

Review [2] of The University of North Carolina at Greenboro's Proposal to Establish a Doctorate in Communication Studies

My overall assessment of the proposal for establishing a Doctorate in Communication Studies is that the faculty have designed a high quality program with appropriate coursework and experiences in communication sciences and disorders as well as a strong connection to other complimentary disciplines which will enhance the students' experiences and knowledge and prepare them well for academic positions. The program appears to be ready to mount this effort, but resources will be needed to enable recruitment and preparation of high quality graduates to occur.

The following are my comments regarding your specific issues:

What is the pool of good students for such a program and what are the employment opportunities for graduates both in and outside the academy?

As documented in the proposal, there is a significant need for Ph.D. faculty in communication sciences and disorders across the country. The shortage of doctoral level faculty to fill positions in the 246 graduate programs has been called a crisis because of the potential inability to educate clinical speech-language pathologists and audiologists, as well as future faculty. There are many well qualified graduates of our master's degree and AuD programs as well as working clinicians who can bring a wealth of clinical experience and research questions to the PhD program. Convincing them to seek careers in academia is the challenge. One part of the problem is related to lack of access to a Ph.D. program for these individuals in many parts of the country. A second limitation is the inability of some individuals to discontinue employment and move to another location while seeking the degree. For these reasons, recruitment may be a challenge; however, the availability of part time study and distance learning enhancement increases the potential for recruiting strong students as well as the value that this program can provide for the needs in North Carolina and surrounding states. In our own program, and I believe in many programs, we have seen an increase in the number of Ph.D. applicants and the number of enrolled students since the recent recruitment, funding and public information efforts of Ph.D. programs, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and its Foundation, and the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Is the curriculum appropriate for the degree level and does it reflect accepted standards, practices, and current trends in the discipline?

The curriculum described in the proposal includes the standard coursework in the discipline of communication sciences and disorders as well as the tools for research and other academic roles (e.g. grant writing, teaching and supervision). It appears that students will have access to advanced coursework and independent study in the discipline. In addition, the available coursework in related fields is a strength. The discipline of communication sciences is dependent on a wide variety of areas of

knowledge to consider answers to the questions surrounding communication and its disorders. Graduate programs welcome faculty who can collaborate with other disciplines for research and who can bring additional outside perspectives to students.

How would you assess the quality and size of the faculty they identify for the program and what is the current availability of strong faculty for such a program?

With seven Ph.D. faculty either tenured or in tenure leading lines, there is a minimally sufficient faculty to initiate the Ph.D. program. The presence of a strong group of clinical faculty and additional adjuncts to support the undergraduate program and the graduate professional preparation program in speech-language pathology is a critical factor for assuring that the Ph.D. faculty have sufficient time to mentor doctoral students. Child language disorders, voice, craniofacial anomalies, and hearing science are among the areas in which faculty have research and the expertise to mentor students. In order to recruit students and maintain a viable Ph.D. program additional faculty are needed for at least two reasons. First there must be more help to share the burden of doctoral advising, mentoring and teaching. Second, for recruitment in communication sciences and disorders, it is important to be able to provide the opportunity to specialize across the range of communication disorders, and this requires faculty with specific expertise and a research program in these areas. Adult neurogenic communication disorders, including dysphagia, is one example of a large clinical/research area which students will request. At least one faculty member will be needed in this area. As a speech-language pathologist, it is not as clear to me which specific areas of audiology are available and which are not, but additional faculty is likely to be required in order to meet the interests and needs of Ph.D. students in audiology. In addition, it is important to provide access to information and research in the sciences which underlie communication and its disorders. At least two new faculty positions will be required in the near future, if the Ph.D. program is to grow to the numbers outlined in the proposal. The program should make a concerted effort to recruit faculty with a documented strong research agenda and ideally with grant funding, or the potential for both.

As noted above, the pool of available faculty is small. However, the number of programs offering the Ph.D. is also small in comparison to those offering the clinical master's degree. Those individuals who do have strong research agenda and/or potential will be more easily recruited by an institution that has a Ph.D. program and provides the opportunity, resources, time and incentives for research.

How would you assess the research achievements of the current faculty and what are the expectations for scholarship and funded research for such a program?

The number of faculty publications and presentations over the last 5-8 years seems modest, but I see several articles in 2005 and 2006. Dr. Kamhi, who has recently joined the faculty brings a strong history and high level of current activity in child language and literacy research. His presence, in combination with other faculty who have research interests in that area, suggests a good potential for child language research. Dr. Mayo's vita demonstrates a very impressive record of refereed publications prior to 2001 and

continuing presentations in recent years. His current administrative role may certainly restrict time for research activity and should be considered when addressing the number of faculty needed for the program.

It is expected that faculty in Ph.D. programs (at least those who will advise Ph.D. students) will have active research programs, including a consistent record of publications, presentations and grant writing for the following reasons. First, national faculty reputation is important in recruiting Ph.D. students. Second, it is important for faculty to have active research projects in which Ph.D. students can participate during the early part of their program. They need to be able to participate in research data collection and analysis as well as presentations, and research and grant writing. Third, it is important to model all of these activities for students who will be future teacher/scholars. Finally, grants are one way to provide additional student funding. Funding mechanisms for research in our field are not abundant. It is not reasonable to assume that all faculty will have NIH or other high income funding, but faculty must be involved in this effort.

What are the requisite strengths in related degree programs at a lower level and at the same level to support the new program?

The presence of the existing Bachelor of Arts program in communication sciences and disorders and, more importantly, the Master of Arts program in speech-language pathology is an important strength for initiating the Ph.D. program because there is already an existing core of faculty who have the credentials and expertise to provide doctoral education. These individuals have expertise and research in a number of different areas, have graduate teaching experience, and understand what doctoral education is and should be. Some courses already exist that can be taken by Ph.D. students or modified to fit their needs. Faculty have the expertise to provide independent study in a variety of areas.

The proposal indicates availability of educational/research opportunities in a number of related disciplines which are important for the study of communication sciences and disorders. The availability of resources in genetics, nutrition, physiology, human development, and neurological bases support the growing research into these biological bases of communication. These and other available disciplines such as gerontology, counseling, education, sociology, and psychology support the broadened views of prevention of and treatment for communication disorders. Interaction with faculty and coursework from these disciplines would be a significant strength of the program.

What resources are needed to make such a program successful, and does the proposal adequately characterize needed resources?

At least two additional Ph.D. tenure track faculty lines with strong research record and/or potential will be needed to support the increased workload of advising Ph.D. students as well as the additional areas of expertise and research to attract students. Neurogenic communication disorders is one area that does not appear to be available in the program. These and existing faculty will require teaching and supervision loads that allow time for

research, publication and grant writing as well as encouragement and incentive to participate in these activities. This may mean that additional clinical faculty/staff are needed to take on the supervision and perhaps some teaching on-campus students receive full tuition remission and a competitive stipend, especially in light of the other nearby doctoral programs. Part-time and/or distance learning students who plan to continue their current employment may require tuition only, but I do not believe that we can expect Ph.D. students to pay their own tuition.

The proposal indicates that some coursework and experience may be offered through distance learning. This necessitates consideration of resources such computers, server space and access, student resources at their location, faculty expertise, and technical support for program delivery and for faculty and students.

It is difficult to comment on space without having visited the program, but the case that is made seems reasonable in that additional faculty will require offices and especially research space and that Ph.D. students will require work space, research lab space, and access to technology.

The resources that I have outlined are well described by the proposal and supported by the previous program reviewers.

Please summarize what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed program and provide any advice for improving the program.

I consider the following to be strengths of the program:

1. There is an existing well qualified faculty who have already worked together to develop and implement graduate education in the discipline of the proposed PhD program as well as to develop the proposal for the Ph.D. program. This provides confidence that the faculty is experienced and aware of the needs of such a program. The faculty is sufficient in size to begin recruiting students.
2. The proposal for education of Ph.D. students in communication sciences and disorders is well designed and includes an appropriate education experience for students, including coursework in the discipline, in appropriate related areas, and in research tools. Coursework and experiences are designed to prepare students for employment in academia, including research, teaching and supervision.
3. The program has considered the needs, as well as available resources, of the university and community, including cultural aspects of education/service.
4. The Department Head is a well-respected national figure with credibility in research and national service, and the ability to initiate and lead such a program.
5. The program appears to have good physical resources, including space, clinic, some research labs, library, technology.

I recommend the following to develop a viable Ph.D. program:

1. At least two faculty members with strong research records and/or potential are needed as the program begins to enroll students. It would be desirable for them to have external funding. Faculty in specific areas of expertise such as neurogenic communication disorders and perhaps audiology will be needed for recruitment of students in current high interest areas. In addition, clinical faculty/staff must be sufficient to take on more of the workload of the master's and undergraduate programs in order to allow sufficient time for the new Ph.D. program, maintain quality education for those students and meet accreditation standards.
2. Additional space will be needed for new faculty and for Ph.D. students and for the future research of both groups.
3. Tuition and stipend funding is critical for all full time students and ideally for part-time students also in order to recruit well qualified students and allow them to focus on their academic program and research in order to graduate in a timely manner.
4. Faculty need encouragement and time for active research, and publication and travel to give national presentations. Travel funds will be needed for both students and faculty to give joint presentations at national meetings. Encouragement, incentive and support for grant writing is needed.