

The College of Communication Arts and Sciences is requesting that a moratorium, in conjunction with the proposed degree program disbandment, be placed on the BA degree program in communicative sciences and disorders (CSD) effective in Spring Semester 2010.

### **Rationale**

Though the undergraduate program in CSD is a valued undergraduate degree program in the college, the faculty have a long-standing record of low research productivity, they do not contribute significantly to external revenue generation activities, they lack connectivity across units within CAS and they lack necessary interdisciplinary work across CAS and the University. The CSD program has also performed poorly in national rankings and is among the weakest performing overall units in the college. This track record of underperformance has existed for many years eventually triggering a formal review. In 2004, CSD (then Audiology and Speech Sciences) participated in an external review by speech language pathology experts that resulted in very specific recommendations. These recommendations included pursuing faculty development opportunities in extramural research funding, reviewing merit and promotion criteria, revising goals for scholarly production and external funding, and forming a cross-departmental advisory committee to identify funding opportunities. None of these recommendations have been implemented.

In order for BA program graduates to practice in the field, they are required to complete a graduate program. CAS is maintaining the MA program in CSD and will be refocusing this program and its faculty to be more scholarship and grant active. Though CAS is proposing eventual disbandment of the BA CSD program, there are many alternatives for students to pursue undergraduate programs in audiology and speech pathology in Michigan. These programs are located at Calvin College, Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Northern Michigan University, Wayne State University, and Western Michigan University.

### **Adequate and accessible dissemination of information to all concerned parties**

It was confirmed in a private Dean's Council meeting on Wednesday, October 28, 2009 that the BA degree program in Communicative Sciences and Disorders was being proposed for disbandment. Late afternoon on Thursday, October 29, Dean Whitten sent an email to CSD faculty informing them that the BA degree program in CSD was being proposed for disbandment and conducted a meeting with the CSD faculty on the following morning, October 30<sup>th</sup>. Similar correspondence to all college faculty and staff, recently retired CSD faculty members, students in CSD, and alumni was sent on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Appropriate consultation/notification of interested parties**

Since August 2009, Dean Whitten, associate deans, all department chairs and directors, and the college budget officer have met multiple times to discuss

program quality and productivity for every transcriptable academic program in CAS. Dean Whitten also held special departmental meetings with faculty and separate meetings with department chairs to discuss the situation. A special meeting with the College Advisory Council was convened on September 3 to discuss the budgetary situation. Additionally, both Dean Whitten and Provost Wilcox addressed the budget situation with the CAS Alumni Board during their October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. A schedule of the meetings is attached.

Once the proposed program disbandment was announced, Dean Whitten and other members of the dean's office met with the CSD faculty on October 30 (9 of 11 faculty members were present). On November 4, Dean Whitten, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Steve Lacy Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies Janet Lillie, and Acting Chair of CSD Frank Boster met with CSD undergraduates. There were 100 undergraduate CSD students and 20 CSD MA students present at the meeting. In addition, Dean Whitten and administrative staff met with the faculties from all departments in CAS (including CSD again) during the week of November 2 through 6.

#### **Appropriate consultation/notification of college governance.**

In addition to the September 3rd College Advisory Council meeting, Dean Whitten and administrative staff consulted with the CAS College Advisory Council on the morning of November 6.

#### **Appropriate consultation/notification of external stakeholders (e.g., alumni).**

On the same day email correspondence was sent to faculty, Dean Whitten made separate phone calls to recently retired faculty to discuss the situation. Dean Whitten and Advancement Director Cara Boeff consulted via phone about the suggested proposal with available CAS Alumni Board members. Additionally, Dean Whitten and Cara Boeff made a number of phone calls to key donors regarding the proposed disbandment.

#### **Summary feedback from constituents**

Not surprisingly, the collective CSD faculty are publicly upset, though privately many of them have said that they were not surprised by the proposal for disbandment and related moratorium. They also have privately recognized that they have done very little to refocus the department since the 2004 external review. The recently retired faculty were disappointed, however, they were not surprised about the BA degree program disbandment proposal because they knew that the unit had received a number of clear messages about improving scholarship and grant productivity in recent years. CSD students are very passionate about their academic program and are disappointed as well, however, they are very pleased that greater focus will be given to the MA program.

### **Timetable for implementation.**

Academic advisors are preparing individual advising plans to be placed in the Electronic Academic Folder System (ESAF) for every student who has declared or made a preference for CSD as their undergraduate major. Once the moratorium has been approved, all CSD undergraduates will receive an email stating that their individual advising plan is in ESAF and they will be encouraged to make an advising appointment to review their individual plan. All currently enrolled students will be given an opportunity to complete their CSD degree. Based on current enrollment numbers, we are planning on offering courses through summer of 2012, with the proposed closing of the program effective Fall 2013. As there are some students who are intending to pursue a Teaching Education degree along with their CSD BA, we are requesting to keep the program open through summer 2013, though course offerings will conclude summer 2012.

The impact beyond undergraduates in the CSD degree program will be minimal. The undergraduate degree program offers a fairly closed curriculum, meaning that very few classes are taken by students outside the major. CSD 333 is a selective for education majors, and is required for deaf-education/learning disabilities and special education majors. Additionally, CSD 444 (Audiologic Rehabilitation) and CSD 491 (Topics in CSD) are required for deaf education/learning disabilities majors. Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, Janet Lillie, has spoken with the Associate Dean, Cass Book, in the College of Education about the potential impact.

### **Accommodations for students in the program and those who may be applying to the program**

Once the moratorium is in place, we will work closely with Admissions to notify students who have a major preference for CSD and who were planning on attending MSU in Fall 2010.