

REVIEW OF THE B.S. IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS

Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code: 51.0204
Audiology/Audiologist and Speech-Language Pathology/Pathologist

OVERVIEW

The B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders program at Illinois State University is housed in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders within the College of Arts and Sciences. The department also offers a minor in communication sciences and disorders, a M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology, and a Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.).

A graduate degree is required to become a certified and licensed speech-language pathologist or a certified and licensed audiologist in Illinois and the U.S. Thus the B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders program at Illinois State University has been designed to offer a comprehensive, pre-professional curriculum intended to prepare students for graduate study in either speech-language pathology or audiology. The program is one of three undergraduate audiology/audiologist and speech language pathology/pathologist programs offered by public universities in Illinois.

Since the 2009-2010 review of the program, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders has restructured its B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders program to provide all students with an overview of both speech pathology and audiology. A key component of the restructuring was disestablishment of speech pathology and audiology sequences. To reflect the restructuring, the program name was changed from the B.S. in Speech Pathology and Audiology. Although the restructured curriculum of the program is more comprehensive in its coverage of the fields, most students still graduate from the program within four years.

Enrollment by Sequence, Fall Census Day, 2010-2017

B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No sequence					148	209	216	224
Speech Pathology*	200	195	184	194	68	2	9	10
Audiology*	7	12	5	9	2			
Total	207	207	189	203	218	211	225	234

*Disestablished effective May 12, 2014

Degrees Conferred by Sequence, Graduating Fiscal Year 2010-2017**

B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No sequence	2	2	4	4	1	NA	56	66
Speech Pathology*	75	72	76	56	81	NA	2	1
Audiology*	1	1	8		4	NA		
Total	78	75	88	60	86	66	58	67

* Disestablished effective May 12, 2014

** Summer, fall, and spring terms (e.g., graduating fiscal year 2017 consists of the following terms: summer 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Program goals

- The program provides students with general knowledge of communication sciences and disorders.
- The program provides students complete undergraduate courses in related professional areas of study that are required for eventual Illinois licensure and ASHA certification.
- The program provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to be accepted into graduate school or to be employed.

Student learning outcomes

- Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the professions at a level sufficient to progress further in the major.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of normal processes of communication.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of disorders in communication.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of audiological assessment.
- Students will complete related (outside of CSD) courses for eventual Teacher Educators License and national-level certification.
- Students will demonstrate ability to write professional documents.
- Graduates of the CSD program will attend graduate school to pursue the terminal degree in the profession.
- Graduates who do not continue their education will find employment.

Curriculum (2017-2018)

Graduation requirements: 120 credit hours consisting of 48 credit hours of communication sciences and disorders core courses; 39 credit hours of General Education courses; 6 credit hours of Professional Education (educator preparation) requirements; one course in science, mathematics, or technology to fulfill the university bachelor of science requirement (3 credit hours); successful completion of an advanced foreign language course (4 credit hours); and the balance of credit hours in elective courses. Of the 39 General Education credit hours, students must complete 12 credit hours of prescribed courses in mathematics, biological sciences, chemistry/physics, and statistics. Through coursework or through experiences outside courses, students must complete at least 25 clock hours of clinical observations.

Program delivery

The program is offered on the Normal campus.

The program is delivered primarily through a traditional face-to-face format.

Two communication sciences and disorders courses are offered online during the summer term; the courses are taken primarily by students majoring in special education.

The department has offered short-term study abroad trips to New Zealand/Australia, London/Paris, Spain, and Greece. All study abroad trips have been developed since the prior program review.

Department faculty (Fall 2017)

10 tenure track faculty members (1 Professor, 3 Associate Professors, 6 Assistant Professors)

8 clinical supervisors

3 clinical administrators (i.e., Clinic Director/Director of Advisement, Director of Clinical Experiences for speech-language pathology, Director of Clinical Experiences for audiology)

5 part-time non-tenure track faculty members (1.5 FTE)

Student to faculty ratio: 19.8 to 1

Student to tenure-line faculty ratio: 23.1 to 1

Classroom instruction and clinical supervision for communication sciences and disorders students are provided by a team of highly-credentialed tenure track faculty members, clinical supervisors, and non-tenure track faculty members.

Each tenure track faculty member holds a Ph.D. in their field. Two tenure track faculty members hold both a Ph.D. and a clinical doctorate (Au.D.). All but one tenure track faculty member is licensed and credentialed in their field. Tenure track faculty members are responsible for almost all classroom teaching in the department. They contribute to scholarship in their specializations through publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals (including the flagship journal in the field) and through conference presentations. Tenure-line faculty members also participate in service activities at the department, college, university, and professional levels. Several faculty members serve on journal editorial boards, and some have served on state or national professional associations such as the American Board of Audiology, the American Academy of Audiology, the Illinois Chapter of the National Stuttering Association, and the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Each speech-language pathology clinical supervisor holds a master's degree, and each audiology clinical supervisor holds an Au.D. All clinical supervisors are licensed and certified. Some clinical supervisors also teach undergraduate courses. Non-tenure track faculty members hired to teach speech-language pathology must have at least a master's degree, whereas non-tenure track faculty members hired to teach audiology must have at least a clinical doctorate (Au.D.). As the number of tenure track faculty members in the department has increased in recent years, fewer non-tenure track faculty members have been needed.

Specialized accreditation

Undergraduate programs in communication sciences and disorders are not accredited or certified by a national association. Specialized accreditation in the discipline is available only at the graduate level.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand

Although the scope of practice for speech-language pathologists and audiologists has expanded over the years, there have not been significant changes in the fundamental purpose or nature of either academic discipline or field since the last program review. Societal need continues to be strong for professionals in both disciplines, due in part to population aging. To address those needs, the number of jobs for audiologists or for speech-language pathologists is expected to increase in Illinois and nationally at rates higher than the average across all occupations. Colleges and universities are challenged with preparing more speech-language pathologists and audiologists to address the state and national shortage of applications for those positions. Given these dynamics, Illinois State University has experienced a strong demand for its B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders program since the prior program review. That strong demand is expected to be sustained throughout the next program review cycle.

Response to previous program review recommendations

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders has addressed all five recommendations resulting from the 2009-2010 program review of its B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders program.

Continue to hire additional faculty in critical areas of need to reduce teaching loads and student-to-faculty ratios. Working through the College of Arts and Sciences, the department has succeeded in securing additional faculty lines since the last program review. As a result, the number of tenure line faculty members in the department has increased from six in 2011-2012 to 10 in fall 2017. The department has been able to attract applicants for its faculty position openings despite the national shortage of Ph.D. credentialed candidates in the discipline.

Given that the department has a young faculty cohort, the department and college together should develop a strong mentoring plan to support scholarly productivity. Faculty mentoring has been and continues to be emphasized in the department. Mentoring efforts since the last program review include providing new faculty members with appropriate start-up packages and research laboratory space, providing new faculty members with a reduced teaching load during their first two years of service at the University so they can focus on their research agenda, encouraging new faculty members to participate in programs and services of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology at the University, encouraging senior faculty to collaborate with junior faculty on research and teaching

initiatives, and encouraging new faculty members to participate in the faculty mentoring series offered by the college.

Work with Placement and Career Counseling to develop an advisement process that clearly articulates the transition for students who do not continue into graduate programs in the discipline. The department has collaborated with the Career Center at the University to strengthen support for students who choose to transition from the undergraduate communication sciences and disorders program into employment rather than to immediately pursue graduate education. The program advisor encourages each student to participate in workshops provided by the Career Center and by the College of Arts and Sciences and to work with Career Center advisors after the student has decided to pursue employment immediately upon graduation.

Work with Milner Library faculty and staff to develop stronger library involvement in student learning. The department has designated a faculty member to liaise with library faculty regarding research resources and services available to department students and faculty. Department and library faculty are collaborating to develop short- and long-term goals for infusing information literacy instruction into the program curriculum.

Develop a formal equipment maintenance plan. The department has compiled and is implementing a plan for maintaining and replacing equipment needed to support student learning and faculty research.

Major findings

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders continues to succeed in graduating the majority of its students within four years and in successfully preparing them for graduate programs in speech-language pathology or audiology; 75 percent of students in the program are accepted into graduate schools compared to 50 percent nationally. The increase in the number of tenure-line faculty members since the last program review makes it possible for the department to continue its successes during the next program review cycle in preparing students for graduate schools or for employment immediately upon graduation. Challenges for the program documented through the program review process include class sizes that are larger than those of other programs at Illinois State University and a student-to-faculty ratio that, although comparable to the ratio across all units at the University, is higher than the ratios of aspirational programs at other universities. A challenge that may be more difficult to resolve and one that impacts all programs and services of the department are its aging facilities. Classrooms, research laboratories, and clinical spaces provide less than ideal environments for students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

Initiatives and plans

- Continue advocating for improved facilities for all communication sciences and disorders programs. The department will continue exploring construction of an allied health building that would house clinical facilities of the department as well as academic or clinical facilities of other health-related programs at the University.
- Continue working to decrease the ratio of students to tenure-line faculty members and the ratio of students to clinical faculty members. The department intends to continue requesting funds from the college and central administration for additional clinical supervisors.
- Continue collaborating with Milner Library faculty in providing access to research resources and services needed to support student learning and faculty research in the discipline and in further integrating information literacy instruction with the undergraduate curriculum.
- Implement the newly revised student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program and utilize assessment findings to identify ways to further improve the program.
- Establish a sustainable international/humanitarian outreach experience for students in the program, working with the Office of International Studies and Programs at the University.
- Expand students' understanding of how they can apply the diverse knowledge and skills they gain through successful completion of the program to succeed in positions in allied fields and professions.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Review Outcome. The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders program to be in Good Standing.

The committee thanks the program for a comprehensive and concise self-study report that is critical and forward looking. A particularly noteworthy aspect of the report is the analysis of comparator and aspirational programs and their relevance to the program at Illinois State University. The discussion of facilities in that analysis was informed by program faculty visits to other institutions.

The committee recognizes the work program faculty has done since the 2009-2010 program review to maintain a high quality program that blends theory and practice. Among those efforts are attention to the curriculum, co-curricular opportunities, and student support services; involving students in the provision of clinical services that benefit members of the campus community as well as area residents; and systematic gathering of feedback from students and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to further improve the program. These and other efforts have led to commendable student outcomes. Graduation rates consistently exceed the rate across all undergraduate programs at Illinois State for both first-time-in-college and external transfer students. Of first-time-in-college students graduating from the program each year since 2010, 90 percent or higher earned their degree within four years of initial enrollment at Illinois State compared to 60-65 percent across all undergraduate programs at the University. Since 2010, participation by B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders students in the university Honors program has ranged from 23 percent to 44 percent compared to approximately 6 percent across all undergraduate programs at the University. The program reports that approximately 75 percent of its graduates are accepted into a graduate program in either speech-language pathology or audiology compared to approximately 50 percent for undergraduate communication sciences and disorders programs nationwide.

The committee recognizes program faculty members for their work to revise the curriculum since the last program review, including a 2014 restructuring that eliminated the speech-language pathology and audiology sequences. The curriculum now exposes all students to both sub-disciplines, which especially benefits students uncertain about which sub-discipline of the field to pursue through graduate studies. When revising the curriculum faculty has carefully balanced the addition of courses with the deletion of others, so students are able to complete the program in four years. The committee commends faculty members for encouraging students to participate in the university-wide Honors program; participation averaged approximately 32 percent from 2012 through 2016 compared to about 6 percent across all undergraduate programs at the University. The committee also commends faculty for encouraging all students in the program to engage in research outside the classroom, either by assisting faculty with their laboratory work or by conducting independent research, and for supporting students in presenting their research findings at research symposia and conferences. The committee recognizes the program for its support of other out-of-classroom learning opportunities, including sponsorship of three registered student organizations (National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, Student Academy of Audiology, and National Stuttering Association chapters) and support for the numerous community service initiatives in which the organizations are involved, such as the Special Olympics Healthy Hearing program and community health fairs.

The committee commends the department and program for their contributions to the campus and region through operation of the Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic. In Fiscal 2017 the clinic scheduled approximately 5,100 appointments for speech, language, or audiology testing or treatment for members of the campus community or general public. Students enrolled in academic programs of the department, including the B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders, assist with this clinical work. The committee recognizes that opportunities to assist with clinical work are not always provided by undergraduate communication sciences and disorders programs at other universities.

Adequacy of clinical facilities for the Eckelmann-Taylor Speech and Hearing Clinic as well as of laboratory space for faculty is identified in the self-study report as an ongoing concern of the faculty. The committee commends the department for maximizing use of its existing facilities while seeking alternatives to better serve clinic clientele. Especially noteworthy is the collaboration with Normal Township to provide audiology services at its Activity and Recreation Center (ARC), located northeast of campus.

The committee recognizes program faculty for revising the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program to align with the 2014 curriculum revisions, for continuing to refine the plan since then, and for systematic use of assessment results to guide program improvements. The committee commends the department for its Student Advisory Board, which consists of students in the communication sciences and disorders program and other academic programs of the department elected by their peers. The board provides a venue for regular communication involving the department chairperson and students regarding academic programs, policies, student support services, and department initiatives.

Recommendations. The Academic Planning Committee makes the following recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2025, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Continue exploring options for upgrading department facilities. A long-term solution to the facility challenges facing the department and its clinic may be relocation of either or both to a newly constructed facility on campus. However, given anticipated levels of state support for capital improvements at its public universities and the substantial backlog of capital improvement projects awaiting funding, such a new facility is not likely to be built within the next decade. Accordingly, the committee recommends that the department continue to work with the College of Arts and Sciences to explore other means of upgrading department facilities. Warranting particular attention is the need for the additional laboratory research facilities for department faculty. The department might explore establishing partnerships with health care or social service institutions in the community to provide off-campus clinical sites that could supplement or replace existing facilities in Fairchild Hall and Rachel Cooper. The satellite audiology clinic at the Normal Township Activity and Recreation Center (ARC) might be one model for off-campus facilities. Other options to consider include working with the college to explore reconfiguration of space in Fairchild Hall and Rachel Cooper or access to it, use of other space on campus, or leasing space near campus. For guidance in exploring ways to upgrade facilities, faculty might also look to aspirational programs that operate clinics through health care facilities either on or near their campus.

Develop and implement a plan for furthering student and faculty diversity. The committee acknowledges the challenges faced by the program and department in achieving greater gender and racial/ethnic balance among its faculty and students. However, it may be difficult for the department to do so without having goals and a plan for working toward those goals. Accordingly, the committee encourages the department to develop and implement a plan for furthering gender and racial/ethnic diversity among its students and among its faculty members, particularly non-tenure track faculty members and clinical supervisors. The committee encourages the department to articulate goals for gender and racial/ethnic diversity in the plan. As the department develops the plan, the committee encourages the department to consider recruitment for diversity in a broad sense to include maintaining coverage of diversity issues in the curriculum, serving diverse populations through clinical and practicum experiences, and encouraging networking of students with practitioners having diverse backgrounds and life experiences. Continuing to foster such diversity may, in turn, help attract students and faculty from traditionally underrepresented populations and help the department with its efforts to maintain an environment of inclusiveness.

Develop and implement a plan for engaging alumni. The self-study report identifies expansion of efforts to engage program alumni as a goal for the next program review cycle. The committee concurs with this goal and recommends that the department develop and implement a plan for doing so. Some elements of such a plan are already in place, including the university-wide alumni survey and the exit survey introduced by the program in recent years, and other strategies might be considered, such as developing an alumni database and systematic use of social media. The committee recommends incorporating strategies for systematically communicating with alumni who choose not to pursue graduate study in the discipline. Information gleaned from those contacts could suggest additional ways the program might prepare students who ultimately choose not to pursue graduate education or a career in the discipline.

Implement the plan for expanding collaboration with Milner Library. The self-study report identifies as a goal for the next program review cycle expanding collaboration with Milner Library and its communication sciences and disorders subject specialist to facilitate appropriate use of library resources. The self-study report sets forth a plan for doing so, including developing a structured, tiered approach to information fluency instruction across all

academic programs of the department. The committee commends the department and library for their collaboration in developing the plan and encourages implementation of it.

Investigate ways to sustain short-term study abroad options. The committee recognizes establishment by program faculty of short-term study abroad opportunities for students who might not otherwise be able to study abroad due to the rigors of the program curriculum or the costs associated with longer study abroad experiences. The committee concurs with the program goal of investigating ways to promote sustainability of those short-term experiences, particularly those with explicit ties to the discipline.

Continue refining and implementing the student learning outcomes assessment plan. The committee encourages the program to continue to utilize information collected through student learning outcomes assessment to make program improvements as necessary and to document how that has been done. As faculty considers modifications to the assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, the committee recommends continued work by faculty to incorporate formative assessment strategies to reduce reliance on course grades for gauging levels of student learning. Selecting course assignments and adopting rubrics for their assessment should help program faculty identify points within the curriculum at which modifications could be made by faculty to improve student learning relative to learning goals.