

## **Ph.D. Program in Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The CSD doctoral program began in 2007 with 7 doctoral students, and 28 students have graduated from the program. Currently, 14 students (8 full-time and 6 part-time) are enrolled. Our program addresses the lack of qualified and trained Ph.D. graduates nationwide and the significant shortage of CSD faculty in academia as tenured faculty retire. Both the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CAPCSD) and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) have documented these dire shortages. There are over 120 open positions for faculty in speech-language pathology and/or audiology; 33% of all open positions for PhD faculty went unfilled last year.

### **Category 1 - Cost and Revenue of Delivery:**

This information appears to indicate that the Ph.D. program in CSD is less efficient in generating revenue and credit hours than incurring expenses; however, upon closer inspection, several reasons unrelated to the Ph.D. program result in large expenses and decreased revenue.

Revenue: The Ph.D. program is a 63-credit hour program. Of that, 36 credit hours are taken within the department, and 27 credit hours are taken outside of the department (e.g., ERM, HHS, Psychology, Gerontology, Public Health) and thus contribute to the revenue of other departments within the University. Additionally, all CSD courses are funded at the highest level in the new funding model due to their designated CIP code. Revenue from differential tuition (DT) and the Speech and Hearing Center (SHC) offset some of the expenses incurred by the department (nonstate-funded) PT faculty, staff positions, and equipment repairs. We anticipate an increase in DT revenue this year from our new online MA program and from the increasing enrollment in the on-campus program.

Expenses: The CSD department has three academic programs: undergraduate, master's, and doctoral. In addition, the CSD Department houses the SHC. The SHC is a department-operated business that provides speech and hearing services and equipment to the University and Greensboro community while serving as a training facility for our first-year MA students. The in-house training of graduate students is one of the reasons why students choose UNC Greensboro for their master's program. There are significant costs associated with running the SHC- purchasing hearing aids for resale, subscribing to an electronic medical record system, the need to have a video system for recording all clinical encounters, parking spaces for clients, and a credit card machine for transactions. In addition, two staff members (billing specialist and scheduler) are dedicated to the SHC. These staff members are salaried through the SHC and DT. **Although a substantial expense is associated with running the SHC, revenue exceeds yearly expenses.** The SHC and the accreditation requirements for an adequate number of clinical educators to supervise MA students during their first year in the graduate program result in significant expenses for the entire department. However, we have been efficient in managing expenses. Many Clinical Educators (Professional Track Faculty) salaries (5/11 full-time) are paid through contracts, SHC revenue, and differential tuition dollars. The remaining six PT faculty are paid through state-funded dollars. Any part-time needs for additional Clinical Educators are paid through DT. Many of our doctoral students supervise our MA students in the SHC and provide instruction or instructional support for our undergraduate and graduate courses. Doctoral students contribute to the research mission and research success of the department by supporting faculty members in research labs. Currently, only four Ph.D. faculty work with the full-time and part-time doctoral students while providing academic support to the undergraduate and master's programs. The loss of faculty lines over the past few years has resulted in fewer faculty available for doctoral students. Our CSD faculty mentor between 3 and 5 doctoral students each while maintaining teaching, service, research, and administrative duties.

Two fairly new research-active faculty are now recruiting doctoral students. One new faculty member began mentoring a doctoral student this fall; the other faculty member is recruiting for her NSF grant (tuition waiver and stipend available through the grant).

**Category 2 - Academic Program Demand:**

Our doctoral program may be small as compared to other departments within the university, however, the number of students is comparable to other doctoral programs in CSD nationwide. Our program is unique in that we offer both a part-time and online option. According to [ASHA Ed Find](#), UNC Greensboro is one of only 23 universities that offer a part-time option to students pursuing a research doctorate. This is an important distinction and a critical need. Approximately one-third of our doctoral students are/were enrolled as part-time students. The demand is growing. We currently have 4 new applicants for fall 2024 admission.

**Category 5 - Student Success:**

In 2021, only 151 CSD research doctorates were granted nationwide. The graduation numbers for UNC Greensboro's program are consistent with national averages for CSD Ph.D. programs of 3-4 graduates each year. In 2023-024 CSD will have 4 graduates. ASHA reports the average time to degree as 4-6 years. Our average time to degree is 4.6 years for full-time students. This is within the average range reported by ASHA.

Since 2007, the program has graduated 24 full-time and 4 part-time students. Twenty-two of the graduates were offered faculty positions following graduation; two obtained Postdoc positions; and four accepted clinical positions. The employment rate for our graduates is 100%. Five of our graduates are currently in faculty positions in North Carolina.

The twenty-four full-time students graduated within UNC Greensboro's Graduate School allotted time frame (5-7 years). The four who did not were part-time students, without tuition waivers or stipends, who graduated in 6-9 years (average of 7.75 years).

Since 2019, we have seen a significant growth in the number of students enrolling part-time. Our Ph.D. program occupies a unique niche in attracting both full *and* part-time students. Part-time options for working professionals provides options for adults who want to pursue a research doctorate but cannot afford to leave their jobs. These students do not receive tuition waivers or stipends.

Our full-time and part-time students appreciate the parallel or similar educational experiences they receive, including conference presentations, publications, and leadership opportunities. Part-time students may take longer to complete their degree, yet we believe that full-time-only programs will not fill the growing need for doctoral faculty in the Speech and Hearing Sciences.

In summary, there is a significant nationwide shortage of doctorly-trained CSD faculty. The Ph.D. program in CSD has been very successful in producing immediately employed graduates who are helping to reduce these shortages.

## PhD CSD APR/SOC

### Communication Sciences and Disorders: Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges

#### *Strengths*

- High Employment Rate: 100%
- National Comparability: The program is competitive and relevant.
- Diversity: The program accommodates a diverse range of learners and professionals.
- Opportunities for Other Departments: The program contributes to the revenue of other departments within the University as 27 credit hours out of 63 are taken outside of the department.
- The SHC: It is a department-operated business that provides audiology and speech and hearing services to the University and Greensboro community while serving as a training facility for the first-year MA students. This is an important strength, although it is costly. It helps recruit more MA students and provides community-engaged services.
- Their CIP code is a high amt/SCH as a health-based discipline.
- They have an integrated training and revenue generating system for revenue to exceed expenses: contracts & differential tuition covers many APT and non-faculty personnel and clinic expenses; doctoral students supervise MA students, teach, and engage in research; doctoral students are supervised by four faculty
- Offers a part-time plan that supports students paying "out-of-pocket." - 33% of unfilled seats from ASHA data shows the need/demand this program is filling.

#### *Opportunities*

- Meeting the Nationwide Demand: Given the nationwide shortage of CSD faculty, the program can continue to play a crucial role in addressing this need by expanding and accommodating more students, both full-time and part-time.
- Marketing Part-Time Program: There's an opportunity to actively market the part-time program and attract more students, particularly working professionals. This might enhance the overall success of the program, although the average completion time might also increase.
- Addressing Student Completion: Implementing strategies to support and ensure timely program completion could enhance student success rates.
- Collaborations and Funding: Exploring collaborations with other universities or securing additional resources could further strengthen the program's capacity and outreach.
- Supporting Faculty: Investing in faculty development and support can improve the overall quality of education and mentorship for students.
- Leadership Role: Considering the nationwide demand, this program has a good chance to play a leadership role.
- Explore where and how growth is feasible and can be supported through multiple factors (e.g., MS students, faculty lines, cost-sharing, sponsorships with targeted institutions)
- Program seems poised for growth if there were more resources hired to fill academic positions at UNCG. At the moment it seems as if the number of doctoral students to faculty is at the upper limit, but with new lines (strategic investment) more students could be supervised.

## Challenges

- **Cost Efficiency:** It seems the program's cost and revenue generation are in the lower 15th percentile compared to other departments. However, some of the reasons are explained well. For example, 27 credit hours out of 63 are taken in other departments or running SHC where some expensive equipment is purchased.
- **Shortage of Staffing:** The decrease in faculty lines has resulted in limited faculty availability for doctoral students which affects student-faculty ratios and mentorship opportunities.
- **Extended Completion Time:** A lower percentage of students complete the program within the standard 7-year timeframe, but this is reflective of the inclusion of students who are attending part-time (and hence don't require an assistantship). This could also be seen as a strength!
- **The part-time option potentially pulls resources based on the contracted time for completion – how long are they given to complete the program?**
- **For a program with small numbers, how many FT and PT students are viable given available faculty, supervision needs, research engagement, with consideration on the field (are PT graduates engaged on a national level post-degree? [Answer provided in ERC meeting: 14]**

## Addendum

1. **Maintenance** of the program would enable the two recently appointed faculty members in the CSD department to expand the number of students they can mentor. This increase is expected to occur over the next year, leading to a growth in the number of doctoral students. If the doctoral program is not maintained, there is a possibility that the two research-active faculty members will look for positions in a university that offers a doctoral program. The doctoral program is an important selling feature for recruiting both research-active faculty and MA students interested in pursuing research.
2. **Investment** in the program would allow us to market our program to more full and part-time students. We have not been heavily marketing the program due to the number of faculty members who are able to take doc students. If we had more faculty we could do so. In addition, we now offer an online option for doctoral students and many of our part-time students take advantage of this opportunity. We could certainly attract more students to the part-time and online programs, but we have not marketed these programs.