

**SPECIAL REPORT**

of the

**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES, PROGRAM AND BUDGET  
AND RESEARCH COUNCILS**

concerning

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTER  
FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE**

Presented at the  
688<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
October 15, 2009

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**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL**

At its meeting on March 31, 2009, the Academic Priorities Council voted to approve the Center for the Study of African American Language (with nine members in favor and one abstention). The Center will foster research on language in the African American community and application of that research in educational and social settings. It will enhance the training of educators concerned with language and dialect-related issues, and support the University's outreach mission, multicultural awareness and respect for diversity. The Center will build on the expertise of UMass and Five College faculty and can serve as a catalyst for external funding opportunities.

**PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL**

Following review of the Program Subcommittee and based on its recommendation, the Program and Budget Council unanimously approved the proposal for the Center for the Study of African American Languages at its meeting on September 15, 2009.

**RESEARCH COUNCIL**

The Research Council at its meeting on April 3, 2009 enthusiastically endorsed the formal establishment of the Center for the Study of African American language, a Center that has already operated during a two-year probationary period from 2007 to the present. Among the research benefits of such a Center are:

1. The construction of a language database that will allow scholars to study more effectively the mechanics of African American English (AAE) and by extension standard American English (SAE).
2. The integration of linguistic study with other disciplines such as art, literature, and history will further enrich and broaden the already extensive research underway on this campus. The fact that the Center has active involvement of ten faculty members from six different departments speaks to its inter-disciplinarity.
3. The creation of colloquia, seminars, and summer programs that will facilitate productive contact between researchers at the University and other campuses and will generate new ideas about, and knowledge of, African American Language.

Its research will also help bridge the gap between theory and practice, and its fruits will have practical application for the academic preparation of younger AAE speakers. The Center would thus function as more than forum for pure research, by also serving as a forum for community engagement.

The Council would like to emphasize that the Center has been operating successfully for the past two years and already has a strong foundation. It is building on substantial start-up funding from the Provost's Office and from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, and represents a further expansion of an existing working group for the study of AAE, a group that has attracted multi-million dollar grants from the National Science Foundation.

Finally, the Center's inclusion of faculty at Smith College responds directly to the valley-wide push to promote programs that involve a variety of campuses and foster Five-College collaboration.

**MOVED:** That the Faculty Senate approve the Establishment of a Center for the Study of African American Language, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 10-006.  
**05-10**

**I. DESCRIPTION****A. Brief description (60 words or less) of the proposed enterprise (name, basic mission, activity scope, clientele):**

The Center for the Study of African American Language will foster and integrate research on language in the African American community and applications of that research in educational, social, and cultural realms. It will serve as a resource for communities across the country, with a commitment to furnishing information and training to educators who address language- and dialect-related issues.

**B. Rationale and Justification (mission, goals, objectives, relation to campus goals, needs addressed, population served, resources obtained):****i. Mission and Goals**

The overall goal is to establish a Center at the University of Massachusetts that will be the premier place in the nation to study and conduct research on African American language. The study of African American language to be carried out in the context of this Center would include at its core linguistic research on the dialect of English known as African American English (AAE), which is spoken, in varying degrees, by a large number of African Americans in the United States. The linguistic system of AAE shares patterns and features with mainstream English and other varieties of English, but there are also significant differences. Research on the differences among these important varieties of American English contributes to the scientific understanding of language contact and difference between language varieties and informs discussion of the consequences of linguistic differences in social and educational settings. The establishment of a Center for the Study of African American Language would build on existing expertise at UMass and in the Five Colleges on issues concerning AAE and would enlarge the scope to include areas of research on African American language and new programs for outreach.

The set of research areas envisaged includes:

- research on the linguistic system of AAE from the perspective of modern theoretical linguistics
- research on the acquisition of AAE by children
- research on language use by AAE-speaking school-age children
- research on language-related issues with implications for practical application (e.g., reading, writing, speech pathology, special education)
- research on language-related issues with implications for society (e.g., language variation and extra-linguistic factors, linguistic profiling, popular culture)
- research on texts and recordings (e.g., ex-slave narratives, ex-slave recordings, voodoo documents, blues, prison work songs, hip hop, documentaries and films, literature) which reflect the language of African Americans in different time periods and different genres
- research on the historical origins of African American language varieties

**ii. Objectives and Relation to Campus Goals**

The goals and objectives of the Center are connected to the vision and mission of UMass, especially in the areas of access, innovation, public service, and quality of life. The Center places considerable emphasis on research and outreach in education, and promotes multicultural awareness and respect for diversity.

1. The short-term objectives, which are already being met through regular programs and activities begun during the probationary period from 2007-2008, are to:
  - a) conduct summer research projects for undergraduates interested in pursuing graduate study in issues related to African American language.
  - b) conduct workshops for educators, speech pathologists, and other practitioners who teach

and/or service children who use AAE.

- c) carry out linguistic analysis and research on language data and use the results for publications, conferences, and grants (including grants with research experiences for undergraduates components).
- d) establish connections with students at historically black colleges and universities and other institutions who are interested in participating in Center programs and applying to graduate school in related fields.
- e) build relationships with departments with Center-related focus at UMass and other colleges in the area and establish links to community- and educational-based programs for ongoing work with educators and preschool and school age children, such as initiatives in the Springfield public schools.

2. The long-term objectives are to:

- a) integrate research on the AAE linguistic system with cross disciplinary perspectives on African American communities and art forms.
- b) prepare UMass Department of Linguistics graduate students to integrate topics in the study of AAE into undergraduate linguistics courses and/or teach undergraduate courses on AAE.
- c) build large language databases and a library of materials (audio and visual) on African American language and related issues (e.g., linguistics, education, history, oral traditions) that will be available (some in electronic form) to the public.
- d) secure external funding from granting agencies such as the Spencer Foundation, National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Education, and National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- e) conduct annual national service programs and activities on issues related to African American language.

iii. **The Center and the UMass Community**

The Center will foster a research community on African American language and related issues at UMass.

1. **Community of scholars at UMass**

The Center will facilitate productive, stimulating contact between researchers on African American language from various disciplines in the UMass (and Five-College) community through regularly scheduled events, such as:

- a) colloquium series
- b) monthly Center meetings with affiliated researchers

2. **Visiting faculty and postdoctoral fellows**

The Center will invite a post-doctoral fellow to conduct research and get involved in the unique collaborative research experience. In addition it will be possible to invite visiting scholars to spend research leaves at the Center. These researchers might also offer courses for students in the UMass community and interact with them on different levels (classroom, research, independent study).

3. **Collaborative projects with the UMass Language Acquisition Center in Linguistics**

The Center will collaborate with the Language Acquisition Center on projects related to development of language.

4. **Graduate student participation**

Graduate students will have the opportunity to participate in Center activities that will be useful in helping them integrate topics on AAE into their undergraduate linguistics courses and developing undergraduate courses on AAE.

iv. **Needs Addressed and Population Served**

AAE is the most widely studied variety or dialect of American English; however, it has been approached mainly from the perspective of its variable use in social contexts by adolescents and adults. The Center builds on and extends past research on AAE and moves in the direction of bridging the gap between theory and practice, a crucial approach that is largely absent from the study of the linguistic variety. Such an approach has important implications for research on acquisition and development of AAE. In addition, it also has implications for the academic preparation of child AAE speakers. Recognizing the link between language and culture and the use of language in literature and the media to represent certain images, the Center will support interdisciplinary research on African American language in a broad range of contexts. The Center research will be relevant for scholars and practitioners, and it will also involve students and members from African American language communities on a number of different levels.

**v. Resources Obtained**

The Office of the Provost and the College of Humanities and Fine Arts provided funds to support the Center's start-up costs and initial programs and activities. These funds were made available with the understanding that the Center's major funding would come from external sources, and the Director (with other collaborators) would aggressively apply for grants. The start-up funds are being used in this initial phase. (See Budget in Section III for details.) The Center will also generate funds to cover some of the operating costs from registration fees for workshops and conferences.

**C. Specific Activities planned as an on-going enterprise (types, quantities of activities, meetings, publications, seminars, research):**

The Center programs and activities reflect local and national relationships involving both academic and community-oriented activities. Some of these programs have already been implemented and are summarized in the Appendix.

**1. Bi-annual Summer Dialect Research Project (SDRP) for undergraduates**

The SDRP is designed to provide research experiences for undergraduates at UMass and other universities on issues related to African American language. (The first SDRP was held in June 2007. See the summary in the Appendix.)

**2. Bi-annual Summer Dialect Teacher Project (SDTP) for researchers, educators, and other practitioners**

This in-service workshop is a three-day training session for teachers and other practitioners in Massachusetts and other states. The workshop is designed to inform practitioners about students' use of dialect in schools and its relationship to mainstream English curricula and methods of instruction. (The first SDTP was held in July 2008. See the summary in the Appendix.)

**3. Tri-annual conference**

The three-day tri-annual conference will bring together scholars who conduct research on some area related to the study of AAE: linguistic theory, child language acquisition, education, sociology of language, history and pidgins and creoles, and language and identity. The papers presented at the conference will be published in an edited volume.

**4. Annual colloquium series**

There will be four colloquia per year, two during the fall semester and two during the spring semester. Researchers will be brought in from neighboring areas as well as from different parts of the United States to present lectures on current research on African American language and related topics and to lead discussions in classes on campus. (The first colloquium was held in April 2007. See the summary in the Appendix.)

**5. Topical workshops**

Special workshops on language-related topics will be held periodically. (The first special workshop “Workshop on Locating Variability” was held in April 2008. See the summary in the Appendix.)

6. Post-doctoral research

The Center will support an in-residence post-doctoral fellow who will have the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to the UMass Center community programs, activities, and research. (The first post-doc has applied for Spring 2009.)

7. Recruitment of undergraduates through summer programs

The Center will place emphasis on recruiting students into the study of African American language and related academic disciplines such as linguistics and communication disorders, fields in which African American scholars are underrepresented. (Two students who attended the SDRP have enrolled in a UMass graduate program. See Appendix for further information.)

8. Center library and clearinghouse

The Center will collect, organize, store, and disseminate information and resources (books, journal articles, newspaper articles, videos, databases, and other information sources) on African American language and related areas of study.

9. Center databases

The Center will establish and maintain databases of African American language, such as narratives, spontaneous speech samples, and elicited responses that will be available to researchers and students.

10. Center publication

The Center will publish a document for teachers and other practitioners that can be used as a source of information about the use of AAE by school-age children.

D. How does this enterprise differ from other offices or activities on campus with similar names, missions, interests?

The Center for the Study of African American Language is broader in scope than the African-American English Working Group (under the Department of Communication Disorders), which is listed under ‘Others’ on the UMass Research and Engagement page, Office of the Vice Chancellor. The Working Group, which was organized by Professor Emeritus Harry Seymour and his collaborators, Professors Tom Roeper and Jill de Villiers (Smith College), was active from 1998-2004, the six-year period of the multi-million dollar National Institutes of Health grant to study language patterns in AAE-speaking children. The goal of the Working Group was to develop a standardized test that could be used to assess the language of children whose native language variety was a non-standard dialect of English, not standard American English. The Working Group was committed to establishing guidelines for distinguishing AAE from standard American English in an effort to provide information for speech pathologists that would be useful in diagnosing language disorders in AAE. In effect, one of the major goals was to develop tools that would adequately distinguish patterns in normally developing AAE from that in disordered AAE, especially in light of the long-standing problem of misdiagnosing normally developing AAE speakers as children with language disorders. The Working Group was divided into study sections in syntax, semantics, phonology, and pragmatics, and each group, which included graduate students and faculty, was led by either Professor Seymour or one of his collaborators. The Working Group projects were based on major collaborative work between the University of Massachusetts (Departments of Communication Disorders and Linguistics) and Smith College Department of Psychology. The product of the AAE Working Group was the Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation (DELV)—Norm Referenced and Screening Test, published by Psychological Corporation in 2005. The Group is no longer active; however, many of its members work with the Center. (See INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE.) Some of the issues addressed by the Working Group are included as part of the Center research focus.

**II. INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE**

- A. List all University units involved and describe administrative arrangements with them, if any.**

The Center has relationships with the following UMass departments: Afro-American Studies, Communication Disorders, English (Western Massachusetts Writing Project), Linguistics, Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, and Theater. In addition, the Center has begun to discuss the opportunity to collaborate with Women's Studies on the Bennett College mentoring project.

- B. Describe any organizational relationships (as distinct from funding sources) with other agencies, public or private, outside of the University.**

Through the advisory support of Professors Jill de Villiers and Peter de Villiers and their work with Center projects, the Center has a relationship with Smith College Department of Psychology. In addition to having worked with the Center in the very early stages, Professors de Villiers and de Villiers lecture in the summer research programs, during which they host workshops in the Smith College language acquisition labs.

- C. Describe the organization's advisory board or governance group.**

The mission of the governance group is to support the goals of the Center by helping to develop and strengthen interdisciplinary research, working to secure resources, and contributing to efforts to expand outreach across and beyond the nation. The Center's governance group consists of UMass and Smith College faculty who have expertise in different facets of language use in African American communities and who reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the Center. They are Harry Seymour, Professor Emeritus, Communication Disorders; Elisabeth Selkirk, Linguistics; Tom Roeper, Linguistics; Margaret Speas, Linguistics; Esther Terry, Afro-American Studies; Anne Herrington, English; Shelley Velleman, Communication Disorders; Gilbert McCauley, Theater; Peter de Villiers, Psychology, Smith College; and Jill de Villiers, Psychology, Smith College.

- D. Will this be an institute—an independent organizational unit, acting as department for purposes of non-faculty personnel actions and appointments, able to solicit its own funds without department head approval?**

This is a center, not an institute.

- E. If center, describe the relationship within the department to which this organization is subordinate.**

The Center is housed in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and is supported by CHFA business management staff who help with budget-related issues. The Center is also eligible for technology support from the CHFA information technology staff. Also, CHFA has supported the Center with start-up funds.

- F. Describe arrangements for any patent rights, copyrights, or other ownership components of activities, and any restrictions on access to research information.**

Non-applicable

**III. RESOURCES**

- A. Describe the space available for use by the organization. (If this is not a permanent location, indicate other space arrangements that are to be made in the future, if known.)**

The Center has been allocated four rooms in the basement of Arnold House:

**Room 22** will be used as the Center Library and seminar room, where gatherings such as colloquia, workshops, and courses (accommodating up to about 20-25 people) can be held. **Room 20** is being set up as a lab/workspace where databases on AAE will be stored and made available for use by the UMass community, Five-College students who may be enrolled in courses with Center faculty, participants in Center programs, and graduate and post-graduate students who are conducting research on areas in the study of AAE. **Room 18** will be used as revolving office space for Center visiting faculty, post-docs, and graduate students with special assignments. **Room 17** will be used as the office for Center staff, such as the coordinator/office manager.

**B. Describe any requests for space that have been made.**

Non-applicable

**C. Describe any repairs, renovations, major equipment needed to make the space you have useful to the organization.**

Non-applicable

**D. In any non-University employees or students are or will be using space, describe the arrangement.**

Non-University employees and students will use the rooms for assignments during the summer Center programs and workshops.

**E. Staffing (when operation is fully developed):**

**1. Non-Faculty (provide rank or grade, student status, working title, FTE, source of funding)**

The Center can be run on a small budget, but limited staff necessary to help meet the goals, especially in planning and carrying out the types of programs that have already been put into place, must be included in the expenses.

**a) Research and activities coordinator to be funded by external grants**

The Coordinator will directly assist the Director both in instigating and supervising the Center activities and programs as well as performing administrative duties. The Coordinator will also provide assistance with data analysis, statistical analysis, grant writing, research on granting opportunities, and grant management.

**b) Graduate research assistant to be funded by external grants and research allowances**

A graduate research assistant will be hired to help coordinate and support work involved in conferences, workshops, summer programs, and external grant preparation.

**2. Faculty involved (provide name, department, extent involved, release time arrangement, if any).**

**a) Faculty in Linguistics will support the Center in integrating linguistic research with topics in other disciplines.**

Lisa Green (Linguistics), who will be Director of the Center, has focused on issues in the study of child and adult AAE and has broad interests in all aspects of African American language. Part of her research has focused on descriptive and theoretical analysis of AAE and the implications it has for practical application in education and communication disorders.

Thomas Roeper (Linguistics), leader in the field of child language acquisition, has collaborated on a number of projects on AAE, including a NIH grant with Harry Seymour, Jill deVilliers, and Peter deVilliers. His work on child language acquisition will be beneficial in that one of the major components of the Center's research will be child language and the use of AAE by school-age children. Professor Roeper lectures in the Center's summer programs.

Elisabeth Selkirk (Linguistics), expert in the area of phonology, has already contributed to research on intonational patterns in AAE and served as a consultant on a UMass Communication Disorders AAE project. Professor Selkirk's expertise in this area would be very valuable. It is a general consensus that intonation and other prosodic features used by AAE speakers are clear markers of the dialect; however, little is known in this area. The Center, with Professor Selkirk's expertise, could lead the path on research in this area. Professor Selkirk lectures in the Center's summer programs.

Margaret Speas (Linguistics), a syntactician who has been a consultant for previous grant projects on AAE and has supervised several dissertations on AAE syntax and semantics, will offer expertise in theoretical syntax. Professor Speas lectures in the Center's summer programs.

Angelika Kratzer (Linguistics), a leading semanticist, has also served as a consultant on work on AAE in the Department of Communication Disorders, and she has worked closely with graduate students in Linguistics who have written dissertations on AAE. Professor Kratzer's expertise in semantics will be extremely useful in that the Center research will include theoretical work on AAE, which still lags behind the sociolinguistic work on the dialect.

John Kingston (Linguistics), Director of the Department of Linguistics Phonetics Lab, would be an excellent resource in the area of phonetics in AAE. Professor Kingston has expertise in African and North American languages, so he would make valuable contributions in research on sound patterns in the variety.

Lyn Frazier (Linguistics), whose major focus is on psycholinguistics, would make important contributions to Center research, especially given the implications that work in psycholinguistics has for the types of reading issues that have been associated with AAE speakers. Professor Frazier's expertise on adult language comprehension and her collaborative work on language processes during reading would be valuable in addressing crucial issues in processing and reading that are often mentioned in the AAE literature but that have not been studied.

- b) Faculty from other CHFA and UMass departments are associated with the Center to support its interdisciplinary focus.

Anne Herrington (English), who works with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, will be a valuable resource as the Center develops its link to issues in education. The Center collaborated with Professor Herrington on the Summer Dialect Teacher Project and is collaborating with her on a Visioning Grant project that will involve Springfield youth and the YMCA. (See Appendix for discussion of collaboration with Professor Herrington.)

Esther Terry and Yemisi Jimoh (Afro-American Studies) have expertise in the representation of language in African American literature.

Steven Tracy (Afro-American Studies) is a scholar on African American verbal art and music forms, such as the blues, and has expertise on prison worksongs, documents to be researched in the context of the Center. Professor Tracy lectures in the Center's summer programs.

Shelley Velleman (Communication Disorders) is currently working on a project on the study of the sounds used by African American children from birth to four years and is a collaborator on a Center Visioning Grant to support interdisciplinary work in linguistics and communication disorders by graduate students. Professor Velleman lectures in the Center’s summer programs. (See Appendix.)

Frances Burns, who will be joining the Communication Disorders faculty in Spring 2009, started working with the Center in Summer 2007 as a Summer Dialect Research Project presenter. She will continue to work on Center-related projects in the area of child language research.

Gilbert McCauley (Theater) addresses issues pertaining to African American language and dialect in performance.

Theresa Austin (Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies) researches issues of language and multiculturalism in education, especially in the area of language and literacy in communities. She facilitated a session in the SDRP and attended the SDTP.

c) Faculty from Smith College are also associated with the Center.

Peter de Villiers and Jill de Villiers (Smith College) are valuable resources on a number of levels. They are leading authorities in the area of child language acquisition and psychology, and they have a successful history of securing federal funding. Also, they will be helpful in developing a link between the Center and various resources at Smith College, such as visiting post-doctoral students who work on related activities (e.g., Erica Dinkins 2006-2007).

3. Describe how the Center or Institute may impact existing teaching responsibilities of participating faculty members through “buy-out” arrangements, reduced teaching loads, or other provisions, and how such impacts will be resolved.

There will be no impact in the foreseeable future on teaching responsibilities, but given the emphasis that is placed on external funding, resources may become available for buy-out arrangements connected to reduced course loads.

F. Attach a detailed budget showing sources of funding, full-year basic operation costs and anticipated expenditures. (This should show programmatic expenditure descriptions, kinds of funding accounts and amounts by subsidiary accounts as well as alternative funding arrangements or programmatic adjustments to be made if funding sources fall.)

The Center received \$250,000 in start-up funds from the Office of the Provost and \$15,000 from The College of Humanities and Fine Arts. These funds are being used for the implementation of programs and activities and to hire research assistants and temporary professional staff to work in various capacities associated with the programs and activities. The remaining balance to date is \$183,310. Below are proposed budgets for 2009, 2010, and 2011. It has been noted that some Center-related projects need to be supported by external funds in the near future.

Budget Year 2009	
Beginning Balance	\$183,310
Personnel	
7 SDRP Faculty (3 lectures each, \$1,500)	\$10,500
Professional Staff (40 hours @ \$40/hour)	1,600

Post-doc (Spring, Summer)	25,000
Graduate Student (Summer)	3,600
Undergrad. Computer Student (Summer)	700
Fringe	2,590
SDRP Participants	
Stipends for 10 Participants ((\$260/week for 2 weeks)	5,200
Travel	
1 SDRP Faculty (non-5-College)	600
10 SDRP Participants (up to \$600)	6,000
Lodging	
Presenter (\$130/night for 4 nights)	520
Participants (\$35/night for 14 nights)	4,900
Meals, Expenses for SDRP Participants	
\$60/day for 1 Presenter	180
\$45/day for 10 Participants	6,300
SDRP Mini Conference, Closing Ceremony	700
Printing, Supplies, and Services	
Publication costs	500
Books, printing, supplies	1,000
Postage	100
Phones, Internet (Arnold House)	240
Total	70,230
Ending Balance	113,080

Budget Year 2010	
Beginning Balance	\$113,080
Personnel	
2 SDTP Lead Presenters (3 sessions each)	\$ 6,000
4 SDTP Presenters (1 presentation)	4,000
1 Colloquium Speaker	500

Professional Staff (40 hours @ \$40/hour)	1,600
Part-time Staff	20,000
Graduate Student (Academic Year)	20,000
Fringe	300
Travel for SDTP Presenters, Participants	
10 Participants (up to \$500)	5,000
5 Presenters (non-5-College)	3,500
1 Colloquium Speaker	700
Lodging	
Faculty (\$130/night for 4 nights)	3,120
Participants (\$35/night for 4 nights)	1,400
Colloquium Speaker	130
Meals for SDTP Presenters, Participants	
UMass Conference Services	2,400
Colloquium Dinner	200
Printing, Supplies, and Services	
Publication costs	500
Books, printing, supplies	1,000
Postage	100
Phones, Internet (Arnold House)	240
Total	70,690
Ending Balance (contingent on external funding of \$40,000 for a part-time staff person and a graduate student for the academic year) SDTP registration fees will offset a some workshop expenses.	82,390

Budget Year 2011	
Beginning balance (contingent on external funding in 2010):	\$ 82,390
Personnel	
7 SDRP Faculty (3 lectures each)	\$ 10,500
Professional Staff (40 hours @ \$40/hour)	1,600
Part-time Staff	20,000

Graduate Student (Academic Year, Summer)	23,600
Undergrad. Computer Student (Summer)	700
Fringe	390
SDRP Participants	
Stipends for 10 Participants	
\$260/week for 2 weeks	5,200
Travel	
1 SDRP Faculty (non-5-College)	600
10 SDRP Participants (up to \$600)	6,000
Lodging	
Faculty (\$130/night for 4 nights)	520
Participants (\$35/night for 14 nights)	4,900
Meals, Expenses for SDRP Participants	
\$45/day for 10 Participants	6,300
\$60/day for 1 Presenter	180
SDRP Mini Conference, Closing Ceremony	900
Printing, Supplies, and Services	
Publication cost	500
Books, printing, supplies	1,000
Postage	100
Phones, Internet (Arnold House)	240
Conference: AAE in Multiple Contexts (Fall 2010)	40,000
Total	123,230
Ending balance (contingent on external funds for a part-time staff person, a graduate student for the academic year, and some of the costs associated with the proposed conference). The amount of external support required is \$75,000. Registration fees for the conference will help to offset some of the expenses. The ending balance would cover some operating costs as well as support the 2012 summer program.	48,230

Appendix: Summary of Center for the Study of African American Language  
Programs and Activities (2007-2008) and Overview

**I. Programs and Activities**

The major programs in 2007 and 2008 were the Summer Dialect Research Project, Workshop on Locating Variability, and the Summer Dialect Teacher Project. A spring colloquium featuring Professors John and Angela Rickford was held in 2007.

**A. Summer Dialect Teacher Project (SDTP)**

One of the goals of the SDTP, which was held from July 9-11, 2008, was to provide a forum to address language use and literacy skills of school-age children who use African American English (AAE) as their major form of communication. Teachers, speech pathologists, and researchers from around the country participated in the program. In addition to sharing in interactive presentation discussions, participants got hands-on experience by completing activities and mini projects that they can use in teaching reading and language arts classes. For a complete description of SDTP, go to: <<http://www.umass.edu/csaal/SDTP/index.html>>.

**B. Workshop on Locating Variability (WLV)**

WLV, which was held from April 24-26, 2008, brought together eighteen researchers from the United States, Canada, and Europe to discuss current research on language variation. For a list of participants, see the description of the workshop at: <<http://www.umass.edu/csaal/events/2008-events.html>>.

**C. Summer Dialect Research Project (SDRP)**

Twelve talented students from around the country participated in the first program in a series of summer research experiences in linguistics for undergraduates with interest in language-related disciplines. In addition to taking courses on the linguistic description of AAE, students gained research experience by gathering primary data, analyzing adult and child AAE language samples, and helping to characterize the differences between AAE and mainstream English. The SDRP was held from June 3-17, 2007. For a description of SDRP, go to: <<http://www.umass.edu/csaal/SDRP/index.html>>.

**D. Spring 2007 Colloquium**

Professors John and Angela Rickford (Stanford & San Jose State University) presented the lecture "From Outside Agitators to Inside Implementors: Improving the Literacy Education of African American Vernacular and Creole Speakers" on April 27, 2007. The focus was on their strategies of using linguistics-based principles in education to strengthen reading skills of school-age children in AAE-speaking communities in the United States and in Caribbean Creole-speaking communities. The event is listed on the Center website: <<http://www.umass.edu/csaal/events/2007-events.html>>.

**II. Collaborative Effort**

The emphasis on the integration of linguistics and cross-disciplinary perspectives on language in African American communities makes it necessary and natural to establish collaborative relationships across the campus.

**A. Western Massachusetts Writing Project**

The Center worked with the Western Massachusetts Project (Anne Herrington, Director, UMass Dept. of English and In-Service Coordinator Susan Biggs) to offer professional development credit to Massachusetts teachers who participated in the SDTP. The Center is also partnering with the Writing Project in carrying out College of Humanities and Fine Arts (CHFA) Visioning Grant activities involving writing instruction and Springfield area students.

**B. The Center, Communication Disorders, and CHFA Visioning Grant Linguistics (Green, Roeper, and Selkirk), the Center, and Shelley Velleman (Communication Disorders) were awarded a Visioning Grant, funding that will be used to support Tracy Conner, an MA-level graduate student who is working with mentoring faculty in Linguistics and Communication Disorders, while she is learning to conduct clearly defined interdisciplinary research in the two fields. The plan is to train Tracy to conduct needed research on the acquisition and development of AAE. Tracy is working with me on a**

project on rhetorical markers in child AAE, and she is also working with Shelley Velleman on early sounds produced by infants developing AAE.

#### Center Overview

This is the only center in the US that focuses on the study of African American language-related issues. Although the Center is in its beginning stages, a number of programs and activities have already been put into place, especially in working to meet the goals that have been outlined in the proposal.

Twelve undergraduate students from all around the country participated in the Center's first major summer program, the Summer Dialect Research Project (SDRP) (June 2007), which was designed to provide research experiences for undergraduates who are interested in pursuing graduate research in fields related to the study of language used by African Americans. Two of the students (Tracy Conner from Stanford University and Hadiya Coppedge from North Carolina A&T University) who participated in that program are now graduate students in Communication Disorders at UMass. Given her interests, Tracy will be taking courses in Linguistics next semester. Another student (Adrienne Washington from Hampton Institute) is pursuing an MA in linguistics (with considerable emphasis on African American language and Caribbean Creoles) at the University of Pittsburgh. The Center has already begun to serve as a pipeline for students—especially those from underrepresented minority groups—to graduate schools. In addition, faculty from UMass, Smith College, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and Texas State University taught in the summer program, and some are serving on the governance board and as Center affiliated faculty. The second SDRP will be held in June 2009. While the focus of this program is on undergraduate and early graduate education, we have also begun to work on attracting post-doctoral students to the Center who are engaging in research on issues in the study of African American language. Gus Polite, who is scheduled to complete his dissertation (on AAE verb morphology) at Purdue University in December 2008, is a post-doctoral candidate (for 2009).

As one of the goals of the Center is to provide training for educators, the Summer Dialect Teacher Project (SDTP) was held in July 2008. The workshop was one of the few venues where researchers and practitioners, such as teachers and speech pathologists, could talk with each other about possible links between research and practical application. The workshop materials and written evaluations will be useful information in writing a grant to fund a major conference that will address the research-practice issue and other topics in the study of African American language.

Both the SDRP and SDTP have been instrumental in fostering connections between the Center and faculty at UMass and other colleges in the area. The collaboration with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project and Communication Disorders has already been noted in II above, and because faculty from Afro-American Studies (e.g., Steve Tracy, Yemisi Jimoh) and Teacher Education and Curriculum Instruction in the School of Education (e.g., Theresa Austin, Denise Ives, K.-C. Nat Turner) participate in the Center's programs or have interests that are directly related to African American language, I anticipate significant collaboration with these departments in the very near future. However, given that the Center will work to integrate research on the African American language linguistic system with cross-disciplinary perspectives on African American communities and art forms, there is a move to make strong connections across the campus.

In April 2008, the Center hosted the Workshop on Locating Variability (WLV). Recent trends in linguistic theory have led to increased interest in the role that features of the grammar play in language variation, its expression as dialectal difference, and speakers' choices of forms within dialects. Language variation, which has been mainly the domain of sociolinguistics, refers to systematic choices between varying forms within a language and across languages. At the workshop, linguists from the US and abroad discussed ways variation in language can be handled in current linguistic theory, an approach that is different from a social linguistics model. WLV is of interest both from the point of view of scientific studies of intra-speaker variation and from the point of view of the contribution it can make to certain debates around the studies of dialects such as AAE. This workshop is important in that it is one of the few to present research on (non-standard) dialects in current theoretical frameworks along with formal theory and mainstream languages. The workshop provided an excellent opportunity for increased visibility of the Center in the broader linguistics community, especially with respect to other research institutes in the US and Europe, in which research on dialects is conducted. It is hoped that increased visibility will serve as evidence to granting agencies and foundations that the Center makes connections to practical application in fields such as education and communication disorders, as well as connections in more theoretical and research-oriented domains in linguistics.