

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**PROPOSED DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS**

**Action Requested:** Consider recommending approval to the Board of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to change the name of the Department of Communicative Disorders in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts to the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed name recognizes a national trend to use the name "Communication Sciences and Disorders" for the discipline. The proposed name is consistent with similar departments in peer institutions. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This report addresses the Board's Strategic Plan objective to "offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students" (1.1.).

**Background:**

- ◆ The Department of Communicative Disorders offers undergraduate and graduate programs. The undergraduate major in Communicative Disorders is designed to provide the academic preparation and experiences required for admission into a graduate program in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology.
- ◆ There is a movement in health care and education for "evidence-based practice" which stresses that scientific evidence needs to play a preeminent role in decisions involving client care. This initiative places "science" at the forefront of clinical speech and language services and should be reflected in the department name.
- ◆ Speech and language sciences underpin the core content of the undergraduate and graduate curricula. These curricula emphasize normal communication processes at one level and disordered processes at another. Therefore, it would be appropriate to include both "sciences" and "disorders" in the department name.
- ◆ The word "science" or "sciences" is contained in the names of 40% of accredited programs nationally and appears in the name of the national council, Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Fifteen institutions comparable to UNI with speech-language pathology programs have department names containing "science" or "sciences." Eighty other U.S. universities across the country have similar department names.

Details about the proposed name change are available in the Board Office.