International Research Advisors (IRA) Scheme  
Introduction  
It has long been observed that conducting research in the areas of teaching and language education and related fields is highly beneficial to the learning and teaching enterprise. Rigorous and impactful research can inform sound language and teaching practices and vice-versa. One of the current initiatives for the Language Centre is for it to develop and strengthen its pedagogical research capacity and areas of expertise.  
In order to provide additional research support for colleagues, the Language Centre has established an International Research Advisors scheme, through which expert advisors will be invited to provide comments on research/grant proposals, assist in different stages of research/scholarly activities and/or be actively involved in research projects as co-investigators or research team members.  
Aims of the International Research Advisors (IRA) Scheme  
Current International Research Advisors  
Born in New Zealand, Professor Richards obtained a Master of Arts degree with first class honours in English from Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, in 1966. He obtained his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Laval University (a French-Language University) in Quebec City, Canada in 1972. He has worked in many parts of the world, including New Zealand, Canada, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United States. After completing his PhD, he taught in Indonesia and was then appointed specialist in applied linguistics at the Regional Language Centre Singapore, under the auspices of the New Zealand Government. Later he was Senior Lecturer in English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, before being appointed full professor in the Department of English as a Second Language at the University of Hawaii in 1981. In 1989 he returned to Hong Kong to set up a new department of English at the City University of Hong Kong, where he was head of the department of English and also chair professor. In 1996 he returned to his home country for two years to set up an MA program at the University of Auckland. In 1999 Professor Richards retired from full-time university teaching and administration and since then has taught for part of each year at the Regional Language Centre (RELC), in Singapore, while making his primary residence in Sydney, Australia. At RELC, Professor Richards teaches in the MA in Applied Linguistics program, as well as the RELC Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics.  
Professor Guardado is an applied linguist investigating language socialization and literacy practices within immigrant communities in Canada, with a particular focus on the development and maintenance of heritage languages. Additionally, his research has examined English as a Second Language (ESL) students’ experiences of online peer feedback on writing, the use of podcasting in ESL classes in the Chinese community of Edmonton and is currently working on a project to investigate Task-Based Language Teaching in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes. Among other projects at different stages of development, Professor Guardado is collaborating on an initiative to study the experiences of internationally trained professionals in a career mentorship program in Edmonton, Canada. Professor Guardado started his career in education as a teaching assistant in the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1982. Since that time, he has taught ESL/EFL to all levels and age groups in the United States, El Salvador and Canada. He has also taught public school teachers, student teachers, graduate students, and international students in community colleges and universities both in El Salvador and in Canada. He obtained a secondary school teaching diploma and a B. A. (honours) in TEFL from Universidad Francisco Gavidia in El Salvador, a TESOL in-service Diploma from Vancouver Community College, a Masters in TESL, and a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from The University of British Columbia.  
Professor Jingqi Fu obtained her B.A. in French from the Beijing Institute of Languages (1982); Nouveau Doctorat in linguistics from Université de Paris III (1986) and Ph.D. in Linguistics from University of Massachusetts (1994). Her research interests are in Chinese and Bai syntax, syntax-morphology interface, typology and language documentation. Most recently her work focusses on the grammar of Bai Dialects based on her fieldwork in Yunnan and preservation of Bai Dialects and Culture. She has published in a number of journals and book volumes, including Journal of Natural Language and Linguistic Theory, Les Cahiers de Linguistique Asie Orientale, Minzu Yuwen (Minority Languages), and Linguistic Sciences. She has recently co-authored a book entitled “Chinese Ethnic Minority Oral Traditions: a Recovered Text of Bai Folk Songs in a Sinoexenic Script” (Cambria Press) and co-edited “New Studies in Space and Quantification in Languages of China” (Springer, 2014). She is a Research Associate at the Centre de Recherches Linguistiques sur Asie-Orientale, CNRS-l’EHESS. At St. Mary’s College, she runs the Chinese Program and the St. Mary’s-Fudan Exchange Program. She has been teaching courses on Chinese language and linguistics.

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