

# Creating Futures



University of Colorado *at Boulder*

*For the Love of Language*

## Department of Linguistics

A language is the most complex intellectual product of any community—a tool not only for communication, but for culture-building. But in countries half a world away and in Native American communities in Colorado and surrounding states, languages are endangered or disappearing.

By documenting these languages, Department of Linguistics scholars help preserve and strengthen indigenous cultures. And in growing fields such as computational linguistics (which help voice-recognition services understand us more clearly, and allows us to find needles within haystacks of voice data) and sociolinguistics (exploring intersections between language and individual/group identity), the work of linguists fortifies our future.

Your support will keep our linguistics scholars working to preserve history, build community, and connect people—around the world, and all around us.

### Expanding Department, Expanding Need

Though few students are aware of the field before reaching college, more than 200 undergraduate and graduate students currently choose to pursue linguistics degrees at CU-Boulder.

While scholars in some disciplines work for decades without finding something new, many linguistics scholars make breakthroughs by the time they finish graduate school. This indicates the vast opportunities in the field: and the vast amount of work left to be done. The world now boasts 6,000 languages—but while this number will grow no higher, cultural, economic, and political shifts threaten the existence of numerous languages (including for example Wichita, an Oklahoma language with just one remaining fluent speaker). As a result, we must act quickly to support the work of aspiring linguists.

This work cannot be done solely in libraries or classrooms. It often requires dedicated fieldwork in remote environments. Donor funding can help us bring students and researchers closer to the source material they need to study.



*Speakers of the Hdi language in Africa, on which CU-Boulder linguists have done research.*



*CU-Boulder Linguistics Professor David Rood with Doris Lamar McLemore, the last remaining speaker of Wichita, an American Indian language.*

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*Ramadan Abba, a speaker of Wandala, a language of Cameroon.*

To learn about the many ways you can help the Linguistics Department thrive:

### **Contact Kimberly Bowman**

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*All gifts should be payable to the University of Colorado Foundation, specifying the appropriate Linguistics Department fund.*

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### **We are raising money for five department priorities:**

**Graduate Student Research Fund:** This two-year-old fund (whose current balance is \$20,000) supports fieldwork in the U.S. and abroad, and funds student presentations at national conferences. Last year the fund supported seven students—but if we disbursed funds according to needs, it would be entirely depleted within a few years. We aim to double our fund balance to sustain the fund for the long term, and support conference travel and research needs of another eight to ten students annually. **Goal: \$20,000**

**Indigenous Languages:** The Center for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the West researches and documents Native American languages in the Western U.S. and Canada. Faculty and students have researched languages such as Lakota and Yavapai, and do public outreach on Arapaho—spoken by Boulder’s original inhabitants. CSILW donations fund student research projects and field trips, and online technology to make language resources available to educators.

**Goal: \$50,000**

**Languages of Africa:** CU boasts renowned African-language expertise, with faculty that have done first-ever grammars of several central African endangered languages. Current work is revealing structures and functions that challenge current thinking about language universals. Your donation can underwrite graduate student research trips to Africa that will expedite work in this area.

**Goal: \$50,000**

**Experimental and Computational Linguistics:** Insights into use and representation of linguistic knowledge can be used in new ways—enhancing our ability to conduct literary training, translate documents, and perform myriad computer-assisted functions. Work in these fields requires large pools of data and extensive study of diverse speech patterns and language-acquisition tendencies. Donations to this area will help us acquire data storage equipment, perform recording and acoustic analysis, and compensate experimental subjects.

**Goal: \$50,000**

**Department Fund:** As the Rocky Mountain Region’s only linguistics department, we take on a wide variety of research and outreach roles in the academic field and the community. Our invited-speaker series is one way in which we maintain and create ties with linguistic scholars throughout the world. Department Fund contributions draw scholars of widespread prominence for colloquia, workshops, and research interactions, and allow sociolinguists to work with immigrant communities. **Goal: \$50,000**

In addition to the above, the Linguistics Department has ambitions for initiatives in an array of areas. We’re happy to discuss other additional opportunities for you to support our students and faculty in a transformational way.

### **Invest Today in Linguistics**

Your investment in our department will do more than simply support the linguistics scholars of today and tomorrow. It will help us preserve languages, and enhance our understanding of these essential communications linkages—leading to discoveries we can’t yet imagine.