

# UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

## 1 Review Summary

<b>Program Reviewed:</b>	Speech-Language Pathology, MHSc
<b>Unit Reviewed:</b>	Department of Speech-Language Pathology
<b>Commissioning Officer:</b>	Dean, Faculty of Medicine
<b>Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):</b>	1. Professor Marc Pell, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, McGill University 2. Professor Natacha Trudeau, L'École d'orthophonie et d'audiologie, Université de Montréal 3. Professor Patricia Zebrowski, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Iowa
<b>Date of Review Visit:</b>	January 25, 2019
<b>Date Presented to AP&amp;P:</b>	October 30, 2019

## Previous Review

**Date:** April 2011

### Summary of Findings and Recommendations

#### 1. Undergraduate Programs (n/a)

#### 2. Graduate Programs (MHSc)

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Highly selective admissions for high quality students
- Innovative components to the curriculum

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Enrolment perhaps too large given market saturation
- Student funding has not kept up with the cost of living

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Reduce enrolment
- Ensure remediation is made available to struggling students

## **Faculty/Research**

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Impressive research reputations and record of funding

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Concerns about faculty complement impacting the operations of the department, including upcoming sabbaticals, loss of faculty to long-term research and administrative release, a long standing faculty position vacancy, and the search for a Chair

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Consider expanding in the areas of acquired language disorders and neurolinguistics, perhaps through increased collaboration with other areas of neuroscience at the University

## **Administration**

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Ensure development/fundraising is a top priority in the future
- Ensure that the contributions of clinical educators are more recognized and appreciated and that they feel more connected with the Department
- Increase collaboration with other units

**Last OCGS review date: 2005/06**

# **Current Review: Documentation and Consultation**

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## **Documentation Provided to Reviewers**

Confirmation/Agreement Letter; Terms of Reference; Self-Study Report (including latest CACUP-ASLP accreditation documents); Faculty CVs; Schedule; Previous External Review Report (2010-11) and the Dean's and Chair's Responses; Dean's Report 2018; Faculty of Medicine's Strategic Priorities; University of Toronto Towards 2030; Access to all course descriptions

## **Consultation Process**

The reviewers met directly with the following individuals/groups:

1. Dean and Vice Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions
2. Vice Dean, Graduate and Academic Affairs
3. Chair
4. Senior Advisory Committee
5. Core Faculty
6. Departmental Coordinators | Clinical Education
7. Educators + Site Coordinators | Clinical Education
8. Course Instructors + Status-Only Professorial Faculty

9. MHSc Students
10. Cognate Department Chairs
11. Administrative Staff
12. Faculty of Medicine Advancement Officers + SLP Alumni Association

## Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

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### 1. Undergraduate Program (n/a)

### 2. Graduate Program

*Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.*

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Objectives
  - Curriculum aligns well with the vision and mission of the department
  - Student handbook contains clear but broad objectives for courses and outplacements in both academic and clinical units
- Admissions requirements
  - Rigorous and appropriate given the learning objectives of the curriculum and accreditation standards and the need to attract students who can achieve them
  - Commendable consideration of relevance by the Admissions and Awards Committee, which is considering changes to prerequisite requirements and the possible replacement of the letter of intent
- Curriculum and program delivery
  - Highly innovative curriculum, attracting strong students year after year
  - Organization of placements in sequence with the coursework is beneficial for students
  - Creative and effective teaching methods
  - Faculty re-examined curricular changes to increase efficiency without sacrificing quality; continuous quality enhancement efforts are impressive and have had positive impacts on the curriculum
  - Comprehensive curriculum meets accreditation standards for the profession; faculty working to align curriculum with 2020 competency frameworks
  - Faculty looking to add a stronger research emphasis to the program
- Innovation
  - Innovative modular curriculum framework sequentially links five academic units of coursework with four full-time clinical placements in the areas just studied
  - Three novel learning experiences—Integrative Learning Experiences (ILEs), Teaching Clinics, and the University’s Interprofessional Education (IPE) Curriculum—help students consolidate and integrate their developing knowledge and skills
- Accessibility and diversity

- Department has worked hard to recruit students from diverse communities and ensure the success of students who require accommodation
- Assessment of learning
  - U of T's leadership role in developing the national competency-based clinical assessment tool is well aligned with its cutting-edge curriculum and confirms the prominent place that U of T occupies in SLP clinical training
  - Student achievement is assessed at multiple points using a variety of methods and tools
  - Improvement in reducing amount of paperwork required for assessments of student performance at clinical placements since last review
  - Innovative portfolio capstone requirement
- Quality indicators – graduate students
  - Recent period of progressive expansion of enrolment; no further enrolment increases are planned
  - Almost no variation in time to completion due to lockstep nature of the program
  - Consistently high ratings from students on the quality of their education

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Curriculum and program delivery
  - Program is packed tightly with little room for deviation, which makes it difficult to pause for reflection/remediation
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - Difficulty in remediating student performance in a timely manner due to lockstep nature of curriculum, lack of timely information about student accommodation needs, short duration of placements, and turnover and other changes in the department
  - Increase in mental health support needs
  - Some students find certain classes too large, high workload in some of the academic units; changes in class sizes have created changes that are less than ideal for student learning
- Quality indicators – graduate students
  - Faculty concerned that decreased number of applicants and increased enrolment may lead to lower quality students
- Student funding
  - Concerns about lowered provincial funding, high cost of living in Toronto, and need to support an increasing number of students
  - More funding is needed to be able to continue to attract excellent students

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Student engagement, experience and program support services
  - Consider how to effectively accommodate students requiring remediation/support

- Take advantage of embedded mental health supports for students
- Student funding
  - Continue to work with Alumni Association and University Office of Advancement to increase the number and size of scholarships provided by individual and organizational donors

### 3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
  - Faculty members expressed a deep sense of belonging and dedication to the unit, a sense of optimism for the future, and a positive and constructive rapport with the Chair
- Research
  - Very high ongoing reputation in the speech area, and recently in swallowing
  - MHSc students are exposed to basic and applied research in the courses taught by research faculty and have the opportunity to gain research experience in faculty laboratories

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Overall quality
  - Strong national and international position of the department cannot be sustained without the addition of new faculty members
  - Complement size—the biggest issue facing the department—impacts the morale of faculty, staff, clinical educators and students; program delivery including placement pressures and workload for clinical educators
- Research
  - With the PhD students now belonging to a different unit, some faculty have reported that their research students are less integrated in the SLP program activities
- Faculty
  - Particular need for more clinically-trained faculty in child language and acquired language disorders—a previous recommendation that has only been partly met
  - UCDF courses no longer taught in department of Linguistics because of small number of tenure-stream faculty (also results in lost pipeline of undergraduate students who could apply to SLP master's)
  - Tenure-stream participation in teaching in RSI is outside regular workload
  - Dean has made strategic decisions about faculty replacements; previous decisions were made not to replace two retired tenure-stream faculty members (only one was replaced with a status-only hire)
  - Responsibilities of teaching-stream faculty are too great in light of the expansion of the student body

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
  - Take urgent action to address the issue of the faculty complement size, which has created pressures compounded by the increase in student cohorts
  - Pursue replacement of tenure-stream appointments of faculty members who retired since the last review
  - Add third full-time teaching-stream position to maintain departmental excellence and facilitate reaching its goals

#### **4. Administration**

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
  - Department has built fruitful relationships with several partners, including other academic units (RSI, OT, PT, Linguistics), affiliated centres (e.g., Bloorview, Sick Kids, etc.), other clinical settings (e.g., GTSB), and organizations such as the SLP alumni association
  - Positive dedication to improving communication and connection to stakeholders within and outside of the University
- Organizational and financial structure
  - Highly impressive dedication and quality of contributions by everyone involved in the department's mission
  - Recent changes to the unit were met with great solidarity and optimism
  - Current resources, space, and infrastructure are appropriate and have been recently reconfigured to house the increased class sizes
  - Research space available to faculty, as well as classrooms and other spaces, are adapted to the size of the unit and have kept pace with current technology
  - Support staff meet the needs of the current program and have manageable workloads
  - Financial structure is appropriate; chair engages in annual budgeting and quarterly reporting, and prioritizes resources to maximize the department's potential
  - Shared RSI physical resources are well-managed to the benefit of all programs, and shared administrative personnel are highly satisfied
  - Merit to the proposal to generate revenues from the clinical community by offering professional development opportunities
  - Justifiable and appropriate move of PhD and MSc programs to RSI
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - Faculty and students have a long and rich history of contributing to the University's mission of excellence through their teaching, research and service; Department excels in all aspects of its mission
  - Chair will ensure continued monitoring and sound management of the unit

- Vision of the department and clear priorities have been collectively articulated in the Strategic Plan which was adopted last year, providing a clear path forward for the next five years (2018-2023); priorities in the plan are appropriate and necessary to sustain the Department's level of excellence, and are in line with the Faculty of Medicine's Strategic Priorities and the University of Toronto's Strategic Research Plan
- Strategies to generate alternative sources of revenue proposed by the department are reasonable and worth pursuing; department and chair have strong relationship with Senior Development Officer in RSS and the dynamic SLP alumni association
- International comparators
  - Program enjoys a very high ranking nationally and internationally, on many fronts (curriculum, research, high-quality students, etc.)
  - Quality and quantity of the research led by tenure stream faculty, joint appointments, and status-only faculty compares favourably to similar programs in Canada and North America, ranking at top levels in Canada and top five internationally both in publication rankings and citation rankings
  - Current curriculum model is unique in Canada, and possibly the U.S.
  - U of T's leadership role in developing the national competency-based clinical assessment tool is well aligned with its cutting-edge curriculum and confirms the prominent place that U of T occupies in SLP clinical training

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Relationships
  - Challenges related to moving the MSc and PhD into the Rehab Sciences Institute have not been fully resolved
  - Inability to teach within the Linguistics department could damage relationship, collaboration, and student pipeline for recruitment
  - Significant revenues generated from Graduate Expansion Funding to support general operating expenses and special projects; unclear of the certainty of this funding arrangement
  - Capacity of the unit to secure UCDF revenue in the future is constrained until the shortage of core tenure-stream faculty is addressed
- Organizational and financial structure
  - Some budgetary decisions may be potentially damaging the otherwise stellar activities and reputation of the SLP; Chair must account for cost-cutting measures undertaken by the Faculty of Medicine
  - SLP program has to manage with the reduced budget resulting from the loss of research (MSc & PhD) students in their unit
  - Clinical site payments (\$10/student/day) from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities are considered insufficient by the department as a major incentive to take SLP trainees, and do not compare favourably to what clinical

sites are receiving to train students in other professions or to train SLP students in other jurisdictions in Canada

- To generate revenue, department chose to expand its class size to historic numbers to cover their budget shortfall (120 students in total, the largest of all SLP English programs in Canada)
- Failure to harmonize budgetary decisions to increase students with increasing investment in full-time faculty, if sustained, will jeopardize the quality of education and program delivery that the department can offer
- Number of signs that the department is involuntarily beginning to take “short-cuts” in how they assess students, which may be an early sign of how budgetary decisions taken at different levels are progressively impacting high quality education
- Chair has strategically allocated funds to a 0.6 Clinical Coordinator to address some of the burden of clinical coordination and teaching
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - Department is now facing a crucial breaking point, which requires immediate and substantial action in order to maintain the favourable reputation and ranking that it has enjoyed
  - Department is not in a position to take advantage of the many opportunities that present themselves, for lack of resources to assign to new initiatives and development
- International comparators
  - Other SLP programs in Canada which have fewer students but more tenure-track faculty members; dire situation is a direct threat to RSI and SLP’s missions, in spite of two upcoming faculty recruitments

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
  - Maintain collaboration with RSI colleagues given small SLP complement
  - Appropriately allocate funding for faculty’s RSI grad students
  - Offer some continuing education opportunities to practicing clinicians, if complement size changes
  - Engage in discussions to alleviate concerns regarding funding, contributions to teaching and its recognition, and promoting interactions between the students enrolled at RSI and the students in the clinical program
- Organizational and financial structure
  - Pursue fundraising opportunities for student scholarships
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
  - Remediate the urgent faculty complement and budgetary issues to enable the department to remain a national and international leader in the field



## 2 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

L. Trevor Young, MD PhD FRCPC

Dean

Vice Provost, Relations with Health Care Institutions

September 25, 2019

Professor Susan McCahan  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
University of Toronto  
Room 225, Simcoe Hall  
27 King's College Circle  
Toronto M5S 1A1

Dear Professor McCahan,

I am responding to your request for a Decanal Administrative Response to the External Review of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) and its Master of Health Science (MHSc) Graduate Program.

On behalf of the Faculty of Medicine, I would first like to thank the three external reviewers, Professors Marc Pell (School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, McGill University), Natacha Trudeau (L'École d'orthophonie et d'audiologie, Université de Montréal) and Patricia Lebowski (Dept. of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Iowa) for a rigorous and comprehensive review of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology on January 25, 2019. The reviewers referred to the Department as:

*"A department that excels in all aspects of its mission. U of T offers a highly innovative curriculum, attracting strong students year after year. The continuous efforts invested in quality enhancement of the program are impressive and have had positive impacts on the curriculum through the years. The quality and quantity of the research led by tenure-track faculty members, joint appointments, and status-only faculty ..... presents an impressive level of achievement, among the top ranks nationally and internationally."*

I would also like to thank, on behalf of the Faculty, Professor Pascal van Lieshout, Chair of the Department, the administrative staff of the Department and all those who contributed to the preparation of the comprehensive self-study. I also thank the many faculty members and students who met with the external reviewers; their input was invaluable for this review. The Faculty of Medicine greatly appreciates the time and effort of the reviewers in providing a written report that is comprehensive and thoughtful.

I will comment on each of the specific areas that you have identified.

- ***While the reviewers commended the innovative curriculum, they were concerned that these innovations and the quality of the programs may not be sustainable with current faculty-student ratios. They recommended additional hires, especially in the areas of child language and adult language disorders, and distributing administrative duties more broadly. They also recommended that future tenure-stream faculty members be trained speech-language pathologists.***

**Immediate Term/Medium Term:** The Faculty has approved two new tenure-track positions for the Department, one to be hired this year and one to be hired in 2020-21.

Following the review of the faculty-student ratios in the Rehabilitation Sector that was conducted with Professor Linda Johnston, Dean of the Faculty Nursing, it was recommended that, because of the growth in status-only and adjunct lecturer appointments, consideration should be given to reviewing the current appointments policy and teaching expectations for status-only adjunct appointments to be utilized in the delivery of courses. New guidelines have now been put into place regarding the appointment and expectations for status-only faculty.

**Long Term:** We plan to address the long-term faculty needs through additional hires to assure the sustainability of the professional master's program. New revenue will be needed, and one possibility is to seek additional government funding for the clinical professional master's programs. Currently it is the same level as research master's programs and thus inadequate to support a course intensive program with multiple clinical placements. A strong case for increased funding could be made, given that the SLP program graduates students are 100% employable and serve a great provincial need for quality healthcare in relevant areas.

- ***While the reviewers judged the quality and quantity of research to be excellent, they were concerned about a drop in tri-council funding and in tri-council applications.***

The drop in grant applications and subsequent funding relates, in part, to the retirement of two professors in the past five years, and to another senior professor holding a central administrative role in the university for the past six years. In addition, one faculty member left for a new position overseas and replacing her with a new junior faculty member created a gap for at least one year. The new faculty member has, however, already been quite successful in attracting new funding from NSERC and CFI.

**Immediate Term:** One new clinician scientist was hired in collaboration with the Holland Bloorview Research Institute to address the need for more SLP capacity at clinical sites. This person is in part meant to fill some of the teaching and research needs related to child communication disorders in the Department. The Chair also hired (on a 0.6 FTE contract basis) a clinical faculty member to assist the existing two teaching-stream faculty in organizing and managing the clinical placements in response to the 20% increased student enrolment.

**Medium Term:** The Department will begin a search in the next two years for two full-time tenure-track faculty (as noted above), preferably in areas of identified need, such as research in language disorders in both adult and pediatric populations. In addition, the Department will continue to work with the Dean's Office to transform the 0.6 FTE contract position for a clinical coordinator into a full-time teaching faculty-stream position where financially feasible.

- ***The reviewers identified challenges with finding and supporting high quality clinical placements.***

**Immediate Term:** As part of the ongoing curriculum review, the Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) in the curriculum will provide new opportunities for students to apply newly acquired knowledge in an applied context.

**Medium Term:** As mentioned in the previous section, the Department will work to find ways to transform the 0.6 FTE contract position for a clinical coordinator into a full-time teaching faculty stream position over the next three years in order to handle the increased number of students seeking high-quality placements in specific areas of care.

- ***The reviewers noted missed opportunities for collaborative teaching with Linguistics through Undergraduate Course Development Fund (UCDF) courses, and for offering continuing education to clinicians. Both of these activities could also generate additional revenue for the department.***

In terms of undergraduate teaching:

**Medium Term:** Because only core tenure-stream faculty could teach in UCDF supported courses, the Department was not able to continue teaching these courses as it did not have enough core faculty. The Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education, made changes to these requirements last year, allowing status-only faculty to teach as well. However, the amount of compensation provided for these instructors would barely cover the instructor stipend. Most recently the University decided it would begin to roll eligible St. George campus UCDF courses into the Interdivisional Teaching Agreement following Faculty of Arts & Science approval, with no restrictions on which faculty can teach in these courses. The Department will therefore plan to renew undergraduate teaching in the 2020-21 academic year.

In terms of continuing education:

**Immediate Term:** The Department has created a partnership with the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA) to provide accredited CE courses for clinicians. As part of this partnership, the Department and OSLA have been supporting a year-long accredited course on literacy over the past two years.

**Medium Term:** In partnership with OSLA, the Department will explore other topics that would be of interest to clinicians.

- ***The reviewers noted a number of unresolved challenges related to moving the MSc and PhD into the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute that stand in the way of full collaboration among and support of faculty and students in the sector. The reviewers recommended engaging in discussions to alleviate concerns regarding funding; ensure teaching and supervision in RSI are appropriately recognized; and promote interactions between the students enrolled at RSI and the students in the clinical program.***

**Immediate Term:** The research students in RSI who are supervised by SLP faculty are part of a distinct SLP stream. The Department will increase its efforts to communicate all major achievements of research students to all members of the SLP Department. In addition, there is a Departmental celebratory event whenever one of the RSI-SLP students successfully completes the research program. Supervision of research students for full-time faculty is a required part of their workload and is rewarded through the

PTR process. Likewise, for status-only faculty, teaching in the RSI stream is recognized as part of their status renewal application.

**Medium Term:** Over the next year, the Department will be integrating RSI graduates into the SLP alumni group.

- ***The reviewers made suggestions about how to improve the student experience in the MHSc, including improving remediation for students in academic difficulty, ensuring access to appropriate mental health supports, and pursuing fundraising opportunities for student scholarships.***

**Immediate Term:** The mental health needs of the MHSc SLP students are now being addressed by an embedded MSW counsellor at 500 University who is available to meet with graduate students in the Rehab Sector, including those in the MHSc SLP program. The University has recently hired additional staff specifically to provide support to students in need of academic remediation, not only for academic issues but also for clinical placements. The Department has successfully engaged with a senior Advancement Officer and with the Alumni Association to increase the number of student scholarships.

**Medium Term:** The Department will continue in the near future to evaluate policies and procedures to assure that students in clinical placements who are facing challenges are identified early and that an appropriate remediation plan is put into place.

The next UTQAP review of SLP is scheduled in 2023-23. In 2020-21 we will follow up with the Chair on the implementation of the external reviewers' recommendations and, later that year, provide you with an interim report on the status of the implementation plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Young', written in a cursive style.

L. Trevor Young

### **3 Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings**

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the summary covered the full review. The administrative response covered all main points and represented a forward- looking plan to address concerns.

No follow-up report was requested.

### **4 Institutional Executive Summary**

The reviewers remarked on the impressive research achievements of the Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) faculty. The reviewers stated that they were highly impressed with the commitment and dedication of the SLP community, noting that, “All faculty members expressed a deep sense of belonging and dedication to the unit, a sense of optimism for the future, and a positive and constructive rapport with the Chair of the department.” They praised the highly innovative curriculum of the MHSc, which attracts strong students. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: improving current faculty-student ratios; increasing tri-council applications and tri-council funding; finding and supporting high quality clinical outplacements; capitalizing on opportunities for collaborative teaching with Linguistics through Undergraduate Course Development Fund (UCDF) courses, and for offering continuing education to clinicians; unresolved challenges related to moving the MSc and PhD into the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute; and improving the student experience in the MHSc, including improving remediation for students in academic difficulty, ensuring access to appropriate mental health supports, and pursuing fundraising opportunities for student scholarships. The Dean’s Administrative Response describes the Faculty, unit and programs’ responses to the reviewers’ recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

### **5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review**

In 2020-21 the Faculty will follow up with the Department Chair on the implementation of the external reviewers’ recommendations and, later that year, provide an interim report on the status of the implementation plan.

The next review will be commissioned in 2023.

### **6 Distribution**

On October 26, 2020, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, the Secretaries to AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to the Chair of the Unit.