

Department of Linguistics



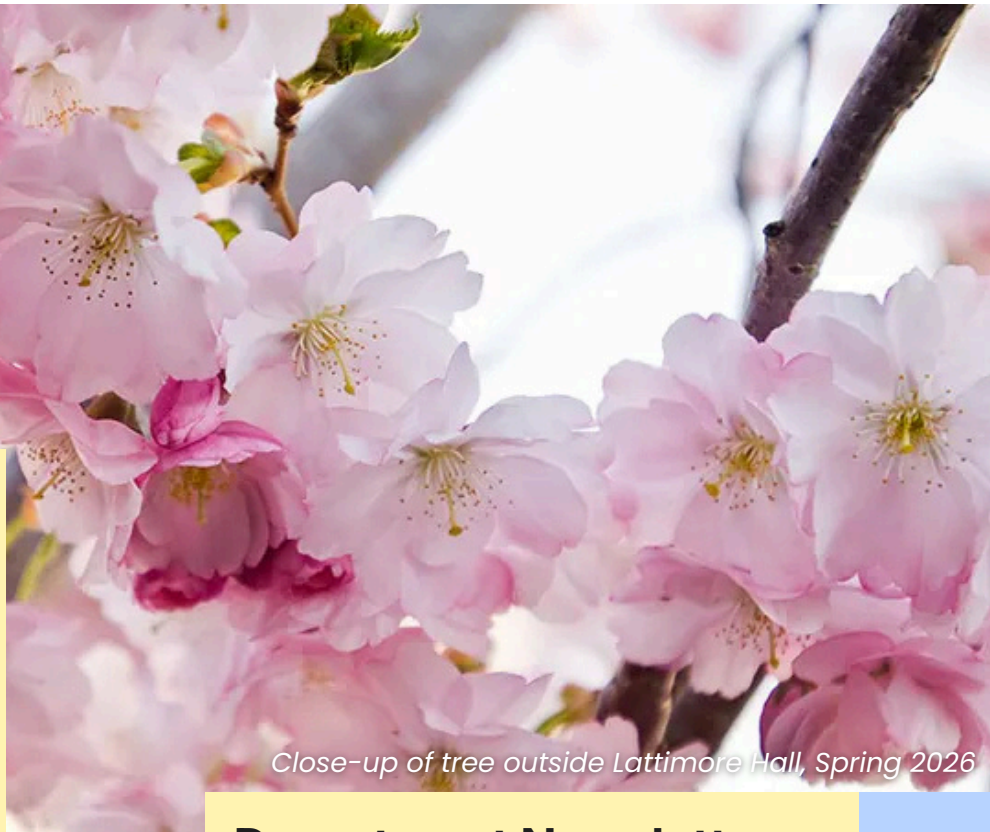
In this issue

The department continues to build momentum through impactful research, scholarly recognition, and active participation in the global linguistics community. This issue features highlights from January through April.

- Research publications and contributions
- Fellowships, awards, and honors
- Faculty and student presentations
- Additional news, recent events, and photos

Language is the most massive and inclusive art we know, a mountainous and anonymous work of unconscious generations.

Edward Sapir



Close-up of tree outside Lattimore Hall, Spring 2026

Department Newsletter

Volume II - Spring 2026

Major Publications & Research Contributions

This semester saw a series of significant publications from faculty and graduate students, reflecting the department's continued leadership in the linguistics community. Spanning fieldwork-driven inquiry, theoretical innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration, these

contributions highlight both the depth and breadth of research taking place across the department.

Mary Moroney: Advancing the Semantics of Understudied Languages

Visiting Assistant Professor Mary Moroney's work this semester made important contributions to the study of plurality and distributivity, with a particular focus on Navajo. Her recent publication

explores how plural marking interacts with event structure, offering new insights into how meaning is built across linguistic domains.

Drawing on detailed analysis of Navajo data, Moroney's work brings an underrepresented language into broader theoretical conversations, challenging assumptions derived primarily from Indo-European languages. By situating Navajo within formal semantic theory, her research not only expands empirical coverage but also reshapes how linguists understand the range of possible variation in natural language.

In addition, Moroney's related work presented at the Linguistic Society of America annual meeting further developed these ideas with a cross-linguistic perspective, reinforcing the visibility and impact of her research within the field.

Aaron White & Julian Grove: New Work in Formal Semantics

Aaron White, in collaboration with Julian Grove, published new research in *Natural Language Semantics*, one of the field's leading journals. Their work addresses foundational questions in meaning representation, contributing to ongoing debates at the intersection

of logic, language, and cognition.

The publication reflects a sustained engagement with core issues in formal semantics while also pushing toward new theoretical territory.

Ellise Moon (PhD): Emerging Scholarship in a Leading Journal

Ellise Moon, a doctoral candidate in the department, achieved a major milestone with the publication of their work in *Glossa*. As a prominent open-access journal with a global readership, *Glossa* provides a platform for innovative and widely accessible linguistic research.

Nadine Grimm: A Typological Perspective on Negation

Associate Professor Nadine Grimm published a chapter in a book on negation in Africa with *Language Science Press* this semester, offering a comprehensive typological study of negation across languages. Drawing on a wide range of cross-linguistic data, the volume examines how languages encode negation and what these patterns reveal about linguistic structure more broadly.

The book represents a substantial scholarly contribution, synthesizing

years of research into a cohesive framework that will serve as a resource for linguists working in typology, semantics, and beyond. By combining empirical breadth with theoretical insight, Grimm's work exemplifies the department's strength in globally informed linguistic research.

Grants, Fellowships, & Recognition

This semester, faculty and graduate students in the department received notable recognition for their research, reflecting both the intellectual strength of their work and its growing visibility across the field. From invited talks at leading institutions to competitive fellowships and emerging interdisciplinary initiatives, these achievements highlight the department's continued impact within and beyond linguistics.

Ashkay Lakharam NSF IRES Acceptance

This semester, Ashkay was selected to participate in the National Science Foundation-funded International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) program, a competitive initiative supporting collaborative, cross-border research in linguistics. The program, led



Ellise Moon, PhD candidate in the Department of Linguistics

by Fabiola Henri, brings together students and researchers to examine language in contexts of migration, contact, and social change.

Ashkay will join the program in Summer 2026, where he will take part in immersive, community-engaged research and receive advanced training in field-based and interdisciplinary approaches to language study. The program emphasizes international collaboration and provides participants with the opportunity to work across institutional and national boundaries.

His selection for IRES reflects both his academic promise and a growing interest in research that

connects linguistic theory with real-world social contexts. It also highlights the department's continued success in preparing students to compete for research opportunities.

Constanza Aceves Rodriguez (PhD) receives Dean's Dissertation Fellowship

Constanza Aceves Rodriguez, a doctoral candidate in the department, was awarded the highly competitive 2026–2027 Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, one of the university's most prestigious honors for graduate research. The fellowship supports outstanding PhD candidates in the final stages of their dissertation,

providing dedicated time to complete significant and original scholarly work.

Constanza was awarded a grant from the Endangered Language Documentation Programme (ELDP) to document Huave, an endangered language isolate spoken in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca, Mexico. The project approached documentation through the ethnographic lens of women's activities and livelihood, with a particular focus on knowledge related to weaving techniques and textile production. The data gathered through this fieldwork has directly supported her dissertation research on subordination and clause constructions.

Beyond filling the existing descriptive gap on complementation, Constanza's dissertation work investigates contact-induced variation in these constructions, an important question given the intense and ongoing contact between Huave and Spanish.

Bryan Prince named Design Madness Champion 2026

In March, the department's manager, Bryan Prince, took part in a national design competition where he was crowned the Design Madness Champion.

The competition was modeled after March Madness brackets and took course over a week with three rounds, each increasingly more complex: the first, designing a movie poster; the second, designing a website; and the third, building out an entire brand identity.

Prince's design work has been increasingly prevalent throughout the department during his tenure as he took on several large projects including the revitalization of the department's digital presence through massive website design changes and the creation of a graduate student resources hub.

Faculty and Student Presentations

In January, Visiting Assistant Professor Mary Moroney and PhD student Meghna Hooda presented at the 2026 Annual LSA Meeting. Together, they presented a talk titled, "Revisiting (in)definiteness in Hindi." Moroney also presented a talk titled, "Unifying distributivity: A cross-linguistic account."

February brought a burst of activity from both faculty and students:

- PhD student Lateef Adeleke and MS student Fei-Yueh successfully turned a term project on evaluating Automatic Speech Recognition for African languages into a publication for the AfricaNLP workshop.
- Assistant Professor C.M. Downey gave a talk titled "Improving Computation for Under-resourced Languages" at the University of Buffalo.
- Associate Professor Maya Abtahian gave a talk titled "Language shift and speakerhood" at the University of Wisconsin Madison.
- Associate Professor Scott Grimm gave a talk titled "On the Underappreciated Strengths of Weak Definites" at the 26th Workshop on the Roots of Pragmaseantics.

In March, Visiting Assistant Professor Jeremy Coburn presented on "Phonotactic organization and prosodic

structure in Hadza: Word length and click distribution in a language isolate" at the Isolated Languages Workshop held at Ghent University in Belgium.

Also in March, PhD student Lateef Adeleke and MS student Fei-Yueh Chen presented their paper titled, "Linguistically Informed Evaluation of Multilingual ASR for African Languages" as a poster at AfricaNLP @ EACL 2026 in Rabat, Morocco.

April brought a second burst of activity from both faculty and students:

- PhD student Elodie Schley presented her paper on Navajo Instrumentals at the Na-Dene Reading Group.
- Jeff Runner gave a Center for Research in Language talk titled "Reflexives and pronouns in Mandarin Chinese and English" at UC San Diego.
- PhD student Danil Alekseev presented a poster titled "Bidirectional pattern borrowing: the case of Uzbek and Tajik conditionals" at the 11th Workshop on Turkic and Languages in Contact with Turkic.
- PhD student Ebru Ersöyleyen presented a poster titled "On the clause size of Turkish nominalizations" at the 11th Workshop on Turkic and Languages in Contact with Turkic.
- Visiting Assistant

Professor J.C. Wamsley and undergraduate Rose Fischman presented a poster titled "The Hakha Lai Discourse Particle ko" at (F)ASAL 16.

Recent Events

This semester's calendar brought a lighter stream of talks, but still showcased the depth and range of the department's research community.

We opened the semester on February 27 with a visit from Claire Bowers (Yale University) who presented "Explorations in the Archival Semantics of Australian Languages."

Next up, we were visited by Jane Chandler (Haverford College) on April 3 who presented on "Computational Locality and Morpho-phonological Learning."

We rounded out our colloquia of the semester

with Hannah Gibson (University of Essex) on April 17 who presented on "Emerging dialect areas: Contact, change and variation in Swahili."

Alongside these invited talks, our omnibus lab meetings continued to give graduate students an opportunity to share developing work, field experiences, and new research.

We began on February 13 with Aditya Dan, who discussed Case in Deccani and with Owoyele Oluwasegun who discussed Deletion and Insertion in Ukue: An Optimality Account; on February 20, Hannah Chun presented on Back-Translation for Low-Resource North-South Korean and Woo Jin Choi presented on Distributivity in Korean; on May 1, Sydney Moore finished out our omnibus lab

meetings of the semester.

Our annual Master's Thesis and Senior Honors Presentations event took place on April 10, where Robert Chen, Gargi Kowli, and R.R. Ganushka Randula each presented their final essay or thesis to the department, the final requirement for their master's degrees.

We ended the semester with our annual department outing to a Red Wings game; however, this year we arrived in style. For the first time ever, we were in a suite with catering.

Together, these events created a lively intellectual rhythm throughout the spring, offering students and faculty ongoing opportunities to connect, exchange ideas, and engage with research.



Graduate students at our annual department outing to a Red Wings game, May 1, 2026



PhD student Meghna Hooda (left) and Visiting Assistant Professor Mary Moroney (right) at the 2026 Annual LSA Meeting in New Orleans



Professor Joyce McDonough and Associate Professor Nadine Grimm show recording equipment to PhD students Yizhen Ma and Jiajia Wang



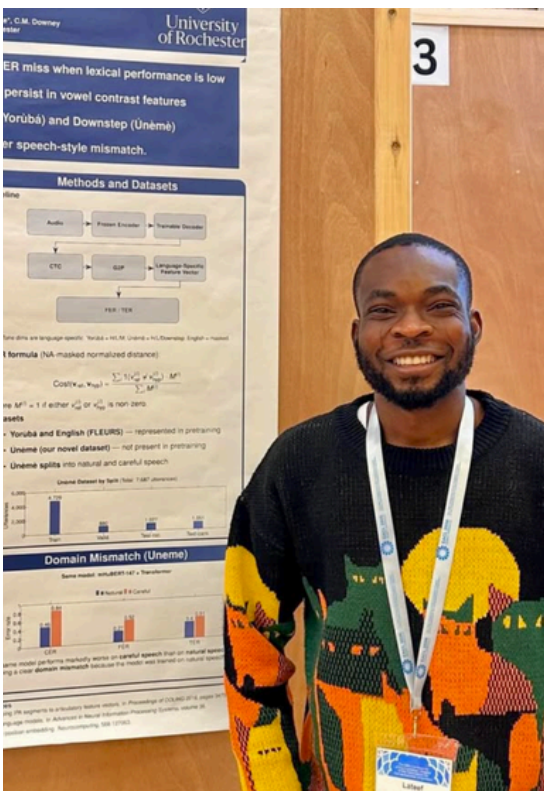
Hannah Gibson colloquium, April 17, 2026



Graduate students get together for a dumpling party



Graduate students and Visiting Assistant Professor J.C. Wamsley at the Red Wings game, May 1, 2026



Lateef Adeleke, PhD student, presented his research as a poster at AfricaNLP @ EAACL 2026 in Rabat, Morocco.



Visiting Assistant Professor Jeremy Coburn and family at the Red Wings game, May 1, 2026



Visiting Assistant Professor J.C. Wamsley speaking at the Grammar & Variation Lab meeting

Department of Linguistics



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Department of Linguistics Newsletter

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 @roclinguistics

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