

## **UCC Program Review Committee Summary of Review**

**Program:** Communication Sciences and Disorders

**Date of last review:** AY 2005-2006 (last archived report)

**Date of this review:** AY 2021-2022

The program offers the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- Clinical Doctorate in Audiology (Au.D.)
- Ph.D. in Hearing Science
- Ph.D. in Speech-Language Science
- Joint Au.D.-Ph.D.
- Joint M.A.-Ph.D. in Speech-Language Pathology
- M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology
- B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Minor in Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Undergraduate Certificate in Experimental Study of Language

**Recommendation:** This program is found to be viable.

See report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

The report was forwarded to the division's director and the college dean. Their joint response is attached.

The Graduate Council's comments are included as well.

**Program Review**  
**Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD)**  
[Within the School of Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences (RCS),  
College of Health Sciences and Professions (CHSP), Ohio University]  
**October 28-29, 2021**

Review Committee:

Dr. Jill Ingram (Associate Professor of English)  
Dr. Pramod Kanwar (Professor of Mathematics)  
Dr. Jixin Chen (Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry)

**Executive Summary**

The review committee found the programs in the Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders to be viable and thriving. In coming to this conclusion, the review committee met with various groups of faculty, staff, and students in the Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders during the site visit on October 28-29, 2021, and reviewed the school's self-study report. The review includes the following programs:

- Communication Sciences and Disorders (B.S, minor, HTC)
- Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) (M.A.), Speech-Language Science (Ph.D.), Hearing Science (Ph.D.), Audiology (Au.D.)

**Commendations**

The program is highly research-oriented, has an excellent national reputation, serves its probationary faculty well, and the department culture is collegial and supportive. The undergraduate program and SLP M.A. and Speech-Language Science Ph.D. are thriving. The Hearing Science Ph.D. and Audiology Au.D. programs are doing well, and programs serve local and regional clientele well. The committee commends the department for its strong faculty, resources, and facilities, with commendable research agendas, service to the University and the community, student activities, and external network. The SLP program and the Audiology program are ranked 45th nationally and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the State of Ohio after the OSU programs. To stay competitive, additional investment is recommended.

**Areas of Concern**

There are some areas of concern particularly in the lack of additional faculty and staff to maintain the highly specialized, hands-on clinical training needed for the management of increasing demands from undergraduate students in introductory courses, new certificate programs, and the Au.D. graduate program. These challenges include the growing teaching and service loads that have negatively impacted research activities and the ability to seek external funding, dampened

faculty morale, and jeopardized students' success. Overall, the committee recommends faculty and staff hiring to lower teaching loads for research and clinical faculty, in an effort to encourage and enhance faculty grant applications to federal and private funding agencies for their research projects. The deaf faculty urgently need a full-time interpreter to assist teaching, lab instruction, and grading. The clinical faculty need additional instrumentation to teach a growing number of students. Without these additional resources, it is likely the program's national ranking will suffer in the coming years. Another slight area of concern is in funding for graduate students: the Audiology and Hearing Science Ph.D. programs, 4-year programs, do not fund their students in the 4<sup>th</sup> year. This places stress on the students and results in some having to take longer to complete their degree as a result of needing income.

### **Recommendations**

- The approved faculty line (SLP Assistant/Associate Clinical Prof.) to replace the lost tenure-track faculty member is a top priority.
- An in-house, full-time interpreter is needed to assist deaf faculty (3 full-time deaf faculty and 2 part-time deaf faculty members) and students. This is particularly urgent for the growing undergraduate student population.
- Additional ASL instructors are needed to serve the growing ASL course demand. The recent addition of the ASL Certificate program also exacerbates this need.
- Administrators needed to support graduate students and faculty in administering externships and other needs. Although a half-time position has been proposed, a full-time position is desirable to meet the program's needs.
- Equipment needed to meet high demand from both classroom and patient requirements. Some equipment is obsolete, resulting in inadequately trained students entering the profession. The Audiology lab needs replacement equipment, and other equipment is inadequate to meet competing demands from concurrent clinical and instruction needs. We recommend seeking university or college funds to purchase teaching instruments for the clinical training classes.
- We recommend creating TA positions for Ph.D. students and Au.D. students to provide an additional area of funding support; TA positions also may reduce some faculty teaching loads.
- If the programs continue to grow, more teaching space should be proposed especially for the clinical training of undergraduate students.
- We recommend upgrading conference room and clinical virtual meeting technology.

## Introduction

### Overall Program

- a. Is the current number and distribution of faculty sufficient to carry out the broad overall mission of the Department (Teaching; Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity; Service)?***

The current number of faculty is not quite sufficient to carry out the Department's teaching mission, as 1 tenure-track SLP faculty (Assistant/Associate Clinical Professor) and 1-2 more ASL instructors are needed to meet student demand for the increasingly popular ASL courses. The CSD program has lost two faculty to service (their course loads were reduced) and one who was recently denied tenure. The shortage of teaching faculty and support staff has impacted the program, with research faculty and clinical instructors asked to do additional teaching. Regarding the ASL element, one deaf faculty member pointed out that the sign-language courses are staffed by 4 faculty but peer institutions of a similar program size have 8 faculty. The lack of interpreters also impact teaching: the deaf faculty cannot participate fully, owing to the lack of a full-time interpreter to assist in teaching and clinical lab work, communicating to students and colleagues, and serving on committees. Faculty pointed out that peer institutions in Ohio have 4 full-time on site interpreters, while OU has only part-time interpreters, and uses a cumbersome external contracting system.

- b. Is the level of the Department's RSCA appropriate for the program given the size of the faculty and the resources available to the Department? Is the Department's level of external funding at an appropriate level?***

The RSCA level is generally appropriate given the size of faculty and resources available to the Department. The teaching load is appropriate for lecturers but is too heavy for research and clinical faculty. There is inadequate time for the research and clinical faculty to develop fundable research projects and to write proposals. This has resulted in a drop in the number of Ph.D. students in the program which will affect national ranking, which is currently very high. US News ranks the SLP program #45 nationally, and the Audiology program #46 nationally. Both are 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state of Ohio. External funding is a bit of a concern, as research pipelines are not as strong as they might be. The program's recent efforts in developing alumni support and endowed funds have been beneficial, so this might be a potential area of future growth.

- c. Is the level of service, outside of teaching, appropriate for the program given its size and the role that it plays in the University and broader communities it interacts with? Is the Department able to fulfill its service mission?***

The level of service outside of teaching is appropriate, however the advising load for each faculty member is somewhat high, with each faculty having to advise between 20-25 students. Advising assistance for faculty would help alleviate this burden. The department can fulfill its service mission: however, the lack of support staff has put undue pressure on faculty—especially the clinical faculty—in administering enrollment, documentation, office management, and externship activities. The lack of a full-time interpreter, mentioned above, has hindered the deaf faculty in delivering some community outreach services.

***d. Does the Department have an appropriate level of financial resources, staff, physical facilities, library resources, and technology to fulfill its mission?***

Physical facilities and technology need to be updated in some cases to meet the standards of a high-quality modern clinic, teaching, and research space, all important elements in attracting funding and maintaining the program's reputation. The program is in urgent need of a full-time interpreter (mentioned above), as part-time interpreters are not sufficient to fill department needs, with procedures for procuring contracted interpreters overly cumbersome. The clinical faculty are using instruments and space for clinical use and for teaching, the two needs sometimes conflicting. Providing equipment support for clinical teaching is an urgent need. The clinical staff is stretched owing to a lack of administrative support—the program's various activities require documentation, management, and financial administration, especially in the areas of grants and clinical training. Since clinical instruction is a key resource for the program, it should be noted that some clinical faculty have expressed concerns over promotion. This is an important issue for the departmental leaders to address to maintain a highly active and motivated faculty team.

## **Undergraduate Programs**

***a. Is the program fulfilling its service role, adequately preparing non-majors for future coursework and/or satisfying the needs for general education?***

The program is fulfilling its service role in preparing non-majors, satisfying the needs for general education. For example, the ASL courses serve the General Education foreign language requirements; CSD 1080 (Intro to Comm. Sciences) fulfills a Gen Ed requirement and attracts new CSD majors too. Several courses have been adapted to "BRICKS" requirements or are in the process of ICC approval to fulfill "BRICKS" requirements, such as CSD 1070, which will be a Bridge "Speaking and Listening" course; CSD 4420 is a Tier 3

course; CSD 2140 fulfills a “Foundations” requirement; and CSD 1130 (“Intro to the Deaf Community”) is in the approval process to be a “Bridges” course.

- b. Is the program attracting majors likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of majors appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?***

The program is attracting viable majors, and the number of majors—283—is appropriate to the program. The program could make additional efforts to attract a more diverse group of students. We recommend searching qualified out-of-state students from a variety of backgrounds, including international students.

- c. Does the undergraduate curriculum provide majors with an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation? Are students able to move into discipline-related careers and/or pursue further academic work?***

Yes, the curriculum serves the undergraduate students, and the coursework provides students with the background to pursue discipline-related careers. In Audiology, however, coursework sequencing may not be adequate, as sometimes students don’t get audiology exposure until junior year. The students have expressed a wish to experience certificate and major paths as early as possible and have earlier clinical and internship/externship opportunities. If possible, Hearing Science needs to be presented in introductory classes more frequently to increase student exposure to that career option.

- d. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the undergraduate program?***

The number of faculty currently supports the undergraduate program but we underline the need for (the currently approved) tenure-track line and for additional ASL instructors to meet demand for those courses.

- e. Are pedagogical practices appropriate? Is teaching adequately assessed?***

The pedagogical practices are appropriate, and even during virtual learning, faculty, and professors adjusted well. Lab-oriented classes offer hands-on coursework that is valuable. Teaching is adequately assessed. A major concern for the ASL instructors is the requirement for grading an excessive amount of video submissions. This grading burden should be

addressed, with perhaps more TA's assisting in grading, or a creative solution such as upper-level undergraduates assisting in grading ASL video submissions.

***f. Are students able to move into to discipline-related careers and/or pursue further academic work?***

Yes. The department's self-study tracks this well—90% of graduates either pursue graduate work in the field or have a professional position within three months of graduating. The certificate programs help the students find related jobs. We recommend maintaining the program's extensive clinical and hands-on training to remain competitive.

### **Graduate Program**

***a. Is the program attracting students likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of students appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?***

Owing to an excellent national ranking and reputation, the graduate programs can be selective, attracting students likely to succeed: 35 SLP graduate students are accepted out of 250 applicants. For the Au.D. program, 10 students are accepted out of 50-60 applicants. Most Au.D. students expressed that they were attracted to the low tuition, good reputation, and extensive clinical training opportunities very early on into the program. The faculty has identified outstanding Ph.D. students, but the program lacks adequate funding in some cases to entice them to the program. To address this issue, we recommend creating funded TA positions for a short-term solution and, if possible, lowering the teaching load for research and clinical faculty as a longer-term solution so that they can develop fundable projects and prepare proposals.

***b. Does the graduate curriculum provide an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers following graduation?***

The graduate curriculum and the extensive clinical experience, as well as the externship experience, provide students with an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers. Most Ph.D. students graduate with strong research experience, good publications, and embark on academic careers, bolstering the reputation of the program. Some students in the Au.D. and Ph.D. (Hearing Science) programs who want to pursue academic careers would benefit from more teaching opportunities, as that experience is valuable on the

academic job market. Recent revisions to the curriculum have been helpful, as have been the shifts in the comprehensive exam procedure.

***c. Does the program provide adequate mentoring and advising to students to prepare them for discipline-related careers?***

Students have a range of experiences—some are guided well by their faculty advisors, though some students express their sense that guidance in pursuing publication has been somewhat lacking. Ph.D. students find that the pre-dissertation exercises are useful. More information for beginning Ph.D. students on the comprehensive exam process would be welcome. Peer support for a few students is lacking.

***d. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the graduate program?***

While the number of faculty is sufficient currently, see our recommendation above encouraging greater financial resources to recruit more Ph.D. students. In order to adequately serve the graduate program, the shortage of clinical instruments and the condition of aging instruments should be addressed: the faculty identified a need for 10 Au.D. instruments for teaching. With instrumentation costs at \$30,000 each, we recommend pursuit of university funds and/or donation for this expensive but necessary purchase. This Au.D. program and the SLP element would benefit from increased teaching space owing to the growing number of students. Finally, administrative resources are somewhat lacking to serve all the program's needs: at least one full-time staff member is needed for documentation and for managing externships, since 100% of students have externships that require extensive administration.

***e. Does the program offer appropriate financial support to graduate students?***

The program guarantees financial support up through Year 3 (Ph.D. program). In the 4<sup>th</sup> year students must pursue their own funding—while the program sometimes offers assistance in helping students find sources of income, more funding through the 4<sup>th</sup> year would be helpful. Ideally, the program could create a few teaching assistantship positions for the Ph.D. students and enhance funding to aid their research activities as they complete the program.

***f. Are interactions, including interdisciplinary, among graduate, undergraduate, and professional programs, appropriate?***

Valuable interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary work and opportunities include the International IPE, a summer graduate course, where faculty take students to Botswana and



work with health educators in cities there. Students gained another valuable experience last year when the program shifted to West Virginia. The domestic program in W.Va. is a good option for those who can't afford Botswana. Experiences for undergrads have included the music therapy programs, and the summer camp experience working with children with autism. Other valuable projects have joined the undergraduate and graduate populations in joint experiences. The opportunity to collaborate with similar programs at other universities may provide an area of potential growth.



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November 30, 2021

Dear Dr. Such and Site Reviewers,

We, Dr. Joann Benigno and Dean John McCarthy, prepared this response to the site review report for Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) in the College of Health Sciences and Professions (CHSP). On behalf of CSD, we would like to thank the members of the review committee, Drs. Ingram, Kanwar and Chen for the time and effort extended in completing the review of the CSD programs. CSD faculty, staff and students enjoyed the opportunity to connect with all of them to discuss undergraduate and graduate programs on October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. We have carefully reviewed the Program Review Report furnished on Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. In the sections that follow, we respond to comments according to the section of the report.

### **Executive Summary and Commendations**

We were delighted to learn that the review committee deemed CSD programs as “viable and thriving.” We thank the committee for the commendations shared. We are very proud of our faculty, staff, and students and our programs in CSD.

### **Areas of Concern**

**Additional Faculty and Staff.** Thank you for recognizing the critical need for additional faculty and staff. As discussed in the report, additional faculty and staff are needed to “maintain the highly specialized, hands-on clinical training needed for the management of increasing demands from undergraduate students in introductory courses, new certificate programs, and the Au.D. graduate program.” We agree that these challenges have impacted the teaching and service workloads of our current faculty. Though not highlighted above, the increasing size of the Master’s program in SLP (cohort size of 35) has increased the workload of academic and clinical faculty and supervisors who educate and train students in the program. Faculty workloads are evaluated and discussed on an annual basis. Any adjustment in workload will also require approval from the Dean of CHSP. The full-time interpreter position represents yet another critical need and a priority hire. We continue to have discussions about this need and will advocate for this position at the level of the Provost. Although we understand the Au.D. faculty expressed equipment needs, the need for additional faculty and staff for the Au.D. program requires further clarification and discussion.

**Au.D. and Ph.D. Student Funding.** With respect to PhD funding student funding, it is true that funding is not guaranteed in the fourth year. Historically, it has been rare for a fourth year Ph.D. student who sought funding not to find any possibilities. Fourth year Ph.D. students have been provided opportunities to teach and TA courses and/or receive a partial stipend if they have passed their comprehensive exams and maintained good standing in the program by the end of

their third year. Au.D. students receive support in the form of research or teaching assistantships or through working in the CSD main office or the Hearing, Speech and Language Clinic.

## Recommendations

- ***The approved faculty line (SLP Assistant/Associate Clinical Prof.) to replace the lost tenure-track faculty member is a top priority.*** We agree. Since the initial report was submitted, a proposal was approved and the search is currently underway.
- ***An in-house, full-time interpreter is needed to assist deaf faculty (3 full-time deaf faculty and 2 part-time deaf faculty members) and students. This is particularly urgent for the growing undergraduate student population.*** We agree, though we would like to recognize that we have 12 hours of on demand support for ASL interpreting through the Office of Accessibility Services. We recognize this was reported to be insufficient by members of the ASL faculty and not at the level of our peer institutions. Though the pursuit of a full-time position (as mentioned above) is still in process, at this point, we need to find the best path to move forward with this position in conjunction with the College and University/Office of Accessibility Services (as deemed appropriate).
- ***Additional ASL instructors are needed to serve the growing ASL course demand. The recent addition of the ASL Certificate program also exacerbates this need.*** We agree. A proposal is under consideration at the level of the Provost at the time of this response. Without action, we will not be able to meet the demand for the courses on our campus and opportunities for growth will be inconsistent.
- ***Administrators needed to support graduate students and faculty in administering externships and other needs. Although a half-time position has been proposed, a full-time position is desirable to meet the program's needs.*** At this time, we are moving forward to express our imminent needs with a budget-neutral .50 FTE position. Shared service pilots are new and ongoing in CHSP and it will take time to find ways to meet all needs.
- ***Equipment needed to meet high demand from both classroom and patient requirements. Some equipment is obsolete, resulting in inadequately trained students entering the profession. The Audiology lab needs replacement equipment, and other equipment is inadequate to meet competing demands from concurrent clinical and instruction needs. We recommend seeking university or college funds to purchase teaching instruments for the clinical training classes.*** Thank you for these recommendations. This year, CHSP created a process for capital funds requests. One audiology request was funded. We recognize there are continued needs. As more funds become available for capital equipment and teaching/clinical endeavors, Au.D. faculty and clinical staff will be encouraged to pursue those funds by prioritizing their needs. With respect to the adequacy of training of our students, we are required to report individually the competency level of each student in our graduate programs to our national accreditor. We have not identified any student who has failed to meet any critical competency area who has then graduated from our program.
- ***We recommend creating TA positions for Ph.D. students and Au.D. students to provide an additional area of funding support; TA positions also may reduce some faculty teaching loads.*** Thank you for the recommendation. Historically, a number of

opportunities have been extended to Ph.D. students to teach classes. We will make sure we are maximizing these types of opportunities with future cohorts as we consider ways to enhance the instructional training of our Ph.D. students. Though some Au.D. students serve as TAs for undergraduate and graduate courses, additional TA opportunities (as appropriate) will be explored.


- ***If the programs continue to grow, more teaching space should be proposed especially for the clinical training of undergraduate students.*** Thank you for this recommendation.
- ***We recommend upgrading conference room and clinical virtual meeting technology.*** Thank you for this recommendation. Upgrading technology and maximizing use of university infrastructure with videoconferencing are both priorities.

Thank you again for the effort and time expended to review the programs in CSD. If you have any questions or wish to follow up on the contents of this response, do not hesitate to reach out to Joann Benigno ([benigno@ohio.edu](mailto:benigno@ohio.edu)) or John McCarthy ([mccarthj@ohio.edu](mailto:mccarthj@ohio.edu)).

Sincerely,



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