



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT
CHAPEL HILL

Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences
Department of Allied Health Sciences
The School of Medicine

CB# 7190, Wing D Medical School
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-7190
Telephone: (919) 966-1006

Response to Graduate Program Review
Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences
Department of Allied Health Sciences

This document was prepared by the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences (DSHS) in response to the report of the External Review Team, submitted in June, 2002, following program review and site visit in February, 2002. Several important events have taken place over the ensuing months:

- In March, 2002, the DSHS completed a self study and site visit for accreditation by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA). The program received a positive review and has been re-accredited through 2007.
- In the fall semester, 2002, the first cohorts of Au.D. and Ph.D. students were enrolled (9 Au.D. and 4 Ph.D.).
- In September, 2002, the DSHS entered into an agreement with the UNC Center for the Study of Development and Learning to allow use of clinical space (for DSHS patients) in exchange for faculty time and expertise.
- During the fall semester we began a long-range planning process in conjunction with a department-wide effort. A faculty retreat in December, 2002, was devoted to planning a series of meetings in the spring semester, 2003, which are now under way. A facilitator is assisting us with the process and a report will be submitted in June, 2003, to Dr. Lee McLean, Chair of the Department of Allied Health Sciences. A copy of the report will also be forwarded to Dr. Arne Kalleberg, Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

The Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Sciences

The site visit team identified numerous strengths in our graduate programs. They also made specific recommendations for future planning. This report will address the specific challenges/needs identified by the site visit team (shown in italics) followed by a response to each item.

The faculty are inexperienced in directing Ph.D. dissertations.

Because the Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Sciences is a new degree, most DSHS faculty lack experience in directing Ph.D. dissertations. There is considerable experience, however, in serving as members of dissertation committees in other Departments and Schools. For example, over the past three years, several DSHS faculty have served as dissertation committee members in the School of Education and other academic units. Division faculty have also been actively involved in directing M.S. thesis projects. Since we have not had the Ph.D. until recently there has been a relatively large number of master's thesis projects mentored by Division faculty. Although these projects have been smaller in scope than a dissertation they have given Division faculty experience in advising and mentoring students in a variety of research areas. DSHS faculty have also served as members of thesis committees for graduate students at North Carolina Central University and North Carolina State University. We are confident that our past experience will serve us well as we mentor the Division's first Ph.D. students.

The areas of Infant and Toddler Specialization, Autism Specialization, and Hearing Impairment may be narrower than needed for the new Ph.D. program. It is not clear that any of these specializations are actually essential, especially given that the sample Ph.D. curricula are composed largely of Master's level courses. Given the limited number of doctoral courses and the lack of new resources to support the Ph.D. program, it may be advisable to construct a broad curriculum in communication disorders in early childhood and let the dissertation, independent studies, and guided research provide the specialty training.

It was not our intent to narrow the focus within the Ph.D. program to particular specialization areas. In fact, our objective (although not delineated well enough in our website or printed materials) was to provide sample "courses of study" that students could choose in designing their doctoral programs. The examples were provided in response to requests from prospective students who sought clarification as to what an early childhood intervention specialization within communication disorders might look like. We only proposed these to serve as examples for students interested in infant/toddlers, autism, or hearing impairment. The four doctoral seminars on communication issues in early childhood were specifically developed to give all students a broad base from which to select more specialized doctoral study. In addition, to insure a broad number of options within the early childhood areas, the Division will begin considering Ph.D. students interested in studying communication disorders across the lifespan. A DSHS committee will begin working this year to examine specific curricular modifications needed for these students. We anticipate that Ph.D. students who desire a focus in adult neurogenetics or other areas of communication disorders may begin as early as fall semester, 2004.

Division faculty have limited extramural grant support for research. An important goal is to increase the level of extramural support, to enhance research productivity, to

supplement the facilities and equipment needed for research, to support the training of Ph.D. students, and to serve as a model of grant preparation and conduct of research for students enrolled in the Division. Research funding from the faculty as a whole is minimal. Faculty will need to develop a strategic plan for identifying specific goals and objectives of a research program and then develop strategies for achieving those goals.

The Division is making substantial progress in its efforts to obtain extramural support. Division faculty are already involved in productive programs of research that are relevant to current priorities in NIH and CDC. Several faculty are developing the individual and organizational capacity to obtain NIH support for their research. The Department of Allied Health Sciences (DAHS) has put a high priority on extramural funding and has created an infrastructure to assist with grant preparation, submission, and administration. The Division is also taking advantage of the resources of the School of Medicine, including the General Clinical Research Center and Office of Research. Current NIH emphasis on developing new researchers has created funding opportunities for junior faculty (“K-series”) as well as established faculty moving into new areas of investigation. The Chair’s “start up funds” are now available and committed to support development of faculty research with potential for NIH funding. Since the graduate school self study and site visit, Division faculty have submitted three NIH grants (one RO1, one R03, and one R21). Recently, we were notified of a successful RO1 submitted from another DAHS Division, with a DSHS faculty member as co-investigator. Several more proposals are in the planning stage. In addition, we have begun a dialogue with representatives of the Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Durham to explore opportunities for collaborative research and funding.

The M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology

Suggestions regarding the M.S. program were derived largely from interviews with current students and recent graduates. The site visitors also interviewed graduates from the M.S. program in Audiology; however, the issues raised by those students are addressed by replacement of the master’s program with the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.). The site visitors described the views expressed by students and alums as “overwhelmingly positive”; however, a few suggestions from current/former students emerged:

SLP students would like to have a full-time clinical experience during their last semester of study.

The faculty is seriously considering such a plan. It is one of the top priorities in our planning process and was recently discussed at length. Another plan we are considering is compressing coursework in the first half of the last semester, allowing for more concentrated practicum in the latter half. This issue will be specifically addressed in our year-end planning report.

The three-track emphasis areas in SLP were viewed as problematic. Students would prefer greater flexibility in selecting courses across emphasis areas to prepare for a variety of practice roles and opportunities.

A decision has been made to eliminate the emphasis tracks. We believe we can facilitate special interests through coursework and practicum, without locking students into a prescribed track.

Students would like to have more content on counseling.

We do not have the faculty resources to create a new course on counseling; however, we have identified courses in other departments that provide relevant content and we are making these offerings known to students. We are also exploring ways to infuse more counseling content within existing DSHS courses.

The Au.D. Program

It would be desirable to enhance the curriculum by adding 3-4 additional courses in the basic sciences. The majority of these additional courses could be taken in other divisions or departments outside of the audiology program and would benefit the students by providing an interdisciplinary component to the program.

We agree with the benefits of adding courses outside the Division. In addition to strengthening the interdisciplinary component, outside courses reduce the teaching load for Division faculty. Unfortunately, the logistics of course scheduling and the availability of courses that provide appropriate content have presented significant barriers. Instead, we have significantly expanded our efforts to involve adjunct faculty and others in our professional community as lecturers and participants in “team teaching” of audiology courses. For example, our course in Hearing Disorders (SPHS 225) will include lectures from faculty in the Dept of Otolaryngology and from the UNC Center for Development and Learning. We are also exploring a new collaboration with the audiology program at the VAMC in Durham which would allow us to provide some of the required coursework through adjunct faculty from that institution (a pilot project is underway this semester). Many of these individuals could also be involved as doctoral research mentors.

The Au.D Program will require the development of a clinical facility for students to obtain their basic practicum experiences. It is not possible to develop a viable, state-of-the-art Au.D program without having one’s own clinical facility. This is essential to the development of a patient base that is needed, not only to train professional doctorates, but also to obtain research data for the Ph.D. program.

As noted above, the Division recently entered into an agreement with the Center for Development and Learning to provide use of facilities in exchange for faculty time and expertise. We are now seeing DSHS patients on a regular basis at the CDL clinic. We believe this arrangement has long-term potential for providing clinical audiology in the

area of pediatrics. For adult audiology services we have entered into negotiation with two of our local retirement communities to provide satellite audiology services. We also have agreements from both the VAMC and UNC Hospitals to place students in those settings for clinical practicum in their first year, for observation and practicum experiences (until this year, outplacements were not made until the summer of the first year). We will continue to explore options for acquiring our own clinical facility; however, we believe we may be able to achieve a more cost effective model by working collaboratively with existing programs and institutions, on or near the UNC campus.

The program may wish to develop criteria for identifying appropriate practicum sites to be used by the program for student placement.

A faculty member has been appointed practicum coordinator for audiology. She is actively involved in exploring new practicum sites and in renewing our affiliation with some of the sites we have used infrequently. We are fully confident we will have all of the sites needed to accommodate our projected enrollments.

The program needs to develop a structured practicum sequence to be followed by students.

We have established a rotation of practicum assignments that begins with observation in the first semester followed by a semester in each of our on-campus sites. The on-campus rotation includes: the Division Speech and Hearing Center, the UNC Center for Development and Learning, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools Educational Audiology program, and UNC Hospitals (consisting of discrete experiences in adult diagnostics, adult hearing aids, pediatric diagnostics, pediatric hearing aids, infant hearing screening in the NICU and well-baby nurseries, and adult cochlear implants). The off-campus rotation includes: the pediatric cochlear implant program (CCCDP), the VA Medical Center, and the Wake County Schools Educational Audiology Program. We are exploring new placements in the Carolina Ear and Hearing Center (Raleigh) and the Carolina Eye and Ear Hospital (Durham).

The Division may want to consider additional approaches that can be used to supplement the learning process beyond the traditional classroom and practicum opportunities. Examples may include: a guest lecture series, the implementation of problem-based learning, distance learning, and the utilization of some of the educational opportunities proffered through the Department of Otolaryngology (e.g., grand rounds, clinical rotations).

The Division recently entered in to a contractual agreement with the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf to develop a program of distance education for clinicians who work with young children with hearing loss and their families. DSHS students will participate in the development and field-testing of these modules as a supplement to their coursework. Also, the Division Director (Roush) recently met with the Chair of Otolaryngology (Harold C. Pillsbury, MD) who has expressed enthusiastic support for

involving faculty and residents from that department in doctoral seminars, grand rounds, and research mentoring.

Future additions to the faculty, especially in audiology, will be important to the long-term success of the two doctoral programs.

Although funds are not available at this time to fund a new faculty position in audiology, we are exploring creative ways to expand our audiology faculty through negotiation of joint appointments with the Dept. of Otolaryngology and collaboration with the VA Medical Center. However, a new Ph.D. faculty position in audiology, based in DSHS, is considered essential and remains one of our highest priorities.

There is a need to identify a single faculty member to serve as the go-to person for the Au.D Program.

A faculty member (M. Mundy) has been appointed Au.D. program coordinator.

The faculty need a focused effort on attracting extramural funds to support students. A variety of public and private sources need to be considered. This will be necessary to attract high quality students in the numbers that will be necessary to justify the program. Revenues from an expanded clinical service could be a possible source for funding of students in the future.

Since completion of the Graduate School self study and site visit, we have been informed of two successful training grants from the U.S. Department of Education that will provide funding for Ph.D. students and M.S. students in SLP. The doctoral leadership grant provides stipend support, tuition, health insurance and some conference travel money for four students per year (two from Speech & Hearing, two from the School of Education). The students will form a cohort for interdisciplinary coursework and research experiences. The Master's level grant will fund 8 full-time and 6 part-time students divided between Speech and Hearing Sciences and the Early Childhood Special Education program in the School of Education. Students will receive stipend support, tuition, health insurance, and conference travel support. These students will also participate in interdisciplinary courses, research projects, and specialized practica. A Doctoral Leadership Training Grant was submitted earlier this month to seek funding for Au.D. and Ph.D. students interested in pediatric audiology and management of hearing loss in children.

It is recommended that the program develop additional incentives for existing clinical supervisors to pursue the Au.D.

We have begun to explore a mechanism to offer our Au.D. degree, for a limited period of time, to master's-level audiologists from our faculty and affiliated senior clinicians at UNC Hospitals and the Department of Otolaryngology in the School of Medicine.

Dr. Pillsbury has offered to assist in recruiting faculty mentors from his department, which includes several M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s engaged in otology and hearing science research. The initiative is included in our long-range planning process.

In summary, the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences is fortunate to have both the faculty and institutional resources needed to provide outstanding graduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology. Although reductions in state funding have brought new challenges, we are committed to a long-range plan that will make us less dependant on support from state funds by expanding our extramural grants, contracts, and clinical services. We look forward to these challenges and remain optimistic about the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackson Roush, Ph.D.
Professor and Director
Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences
February 19, 2003