



2016 Academic Program Review Summary

College of Education

Department of Communication Sciences Disorders

Part 1: Overview

A. Degree Programs by Level

Graduate Programs:

MS in Speech Pathology and Audiology (51.0204) (ED-MS SPAU)

B. Mission and Purpose

The Mission of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is fourfold:

- ~to prepare highly qualified, capable, ethical professionals who will engage in reflective decision-making and promote and sustain authentic change, excellence, and equity, as well as exceeding the Departments and ASHA's guidelines for clinical and academic preparation in speech-language pathology;
- ~to engage in research of the normal and abnormal processes of speech, hearing, and language towards the furthering of both clinical and academic knowledge reflecting the diversity and needs of a global society while considering current methodologies and incorporating current technology;
- ~to provide quality speech, language, and hearing diagnostic and habilitation/ rehabilitation services to all FAU students, staff, and faculty and to any individual outside of the FAU community requiring such services;
- ~to act as a resource for the University, as well as for local, state, national, and international communities, by serving as consultants, liaisons, lecturers, facilitators, master clinicians, and authorities in the various areas of communication disorders.

Vision:

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Florida Atlantic University is dedicated to excellence in academic preparation, clinical education, research, and service to the community. The department is committed to preparing entry-level clinicians who utilize evidence-based practices in the clinical environment, adhere to ethical standards professionally and personally, employ critical thinking and self-analysis, aspire to exceptional quality in clinical practice, use technology to further treatment and research goals, and recognize the value of life-long learning.

Core Values:

Research
Commitment to excellence
Leadership
Independence
Respect
Mentoring
Scholarship
Cultural and ethnic diversity
Internal and external collegiality and collaboration
Professional and personal ethics and integrity

C. Major changes since the last program review

In the fall of 2015 the FAU College of Education became the first in Florida to receive accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the single specialized accreditor for educator preparation in the United States. Faculty underwent the new accreditation process in order to take the lead in meeting new rigorous standards.

The Council on Academic Accreditation conducted a program review and site visit in the spring, 2015. The department was reaccredited for the full 8-year reaccreditation term. For the past 7 years, all graduates taking the NESPA exam have earned a passing score on their first attempts. The department is very proud of that statistic.

The CSD department is included in FAU's strategic plan in the Neuroscience and Health Aging Pillars. These two groups have been holding planning and brainstorming sessions to come up with interdisciplinary projects in both areas. Additionally, Dr. Danesh collaborates with faculty in the engineering department and also holds a joint appointment at the medical school; Dr. Keintz and Dr. Tessel have lectured at the medical school. Dr. Williams serves conducts a fluency support group as well as supervises tele-therapy with clients in Uganda and Dr. Fries supervises screenings at local preschools in the fall and spring semesters.

Faculty changes since the last review in 2008 include the addition of one faculty member for a total of 7 faculty in the department.

The department has an innovative distance tele-therapy program with Rwanda. This collaborative endeavor affords graduate students the opportunity to deliver speech and language services to individuals who do not have access to them. Moreover, it allows for continued treatment by student clinicians via webcam video conferencing. This project began in June of 2009 when Dr. Dale Williams joined a team from the Koinonia Foundation <http://www.kfaid.com> and traveled to Kigali. Over the course of the next 16 days, he attended numerous meetings about the development of this program with Rwandan businessman and various government officials—including the Minister of Education Theoneste Mutsindashyaka.

Part 2: Findings

A. Strengths

The department successfully completed their CAA review so the current curriculum meets the required standards (STD 3.0 Curriculum). The CSD department will be a feather in any College's profile since it has consistently achieved the SUS of Florida's Board of Governors performance metrics targeting timely graduation rates, median wages, and employment post-graduation. Any consideration of reorganization should be carefully evaluated for risks and benefits.

B. Weaknesses/Challenges

Technology upgrades are in dire need. The faculty's "speech science" laboratory is a shared space with relatively older-model equipment (e.g., Visipitch is dated and non-functional). Additional examples include but are not limited to an updated clinical supervisory system, use of simulations (e.g., in conjunction with Schools of Medicine and/or Nursing), and full implementation of all the capabilities within the CALIPSO clinical tracking system. Some mechanism for repair and/or replacement of equipment (i.e., capitol replacement plan) is advised.

C. Recommendations

The College of Education Dean's Office will consider each recommendation and the department action plan response and priorities during the formal Executive Committee retreat in July 2016.

Recommendation 1: Communication Sciences and Disorders should explore the feasibility of offering an on-line post-Baccalaureate Prerequisite Leveling Curriculum.

Recommendation 2: Faculty of CSD should be actively engaged in niche research initiatives (Pillars and Platforms) with similarly minded scholars.

Recommendation 3: Relocate or renovate the CSD Clinic and Department facilities such that they are sufficient to capitalize on the program strengths. The clinic can easily become an avenue for recognition.

Recommendation 4: Curriculum Review: It is sound practice to frequently review courses and credit hours to parallel the practice world. It is not necessary to alter the total credit hours required for graduation if credit hours shift to more accurately align with the changes in the profession.

Other notes: It is advised that the CD Department strongly consider transitioning to the Communication Sciences and Disorders Centralized Application System (CSDCAS). There is no cost to the Institution. In fact, most Graduate Schools have experienced increased applications (and therefore, application fees) since students still need to complete an abridged application directly to the Institution for the purposes of establishing domicile. Although students incur an initial fee to CSDCAS and a nominal fee (~\$40) per institution, they only need to supply one set of transcripts, recommendations, and GRE scores for the CSDCAS application. The student cost is shifted but remains relatively equal to pre-CSDCAS practices. Certainly, upon admission and acceptance of an offer students will need to provide all final transcripts to their graduate program (as done previously) in compliance with most accrediting bodies' guidelines. This system improves the process for both students and programs. Students report less anxiety and applaud the ease of this process. Admissions activities (i.e., workload) for departmental committees and Graduate Schools are reduced by approximately 60%.