

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH AND HEARING SCIENCE

REVIEW TEAM REPORT

May 20, 2021

**Academic Program Review University of New Mexico
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Speech and Hearing Science**

Report of Review Team

An Academic Program Review (APR) of the Department of Speech and Hearing Science (SHS) in the College of Arts and Sciences was conducted on April 22-23, 2021. The meetings were held using Zoom video conferencing due to restrictions on travel and face-to-face meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The review team consisted of:

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This report is based on information and materials provided by SHS in advance of the virtual visit, information obtained from the University of New Mexico (UNM) and SHS website, and meeting with various individuals and groups on April 22-23, 2021. The 150+ page SHS self-study, completed in Spring 2021, provided the basis for the core of this report. The self-study incorporated findings from the 2013 Academic Program Review (APR) and the 2019 Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) reaccreditation site visit in review of the MS degree program in Speech-Language Pathology.

We were also provided with the Office of Academic Affairs “Academic Program Review Manual: Process & Procedures,” (APRM). The report follows the format provided by the APRM. The Review Team Worksheet (Appendix F of the APRM) is also included in this report.

An exit meeting to discuss preliminary findings of the review team was held on April 23, 2021.

REPORT SUMMARY

The SHS department offers an undergraduate BA and a graduate MS degree. The Master of Science (MS) degree in Speech-Language Pathology is accredited by the CAA-ASHA and was reaccruited in 2020. The next reaccruited site visit review is scheduled for 2028. Annual written reports are submitted during interim years.

During the Review, the team met on Zoom with 16 academic and clinical faculty members, two staff members, undergraduate and graduate students, members of the College of Arts and Science leadership, the Provost, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Vice President for Research. The team read the 150+ page report prepared by SHS.

The following pages summarize our observations on the various criteria that make up the Academic Program Review process. Included are suggestions that the faculty and staff, together with the new Dean, can pursue to further advance SHS and its stakeholders.

The Review Team thanks all of the people involved in this process for their efforts to make the review successful and complete, with special thanks to Phyllis Palmer in SHS and Sam Hatch, APR Specialist, for making this virtual visit both easy and pleasant to conduct.

Introduction – Overall Program Strengths

The APR review team found the SHS department of seven tenure track and seven clinical faculty to be a cohesive, functional unit with strong leadership, recognition in the institution, and united in the successful preparation of students at the undergraduate and master's degree graduate training level. The department is commended for the unanimous enthusiasm for the SHS program and collegiality among faculty, staff, and students. Both academic and clinical preparation in the discipline of communication science and disorders is solid with well-defined mission and goals aligned with the institution. The faculty are united in their support of the strategic plan and have identified next steps for continuing program and department improvements. The strategic plan goals will meet needs in the state of New Mexico and at the wider national level.

Criterion 1. Introductory Section & Background Information

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 1 is **EXCEEDED (E)**.

Introductory and background information provided to the team was complete and provided the team with the necessary information to conduct the Academic Program Review. It was particularly helpful to have information about the evolution of the program across review periods with information from the last APR and the most recent graduate program accreditation cycle. The level of detail provided a firm basis for comparison and assessment of the rate and substance of change.

Criterion 2. Teaching & Learning: Curriculum

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 2 is **MET (M)**.

SHS has a solid undergraduate program (BA) serving ~140 students that meets pre-requisite requirements for graduate (MS) training in audiology and speech-language pathology. The faculty have identified a set of “leveling” offerings of core courses needed by students who majored in disciplines other than SHS who wish to apply to the graduate program. The graduate training program for speech-language pathology (SLP) has seen significant growth from an average class size of 23/cohort to the current 35 student cohort in the 2020-2021 class. There has been no concurrent increase in faculty FTE during that expansion. Since the 2013 APR the department has made slow but steady inroads into developing relationships with other departments in Health Sciences. The result of a relationship with the UNM Medical Group will be the ability to bill for clinical services will open the door to serving Medicaid and Medicare clients who are often from culturally and linguistically diverse communities without easy access to care.

Strengths

- Highly productive SLP program whose graduates provide clinical services to all regions of New Mexico.
- The master’s SLP program has grown to a 35 student/yr cohort which is considered large and on par in size with the top ten programs in the country.
- 97-100% timely completion and employment rate upon graduation over the past three years, demonstrating timely course offerings and desirability of graduates.
- Clinical services, as a required part of the degree training program, are poised for significant increase in serving the greater Albuquerque and state of New Mexico community with the advent of enhanced billing capability through UNM Medical Group.
- The relationship with UNM Medical Group will allow for student training in use of the Cerner industry electronic medical record program (EMR), which is an integrated electronic health record, practice management, and revenue cycle system.

Opportunities/Recommendations

- The current program has additional bilingual/multicultural training opportunities for students that enhance their professional credentials. Formalizing the recognition at the state department of education level is a natural next step and an appropriate departmental goal that will provide a “value-added” component to the MS degree.

- Given the significant population diversity in the region, students are hungry for more opportunities to provide clinical bilingual assessment and intervention in the campus clinic and across the graduate curriculum.
- Department effort is required to maintain momentum in addressing diversity and equity issues; the review team suggests the department pursues assistance from the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Division of Equity and Inclusion, leverages resources available from ADVANCE.
- Course sequencing, frequency of course offerings, and course coverage for sabbaticals are items related to the curriculum that also has an impact on student graduation and crosses over into the report areas of faculty.
- Development of more extensive online offerings for leveling courses would improve access to the graduate program for a wider range of students, such as those from rural areas.
- Continue to seek more opportunities for collaboration with other academic units. This will enhance interprofessional training options within education and healthcare fields. As a specific accreditation standard for the graduate program, this is a high priority departmental item.

Criterion 3. Teaching & Learning: Assessment

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 3 is **MET (M)**.

Since the last APR in 2013, SHS has paid careful attention to changing standards and expectations of the Council on Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) which includes undergraduate curricula and the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) that governs graduate training curricula. This is reflected in both the undergraduate and graduate offerings and tracking of assessment targets. The department follows a robust assessment plan with expected student outcomes measured and tracked.

Strengths

- Learning goals are in place for all programs.
- Assessment data are shared annually at the faculty retreat, enabling the department to carefully track student outcomes for the BA and MS programs.

Opportunities/Recommendations

- Continue to evaluate and refine the tools used for undergraduate assessment so as to identify instruments that best reflect the degree to which students are achieving learning goals, which are generally broader than the content of an individual class.

Criterion 4. Students (Undergraduate & Graduate)

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 4 is **EXCEEDED (E)**.

SHS's mission of serving the region and one of the largest percentages of underrepresented and first-generation student populations in the country makes a significant societal impact. Faculty and staff are motivated by the mission and many initiatives to improve student success are underway. Additional opportunities exist for further creating an entire ecosystem to ensure student success. This goal was shared by all departmental faculty, apparent in interview conversations. The department would like to create the supports needed for a diverse student population to succeed at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Strengths

- Rapid responsiveness to the Covid-19 crisis has led to short-term gains in enrollment. SHS's student focus and experience with online delivery is growing enrollment during unprecedented conditions.
- Students appreciated the flexibility offered through distance coursework. This may be something to maintain post-pandemic and market to potential students.

Opportunities/Recommendations

- Continue to track graduate program application rate and reach out to Career Services to assist with recruitment.
- Consider/evaluate graduate student financial aid packages in order to remain competitive with other NM programs.
- Market the additional bilingual/multicultural training available.
- Departmental faculty carry the heavy load of attending more than ten recruitment activities/academic year. This is an example of a service that a high-level administrative support person could provide.

Criterion 5. Faculty

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 5 is **MET WITH CONCERNS (MC)**.

The SHS faculty are high achieving dedicated professionals who put the needs of students and clients served above their own interests. They have “done more with less” for years enhancing programmatic offerings with online leveling coursework, adding bilingual/multicultural courses, quickly transitioning to telehealth service provision, and managing recruitment and outreach within the department.

Strengths

- The SHS faculty are a cohesive group with shared goals and objectives. While apparent that they supported each other, this also has the effect of people carrying extremely heavy loads.
- SHS has made inroads in developing a diverse faculty, particularly at the assistant and associate professor levels. Leadership is aware that there has been a significant culture shift to a research focus with the result that there is only one full professor currently in rank.
- SHS’s tenure-track, and tenured faculty typically teach a total of four classes per academic year, with limited opportunities for a reduced teaching load to support research and grantsmanship activity. Given the extremely competitive market for research faculty in the SHS field, retention and attracting additional faculty is a needed focus.
- SHS offers resources to support faculty from multiple levels – departmental, college, and institutional. Tenure track faculty are able to attend at least one major conference each year and can obtain funding to attend conferences to present research and develop new research and teaching skills.

Concerns/Opportunities/Recommendations

- Interviews indicate that teaching loads, research expectations, and service obligations for this small department are heavy leading to faculty fatigue and low morale. It was noted that similar assessments on high faculty demands were noted in the 2013 APR and the 2019 CAA report. These are longstanding and ongoing concerns.
- Faculty perceive that progress on new initiatives is painfully slow with examples on the long timeline to establish a relationship with the UNM Medical Group for billing and the number of years trying to establish the PhD program that is viewed as integral to their departmental research and grantsmanship engine.

- Addressing concerns and issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion needs to involve the entire faculty.
- The review team suggests a budget allocation for additional administrative positions within the department that would allow faculty relief of some service and administrative responsibilities.
- There has been significant turnover in the clinical faculty rank over the last 3-5 years, more so than would be expected due to natural attrition such as retirements and relocations. Our interviews suggested that limited case types eligible for services in the clinic due to an inability to charge insurance plans were partly responsible. While this barrier is in the process of being removed, it is also important to consider market rate for compensation. Salaries are low compared to other regional institutions.
- The number of academic and clinical faculty currently meet the minimum needs for current programming. However, it was noted in both the 2013 APR review and the 2019 CAA report that the faculty are currently at a maximum level given the number of students, number of programs (UG, graduate, leveling courses), and research and service expectations.
- Expanding the research engine and establishing a PhD program aligns well with the institution, state, and national need, particularly given the dearth of research faculty in SHS disciplines. With a new program, there needs to be a cultural shift that embraces research excellence and the faculty are encouraged to continue discussions on the dual mission of clinical and research training for students at all training levels. All programs will compete for the limited resources available and faculty will need to be clear on priorities.
- While an excellent step, successful implementation requires additional faculty. A new PhD program will require additional faculty with active research agenda and long-term funding potential. The table below provides a snapshot of faculty size at peer institutions. Only one out of 21 SHS programs offering doctoral training has seven or fewer tenure track faculty. A new program necessarily creates additional time commitments for faculty, e.g. the need to balance with existing teaching and service obligations for the other degree programs.

Summary Table of 21 designated Peer Institutions

**This is greater than 1 SD above the mean for peer institutions*

Description	Data
Number of peer institutions reviewed	21
Number of SHS programs with 7 TT faculty or fewer	1
For programs with a PhD: Mean number of TT faculty	12
Average number of PhD students per TT faculty	.72
Expected number of PhD students for a program with 7 TT faculty	5 (Range within 1 SD = 2-7)
Expected number of PhD students for a program with 9 TT faculty	6-7 (Range within 1 SD = 3-9)
Number of PhD students projected for UNM program (assuming 9 TT faculty)	10*

Criterion 6. Research, Scholarship, & Service

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 6 is **EXCEEDED (E)**.

Strengths

- Impressive research productivity and grant expenditures for a faculty of seven academic researchers.
- Department is on the cusp of a new era of expansion into doctoral training and research, and training academic and research leaders of the future, a dire need in the discipline.

Opportunities/Recommendations

- Research faculty have begun to add funds into grant applications for student support, IT support, and other needs associated with their translational research programs. While this is acceptable for some funding agencies, it is not for all, particularly in the behavioral sciences. Many of these needs have existed institutionally and might be best provided/managed through the research office. For example, the new VP for Research suggested looking at shared grants management assistance.
- Large grants through such agencies as NIH often require significant faculty buyout from teaching or a sabbatical year award. This circles back to Criterion 5 and the need for additional faculty lines to allow flexibility in meeting all program needs.
- Department faculty have very heavy service loads in, e.g. advising, that contribute to burn-out and difficulty finding time for research. Addition of the doctoral program will increase the service load. Effort should be directed at identifying any task currently undertaken by faculty that could be even partially fulfilled by others: for example, graduate students might be given more responsibility for managing recruitment events with assistance from the college to oversee these efforts.

Criterion 7. Peer Comparisons

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 7 is **EXCEEDED (E)**.

In comparison to 13 peer programs, SHS ranks 10th in terms of faculty size while ranking much higher (#72) than 6 peer programs according to US News and World Report. UNM has the highest rank of any peer program without a PhD program. This includes the three programs in NM offering graduate degrees in SLP, where New Mexico State University, an in-state comparison, is ranked at #170.

Strengths

- The SHS graduate program is top-ranked in New Mexico.
- SHS's graduate program is significantly larger than the other programs in NM.

Opportunities

- SHS currently teaches a large MS program with fewer FTE faculty. Given the need to meet CAA standards for graduate level teaching by research faculty, SHS will likely need to add to its faculty in the near term to serve these students and meet standards. This concern was noted in the 2013 APR and the 2019 CAA site visit report.
- SHS should consider a deeper dive into comparing with peer institutions, such as the University of Utah, described in their Self-Study Report, to attain a more complete market comparison of strengths of its programs compared to competitor institutions.

Criterion 8. Resources and Planning

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 8 is **MET WITH CONCERNS (MC)**.

Despite a significant decrease in operating budget since 2017 (from ~\$21K to ~\$16K), the review team found that the SHS department clearly demonstrated effective resource planning and allocation allowing them to balance their budget while meeting accreditation standards for their graduate program and keeping the clinic going after Medicaid/Medicare patients were disallowed. The budget overview demonstrated a clear understanding and strategic use of multiple revenue streams from I&G funding, differential tuition, and modest fees collected for clinical services. The move to insurance billing will increase revenue. Given the nature of the training programs and the human interest inherent in providing services for individuals with communication challenges, moving to maximize the philanthropic avenue seems a natural next step.

Strengths

- Implementation of differential tuition, with funds available to support clinical salaries.
- Proposed income from clinical billing.

Concerns/Opportunities/Recommendations

- Declining resources (operating budget) since 2017 due to reductions in state legislative appropriations to all state universities is a concern since the department and students served has increased significantly during this time without additional administrative support.
- To be competitive on new faculty research hires, a commitment to competitive salaries and robust startup packages for new faculty is needed.
- Additional administrative staff (e.g., grants coordinator) are needed in order to support increased research activity, particularly with the addition of a PhD program.
- In addition to increasing the number of staff, the department should consider changing the designation of the junior staff position from Admin Asst 2 to a more specialized position class that better reflects the duties associated with this position, which are more complex than those of a typical Admin Asst 2.
- Infrastructure resources required to support current operations include a need for enhanced/improved IT capabilities and services at the department and clinic level, e.g., telehealth, clinic instrumentation and software, data storage/server space, and support for the new video observation system. This weakness has been an ongoing concern since the 2013 APR.

- Historically, the SHS department has managed development efforts in a homegrown manner, adding to their overall load. The team suggests that they seek university support for development and marketing efforts, and engage with the Arts & Sciences Development staff.

Criterion 9. Facilities

The Review Team concludes that Criterion 9 is **MET WITH CONCERNS (MC)**.

The SHS department has completely filled their space and based on interviews with upper administrators there is no easy solution to the need for expansion to manage nearly double the graduate students from ten years ago, increased research efforts by faculty, and housing for additional faculty and doctoral student office and research space.

Strengths

- The legislative appropriation in 2020 for the clinical remodel and enhanced use of a digital recording and review system has allowed best use of current space primarily for the increased cohort size of the graduate program in SLP. Going from 17 students to 35/cohort all needing 400 clinical clock hours for graduation with multiple rotations through the campus clinic is a huge growth issue. Accommodating this number of students with the remodel was extraordinary.

Concerns/Opportunities/Recommendations

- Academic and clinical faculty have maximized all available space and it was clear from our interviews that expansion at the current location is not feasible. Resources will be required for expanding the research enterprise and establishing a PhD program, including space for additional research laboratories and offices.
- Concern over space has been a documented ongoing issue for SHS and must be addressed at an upper administrative level. Continued limitations on space will significantly limit the ability of SHS to grow in all the ways the team has recommended in this report.
- Every group with which the review team met expressed a dire need for additional IT resources. This is a limitation that affects every aspect of the department's mission and needs to be aggressively addressed.

Conclusion: Strategic Planning

Though SHS faculty and staff have made important strides serving the needs of students, and have identified initiatives that align with the discipline, institution, state, and region, the team believes that there are too many high need initiatives for the current faculty without additional resources.

Strengths

- Faculty and staff understand the needs of SHS students. Ensuring access to technology, faculty availability, and adapting academic and clinical program delivery after COVID-19 are examples of SHS faculty and staff responding to student needs.
- SHS engages with the community. The focus on bilingual/multicultural training and service provision meets a local, regional, and national need in the profession of SLP.

Opportunities/Recommendations

- Prioritize timelines and establish benchmarks prior to engaging in new initiatives with a careful evaluation of resource allocation.
- With a new Dean arriving in the near future, revisit the current strategic plan to make sure it is aligned with the college and institutional goals.
- New faculty hires, additional space for offices, research, and teaching, and IT support are of the utmost importance for SHS to move forward.

Appendix: Review Team Worksheet

Review Team Members: Brad Story, Kim Corbin-Lewis, and Caroline Smith

Unit: Speech & Hearing Sciences

Site-Visit Dates: April 22-23, 2021

APR Criteria	Evaluation Measures (E/M/MC/NM)	Comments
1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	E	
2. TEACHING & LEARNING: CURRICULUM	M	
3. TEACHING & LEARNING: ASSESSMENT	E	
4. STUDENTS (UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE)	E	
5. FACULTY	MC	Increased faculty is needed to successfully support current programming and the proposed doctoral program
6. RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, & SERVICE	E	Exception productivity given faculty loads
7. PEER COMPARISONS	E	
8. RESOURCES & PLANNING	MC	Reduced operating budget; faculty line needs to support current and proposed PhD program
9. FACILITIES	MC	Space is needed for the increased size of the graduate program, faculty hires, research space, and doctoral student space
CONCLUSION. STRATEGIC PLANNING	M	