

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
ACCREDITATION REPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

Action Requested: Receive the accreditation report for the Master of Arts Program in Residential Speech-Language Pathology in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences at the University of Northern Iowa.

Executive Summary: The program (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The program was accredited for the full eight-year period through July 2022. There was one area of partial compliance and two areas of follow-up; these areas must be addressed in the next annual report. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities for “access, affordability, and student success; educational excellence and impact; and economic development and vitality.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** The Master of Arts Program in Speech-Language Pathology stresses the development of an increased student interest and knowledge base within the area of communication and its related disorders, independent critical thinking skills necessary for the effective evaluation and management of a broad range of communicatively impaired individuals, clinical skills to effectively manage individuals with a broad range of communicative impairments, interpersonal skills necessary to function as a contributor to an interdisciplinary rehabilitation team, and an increased awareness of professional ethics and issues.
- ◇ **Purpose of Accreditation.** An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met state and national standards for its development and evaluation. To employers, graduate schools, and licensure, certification, and registration boards, graduation from an accredited program signifies adequate preparation for entry into the profession. In fact, many of these groups require graduation from an accredited program as a minimum qualification. Accreditation is also intended to protect the interests of students, benefit the public, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice.
- ◇ **Accrediting Agency.** The accrediting body is the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).
- ◇ **Review Process.** The self-study prepared by the Master of Arts Program in Speech Language Pathology contained the responses to the appropriate standards required by the accrediting body – administrative structure and governance; faculty; curriculum (academic and clinical education); students; assessment; and program resources.
- ◇ **On-Site Team Report.** In February 2014, the visiting team determined that the Master of Arts Program in Speech-Language Pathology met the requirements for accredited status, although there were five components of the standards that were in partial compliance.

◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.

- ☑ “The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders provides undergraduate and graduate students excellent academic and clinical teaching, research, and public service within the context of a strong liberal arts education. The main focus is personalized professional preparation of students in communication sciences and disorders to serve the public.
- ☑ The program director and faculty report having access to higher levels of administration and indicate this is a particular strength for their program.
- ☑ Institutional commitment to the programs’ faculty is demonstrated through documentation of stability of financial support for faculty, evidence that workload assignments are consistent with institutional policies, and evidence of addition of faculty to support the program.
- ☑ The program demonstrated the sufficiency of the curriculum in preparing students to meet credentialing requirements, consistent with the program’s stated purpose and goals – national certification in speech-language pathology, state teacher certification, and state licensure.
- ☑ Faculty interviews and review of student products indicate evidence based practice is stressed in classes and in the clinic.
- ☑ The clinic director does a very thorough job of recording and monitoring each student’s progress term by term and uses CALIPSO to ensure they are ready for externship placement.
- ☑ Respect for an understanding of cultural, linguistic, and individual diversity is evident through policies and procedures, specifically in admissions, internal and external clinical placements, and retention of students.”

◇ Standards in Partial Compliance.

- ☑ “*Program assessment of student.* The program conducts ongoing and systematic formative and summative assessment of the performance of its current students; however, feedback mechanism to evaluate student performance are not documented or documented consistently and documentation of exact remediation plans are non-specific. *In the next annual report, update CAA on the progress relative to the program’s three-step plan to provide written remediation guidelines and how feedback mechanism to evaluate student performance are documented.*”

◇ Areas for Follow-Up.

- ☑ “*The program develops and implements a long-term strategic plan.* The strategic plan is in place and is congruent with the mission of the institution; however, it is a concern of the CAA that it has not been evaluated. In addition, a mechanism to monitor and assess each objective has recently been put into place but has not been implemented. While the program director and faculty indicated informal discussion of the strategic plan had occurred, the dean and provost indicated they were not aware of the program’s strategic plan. *In the next annual report, discuss steps taken by the program to incorporate mechanisms to evaluate the strategic plan.*”

- ☑ *The program has access to clerical and technical staff, support services, and library and technology resources that are appropriate and sufficient to achieve the program's mission and goals. CAA initial observations indicated there is not a goal in the department's current Strategic Plan that addresses adequacy of its resource or how this goal will be measured. The Strategic Plan should include a measurable and attainable goal for determining adequacy of resource as it relates to the increase in student enrollment. The adequacy of support was not evaluated and resources are not addressed in the program's strategic plan. Although the program hired an additional support person, adequacy of support services to allow the faculty to meet their research and service goals remains unclear. In the next annual report, discuss sufficiency of support services to the program and impact on the ability of faculty members to meet research and service goals."*

- ◇ Accreditation Status. In July 2014, the Council on Academic Accreditation awarded continued accreditation to the Master of Arts Program in Speech-Language Pathology Program at the University of Northern Iowa for an eight-year period through July 31, 2022. There are no areas of non-compliance. There is one area of partial compliance – Program Assessment of Students and two areas for follow-up – Strategic Plan and Clerical and Support Services. Each area must be addressed in the next annual report.