your 2011-2012 executive. Andrea Perez-Leon, Keri Ng, Becky Laturnus, Estefanía Sta Maria, Kimberly Su, Esther Heng, and Dayanqi Si.

Graduating Student Leaders: Dean’s Reception 2012

by PENELÖPE BACSFAŁVI

Over 80 graduating students gathered at Sage Bistro to be recognised for their contributions to the UBC Community at the 7th Annual Dean’s Reception. Students were nominated from across campus by faculty, staff and their peers for their contributions in leadership to UBC and their communities. Among them were three of our own Linguistics students. We are proud of the nominees from the Department of Linguistics: Keri Ng (Speech Science major, psychology minor), Estefanía Sta Maria (Speech Science and Psychology double major), and Alejandra Miranda Erazo (Psychology major and Speech Science minor). Thank-you for your contributions to our department and the university during your undergraduate studies. We wish you all the best in your future academic and professional endeavours.

Linguistics Tri-Mentoring pilot project

by ESTEFÁNIA STA MARÍA

Last Wednesday, March 28th, the Linguistics Tri-Mentoring pilot program came to a conclusion. The wrap-up event took place off campus at the Medical Students Alumni Centre, off campus. Throughout the night, students shared their experiences from the program, including activities and events they participated in with their mentors.

As its inaugural year, the program has been well received across the student body. Through the Department of Development and Alumni Engagement, six mentors were recruited. Two students, a junior and senior, were paired with each mentor to complete the triad. Coming from diverse backgrounds but with studies in linguistics and speech science in common, students found guidance in their mentors’ experiences. Through the program, students gained transferable and networking skills, necessary in building professional relationships. As well, students learned about the realities awaiting them after graduation and gained a deeper understanding of their mentor's profession. Overall, mentees expressed positive feedbacks from their experiences. Likewise, the mentors were appreciative to be connected back to UBC through their mentees.

With the Department of Linguistics’ support and under the direct supervision of Dr. Penelope Bacsfalvi, the Tri-Mentoring coordinators: Keri Ng and Estefanía Sta. Maria are grateful for its success. It is the coordinators’ hope that students benefit from the program through interactions with their respective triads. More importantly, many students gain a greater appreciation for their studies through Tri-Mentoring.

Once again, thank you to the involvement of our enthusiastic students and dedicated alumni. It is through your participation that the Linguistics Tri-Mentoring pilot program is a success.
Thank you to all our trimentoring participants!

Mentees:  
Claire Allen  
Rheanne Brownridge  
Winning Eng  
Alyssa Larsen  
Jessica Luu  
Sidney Shindle  
Fiona Slade  
Darian Strosher  
Emily Wan  
Brittany Wong  
Victoria Wong  
Ophelia Yu

Mentors:  
Penelope Bacsfalvi  
Samantha Blood  
Lisa Langford  
Caleb Lee  
Karin Rennert  
Lucia da Silva

Student Coordinators:  
Keri Ng  
Esthephanie Sta Maria
The Odd One Out

by Merlin Davis (AGE 10)