

Request to Establish a Doctoral Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Introduction

Following a recommendation from the Graduate Council and from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs approved on May 13, 2005 the request from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to plan a doctoral program in Communications Sciences and Disorders. The University of North Carolina at now seeks approval to establish a doctoral program in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CIP: 51.02) effective August 2007.

Program Description

The proposed Ph. D. in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) will be an innovative program designed to prepare individuals for careers in the academy. The program includes advanced study in communication sciences and disorders and the intersections and integration of that discipline with other disciplines, e.g. psychology, human development, neurobiology, special education, gerontology, genetics, and public health education. In addition, the proposed program includes defined study of and practice in using research tools and teaching pedagogies as preparation for research and teaching activities in the academy. The Ph.D. will prepare those who pursue careers in higher education for a research career in the academy. In addition, the Ph.D. in CSD at UNCG will prepare its graduates to teach and mentor undergraduate and graduate students in the areas of research and clinical supervision delivery as they create new knowledge.

The educational objective of the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) doctoral program at UNCG is to prepare teacher/scholars. This objective will be achieved by providing an innovative, responsive, high quality and accessible course of study to students who have demonstrated excellent academic achievement in communication sciences and disorders or closely related disciplines. The program will be anchored by a core curriculum of knowledge and skills within the discipline, in intersecting disciplines, and in evidence-based teaching and research methods. It will also provide flexible integrative courses of study in part-time and full-time schedules and innovative instructional models applied in both campus-based and distance learning.

Specific features of the proposed CSD doctoral program that will accomplish these goals include, but are not limited to:

- close interdependence between research and teaching in exemplary learning environments;
- rigorous basic and applied research experiences, including research experience prior to the dissertation;
- faculty modeling and mentoring “best practice” in academic, scholarly and clinical endeavors;

- integration of students into the professional and social culture of the academic community;
- promotion of cultural competence in students and faculty;
- strategic use of institutional, interdisciplinary, and inter-institutional resources.

Program Review

The review process is designed to surface strengths and weaknesses in proposed new degree programs. Proposals to establish new doctoral programs are reviewed internally and externally. The concerns from the two review processes were summarized in a letter to the Chancellor prior to the presentation to the Graduate Council. That summary follows:

While both external reviewers are very supportive of the proposed new doctorate, they do raise some concerns. Reviewer 1 does not have any fundamental concerns but adds a section of advice for the program to consider. Among the items there is a concern about how part-time students will gain the same benefits of the program as full-time students, and an expression of confusion about the steps and order of the plan of study for a doctoral student.

Reviewer 2 is mostly concerned that the program have adequate faculty, adequate space for the program and enough faculty so doctoral faculty can have appropriate assignments for research and grant work. There is also a concern that there be adequate funding for graduate students and that all faculty be involved in grant work and research to support graduate students financially and intellectually.

Graduate Council

The Graduate Council had, as a basis for its consideration, the proposal to plan the program, copies of the outside reviews of the program, the summary letter to the Chancellor, and a presentation to the Council by representatives of the program. Council members did not raise any additional major issues.

Response

Representatives of the program described the resources available at UNCG for the support of doctoral level work in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Included are the UNCG Speech and Hearing Center, Brain imaging lab including tinnitus and auditory perception, the allied communication lab, Toddler Lab for Preschoolers, and the UNCG Tinnitus and Applied Research Program. In addition the campus has arrangements with over 60 community service sites. The campus has authorized the program to add one senior faculty member in 2007 as well as reallocated \$100,000 for assistantships for doctoral students.

The program has looked carefully at part-time degree programs in related fields, Nursing and Public Health and believe that a workable program can be crafted. Such a program opens up access to a doctoral program for people who may not be able to leave a job and study full time. It will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

Need for the Program

This is clearly an area that will experience growth and greater demand both for practitioners and for faculty for expanding programs. Speech language Pathology is ranked 12th by the U.S. Department of Labor among large-growth occupations.

Resources

The campus has extensive clinics and focused labs and the University is committed to reallocations of resources. Additional funding will come from grants and enrollment growth.

Recommendation by the Graduate Council

After consideration of the issues raised by reviewers and Council members, the Graduate Council voted, without dissent, to recommend approval for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to establish a doctoral program in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Recommendation

The staff of the General Administration recommends that the Board of Governors approve the request from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to establish a doctoral program in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Approved to be Recommended for Establishment to the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Harold Martin

January 3, 2007