



University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

105 Garfield Avenue • P.O. Box 4004 • Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004

Date: May 14, 2019

To: Provost and Vice Chancellor, Patricia Kleine

From: MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE ACADEMIC POLICIES COMMITTEE

Subject: APC report regarding program review of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The Academic Policies Committee (APC) appreciates the time and effort of Chair, Vicki Samelson of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, the members of the Internal Review Committee (Mary Beth Tusing, Rose Batallio, Harry Jol) and the external reviewer (Dr. James Feeney) for the review of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD). The internal review committee and external reviewer reports provided the committee useful information to assist us in forming our recommendations. While the APC recommendations are generally summarized on the attached spreadsheet APC is providing additional details in the form of this letter.

COMMENDATIONS:

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to be commended for the following:

1. The department's recognition as a 2019 UW System Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Award recipient.
2. The department's continued success of the online post-baccalaureate program.
3. The department's use of active learning opportunities, high impact learning experiences, and effective and personalized advisement.
4. The department's commitment to evidence-based pedagogical approaches.
5. The department's recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of majors and minors.
6. The department's commitment to and success of faculty/undergraduate collaborative research experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Faculty Workload and Faculty Recruitment/Retention Efforts. It is apparent from all three reports (Self-study, internal reviewers, external reviewer) that the Department of CSD has reached maximum capacity in its ability to provide teaching excellence in all four of their programs. The department's use of course overloads and expectations for some faculty to also undertake administrative tasks are not ideal. Faculty expectations to teach both undergraduate and graduate level courses as equal FTE workload requires immediate attention and has been shown as a detractor for candidates interviewed for faculty positions. Considering the national shortage of Ph.D. level teaching faculty in the profession, attractiveness to positions must include a competitive salary and perceived manageable working conditions. Due to the difficulty with recruitment of new faculty and the anticipated retirement of an existing faculty, the department must consider multiple scenarios to cover courses. As indicated in the Dean of COEHS response, the Department of CSD should implement all applicable recommendations from the faculty

workload study group. The university should also consider providing additional financial resources to at least assist with removing administrative tasks from faculty/IAS.

2. Sustaining Academic Excellence. A recurring concern highlighted in all three reports (Self-study, internal reviewers, external reviewer) is that the Department of CSD academic and clinical faculty workloads are at the precipice of unsustainability. As highlighted in the external reviewer's report that many members of the department teach courses, supervise clinical sessions, provide clinical services, work on research projects, advise students, and engage in other activities without hesitation, and as a regular part of their workload (contractual or not). Despite highlighted efforts to demonstrate the difficulties that some academic departments encounter in sustaining academic excellence for undergraduate students in the classroom, it appears that the university is committed to providing resources to support students outside of the classroom. APC requests that Academic Affairs reprioritize its resources and commitments, especially for highly productive and successful departments in the true spirit of the program array process and academic master plan.

3. Review Form (Excel) recommendations that APC disagreed with the department (item #6). The APC also disagrees with program review form recommendation #6. After discussions with the department chair and comments from the Dean of COEHS, increased physical space for course instruction can be alleviated by reconsidering "appropriate" class sizes and adding more sections for instructional delivery. This is assuming that the concerns relating to faculty workload (see above) are addressed in a timely manner

Summary Recommendation:

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders provides a very high level of teaching, scholarship, and service to students, the university, and the community. For the program to continue in these efforts, the APC recommends these immediate actions:

- Development of plan to address the department's desire to recruit and train diverse undergraduate students
- Discussion with university administration regarding competitive faculty salaries for the recruitment and retention efforts into its successful department
- Discussion within department to consider enrollment cap of undergraduate majors/minors
- Streamline departmental administrative tasks that are being done by faculty/IAS and, where appropriate, hire and train highly qualified administrative assistants to support programs in the department

APC strongly supports the recommendation from all the other review levels to "continue in present form" considering the recommendations made above.

Cc.

Dr. Vicki Samelson, Chair, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Dr. Mary Hoffman, Director of Academic Planning and Assessment