JULIA HERSCHENSOHN COMPLETES 15-YEAR TERM AS CHAIR OF LINGUISTICS ON JUNE 30TH

Submitted by Joyce Parvi on June 24, 2015 - 4:26pm

Prof. Herschensohn will continue to teach and conduct research for the UW Department of Linguistics. Prof. Richard Wright will take over as Chair of Linguistics on July 1, 2015.

When I stepped down as department chair in the year 2000, I knew that I was leaving the Department in good hands with Julia as chair. But nobody (at least not me) could have predicted the absolutely spectacular achievements that the Department would mark in the following 15 years: 11 new faculty members, new programs in Computational Linguistics and American Sign Language, a graduate student body that is largely supported financially, many more undergraduate majors, and spacious new digs. These are remarkable accomplishments: We're all grateful to Julia for engineering them and we hope that she'll look back on her 15-year chairship with intense satisfaction.

Frederick J. Newmeyer
Professor Emeritus, University of Washington
Adjunct Professor, U of British Columbia and Simon Fraser U

Julia has done an excellent job of leading our department. Under her leadership the department has grown in several areas: that computational linguistics program has grown dramatically, sociolinguistics and syntax have both added faculty, child language acquisition has been reestablished, and a new field, experimental syntax, has been added. Julia shepherded the department through the great recession. She did all of this with grace and humor.

Richard Wright, Professor, Linguistics

On Dr. Julia Herschensohn-

I can say thank you to her in a couple of different languages- merci, gracias, xie xie and so on, but simple (or even not so simple) thanks are inadequate to explain what it is like to work for her. She is loyal, and inspires loyalty, she trusts and is rewarded, she is committed above all to learning, and I in turn find aiding students and faculty in their teaching, learning, and research the most rewarding part of my job. Working for Julia is its own reward.

Mike Furr, Administrator, Linguistics

I have known Julia since 1970, when she came to the UW in the Department of Romance languages as a post-MA student in Romance linguistics. She has been my student, my colleague, and my chair! She has excelled in all these roles and I have admired her for all her accomplishments. I will not mention details of our period together in the Dept. of Romance languages, until 1995, as that would take us outside the purpose of these comments. Rather, I would join Fritz in emphasizing how Julia has changed the Dept. of Linguistics since 2000,
all for the good of the department. Compared to the state of the department in the latter part of the 20th century, today's situation is so much improved and bodes well for the future. Julia's legacy will be easily recognized in this evolution.

Jurgen Klausenburger, Professor Emeritus, Linguistics

Julia is a fantastic colleague. We will miss her at the chairs' meetings!!

Kat Dziwirek, Professor and Chair, Slavic Languages and Literatures

Prof. Herschensohn was a phenomenal chair, guiding the department with extreme positivity and intellect. Her service is greatly appreciated and her taste in eyewear... impeccable.

Russell Hugo, Graduate Student

The Department of Linguistics has expanded so much and undergone so many changes during my years as a graduate student. I was fortunate to have worked with Julia on multiple occasions. Julia always amazes me with how well she can juggle her responsibilities as chair, instructor, and thesis advisor. She always responds to emails and requests promptly, and she always gives feedback to student drafts within a few days. Julia is a true fashionista. She's like the Lady Gaga of Linguistics and can probably give a seminar on how to wear a scarf and choose the most fashion-forward eyewear.

Chak-Lam Colum Yip, Graduate Student

I've had the unique opportunity to work with Julia from two perspectives - first as her student and second as the department's undergraduate advisor. In both situations it has been an utmost privilege. She gives such responsive and prompt feedback to any question that the outside viewer would never expect that she is department chair, professor, researcher, on a number of graduate student committees, who-knows-what-else, and she still manages to find the time to train for the Seattle-to-Portland ride every year! I truly admire her and hope that one day I have the capacity to do even half of what she does. Thank you, Julia!!

Katie Manlove, Linguistics Undergraduate Adviser, Graduate Student

Thank you, Julia, for all your hard work on behalf of the department over the years, for your leadership and diplomacy, for leading us through many changes, expansions, moves, new faculty hires, successful promotions. And last but not least, for the parties!

Barbara Citko, Associate Professor, Linguistics

Julia has been the greatest boss I ever had. Effective and efficient leadership defines her 15 year term as a department chair. She took the time to respond to my numerous email, gave all support I needed to run the ASL Minor Program and listened to our ideas for the future. We know that she will make an effective and efficient transition for the new chair for our department. Thanks Julia.

Lance Forshay, Senior ASL Lecturer and Program Coordinator
Julia managed to stay nice while also being fair. Enjoy being just Prof. Herschensohn again!

Sharon Hargus, Professor, Linguistics

Julia has done a tremendous job leading our department through an era of great change—maintaining our strengths in theoretical linguistics as we branched out into ‘laboratory linguistics’ subfields, started a new MS program in computational linguistics and added the ASL program. Our success in these new areas and the ease of the transition both owe a lot to her far-sighted, even-handed, practical yet ambitious leadership style. Thank you Julia!

Emily Bender, Professor, Linguistics

Julia,

Your patient, capable leadership has been a real gift to us all. Thank you so much for leading the department through a move, as well as a significant expansion!

Alicia Beckford Wassink, Associate Professor, Linguistics

Julia, Thanks for your extraordinary dedication and leadership. Enjoy some well-deserved time for your own pursuits.

Karen Zagona, Professor, Linguistics

Dear Julia:

We want to express our gratitude to you for your very competent and beneficial leadership over the past fifteen years. You are a major contributor to a great tradition of excellent chairs under whom we have been privileged to serve for almost fifty years. All the best to you and yours.

Charles Barrack and Joe Voyles, Professors, Germanics

What a wonderful co-editor (of the CUP Handbook of SLA) and co-organizer (of the CIL Geneva workshop/roundtable), while continuing chair duties!

Martha Young-Scholten, Professor, Newcastle University

As an adjunct member of the department whose home is in Asian Languages & Literature, I have nothing but admiration for Julia's work as Chair in Linguistics. Whether coordinating teaching schedules across departments, collaborating on student fellowship awards, or simply exchanging scholarly ideas, Julia has never been anything other than responsive, cooperative, and focused. She gets things done, and gets them done right. It's been a pleasure working with her, and I look forward to continued collaboration with her in her future role as an “ordinary” professor.

Zev Handel, Associate Professor, Asian Languages & Literature

IF YOU WOULD HAVE COMMENTS, MEMORIES, OR ANECDOTES ABOUT PROF. HERSCHENSOHN THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE, PLEASE GO HERE.