

# **UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND**

## **The Graduate School**

### **CURRICULAR REPORT FROM THE GRADUATE COUNCIL TO THE FACULTY SENATE: REPORT NO. 2002-2003-8A**

At Meeting No. 387 held on 28 March, 2003, the Graduate Council approved the following proposal that is now submitted to the Faculty Senate.

#### **SECTION I**

##### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

###### **ABSTRACT**

The Graduate Council approved a proposal from the Department of Communicative Disorders of the College of Human Sciences and Services to offer the degree, Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.). The Au.D. will replace the current M.S. in Audiology. The development of this training model has been mandated by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association and by Rhode Island State law as the entry level degree to the practice of Audiology, effective 1 January, 2007. The program is deemed of significant merit, and is forwarded to the Faculty Senate at the Class B level.

###### **BACKGROUND**

In replacing the current M.S. in Audiology, the Au.D. will be a four year degree consisting of three years of academic preparation followed by a fourth year of residency training. It will be a professional, clinical degree and will not have a major research focus. The degree is said to reflect the growth in the required knowledge base for practitioners facing complex issues

of diagnoses and management of hearing disorders. The current Audiology program is the only one in the state, and one of only five in New England. Ninety credits are required and costs are projected to be the same as those associated with the M.S. degree in Audiology.

The proposal was reviewed under the process established by the Faculty Senate in which the Graduate Council serves as the Coordinating and Review Committee. Announcements of the receipt of the proposal were sent to the President and the Joint Educational Policy Committee (JEPC), the Provost and the Council of Deans, the Budget Office, and Department Chairs and Directors. Recommendations were sought from each of these, and the comments received are appended. Comments and recommendations have been kept on file in the Graduate School.

The Budget Office found that no additional resources would be required for implementation of the Au.D. program. The Council of Deans enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. The JEPC took no action on the proposal, but raised a number of questions dealing with program size, the size and composition of the program faculty, and the way in which the Au.D. program could be offered with no increase in cost over that of the M.S. degree in Audiology. The New Program Committee and the Graduate Council treated each of these issues in detail, and were given satisfactory responses from those proposing the program.

## **SECTION II**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Graduate Council approved the proposal for the Au.D. degree at its meeting number 387 held on 28 March, 2003, and forwards it to the Faculty Senate at the Class B level. Class B

has been selected because the program requests no new resources and will compete for the same resources as were previously used by the M.S. degree in Audiology. Following is an abbreviated proposal for the Au.D. in the format required by the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

## **DOCTOR OF AUDIOLOGY**

### **A. Program Information:**

1. Name of institution: University of Rhode Island
2. Name of department, division, school or college: Department of Communicative Disorders, College of Human Science and Services
3. Title of program and federal Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code: Doctor of Audiology (51.0202)
4. Intended initiation of program change: September 2003  
Granting of first degrees: May 2007
5. Intended location of program: Speech and Hearing Center, Independence Square, University of Rhode Island
6. Description of institutional review and approval process.

The proposal was reviewed under the process established by the Faculty Senate in which the Graduate Council serves as the Coordinating and Review Committee. Announcements of the receipt of the proposal were sent to the President and Joint Educational Policy Committee, the Provost and the Council of Deans, the Budget Office, and Department Chairs and Directors.

Department(s)/Committee(s)/Group(s) approved on November 1, 2002

College(s) approved on December 18, 2002

Graduate Council approved on March 28, 2003

Faculty Senate approved on May 8, 2003

President of the University May 21, 2003

**7. Summary description of the proposed program.**

The Doctor of Audiology degree (Au.D.) has been mandated by our national accrediting organization, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and by Rhode Island State law (R 5-48-SPA, as amended November 2001) as the entry-level degree to the practice of Audiology beginning in the year 2007. The proposed degree program would replace the current Master of Science degree in Audiology in the Department of Communicative Disorders, which is in the College of Human Science and Services. In part, the program would continue to serve students in the Bachelor of Science program in Communicative Disorders and the Master of Science in Speech and Language Pathology, as well as continue a substantial service component. The Au.D. would be a professional, clinical degree and not have a major focus on research. This is an important difference from the Ph.D. A similar degree in concept is the Pharm.D. The new degree reflects the extraordinary growth in the required knowledge base for practitioners in the field facing increasingly complex issues of diagnosis and management of hearing disorders. The current Audiology program is the only one in the State of Rhode Island, and one of only five in New England.

**8. Signature of President**

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Robert L. Carothers, President

9. Statement that no new or additional resources will be required

The program replaces the existing Master's degree program in Audiology and uses existing facilities and staff. The additional coursework is spread over a four-year sequence instead of the current two years. Therefore, no additional resources are requested.

10. Name of Person(s) to contact during the review:

Jay Singer, Ph.D.

Chair, Department of Communicative Disorders

Telephone: 401-874-4742

e-mail: drjay@uri.edu

#### **B. Rationale:**

This professional doctorate will replace the existing Master of Science in Audiology. Graduates of the program will meet the national standards for Certification in Audiology established by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and also the standards for licensure in Audiology in any state, including Rhode Island. The clinical doctorate will address the significant discrepancies between the current (Master's degree) level of preparation and the requirements of the modern scope of practice in Audiology. The program will also serve current practitioners in the state and region who need to upgrade their professional credentials to the new standard.

A professional doctorate is the educational model used by many of the health professions, including medicine (M.D.), dentistry

(D.D.S. or D.M.D), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), and Optometry (O.D.) It is also under consideration in Physical Therapy. As of this writing, there are 18 operating programs that offer a clinical doctorate in Audiology (none in Rhode Island) and the number of programs is rising quickly. These new programs are in high demand. This change is necessary because of the explosion in scientific knowledge and the substantial change in the scope of practice of Audiologists. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), which is the national accrediting body for Audiology and Speech and Language Pathology has mandated that all applicants for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology must complete a graduate program of at least 75 credits and 2,000 hours of clinical experience by December 31, 2006. They further require that after December 31, 2011 only Doctoral degrees will be acceptable. This mandate is also reflected in Rhode Island State law (Rules and Regulations for licensing Speech Pathologists and Audiologists, R 5-48-SPA, as amended November 2001) which makes specific reference to the ASHA standards.

The model that was developed for the Au.D. is a four-year degree consisting of at least 75 credits. The final year is a type of residency experience during which the degree candidate works in a professional setting under supervision. This supervised work year is under the auspices of the graduate institution. The current model of education includes the Master's degree (54 credits at URI) and a year of supervised experience following graduation and prior to full licensure. The additional coursework of the new program provides needed academic background for current and future practice. The inclusion of the supervised year within the academic program improves oversight of this important learning experience. [Au.D\\_comparison.html](#)

The proposed program is entirely consistent with the revised standards of our national accrediting agency (ASHA) that will be implemented January 1, 2007. The current program is accredited through 2005 and will need to go through a review beginning in 2004.

### **C. Institutional Role:**

The Doctor of Audiology program fits well with the role and mission of the institution, just as the existing Master of Science in Audiology does. Audiologists practice in a variety of settings, including hospitals, private practices, schools, the military, and industry. The program fits within the focus programs of Health and Children, Families and Communities. Faculty members in the existing program also have interests and interactions in the areas of marine and environmental studies (marine bioacoustics) and advanced technologies (digital hearing aids). The existing Audiology program provides new trained practitioners to the state and region, as well as continuing education for the established professionals (continuing education is mandated under RI Department of Health regulation). The new program will continue these activities, but with greater authority. Since many of the practicing audiologists in the area already have or will soon have doctoral degrees, they may logically seek continuing education from a doctoral-level program.

The Audiology program currently has many interactions with the community outside of the University. This includes state professional organizations, such as the RI Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the RI Academy of Audiology, as well as the RI Department of Health and the RI Infant Hearing Assessment Program (RIHAP). The current program in Audiology is the only training program in the State of Rhode Island and

one of only five programs in New England. It is not known how many of the other four programs will move from a Master's level to Doctoral level training in the near future.

The program will relate to other programs at URI in the same ways that the current Master's Degree program relates to other programs. The strongest relationships are with the other programs within the Department of Communicative Disorders ("the Department"). There is a historic and substantial relationship between Audiology and Speech and Language Pathology. Currently, and in the future, there is a certain amount of "cross-training" across these two disciplines. Some courses will continue to be offered in common and clinic facilities in Kingston and Providence will continue to be shared. The faculty of the Department will continue to function partially in both programs. Additionally, the Department includes an undergraduate major in Communicative Disorders. This is, and will continue to be, appropriate undergraduate training for either graduate field. The undergraduate class at URI has historically provided a substantial number of the Department's graduate applicants. Operation of the Audiology Clinic generates substantial revenue through billings for clinical diagnostic and rehabilitative services as well as hearing instruments. This revenue stream is expected to increase with the new program because of the increase in clinical services at our two sites. Revenues from these activities (ledger 3) will continue to be used by all programs in the department.

Currently, the Speech and Hearing clinic shares administrative support (third-party billing) with the Physical Therapy Program. It is expected that this cooperation will continue, particularly given the new Speech and Hearing Clinic location in Independence Square.



Faculty in the program will continue their relationships with other programs throughout the University. For example, faculty from the Department serve on Doctoral committees in Education and in Psychology.

#### **D. Interinstitutional Considerations:**

There are no similar programs (graduate programs in Audiology) in Rhode Island. In New England, there are Master's Degree Programs in Audiology at University of Massachusetts (Amherst), Northeastern University, University of Connecticut (Storrs) and Southern Connecticut State University (New Haven). These programs face the same accreditation as we do, and presumably some of them will develop doctoral programs. Boston University is the only New England institution with a currently running Doctoral program in Audiology (Sc.D.). The program at BU has two tracks: clinical and research. The clinical track has very similar objectives to our proposed program.

Because there are not currently Audiology graduate programs in all New England States, the current Master's Degree program in Audiology is available to students under NEBHE RSP. We will seek regional approval of the Doctoral Degree program.

#### **E. Program:**

Following is a list of courses for the program.

**CMD 454 Audiology (3)**

**CMD 493 Cultural and Linguistics Diversity in Communicative Disorders (3)**

**CMD 504 Research in Communicative Disorders (3)**

**CMD 505 Issues in Audiology Private Practice (2)**

**CMD 551 Measurement of Hearing, I (4)**

**CMD 552 Measurement of Hearing, II (4)**

**CMD 553 Pediatric Audiology (3)**

**CMD 554 Advanced Rehabilitative Processes for Hearing Impaired (3) NEW**

**CMD 555 Hearing Aids, I (3)**

**CMD 556 Hearing Aids, II (3)**

**CMD 557 Electrophysiological Measures in Audiology (4)**

**CMD 561 Phonological Disorders (3)**

**CMD 570 Clinical Practicum in Communicative Disorders (1-5)**

**CMD 572 Pathologies of the Auditory System (3)**

**CMD 574 Hearing Conservation (2) NEW**

**CMD 575 Management of Deaf and Special Populations (3) NEW**

**CMD 576 Cochlear Implants (2) NEW**

**CMD 577 Vestibular Rehabilitation and Tinnitus Management (2) NEW**

**CMD 584 Language Disorders in Developmentally Young Children (4)**

**CMD 585 Language Disorders in Adults (3)**

**CMD 658 Advanced Electrophysiology Assessment (4) NEW**

**CMD 670 Audiology Residency (1-6) NEW**

**CMD 691 Independent Study (1-3) NEW**

**CMD 698 Capstone Project in Audiology (3) NEW**

Each course is required with the exception of CMD 691. Also, students may choose between CMD 584 and 585.

Ninety credits are required for the Au.D., post baccalaureate. Students who do not have an appropriate undergraduate background will be required to take prerequisite courses beyond the 90 credits in the Au.D. program. The American Speech-Language and Hearing Association will require a minimum of 75 graduate credits related to Audiology as of January 2007 in order to achieve certification.

A transitional Au.D. will be offered to practicing audiologists who currently hold a masters or other graduate-level degree in audiology. The minimum credits required beyond the Master's shall not be less than 18. A portfolio examination will be used to determine the number of credits required and the specific coursework and practicum needed. Criteria for the portfolio review will include the contents of the Master's degree including its currency, breadth and depth, continuing education activities and practical experience. No transitional degree seeker may receive the Au.D. with fewer than 60 post-baccalaureate credits.

An accelerated Au.D. will be offered in a manner similar to that found in the current masters programs in audiology and speech language pathology. A sixth semester URI undergraduate may apply to the Au.D. program assuming completion of needed prerequisites and may enter the program in his or her seventh semester. During the senior undergraduate year, the accelerated Au.D. student will take a full graduate course load in lieu of free electives. At the end of the senior year, a

bachelor's degree will be conferred assuming all requirements are met. The remainder of the degree requirements will be as previously described.

In January 2007, program accreditation standards and Rhode Island Licensure rules will undergo substantive change. Minimum program graduate credits will be elevated to 75.

Compliance cannot be accomplished within a two-year MS format. We and other graduate programs are making the needed conversion to the Au.D.

#### **F. Faculty and Staff:**

The faculty and support staff for the program are sufficient in number and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and other attributes necessary to the success of the program. Specific costs of the Au.D. program are detailed in the Budget Model. [Au.D\\_F.html](#)

#### **G. Students:**

Because the Au.D. program is a substitute for the current Master's degree program in audiology, many of the sources of prospective students will be the same. This includes students from our undergraduate program, other regional programs, and from other institutions around the country. Students are often communicative disorder undergraduates but also come from backgrounds in psychology, education, pre-med, other health sciences, and, on occasion, unrelated fields. Over the near and medium term, some students will pursue the transitional Au.D. moving from Master's level training to the doctorate. These individuals will be in practice and are most likely to be local or regional.

Five to seven students will be admitted annually. After completion of one four-year program cycle, there will be a total of 20 to 28 students in the program. We anticipate that all students will be full-time.

Admission requirements will include a bachelor's degree (except in the accelerated program), a national standardized test score (GRE), letters of reference, and a standard application. Student performance will be assessed via academic course performance, clinical practicum, and a final year residency experience. Each of these areas will require the development of specific skills in accordance with the assessment process described by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Satisfactory academic performance will be determined through the previously noted assessment method and in conjunction with the university and graduate school requirements that specify satisfactory performance. The Department of Communicative Disorders will perform a rigorous review of student progress twice a year.

The same scholarship sources currently available in our Master's program will be available to Au.D. students. This includes assistantships, grant-related student support, and the Katherine Beaupre Scholarship Trust and Audiology Foundation of America.

#### **H. Administration:**

The Au.D. will administratively reside in The Department of Communicative Disorders, College of Human Science and Services. Because the Au.D. is a substitute for the current Master's degree program in audiology, there will be no impact on the administrative structure beyond the Master's degree program. Administrative costs associated with Au.D. will be the same as for the current Master's program in audiology.

[Au.D\\_H.html](#)

## **I. Instructional Resources:**

The instructional resources are sufficient in quantity, quality and timeliness to support the Au.D.

## **J. Facilities and Capital Equipment:**

The Department of Communicative Disorders is in the process of moving its clinical, academic, and administrative enterprises from Adams Hall to Independence Square and the Fernwood Building. The Speech and Hearing Clinic will be located in Independence Square, Kingston, and will house the clinic operation related to the Au.D. program. Likewise, administrative offices and classroom space will be housed in Independence Square. A move to this location should be complete by January 2003. Faculty offices and laboratories are now located approximately 250 yards away in the Fernwood Building. The Department of Communicative Disorders also has a Speech and Hearing Center in Providence in the Shepard Building. This clinic is in the process of moving to Independence Square in Pawtucket. This move should be complete in December 2002. The new location of our clinic will be state of the art. With respect to the Au.D. program, new equipment has been purchased to outfit the clinic. No additional expenditures are anticipated in the near term. Independence Square and our clinic site will be in full compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **K. Financial Considerations:**

Expenses related to the Au.D. will be very similar to the Master's degree it is replacing.

Personnel expenses are related to the participation of Drs. Singer and Preece and part-time adjunct faculty. There are no new or additional expenses compared to the Master's degree in

audiology the Au.D. replaces. This is specifically true with respect to administrators, support staff, operating expenses, travel, capital, and student assistance. [Au.D\\_K.html](#)

The number of students in the Au.D. program will increase incrementally by five for each of the first four years of the program. At that time, the number of students will plateau at 20 and remain fixed. Institutional resources that support the Master's degree in audiology will be deployed to manage the Au.D. program. The Master's program will be terminated upon approval of the Au.D. No funding for the Au.D. is required beyond the funding used to support the Master's program.

#### **L. Evaluation:**

Program review will be performed internally by the Department of Communicative Disorders and also by the office of the Dean of Human Science and Services. Data that will be examined include: Information pertaining to applicant pools and enrolled students; The degree to which students meet academic and clinical standards while in the program; Performance on the national exam that is part of the Certification process in Audiology, and; feedback from employers of our alumni. External program evaluation will be performed by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Hearing-Language Association (see below) prior to initiation of the program and annually after the program has commenced. This is identical to the review process of the current program.

The proposed program will be eligible for accreditation by the:

Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA)

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

10801 Rockville Pike

Rockville, MD 20852

The current Master's Degree program is accredited through 2005.

The requirements for accreditation are reflected in educational standards for Audiologists promulgated by the CAA. These standards (beginning in 2007) are (details are available on request)