

APPENDIX P

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

Introduction

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro requests approval to plan a doctoral program in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CIP: 51.0201).

Program Description

The educational objective of the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) doctoral program at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) is to prepare teacher/scholars 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 cognate areas, 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 some 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.

The educational goals are designed to meet an urgent need. There is a critical shortage and continuing attrition of Ph.D.s within the discipline of CSD. In 2002, the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) established a Joint Ad Hoc Committee on the Shortage of Ph. D. Students and Faculty in Communication Sciences and Disorders. A total of 56 (86%) doctoral programs responded to a survey. Retirement rates over the next 20 years were estimated, based on a sample of 575 fulltime Ph. D. faculty members in doctoral programs in communication sciences and disorders. The mean age of the respondents was 49 years. Findings of the survey reveal a large number of faculty members who will retire within the next 15 years and for whom there are inadequate doctoral-level replacements in preparation. In 2001, 6-7% of all doctoral faculty positions in the field were unfilled. It is not uncommon for searches to

take 2-3 years to fill vacant positions. Further, the survey identified ineffective strategies for the recruitment and retention of doctoral students in existing programs and CSD doctoral programs that are inaccessible to qualified, interested students. The shortage, if not remedied, has dire consequences on professional preparation and conduct of research in CSD (Joint Ad Hoc Committee on the Shortage of Ph. D. Students and Faculty in Communication Sciences and Disorders (2002). *Crisis in the Discipline: A Plan for Reshaping Our Future*, www.capcsd.org and www.asha.org).

The inadequate supply of doctoral-level professionals for the academy has been observed directly in North Carolina. Within the past five years, all of the six accredited graduate programs in North Carolina have lost faculty to retirement or to fill retirement-based vacancies outside of North Carolina. In some cases, two to three year searches have been required to fill vacancies. Hence, without providing doctoral education for additional faculty, the ability to maintain a qualified clinical workforce to meet rapidly increasing demands is impossible.

In summary, the educational goals for the doctoral program are to prepare teacher/scholars by providing an innovative, responsive, high quality, and accessible course of study. The graduates of the program will help to meet the documented, urgent needs for faculty to expand the science base of the discipline, educate a growing clinical workforce, and prepare others for the same endeavors. The CSD doctoral program will address these needs through flexible scheduling, part-time and full-time enrollment, on campus and distance learning, and a strategic engagement with disciplines that intersect with CSD. Moreover, we will continue to nominate and mentor undergraduate research assistants. The planning of the doctoral program will include the development of vigorous, effective recruitment and retention strategies for doctoral students.

Program Review

The review process for requests to plan is designed to determine if the proposal is developed to the stage appropriate for taking to the Graduate Council and if so what are the issues that may need further attention. Proposals to plan doctoral programs are reviewed internally. The concerns from the reviewers were summarized in a letter to the Chancellor prior to the presentation to the Graduate Council. That summary follows:

The reviews confirm that there is a shortage of potential faculty in Communication Sciences and Disorders but that doctoral programs are better placed to recruit new faculty now than a few years ago. One reviewer says we are in the midst of a shortage and a more severe shortage may be on the horizon and the other says, "I can assure you that here is a growing critical shortage of Ph.D.s in the field." That reviewer indicates that the recruitment situation has improved for Ph.D. programs. The reviewer's department had 25 applicants for 2 new positions. UNCG's master's program is praised by the reviewers as are some of the key members of the department. Both reviewers think the doctorate is a reasonable next step for the program and that they are likely to be successful in recruiting doctoral-level faculty. Both also think there needs to be more

Ph.D.s produced in the field. The reviewers answer the initial concern that led to the review.

A concern is expressed by one reviewer about the part-time and on-line component of the proposed program though another reviewer identifies the flexibility of the program as what the field needs. A question was raised about the Speech and Hearing Center at UNCG, that is, whether it will continue and the role it will play in doctoral education. There was a concern that the relation to the other two doctoral programs in the State be addressed more fully and that the issue of cooperative courses might be considered.

Graduate Council

The Graduate Council had, as a basis for its consideration, the proposal to plan the program, the summary letter to the Chancellor, and a presentation to the Council by representatives of the program. In addition to the issues raised previously, the following concerns were expressed by Council members: whether there was a plan to have a licensure program as part of the overall program, and further issues about the part-time, distance learning dimension of the program.

Response

Representatives of the program made it clear that this is a research doctorate degree and that there would be no practice or licensure component to the degree program. Their primary goal is to produce faculty to be available to alleviate the shortage of faculty for programs that do train practitioners in the field of communication disorders. The representative made it clear that the dominant thrust of the program is for full-time resident students, but that they expect to use the new technologies for enhancing instruction and providing some course work in a distance learning format. Likewise the representatives indicated there are many working adults who probably could pursue such a degree only in a part-time format. UNCG has four active labs that will be available to support the program: Brain Imaging Lab, Auditory Perception Lab, Applied Communications Sciences Lab, and Infant Toddler Lab Preschool. The program will be built on the strength of current undergraduate and graduate programs.

Need for the Program

There is a consensus that significantly more doctorally-trained faculty need to be produced in this area. Both external reviewers confirm this and they do indicate that they believe UNCG can secure the additional faculty needed to build the program.

Recommendation by the Graduate Council

After consideration of the issues raised by previous reviewers and Council members, the Graduate Council voted, without dissent, to recommend approval for UNCG to plan a doctoral program in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

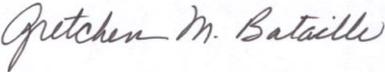
Issues to Address in Planning

Since there was an indication that the issue of part-time and distant components in doctoral work is a source of some disagreement in the field, that issue should be explored and developed in more depth.

Recommendation

The Office of the President recommends that the Board of Governors approve the request from UNCG to plan a doctoral program in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

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



Senior Vice President Gretchen M. Bataille

May 2, 2005