March 20, 2020

TO: Ruth Litovsky, Professor and Chair, Communication Sciences & Disorders

FROM: Eric Wilcots, Interim Dean, L&S

RE: L&S APC Completion of Supplemental Program Review:

- BA/BS, Communication Sciences and Disorders (BA/BS and MAJ 216)
- MS-Communication Sciences and Disorders (MS 216L&S)
- Doctor of Audiology (AUD 209)
- Doctor of Philosophy, Communication Sciences and Disorders (PHD 216L&S)

Completion of the review of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Post-Baccalaureate Capstone Certificate (UNCS212) was conveyed on 7 January 2020.

CC: Jenna Alsteen, Assistant Dean, Graduate School
Gloria Mari-Beffa, Associate Dean for Natural and Mathematical Science, L&S
Elaine M. Klein, Associate Dean for Academic Planning, L&S
Jocelyn Milner, Vice Provost and Director, Academic Planning & Institutional Research
Karen Mittelstadt, Academic Planning & Institutional Research
James Montgomery, Associate Dean for Fiscal Initiatives, L&S
Jennifer Noyes, Associate Dean for Operations and Staff, L&S
Parmesh Ramanathan, Associate Dean, Graduate School

On February 28, 2020, the L&S Academic Planning Council discussed materials submitted for the regular review of academic programs in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. We are aware that the programs offered in your department are (and have been continuously) accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and we trust that the program alignment with the academic and procedural standards associated with accreditation support program quality. Consistent with UW-Madison’s approach to the review of accredited programs, this review was convened to supplement that work, affording the department, L&S, the Graduate School, and UW-Madison an opportunity to consider carefully questions that might fall outside the boundaries of the accreditation reviews required for your programs — to consider our more local contexts and needs in which these programs, students, and faculty operate. In addition, this exercise allowed us to complete the five-year review of the Post Baccalaureate Capstone Certificate program, which is required for new programs.

Associate Dean Gloria Mari Beffa led discussion of the materials provided for the self-study, the review committee’s report, and the department’s response to it. Council members were
impressed by the overall quality of the department, and by the success of CSD’s carefully managed and highly regarded programs. They concurred with the review committee’s conclusion that the department is excellent, and the programs are healthy and thriving. A few matters, in particular, stand out:

- The exemplary work the department has done to nurture a collegial, welcoming, and supportive environment for all members – staff, students, clinical and academic faculty. Importantly, members of this community are also aware of its gaps, and are working collectively, through various initiatives, to improve overall diversity in the department and in the field. We share your hope that these efforts will lead to great things in the future.

- The outstanding placement record for the professionals who complete the master’s program (known colloquially as the MS-SLP). The program’s 100% placement and a 100% pass rate on the PRAXIS test required for employment, certainly grant bragging rights. At the doctoral level, the committee found similar excellence, and a faculty that appears to be working collectively toward the success of these students, as indicated via the collective review of applications, admission decisions, and of annual progress reports. The faculty have procedures in place also to support students in cases where advisors depart.

- As we usually see with accredited programs, assessment of student learning is well developed. Council members were pleased to see, however, that these procedures are particularly robust, with results converted into action both at the level of the individual student (providing guidance for improvement) and on the scale of program improvement to help ensure continued success.

The review committee noted a number of weaknesses that appear, generally, to reflect the pressures to grow the program in sync with the addition of instructional resources, the well-known problems with the current departmental space and of the building in general. Conversations with L&S Administration, and action where possible, will continue. The review committee offered a number of suggestions for actions that might be pursued at the department’s discretion; only one recommendation stood out as requiring substantial intervention to pursue, and therefore the council could not endorse immediately the adoption of the recommendations related to the collaborative program with UW-Stevens Point. Further study of those issues, with extensive consultation and discussion with colleagues in the Provost’s Office, Graduate School, and our peers at UW-Stevens Point, will be required before any action on that matter can be pursued. Nevertheless, the L&S APC directed my colleague Associate Dean for Academic Planning Elaine Klein to explore that work.

Setting aside those issues, however, I am happy to report that the L&S APC unanimously approved a motion to consider the L&S portion of this review complete. Thank you for all you and your colleagues do to allow UW-Madison to offer these very successful programs, and to serve these talented and capable students. I think you’re aware that the next phase of review involves the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee, and they may offer additional advice from their perspective.
Gloria Mari-Beffa  
Associate Dean for Natural and Physical Sciences  
Room 301 South Hall  
1055 Bascom Mall  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Madison, WI 53706  

January 23, 2020

Dear Associate Dean Mari-Beffa,

Following this cover letter is our review of the academic programs overseen by the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders (CSD). Overall, we found CSD as a department to be very healthy and thriving. It was a pleasure to meet with them to learn about all of the work that they do.

One idea that I would like to add to the review in this cover letter is to suggest that the college discuss with campus leadership whether there is any possibility to engage state legislators in a discussion about the building needs of CSD. The professional and clinical aspects of the academic programs that CSD oversees create a specific situation where CSD's direct service to the citizens of Wisconsin is being harmed due to the current state of the physical plant. The current state of the building that CSD is housed in creates a substantial drag across all programs and the clinic due to more expensive operating costs and lost opportunities for collaboration in research and services.

We hope this review is helpful to all involved and please let us, the review committee, know if you need anything else on this matter.

Sincerely,

for the committee

Eric Raimy  
Director, Language Sciences  
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1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706  
raimy@wisc.edu

cc: Elaine Klein, Associate Dean for Academic Planning
Review Committee Report for Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD)

BA/BS: Communication Sciences and Disorders  
MS: Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP)  
AuD: Audiology  
PhD: Normal Aspects of Speech-Hearing-Language; Speech-Language Pathology; Audiology

Date submitted: January 23, 2020

Review Committee Members:  
Christa Olson, English, GFEC Representative  
Eric Raimy, English & Language Sciences, Chair  
Lauren Ritters, Integrative Biology  
Mary Sesto, Medicine

A. A summary of the activities of the review committee and materials reviewed

In the second week of September 2019, the review committee began discussions via email on how to conduct the review. The committee met in person on Friday September 13th where we set a schedule for reviewing the materials we received from CSD and setting up the site visit. CSD provided a Box folder containing the relevant background materials for this review. The Box folder contained CSD's self-review, the appendix materials for the self-review, and program handbooks among other items. Two days of site visit were scheduled for Tuesday November 5th and Thursday November 7th, 2019. During these site visits the review committee met with six university staff members as a group, 8 undergraduate students as a group, 14 graduate students as a group (3 PhD, 8 AuD, 3 MS), 12 clinical faculty as a group, 4 junior faculty as a group, MS SLP Program Director Michelle Ciucci, Undergraduate Advisors Katie Christianson and Mianisha Finney, PhD Program Director Nadine Connor, AuD Program and Clinic Director Amy Hartman, and Chair Ruth Litovsky. The review committee thought that CSD was a welcoming and generous host during these site visits. All of the questions that the review committee had were answered during the site visit and overall, the review committee concluded that the self-report was an excellent representation of the current state of CSD. CSD should be commended for the quality of their self-study.

B. An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the program

(1) STRENGTH: CLIMATE  - CSD faculty (both clinical and academic), staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students all commented positively on the department climate.

The faculty reported collegial relationships with colleagues and between clinical and academic staff. In their meetings with the review committee, they made clear their respect for one another’s expertise and described both groups as integral to the department’s mission. Faculty who had been in the department ten years ago noted that the division between speech/hearing and audiology that had been a factor ten years ago was now non-existent. In clinical, teaching, and department level contexts, faculty have worked not only to build cohesion but also to develop mutually beneficial connections. Junior faculty and clinical faculty expressed
comfort with department governance structures, feeling included in decisions that affected them
directly as well as decisions about the future direction of the department. They explained that
major issues are consistently discussed in open faculty meetings and that, typically, consensus is
reached before the issue goes to the Executive Committee for a final vote.

Department staff shared a similarly strong overall positive feeling about their work
climate and relations with clinical and academic faculty. They were particularly positive about
their work as a team—sometimes going beyond their official tasks in order to support one
another and meet department needs. There was some concern about the upcoming Total Title
and Compensation process and a desire for particularly careful and inclusive communication
around issues that directly affect staff.

Faculty (clinical and academic) and staff all noted that faculty staffing shortages had
posed a serious threat to department climate five years ago and that they had come together
effectively to ensure the health of the department. They also noted, however, that
understaffing—especially among clinical faculty—continued to put a strain on faculty and staff
alike.

Graduate students, likewise, had good things to say about their relationships with clinical
and academic faculty. Several who came to the graduate program after doing UW-
Madison undergraduate degrees cited good relationships with faculty as highly influential in their
decisions to continue here. When asked about the climate and whether they knew who to contact
in case of concerns, students described the department as close-knit, both among cohorts and
with faculty and staff. They also told the review committee that they knew how to raise concerns
should they arise. They acknowledged, though, that it might be difficult to raise concerns, given
how small and connected the department is. This meant that if/when issues arose, they might all
be aware of them but also be uncomfortable soliciting an official response.

Students in the PhD program have a regular professional seminar that includes sessions
on career development and job market preparation. They are required to attend at least four
semesters of the professional seminar and some continue beyond. The seminars appeared to
provide both professional development and a formal site for community building. The weekly
department-wide colloquium provides a similar venue for connections.

Undergraduate students were enthusiastic about their experience in the department. They
appreciate the new advising model and are conscious of the good labor that Katie Christianson
and Mianisha Finney are doing for them. They also celebrated the department’s culture of
teaching, noting that early career faculty clearly invest in growing as teachers and become
stronger and stronger with each semester. They applauded these high standards and described
them as part of what made them happy to be in the major. They also cited the student
organization National Student Speech Language & Hearing Association (NSSLHA) for aiding
their professional development and sense of cohesion.

Faculty, advising staff, and students all noted that the CSD department was less diverse in
terms of race and gender than they would hope. Particularly in the graduate programs, they
discussed the problem in terms of a pipeline challenge—the field as a whole needs to do more
outreach at the high school and early undergraduate levels to attract people to speech, hearing,
and audiology. The department has done typical outreach—to the McNair program, tabling at
events. Through the undergraduate student organization, they have also done targeted outreach in
the Madison community, working to attract high school students from underrepresented groups
to the field.
(2) STRENGTH: UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING - The undergraduate advising team has high energy and is working to set up and revamp the website to reach out to students during SOAR as well as to high school students, including URM students. The team is also making plans to develop targeted assessments to track student progress (e.g. surveys to new students, junior students, and post grads). Undergraduates felt that professors were helpful, responded well to feedback, and worked hard to improve course materials. The momentum of good advising is clearly present in CSD but this system new and there remain some weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Although the undergraduate students were universally positive towards their CSD program, they did have some constructive criticism to share about their experiences in the program. One theme discussed was the restrictiveness of the major which many students were not fully aware of how regimented the major was until part way through it. Questions about prerequisite courses, GPA required for future success in graduate school, course scheduling, making multiple majors work with the CSD program, and applying to graduate school were all raised with the feeling that there could be better communication to the students on these topics. The large class sizes in the undergraduate CSD program were also mentioned with the addition that some students requested that discussion section and/or TA support would be best used in courses early in the program so as to support learning the base content knowledge.

(3) STRENGTH: MS-SLP PROGRAM - CSD has an outstanding record of MS-SLP student placement after graduation, with nearly 100% placement for the past 5 years. Students are also well-prepared for the PRAXIS test needed for employment in the field, with a 100% pass rate for the last 5 years. This is advertised on the website and excellent for recruitment.

Recruitment efforts are strong and effective. Students indicated that it was easy to find information about the program online. Many were attracted by the outstanding reputation of the program and had attended one of three information sessions offered each year for prospective students. Once accepted into the program students are also invited to an open house. Other recruitment efforts involve advertising at career fairs and the newly hired advisor has plans to recruit URM students.

Students felt welcome and found it easy to gather information about program requirements online and through departmental information sessions and pro-seminars. Students felt well supported in the process of preparing for and applying for the job market. Outreach opportunities were considered enjoyable and contribute to a sense of community and positive climate.

Student assessment is a central part of MS-SLP clinical training. If a student falls short, a clinical advisor will work with the student to meet specific learning goals. Faculty also meet to discuss student progress and make plans as needed. The program has prepared a student survey which will further efforts to assess student performance.

Training and coursework are dictated by what is required for accreditation. There were concerns related to meeting these requirements a few years ago when a few faculty left the department. Additionally, increasing student enrollment increased demand related to student advising. The university recognized these concerns and took positive steps to support the program by approving several new hires (new faculty, an MS advisor, and temporary clinical staff as needed to meet the needs of the growing numbers of students).

The program is doing an excellent job training and placing students to meet the strong demand for speech pathologists that exists across the country.
(4) WEAKNESS: STUDENT FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEGREES - The funding model for MS-SLP and AuD students is complex. Many students take hourly jobs, some are offered scholarships through the graduate school, and some are able to obtain RA- or TA-ships. The hourly jobs, TA, and RA positions are readily available but require travel time and are difficult to schedule around required courses and clinic hours. There are concerns that the UW program is losing strong candidates to programs that offer student fellowships. The program makes an effort to schedule classes and clinic time so that students can work, but outreach and practice requirements make it challenging for students to have income while in the program. The Review Committee saw this as more a problem for UW-Madison professional degree programs in general than a problem arising from CSD’s specific model.

(5) WEAKNESS: GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION - The required 3-day graduate student orientation was considered by students to have strengths but to be overwhelming. Important information was difficult to remember later when needed, especially related to Head Start.

(6) WEAKNESS: SIZE OF MS-SLP PROGRAM - Increasing enrollment in the MS-SLP program increases clinic requirements so clinical faculty cannot teach as much, leaving teaching gaps. Additionally, it is difficult to find offsite placements for larger numbers of students and to make experiences equitable. Without additional clinical staff it is difficult to individualize programs to meet student goals.

(7) STRENGTH: PhD PROGRAM STRUCTURE - CSD has an outstanding record of PhD student placement after graduation (nearly 100%). Graduate students found it easy to gather information about the program online.

Recruitment efforts are effective and involve advertisement at meetings and creating closing slides for presentations to make students aware of T32 opportunities. The program is participating in the “name exchange” program designed increase URM recruitment.

The entire faculty is consulted and committed to ensuring student success in the program. Students choose an advisor before admission and are directly admitted to a single laboratory; however, all faculty review student applications and only students the entire faculty approves are admitted with the agreement that if an advisor leaves the program, another faculty member will take over.

The study plan for each PhD student is determined in consultation with the advisor and the entire academic faculty evaluates students every year to assess progress. The PhD student provides information on progress and accomplishments to the committee (that can then be used for the UW annual assessment exercise), the committee reviews and makes recommendations, and the advisor provides written feedback. Changes are also made to the program in response to student feedback, and students feel that they have a voice in departmental decisions.

All PhD students admitted to the program are funded as RAs on individual investigator grants or T32s, as TAs or with external funding.

(5) WEAKNESS: SIZE OF PhD PROGRAM - Admissions to the PhD program are limited by the small number of faculty and only faculty with funding or access to T32 slots accept students. The small faculty size limits the possibility of rotations and availability of specialized seminars.
for PhD students. PhD students are in laboratories that are located in numerous buildings on campus raising concerns about climate and integration. There is no formal graduate student group, but students do meet during classes and pro-seminars, which forges some sense of community.

(6) STRENGTH: AuD PROGRAM - CSD has an outstanding record of AuD student placement with 98% of them finding employment within three months of graduation and 100% finding employment within one year. AuD students, including those from underrepresented groups, complete the degree in the program’s four-year time frame. In addition, they have a 100% PRAXIS examination pass rate. 100% of graduates would recommend the program to others and the support and accessibility of faculty are noted as a strength of the program. The AuD program consists of nationally and internationally recognized faculty. Many of the faculty are R01 funded researchers and have independent laboratories housed across campus (e.g. Waisman, Medical Sciences Center).

(7) WEAKNESS: PARTNERSHIP WITH UW-STEVEN'S POINT, STUDENT EXPERIENCE - The consortium arrangement for the AuD program between UW-Madison and UW-Steven's Point has become a liability for AuD students here at UW-Madison. UW-Madison AuD students are prevented from benefitting from all of the research and teaching resources locally available because students at the two campuses are required to have access to identical programs of study. This impacts active learning, prevents hands-on laboratory activities, taking additional classes offered at UW-Madison, and participating in local outreach activities among other things. The distance learning aspect of the program affects UW-Madison students through technical glitches, makes it more difficult to earn participation credit, and requires travel to Stevens Point at times. There is a noticeable discrepancy between the capstone activities originating in Madison vs. Stevens Point which creates inequities between the two student populations. The review committee could not see any advantages for the UW-Madison student population in the consortium arrangement between UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point.

(8) WEAKNESS: PARTNERSHIP WITH UW-STEVEN'S POINT, PROGRAM VIABILITY - The overall viability of the only AuD program in the state of Wisconsin is threatened due to resource inequality between UW-Madison and UW-Steven's Point. UW-Steven's Point has experienced difficulty replacing AuD faculty resulting from faculty retirement and departures, as well as difficulty obtaining resources for the AuD program. These challenges have weakened UW-Steven's Point’s ability to be an equal partner in the consortium, resulting in inconsistency in student training and available resources across the two programs. This threatens reaccreditation efforts as it is required that the programs demonstrate consistency in training as well as clinical and research opportunities.

(9) WEAKNESS: PHYSICAL SPACE - The physical plant that supports CSD is detrimental to all aspects of CSD's mission. The age, size, and condition of the building that houses CSD has negative impacts on the culture, budget, clinic responsibilities, and research within CSD. The current building is not large enough to house all of the faculty and corresponding labs in CSD which weakens the culture associated with CSD simply because people do not see each other regularly. The diaspora of the labs associated with CSD faculty reduces the possibility of clinical research, prevents CSD from benefitting from the indirect costs generated by the grants secured
by faculty, limits graduate student access to paid research positions, and makes it difficult for a
graduate student culture to develop. The age and location of the building affects the performance
of the clinic due to issues with parking and the fact that the building is a repurposed dormitory
which was not designed to be a clinic. This raises issues about the space and safety needs of the
clientele of the clinic. The budget of CSD is affected both by the lack of indirect costs
(mentioned above) and the additional costs of supporting teaching, research, and clinical
programs in an old building that was not designed for these uses. The IT functionality and budget
of CSD is hit very hard on this point. The building also impacts recruitment of graduate students
because it does not reflect the quality of the graduate programs.

C. Recommendations for future directions
(1) We commend the department for its climate and for its conscious efforts to sustain it. We
recommend continuing to invest in NSSLHA’s outreach efforts to increase diversity in the
department and larger field. We also recommend that department and program leadership
continue to strengthen communication networks at all levels, paying special attention to
communication around situations where department members (students, faculty, and staff) might
feel particularly vulnerable or concerned.

(2) We recommend that CSD continue their efforts in developing high quality advising for their
undergraduate program. Further developing strong communication channels to their majors
through as many means as possible (please check that the online undergraduate tool is working)
will help address some of the concerns raised by undergraduate students. Something not
mentioned earlier that could be considered would be to develop 'pre-advising' for potential future
CSD students. Strengthening support and partnership with the local NSSLHA chapter will help
disseminate information to all of the undergraduate students. The NSSLHA chapter mentioned
that they could use help in building bridges with other prehealth clubs such at PT and OT.

(2) We recommend that CSD review the 3-day graduate student orientation to see whether it
could be less overwhelming.

(3) We recommend that the College, Graduate School, and Campus consider whether CSD could
submit required annual re-accreditation documents in place of the current assessment activity
requirements. This would improve efficiency, reduce redundancy, and diminish the paperwork
burden for CSD.

(4) We recommend that CSD meet with Graduate School representatives to discuss methods to
achieve CSD's goal of increased retention of targeted groups and URM students in their
programs.

(5) We recommend that the College (and possibly Campus) invest more resources to increase
teaching staff and faculty (including clinical) in CSD. This investment will address increasing
enrollments while maintaining high quality individualized training, will help address the state-
(and nation-wide shortage of all of the different types of CSD degrees (MS-SLP, AuD, and
PhD), and will provide a needed robustness to CSD. Many of the weaknesses listed in the
previous section will be remedied with this investment and it will support the recommendation
below in (6).
(6) We recommend that the process of establishing a UW-Madison only AuD program commence as soon as possible. This will require ending the consortium AuD program between UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point. It is important to note that the UW-Madison L&S Academic Planning Council 2011 report stated that the advantages for separating the programs were primarily administrative and that the changes would likely affect only administrative offices not students and faculty. This is no longer the case. Students are directly affected by the joint program’s challenges. The establishment of a new AuD program here at UW-Madison will require some investment from the College (and possibly Campus) because of accreditation requirements. But, this investment will ensure the best AuD program possible in the state of Wisconsin and will directly serve the citizens of Wisconsin in the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea. This will also directly address all of the weaknesses identified in the AuD program in the previous section.

(7) We strongly recommend that the College (and possibly Campus) actively raise the priority of new construction to house the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. The present physical plant supporting CSD is completely inadequate and is detrimental to all programs of study, the operation of the clinic, and the pursuit of research. Acting on this item will eliminate the weaknesses related to the physical plant identified in the previous section.
Dear Elaine,
As a follow up I conferred with CSD faculty and we’re happy with the report going forward to APC
Thanks so much
Ruth

Ruth Litovsky
Madison Wisconsin USA

Dear Elaine,
I’m forwarding an email that I had sent on 1/24/20
Please see below.
Best
Ruth

Dear Elaine,
Great to hear from you. I’m glad that we are moving forward with the next step of the review.
I think that it’s fine to get this in the queue for APC. The document looks great. There are a couple of areas that I’ll send you feedback on.
Before doing so, I’ll confer with my colleagues in CSD and will be sure to send feedback by 2/24.

Best
Ruth

Ruth Litovsky, PhD
Dear Ruth,

I hope this finds you well!

Gloria and I received today the report of the committee convened to review the academic programs in CSD (above and beyond the focused report L&S just completed, for the post-baccalaureate capstone certificate). I’m sharing it with you with an invitation to correct any errors of fact that may have crept into the committee’s report, so we can include those (brief) corrections with the materials the APC will review.

I’d like to get this in the queue for APC discussion no later than March, so if you need a few weeks to do this, you may have them. Shall I look for a response from you by February 24 or so?

Thanks!

Elaine

Elaine M. Klein
Associate Dean for Academic Planning, L&S
elaine.klein@wisc.edu | 608-265-8484

Please note that there are two “Elaine Kleins” on campus; are you sending your messages to the right one?