

## Workshop proposal “Locality: typology, theory and computation”

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### 1 Overview/abstract

We are applying for support for a workshop planned as part of the project “Syntactic locality: an interface of typology, theory and computation” (henceforth the Locality Project), funded by an OVPR Seed Grant awarded in January 2024 to the same PI and Co-PIs (henceforth the Locality Project Team). The Locality Project investigates a fundamental property of natural language — the fact that dependencies between elements within the structure of a sentence are subject to locality constraints. That is, two words or other syntactic items are able to interact in some grammatical way only if they are close enough to each other in some relevant sense. For example, an English reflexive pronoun like *myself* has to appear (roughly) in the same clause as a pronoun or noun phrase that it co-refers with, so it’s possible to say *I considered myself*, but not *I think that she considered myself*. The ultimate goal of the Locality Project is to systematically compare existing theoretical approaches to locality and develop new ones that take into account advances in our understanding of the typology of locality phenomena across languages and in computational methods for determining and managing complexity. More immediately, the Locality Project is building preliminary versions of the tools needed for this theory building, to result in applications for two NSF grants to carry out the main phase of the research.

The proposed workshop is intended to support the goals of the Locality Project by bringing four world-class experts on relevant topics (henceforth the Invited Experts) for three days of intensive interactions with the Locality Project Team and the local linguistics community. As such, the workshop will have a very particular structure and format built around different types of events — ranging from public talks to small group brainstorming sessions and one-on-one meetings — each designed to fulfill a different purpose related to the goals of the Locality Project (and in particular the NSF grant applications) or to expanding on the SBU linguistics community’s nascent status as a center for research on locality. The stakeholders at the university are the Locality Project Team plus the other members of the SBU linguistics community who are interested in issues of locality, especially our graduate students. Relatedly, the target audience of the workshop will be mostly internal, but interested linguists from outside of SBU will be welcome to register and attend the public talks, and the Invited Experts will be eminent enough that we can expect to attract attendees from other linguistics departments in the region. These public talks will solely be by the Invited Experts, the Locality Project Team and other members of the SBU linguistics community (in particular, our graduate students), and there will be no open call for papers. We can expect approximately 30 to 50 participants. Potential Invited Experts we are considering include:

- Tanya Bondarenko (Harvard University)
- Kenyon Branen (University of Göttingen)
- Robert Frank (Yale University)
- Claire Halpert (University of Minnesota)
- Stefan Keine (UCLA)
- Elise Newman (MIT)
- Ur Shlonsky (University of Geneva)
- Hedde Zeijlstra (University of Göttingen)