

External Evaluation Report and Single Institutional Response

A two-day external review of the proposed Master of Science in Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) Program at Binghamton University was completed on March 23rd and 24th, 2021. Dr. Anu Subramanian and Dr. Jack Damico, both highly qualified administrators in similar graduate programs, completed a virtual review. As a part of the process, the reviewers met with administrators, staff, and constituent groups that are stakeholders in the new degree program. Also, the reviewers met with the Founding Program Director and discussed the program in detail. The reviewers were complementary of many aspects of the proposal, but three major areas of concern were raised. Each of these concerns were met in the final proposal. In this response, a specific summary of the response to the reviewers' concerns are addressed below.

Concern #1- Size of Student Cohort

Both reviewers expressed concern that the target size of the student cohort was too large. The initial plan for the program was to admit 60 students admitted each year. The choice to admit this number of students was to meet the shortage of SLPs in the region, assure that the program would be similar in size to other programs in the Decker College, and to improve the availability of resources for the program. Both reviewers commented that the large number was most likely going to put the program into a difficult position. There was concern that identification of clinical sites for this number of students would be very challenging. The initial plan for the program was meet this concern by allowing the students to complete placements in areas outside of an hour radius of the University. Also, the plan was to have the students enter the program two times a year, which would decrease class sizes and limit the number of students doing internships during a given semester. Both reviewers said that this would indeed help, but still cautioned that the size of the cohort would be too large. Dr. Subramanian suggested that the program seek to reduce the number of students, while increasing the number of faculty to supervise the students in clinical internships and practicums during the first four semesters. Dr. Damico suggested that the program only admit a maximum of 30 students into the program, if the program was going to hire only 6 faculty members into the program, as suggested in the initial proposal.

To meet these concerns, the revised plan for the program is to reduce the number of students targeted for admission. Additionally, the SLP Division will hire the needed faculty to establish the clinical internships and practicums needed for a larger cohort of students. To do this, the Division of SLP will hire the Clinical Coordinator and four Clinical Assistant Professors in 2021. These individuals will establish the necessary clinical placements to meet the needs of a large group of students. It is expected that these four individuals will deliver therapy with community partners and their salaries will be partially paid by external contracts in the community. The current version of the proposal has a target enrollment of 45 students, with an initial cohort of 30 students. This number of students will be much better for the program, allows the program to be financially viable, and make the task of placing students on internships much easier.

Concern #2- Small Number of Faculty for Teaching Courses, Clinical Supervision, and Service Activities

In the initial plan for the program, it was proposed that the Division of SLP would employ six full-time faculty. In addition to these full-time faculty, the proposed program would utilize part-time faculty and doctoral students to teach

courses and supervise students in the clinic. Both of the reviewers noted that the faculty size of six would not allow for an adequate number of instructors to cover the coursework, clinical supervision, and service for the program. The reviewers suggested that part-time faculty and doctoral students can be utilized to supplement the work of the full-time faculty, but are not a panacea. Additional faculty was needed to strengthen course teaching, research, and clinical training. Additionally, the low number of full-time faculty would not allow the program to complete the service needed for a program progressing through accreditation.

Dr. Damico provided a detailed discussion of the variability in student to faculty ratios in SLPs programs in the State of New York and around the country. He suggested that the proposed program would have a ratio of 20:1, which was far larger than most graduate programs in the country. He suggested that even a ratio of 10:1 was larger than other programs, but would be more acceptable. With the reduction in the student cohort to 45 in the current proposal, the total number of students in the proposed two-year SLP program would be 90. With this reduce ratio of students to the initial six faculty would be 15:1, so still far higher than most programs around the country. The current proposal includes and increase to 10 full-time faculty. This number will include the program director, a clinical coordinator, one tenure eligible faculty, three tenure track faculty members and four clinical faculty members. The four clinical faculty members are the major change in the faculty composition. The clinical faculty will be tasked with assisting the clinical coordinator in developing clinical simulations and practicum experiences. The additional faculty members will allow for an increase in the number and quality of clinical experiences, as better flexibility in teaching the curriculum. To assist in funding these positions, the clinical professors will establish part-time contracts with community facilities and schools. The clinical faculty will provide therapy in these facilities and the develop these experiences as internship sites for future students in the program. The revenue from these contracts will partially support the clinical professor positions and provide visibility in the community that will be mutually beneficial to the University and community facilities.

3. The Need for Increased Support for Research

Both reviewers expressed a concern that the initial proposal did not appear to include sufficient support for research. The first issue was that the amount of start-up funds would not allow for the necessary resources for each individual faculty member to be successful. The initial budget allocated \$10,000 for each faculty member, which was typical for faculty in the School of Nursing. It was also expected that faculty would be able to access equipment in the variety of labs and research centers on the main campus. The reviewers discussed different amounts of start-up funds offered to new hires on their campuses. The revised budget for the program allows for \$40,000 of funding for the tenure eligible and tenure track hires. With the number of labs and centers around campus, it is expected that this amount will allow for faculty to have ample support to be successful in their research. The amount will also make the program competitive in recruiting strong faculty members.

The reviewers believe that the initial proposed number of faculty was too small for faculty to have the necessary allocation of time for research. To address this concern, one additional tenure track faculty member will be hired. All of the tenure eligible or tenure track faculty members will have 40% of their time allocated to research. This allocation is similar to other programs at BU and other R1 Universities. It should be noted that the addition of three clinical faculty, who will also teach didactic courses, will assure that the faculty involved in research can be successful. These lines were not included in the initial proposal and budget.

Related to this issue was the need for funding to support the students in doing research. Dr. Damico suggested that the University consider funding assistantships for students. Also, he suggested a research colloquium to continually expose the MS students in research. The program director will seek external funding to support the future students in the program and will seek to develop this type of colloquium.

Other Comments

The reviewers offered comments that were not directly related to the MS program, but will impact the offering of the programs. Both mentioned that the addition of the Minor in Speech and Hearing Science offered by the program would not only be a good service to the students at Binghamton University, while also providing a potential group of applicants for the proposed MS program in the future. The addition of this minor will offer challenges and the reviewers mentioned that there will need to be consideration of the minor. The concern being that there will need to be faculty to teach these courses, while also teaching the MS curriculum, completing research and providing service needed to developing the minor and MS program. The increase in faculty size from 6 to 10 full-time positions will allow for coverage of courses in both programs and other responsibilities to the Division of SLP.

The reviewers also mentioned that it was to the faculty's advantage to access the doctoral programs in the College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA). Dr. Damico expressed some concerns that these doctoral programs were not ideal because they were not housed within the SLP program. It should be noted that he did not fully understand the structures in the curriculum to assure that students would indeed be grounded in SLP. This will be done through the students' coursework, teaching opportunities, and their dissertations. Currently, there are four Speech and Language Pathologists that have been accepted in the program, and will be working with the Founding Program Director on projects related to clinical development and teaching. The reviewers also shared that caution should be taken by the Founding Program Director in doing too much doctoral supervision, in combination with the efforts required for developing the MS program. The reviewers also suggested that the University consider financial support of these doctoral students to assist in building the research foundation of the Division of SLP, work as service providers and clinical supervisors, as well as assist in teaching in the undergraduate minor. Steps are being taken to include these students in the Division of SLP.

In general, the reviewers were impressed with the proposal for the MS-SLP program developed by the Division of SLP and the Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Both reviewers suggest that the program has a high likelihood of success. The reviewers recommended being cautious in growing the program too fast. Two ways that this will be addressed is by hiring up to four faculty, including the Clinic Coordinator, in the next year to assist in developing the program. Similarly, additional faculty lines and the reduction of the target student population will be a positive step. Finally, the program will follow the advice of the reviewers and wait to consider establishing other programs, for example the Speech and Language Pathology Doctorate, until after the MS-SLP program is through the process of accreditation.



External Evaluation Report

Form 2D
Version 201-08-02

The External Evaluation Report is an important component of a new academic program proposal. The external evaluator's task is to examine the program proposal and related materials, visit the campus to discuss the proposal with faculty and review related instructional resources and facilities, respond to the questions in this Report form, and submit to the institution a signed report that speaks to the quality of, and need for, the proposed program. The report should aim for completeness, accuracy and objectivity.

The institution is expected to review each External Evaluation Report it receives, prepare a single institutional response to all reports, and, as appropriate, make changes to its program proposal and plan. Each separate External Evaluation Report and the Institutional Response become part of the full program proposal that the institution submits to SUNY for approval. If an external evaluation of the proposed program is required by the New York State Education Department (SED), SUNY includes the External Evaluation Reports and Institutional Response in the full proposal that it submits to SED for registration.

Institution: Binghamton University

Evaluator Name (Please print.): Dr. Anu Subramanian

Evaluator Title and Institution: Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Clinical Programs- SLP
University of Iowa

Evaluator Signature:

Proposed Program Title: Speech-Language Pathology

Degree: MS

Date of evaluation: Tuesday, March 23 – Wednesday, March 24

We had the opportunity to meet and discuss the MS degree in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) with Tod Gabel, Founding director of the SLP program, members of the Senior Administrative team including Provost Nieman, Associate Dean Mahler, CFO Condi and Associate Dean Ortiz. We also attended meetings with Bear-Lehman, Founding Director for Occupational therapy, Buck, Founding Director for Physical therapy. Additionally, we had meetings with local clinicians and potential fieldwork supervisors, and other collaborators within Binghamton University. The information in this report is from these meetings and the document shared with us related to SUNY's new program proposal.

I. Program

1. Assess the program's **purpose, structure, and requirements** as well as formal mechanisms for program **administration and evaluation**. Address the program's academic rigor and intellectual coherence.

The purpose of the program is well documented in the field and in the document itself. There is a dearth of SLP clinicians available for practice, along with a high need in multiple settings. Given that, this program will provide the state of New York, specifically Broome County and its surrounding areas an opportunity to increase the number of SLP clinicians. The structure and academic rigor including the curriculum, the plan for clinical placements are strong. Conversations with area clinicians, both in the school and hospital were very positive for mutually beneficial collaborative opportunities for student training. The support from within the college for structure, including for research, teaching, inter professional education, and physical plant will help the program flourish. It is evident to this reviewer that the founding director and Dean have spent ample thought and effort in building this program. The proposal submitted is impressive in its depth of detail and the number of people and agencies consulted. Such a strong foundation is bound to result in success.

2. Comment on the special focus of this program, if any, as it relates to the discipline.

This program does not have a special focus in the discipline. The program seeks to train generalist SLPs. This is typical of most programs. Any specialization requires additional coursework and clinical opportunities. In starting a program, a generalist SLP program is ideal.

3. Comment on the plans and expectations for self-assessment and continuous improvement.

The program seeks accreditation from CAA (Council for Academic Accreditation) through ASHA (American Speech Language and Hearing Association). Maintaining the accreditation requires self assessment and improvement. While there are no plans discussed for these areas in the proposal, it will be required for accreditation.

4. Discuss the relationship of this program to other programs of the institution and collaboration with other institutions, and assess available support from related programs.

The SLP program is being developed as part of an overall healthcare expansion at Binghamton University. The Decker college of nursing is growing into the Decker college of Nursing and Health Sciences. The School of Rehabilitation Sciences consisting of Divisions of Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and SLP is being developed. In addition to these immediate collaborations, our meetings with representatives from the department of Psychology and Institute of childhood development provided fertile ground for other collaboration opportunities. While BU has not reached out to other SUNY campuses for collaboration, it is expected that as more faculty are hired such collaborations with other Universities will grow.

5. What is the evidence of need and demand for the program locally, in the State, and in the field at large? What is the extent of occupational demand for graduates? What is the evidence that demand will continue?

As indicated in the program's proposal, the field of SLP has a national shortage of SLP's. Additionally, there are more students interested in graduate programs compared to the number of seats available. A needs assessment conducted by the Founding Director of the SLP program indicated a need for SLPs in the greater Binghamton metropolitan area. Our conversations with local stakeholders indicated their excitement and support for the development of a program at BU to help with afore-mentioned shortage of SLP's in the local area. Hence, this program will most definitely fill the need for both trained SLPs and training programs.

II. Faculty

6. **Evaluate the faculty**, individually and collectively, with regard to training, experience, research and publication, professional service, and recognition in the field.

Currently, the Division of SLP has only one faculty member, the Founding Director, Rodney Gabel. There are plans to hire a clinical coordinator before the Fall of 2021. Based on his CV and discussions with him, Rodney Gabel is a great leader who will ensure success for the program. He has previous experience as a program director, has successfully managed the budget and monetization of a clinic. The plan developed by Dr. Gabel for this program is evidence of his training and experience. Dr. Gabel is professionally recognized as an expert in his specific area of SLP (stuttering). My area of expertise is also stuttering; hence I have heard of Dr. Gabel's name and read his publications. He is an a high quality leader for this division.

7. **Assess the faculty in terms of number and qualifications and plans for future staffing.** Evaluate **faculty responsibilities** for the proposed program, taking into account their other institutional and programmatic commitments. Evaluate faculty **activity in generating funds** for research, training, facilities, equipment, etc. Discuss any **critical gaps and plans for addressing them.**

Following conversations on the first day of the review, Dr. Gabel met with Dean Ortiz to discuss student:faculty ratio. In a follow up email, Dr. Gabel indicated that the plan for future hiring had changed. In the proposal discussed on day 2 of the review, the plan is to hire 7 full-time PhD level faculty, the Director of the division and a clinical coordinator). Additional clinical track faculty may be required if more clinical programs are developed at the university clinic. Using some of the clinical collaborations in the area may have to be provided adjunct status as well. In the current proposal, doctoral students will be assigned supervisory responsibilities as well. As the program grows, this may have to be reevaluated to seek out additional supervisory staff.

BU is a Research 1 University, requiring a high level of research output. There is a lot of institutional support for such research. Developing a new program requires a lot more service and teaching from faculty. Hence, ensuring that incoming research faculty have dedicated time for research to ensure their success is essential.

In addition to the MS program in SLP, the Division of SLP will also offer a minor in SLP for undergraduate students to get the requisite courses for a MS in SLP and have a collaborative doctoral program through the College of Community and Public Affairs. With the additional responsibilities of teaching these undergraduate and doctoral level courses, the plan for hiring faculty may need to be adjusted based on research productivity.

In addition to promotion and tenure criteria for tenure-track faculty, policies and procedures should be developed for any promotion/raise/growth opportunities for clinical supervisors. Another consideration is whether these supervisors are considered clinical faculty or will be staff with clear roles outlined. Given that the current plan is to use doctoral students for supervision, this is not essential immediately, but should be considered.

At this time, given the proposal, the plan outlined in a summary email appears appropriate. However, this may change based on research productivity requirements and clinical supervisory needs.

8. Evaluate credentials and involvement of **adjunct faculty and support personnel.**

None at this time. As long term clinical collaborators are identified, there may be need to include some of them as adjunct faculty to ensure a high quality training program for students.

III. Students

9. Comment on the **student population the program seeks to serve**, and assess plans and projections for student recruitment and enrollment.

The high demand for SLP's in the workforce has created a demand for SLP programs. BU's plan to add a minor in SLP for undergraduates will serve your undergraduate students well. This pre-professional track will create more opportunities for the undergraduate students, including graduate school.

In the first draft of the proposal, the expectation was for 60 MA students with start dates staggered between summer and fall, based on the undergraduate path taken. Following the first day of meetings, this was modified to about 40. All the nearby Universities have significantly lower numbers of Master's students. Hence, 60 students

per graduating class for the master's students is not practical. Providing all these students a variety of clinical training opportunities will reduce the quality of the program. A goal of 40 graduate students per class is more achievable and manageable. Plans for student recruitment and enrollment are well thought out. Discussions also indicated that there are many interested and eager students with psychology majors.

10. What are the prospects that recruitment efforts and admissions criteria will supply a sufficient pool of highly qualified applicants and enrollees?

The information provided in the proposal and discussions indicate that recruitment and admissions criteria are adequate for the expected pool.

11. Comment on provisions for encouraging participation of persons from underrepresented groups. Is there adequate attention to the needs of part-time, minority, or disadvantaged students?

The field of SLP is predominantly white. Many efforts at increasing diversity have not moved the needle too far. BU's plan includes plans to recruit students from underrepresented groups. The college reported efforts with HBCU's in order to attract students to BU's program. Additionally, Dean Ortiz discussed the development of a college wide holistic admissions policy to increase the diversity of the college, including minoritized and disadvantaged students.

12. Assess the system for monitoring students' progress and performance and for advising students regarding academic and career matters.

The grading systems for each class and clinic will have to be identified. However, the accrediting agency for SLP programs (CAA) and Clinical Certification Committees (CFCC) have specific knowledge and skills that have to be acquired and signed off prior to certification as an SLP. Hence, the program will have to use rubrics to ensure that such progress is monitored throughout the graduate program. Our discussions with the college advisor indicated that the college will be able to support with advising of students.

13. Discuss prospects for graduates' post-completion success, whether employment, job advancement, future study, or other outcomes related to the program's goals.

This program will result in graduate students who are ready to be certified and join the work force as SLP's

IV. Resources

14. Comment on the adequacy of physical resources and facilities, e.g., library, computer, and laboratory facilities; practica and internship sites or other experiential learning opportunities, such as co-ops or service learning; and support services for the program, including use of resources outside the institution.

A video tour of the building indicated an impressive facility and resources for incoming students. The physical facility included library space, meeting areas, computer labs, clinic rooms, simulation labs and opportunities for interprofessional education. In our discussions with collaborators in the community, all were willing to host students and had the space and interest in providing clinical education/training for the students.

15. What is the institution's commitment to the program as demonstrated by the operating budget, faculty salaries, the number of faculty lines relative to student numbers and workload, and discussions about administrative support with faculty and administrators?

The Provost, CFO and Dean Ortiz indicated their strong support for this Division as part of the University's strategic plan. The budget for start up funds (which was indicated at \$10,000 in one discussion) is too low to attract faculty who are expected to do research commiserate with expectations at an R01 University. Hence, this should be considered based on faculty research needs. Workloads and administrative support seem to be fair from the proposal. Increasing University support to doctoral students may also alleviate some of the load on the faculty members, creating time for grant writing and management.

V. Summary Comments and Additional Observations

16. Summarize the **major strengths and weaknesses** of the program as proposed with particular attention to feasibility of implementation and appropriateness of objectives for the degree offered.

The strengths of the proposed program are the very strong leaders who are leading this charge. The support from the University as part of their strategic focus bodes well for the success of the program. The proposal developed is thoughtful and indicates depth and vision to ensure the implementation. Community support from practicing clinicians (Gigi's playhouse, school system, hospital) will ensure the high quality of clinical training for the students. The revised plan for students (40 per graduating class) and faculty (7 full time faculty, in addition to the director of the division, clinical coordinator and possible long term clinical contracts) seems acceptable, achievable and will ensure student success for a high quality program.

While these are not weaknesses, areas to discuss in greater detail is the feasibility and need for a clinical doctoral program at this time, policies for promotion and research expectations given the research I status of BU combined with the work in developing a program. Ensuring financial support (start ups, doctoral student funding) for the division will be imperative.

17. If applicable, particularly for graduate programs, comment on the ways that this program will make a **unique contribution** to the field, and its likelihood of achieving State, regional and/or national **prominence**.

Choosing the right faculty, providing the appropriate support, and creating the right culture will ensure that the faculty contribute to the field in terms of their research, collaborations, service and teaching.

18. Include any **further observations** important to the evaluation of this program proposal and provide any **recommendations** for the proposed program.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this program. I am very supportive of this program.



External Reviewer Conflict of Interest Statement

I am providing an external review of the application submitted to the State University of New York by:
Binghamton University

(Name of Institution or Applicant)

The application is for (circle A or B below)

A) New Degree Authority

B) Registration of a new academic program by an existing institution of higher education:

MS Speech-Language Pathology
(Title of Proposed Program)

I affirm that I:

1. am not a present or former employee, student, member of the governing board, owner or shareholder of, or consultant to the institution that is seeking approval for the proposed program or the entity seeking approval for new degree authority, and that I did not consult on, or help to develop, the application;
2. am not a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any of the individuals listed above;
3. am not seeking or being sought for employment or other relationship with the institution/entity submitting the application?
4. do not have now, nor have had in the past, a relationship with the institution/entity submitting the application that might compromise my objectivity.

Name of External Reviewer (please print):
Anu Subramanian

Signature:

 _____

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT OF THE
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROPOSAL
AT BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY**

By Jack S. Damico, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Professor and Chair at the University of Colorado Boulder, Jack S. Damico, and Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Clinical Programs-SLP at the University of Iowa, Anu Subramanian, reviewed the proposal for the *Speech-Language Pathology Master of Science (MS) degree program at Binghamton University*. Additionally, they met and interviewed via remote conferencing (Zoom) with 22 individuals over a two-day period (3/23/21 and 3/24/21). The proposal was approximately 259 pages in length and provided all the necessary information for program review. Drs Damico and Subramanian reviewed the program information, the proposed curriculum, the faculty and proposed qualifications for current faculty and new hires, the financial resources and instructional facilities, the community support and the program need, and the institutional resources and support for this proposed program. Although not being able to observe the physical facilities (but a video was provided), we believe that the document and the online conferencing provided us with important information and illuminating discussions with all individuals with whom we interacted. From this, we were able to gain sufficient understanding of the nature and proposed operations of the program, its goals and intentions, and the university governing administration to be able to offer an informed evaluation of the proposal for the speech-language pathology Master of Science degree program. Dr. Rodney Gabel and the university faculty, staff and administrators that we interacted with were open, accommodating, and informative. We are grateful for their assistance with this evaluation.

This report is submitted by Dr. Damico. It was determined that each evaluator would provide separate reports so that these evaluations are objective and with consolidation of the two evaluations, accuracy and completeness would be obtained.

Overall, this proposed graduate program in speech-language pathology is well prepared and effectively provides all the information needed to determine the feasibility of the program and the appropriateness of its purpose and objectives. Further, the program structure, the proposed faculty, the plans for student recruitment and retention in the program, and the resources available and committed to this program all support its successful implementation. Based upon this review, it is the recommendation of this reviewer that **the program should proceed with a few modifications**. Given the state of the profession of speech-language pathology and the high quality of this proposal, **this program is expected to be very successful in both recruiting students and preparing** them as professionals within the discipline of communicative disorders. Indeed, if the program focus on rural service delivery is sustained and advanced, it is very likely that this work would place this program within national prominence.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (in order of priority with the first recommendation holding preeminence to the others)

1. Reduce the number of students accepted into the program each year from 60 students admitted to 30 students.
2. Maintain the focus on providing service delivery to rural areas within your region especially as it pertains to clinical work and clinical research.
3. Do not move too quickly to the requirement or expectation that part-time faculty should be doctoral students in the *Community Research and Action PhD* program. While a strong and worthwhile program, this degree may not be considered a related field in communicative disorders and so doctoral students may not be able to obtain academic positions in the discipline. If students do enter this program, make certain their dissertations are oriented to specifics in communicative disorders.
4. Continue the development of specialized clinical experiences for students during their first year in the program (e.g., stuttering clinic, aphasia clinic), and obtain funding for these programs through the University and upper administration.
5. When planning clinical activities for students, strive for quality of experiences over quantity of experiences. Enable students to obtain their required 400 hours of direct clinical contact but don't strive for too many additional contact hours.
6. While your part-time clinical supervisors/instructors should be University employees, seeking clinical contracts for each one in various clinical sites can assist with the program personnel budget in the future. Examples might be early intervention contracts or contracts at facilities like Whitney-point and GiGi's Playhouse.
7. Establish a funding source for graduate assistantships, research assistantships or teaching assistantships for students in the program. This should be done via internal university funds and external research funding.
8. Move cautiously and carefully toward a doctoral degree within the program. Successful doctoral programs within the discipline take extensive faculty time and resources that may not yet be available to this fledging program.
9. Review the curricular map for any missing required graduate courses. Specifically, determine the location of the SLP 565 course on research.
10. Within the program or across the rehabilitative sciences in the College, establish a scheduled research colloquium that meets (at least) once a month and that requires some percentage of attendance by the SLP graduate students.

I. PROGRAM

To establish a new academic program in a well-established discipline is a daunting enterprise. The success of this endeavor is based upon serious considerations about student learning, content knowledge, and practical

experience, as well as meeting all the requirements from state and national academic certifications, and a focus on the expectations of what is necessary and expected in the discipline and within the academic program. As summarized above, based upon the analysis conducted, the overall speech-language pathology program as described in the proposal is sound with excellent considerations of many of the issues that must be addressed in the discipline of speech-language pathology.

1. The careful vetting and preparation for this program can be noted in the **purpose** of the program and how it has been designed. The primary purpose is to prepare students to be competent and dedicated professionals to meet the needs of the communicatively disordered. In doing so, this program will prepare the program's students for successful careers in speech-language pathology (See section 2.3 a. and b second paragraph. and section 5 a. fourth paragraph). This purpose and the schedule for implementation also meshes nicely with the University's Vision, Mission Strategic Plan, NYSUNY 2020 Challenge, and the up-dated strategic plan "Road Map to Renewal" with its 4 University Initiatives and some of the 10 Divisional Initiatives. Particularly, those initiatives will support the new Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the growth of programs within this college. It is believed by this reviewer that the proposed SLP program will eventually increase the University's international reputation as this program moves toward maturity and excellence as a professional preparatory program.

In the service of this purpose, academic, clinical and ethical standards have been established within this proposal in accordance with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and its professional criteria. These requirements and standards have then been incorporated into the program format, the curriculum and the curricular schedule, and the specific academic rules and regulations designed for this proposed program.

In terms of the **requirements** and **structure** of this proposed program, the Student Learning Outcomes (pages 5 & 6; and Appendix A) have been effectively formulated by taking the guidelines and requirements from ASHA's Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) and weaving in the necessary requirements for program accreditation and for certification of the graduating students as professional speech-language pathologists. Ten Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are proposed, and together they meet the full certification/accreditation requirements of ASHA. SLOs 1 and 2 conform to ASHA's requirements that 9 essential areas of communication and functioning must be studied with sufficient depth so that necessary knowledge within these areas is obtained. Similarly, SLO 2 and SLO 8 address the requirements for sufficient depth and breadth of principles, techniques, and strategies that enable the prevention, evaluation, and intervention of communicative disorders. The remaining SLOs address the issues of ethics, research, professional issues and collaborations, oral and written communication, and clinical experiences. Taken

together, these effectively cover the requirements for a master's degree in speech-language pathology according to ASHA. Importantly, the 9 areas of focus and the student outcomes fit into a tripartite structure across the four semesters and two summer sessions that make up the length of this two-year program. This three-tiered structure incorporates academic coursework, clinical experiences, and research engagement.

Academic coursework (page 4, 2.3 a., pages 15 & 26, and Appendix B) is structured so that students will enroll in 54 to 60 total graduate student credits within 14 to 16 courses (including the nine required areas by ASHA) divided across 4 semesters and 2 summer sessions. The variation between 14 and 16 courses depends on whether the student wants to be licensed to work as a speech-language pathologist in the public schools; to work as an SLP in the New York public schools requires two specific education courses. An analysis of the coursework and the positioning of the courses across the two years indicates that the planned academic schedule is very well designed with sufficient coursework each semester but no one semester or session being too heavily weighted on course work. Further, as the experiential clinical work increases, the number of courses in those semester/sessions will decrease. This course schedule is efficient and should be very effective in providing each student the knowledge required and needed as a professional. Further, the courses are designed to build upon one another and upon the clinical program. For example, SLP 520 (Pediatric Language Disorders) precedes SLP 521 (Language Disorders in School and Adolescents) and the adult language course (SLP 561) so that typical developmental issues and the basis for school-age language is learned and understood before addressing issues in older clients (Appendix C).

Clinical coursework/experience is the second component of the tripartite structure. During each of the four semesters and two summer sessions, the students have clinical assignments wherein they learn to integrate and convert their academic knowledge to clinical action. This move to clinical practice will be accomplished gradually and will be based upon the student's exposure to various communicative disorders via academic coursework. That is, they won't work clinically with a disorder unless they have obtained coursework knowledge about that disorder. During the first two clinical practica, the student-clinician receives significant support from the program's clinical supervisors through simulation experiences, clinical face-to-face interaction/intervention, and some teletherapy. (These two semesters should enable the student-clinicians to comfortably transition to becoming clinicians with maximum support from their clinical supervisors/instructors). Being more experienced with the first-year opportunity of learning under in-house direct guidance, each student will then complete four supervised internships in the community; the first three semester/sessions will be part-time with the fourth and final internship being full-time. As proposed, the result will be that each student will successfully complete a minimum of 400 clock hours of supervised clinical experience; this meets the ASHA clinical requirements. This clinical schedule and design are very

common approaches to clinical education and should be very effective in the Binghamton area given the numbers of schools, hospitals, and clinics within which these students can work as clinical interns (page 7).

Research activity and exposure is the final component of the tripartite structure. Since the master's degree is not the terminal degree but, rather, the entry-level degree for a speech-language pathologist, disciplinary knowledge and clinical experience are the primary needs during graduate school. Research is very important, but at the MA/MS level, it is the consumption and integration of research into one's knowledge bank and clinical activities that are crucial. MA/MS students are rarely expected to do original research in this discipline (unless they opt for a thesis project). However, there are several ways that research knowledge was also incorporated into the program. First, students will be required to take a three-credit-hour course in research (SLP 565)(see page 15). However, this course is not listed on the curricular schedule (see page 26) so when it fits into the course schedule is uncertain. Second, the students are expected to benefit from the research occurring in the doctoral programs in occupational therapy and in physical therapy. This kind of learning via continual exposure is often used when there are doctoral programs that can inform MA/MS students. Perhaps one of the best ways to further this "contact exposure" is to also institute a research colloquium within the two doctoral programs and require SLP student attendance (such attendance requirements can vary from 100% attendance to only a portion of 100% attendance). Third, students are all expected to complete a thesis (SLP 585) or a "final research project" (SLP 586). This reviewer's analysis of the research structure indicates that it is comparable to other MA/MS degree programs in communicative disorders. If this is done, these students should have sufficient exposure to research so that they can become astute consumers of the active research in the discipline.

The formal mechanisms for program **administration** and **evaluation** have been discussed throughout the proposal. The formal administration of the program revolves around the curricular schedule (page 26, Appendix B), the SLOs (pages 5&6), and the proposed admissions process/ criteria (page 13). The design of this proposal and the detailed plans for initiation and continuance of this program is interspersed throughout and suggests strong administrative support by upper administration, a crucial understanding of the issues and potential solutions by Dr. Rodney Gabel, and the carefully considered proposal with various mechanisms put in place to align this proposed program with the rest of the Binghamton University academic criteria and operations (e.g., pages 13 & 14). The evaluation components of this program include both formative and summative evaluations as well as an integrative research experience at the end of the students' coursework. For both types of evaluation, the ASHA CAA criteria and the expected knowledge within various didactic courses as determined by faculty will serve as outcome measures.

Having worked with curricular issues for 40 years, this reviewer believes the academic rigor and the intellectual coherence of this proposed program is strong and appropriate. It meets both the discipline's call for specific knowledge (CAA standards) and the division of knowledge/achieved clinical and research experience through the tripartite design. It is a well-designed curriculum with appropriate program scheduling.

2. This proposed program has designated a special **focus** on *rural and underserved populations* along with two secondary operational foci (page 7). Within the discipline of speech-language pathology, it is documented that many individuals with communicative impairments are not sufficiently served in rural populations. Nation-wide there is a common refrain that it is hard to recruit and retain SLPs for positions in rural areas, especially within the rural public schools. Too often young professionals prefer regions and work sites that are near larger populations centers with their various social, educational, and entertainment venues. According to the proposal, this rural service need is also significant within the Binghamton region and the "Southern Tier" (pages 16 & 17). The focus on exposure to rural areas during internships, the encouragement to look at rural areas and their special needs, and the secondary foci on potential teletherapy within rural areas, along with the continued emphasis on research within these rural areas are ways selected to implement this special focus. Additionally, while completing internships in the rural areas of the Southern Tier, the students in this program will be exposed to surrounding rural areas and to the personnel that they might be working with if they accept positions in these areas. Since the students are already in the Binghamton area, the program graduates may be more inclined to accept jobs in rural areas within the Southern Tier. Considering each of these steps toward rural service delivery, this focus will make this a unique and valuable program.

3. This proposal has several plans for **self-assessment** and **continuous improvement**. First, the viability of the program based upon several review processes by Binghamton University, the SUNY systems (including this analysis), and detailed vetting by the Council of Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) will be determined. Since the program is discipline-specific, the curriculum map and the SLOs that are tied to the CAA requirements are a major component of the self-assessment process (page 23). The program director (Dr. Gabel) and the program faculty (once hired) will be responsible for modifying weaknesses of the program proposal and, once these are addressed, the program will submit the application for candidacy to the CAA (see page 24). Once accredited, ASHA and the program faculty will continuously assess the quality of the program from a disciplinary perspective. The faculty will also evaluate the students and the operations of the program using various methods including formative and summative academic and clinical assessments, the percentage graduation rate, the percentage of students passing the national licensing exam, and the number of students finding employment as SLPs within the first six-months following

graduation (page 24). These data sets will enable the faculty to carefully assess the program and continually seek to make improvements.

4. One tangible advantage for this proposed program is the **relationship** that can be employed with other university programs at Binghamton and beyond. As specified within the University's vision, strategic plan and NTSUNY 2020 Challenge Grant, the advancement and success of the new Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the growth of health-related programs like this one provide the impetus for collaboration between this proposed SLP program and the rest of the health-related programs in the college. Specifically, the relationships established with the other rehabilitative disciplines like occupational therapy and physical therapy with their professional and Ph.D. programs will be a powerful boost to the knowledge, practices, and concerns of the SLP program and its students (see pages 7 & 8). The requirement that SLP students take a general healthcare delivery course (SLP 510) and that there will be a close partnership with OT and PT to identify potential internships for SLP students at those sites already established for OT and PT should further solidify the relationships between these three primary rehabilitative programs. Additionally, providing an undergraduate minor (page 7, first paragraph) so that students with an interest in speech-language pathology as a career can take pre-requisite courses in this program while completing other undergraduate degrees will also solidify the cross-disciplinary interactions. This would be especially important in undergraduate degrees like linguistics, psychology, and education.

The relationships that this program will have with surrounding universities is also considered in this proposal with a discussion of six SLP graduate programs in the SUNY system (page 18). Based upon data from these programs, none of them admit more than 29% of the applicants to their graduate programs (range of the six from 9.5% of applicants admitted to 29% of the applicants admitted). These figures are consistent with national figures that show that all programs have far more qualified students seeking admission to SLP graduate programs than can be accommodated. Consequently, it is expected, and academics interviewed from those programs agree, that there should be little or no competition for the graduate slots in the seven universities.

5. The program proposal does an excellent job of establishing the **need** and **demand** for this SLP program. An initial feasibility study focusing on need was conducted by *Academy Solutions, LLC* and the program director, Dr. Gabel, conducted a separate needs assessment including a survey, interviews, focus groups, and a review of open jobs in the greater Binghamton area. Within this needs assessment, he hosted several focus groups and held discussions with 18 additional individuals who were chosen because of the specific feedback they might provide (11 individuals in SLP but external to Binghamton University and 7 academics internal to Binghamton University; See pages 8-12). The data and feedback (pages 16 & 17) focusing on New York

state, the Southern Tier, and the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts indicated continual need for more SLPs in these areas through 2024. *Academic Solutions* indicated that the growth in need within these states should be around an 18% SLP increase by 2024. That would represent a growth demand of nearly 5000 additional speech-language pathologists. On page 17 of this proposal, various supports for this demand were provided including requirements for an increase in school based SLPs due to increasing in the identification of children with disabilities, an increase in enrollments in the schools, the federal legislation that guarantees access to special and remedial education, and the fact that many SLPs are women who leave the profession to pursue child rearing or other activities. Similarly, the demand for more SLPs in medical settings will also increase in the future due to the greying of America and the increase in communicative impairments as individuals grow older. The proposal also indicates that this shortage extends to the counties in proximity of Binghamton and other rural areas of New York state and surrounding areas.

II. FACULTY

6. The faculty for this proposal is incomplete. At present, only the program director, Dr. Rodney Gabel, has been hired. Dr. Gabel, however, is an excellent addition to this program and has the experience and reputation to effectively marshal this program to success. Dr. Gabel has experience in creating and guiding change and innovation both with his work on the doctoral program in communicative disorders at the University of Toledo and the changes in the clinical program at Bowling Green University. In both situations, he successfully created needed innovations and advancements for those two programs. Although he is (fairly) young, Dr. Gabel is recognized as a valuable researcher and academic across the county, he has published 60+ journal articles and chapters, and he has many professional connections from which he may solicit assistance and influence when needed. Above all, he appears very motivated, is a true believer in higher education, and has a service-oriented attitude. I believe you will need all three of these personality traits when starting a new program.
7. Since the faculty for this proposed program is not yet hired (except for Dr. Gabel), The chart on page 28 of the proposal provides the **qualifications** and the **number of faculty** to be hired. First, in terms of qualifications, four more faculty with terminal degrees (PhD or EdD) and specific expertise in various aspects of communicative disorders across age groups are to be hired. In addition to these tenure/tenure track faculty members, other faculty will also be hired. First, a Clinical Coordinator with professional experience and various clinical affiliations who can advance the development of the clinical and the internship programs will be hired (Search is underway). Second, various part-time faculty will be hired to cover clinical supervision and some undergraduate teaching. In the case of the Clinical Coordinator and the part-time faculty, an MA/MS in speech-language pathology will be required. However, all positions (tenure/tenure track,

Coordinator, and part time faculty) should hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence. The program is planning to gradually advertise and hire these faculty members. The hiring plan shared by Dr. Gabel, clearly outlines when each position is to be hired. The actual SLP MA/MS program will not accept students as a cohort until Summer/Fall of 2024. This gives approximately 3 years to recruit the program's initial faculty, and this appears to be a reasonable timeframe. Overall, the listed qualifications are sufficient for establishing an effective faculty for the SLP program. The number of faculty (6 full-time) are also sufficient for a program with an undergraduate minor and a SLP MA/MS program. Given the reputation and resources of Binghamton University, you should have little problems in attracting strong, qualified applicants

8. While information on the **adjunct faculty** and **support personnel** is minimal, it is important to hire adjuncts to teach graduate coursework that have the terminal degree and who have academic expertise and clinical experience regarding the communicative impairment being taught. This terminal degree requirement is generally expected both by ASHA and by the Regional Accreditation Agencies. It has been suggested that the proposed part-time faculty, who will function primarily as clinical supervisors/ instructors, will be doctoral students in the Community Research and Action PhD program. Whether the program can recruit that many doctoral students who will obtain a doctorate in a discipline that may not be considered a related field in communicative disorders remains to be seen. The expectation seems problematic to this reviewer.

III. STUDENTS

9. As this proposal suggests, one of the real advantages of starting a SLP MA/MS program occurs when there is a large **student population** who would be interested in enrolling in this program. Across the country, many students with undergraduate degrees in communicative disorders or related fields want to obtain professional certification and licensing as a speech-language pathologist. To do this, however, a graduate degree within the discipline and from an accredited program is required. In nearly every accredited graduate program, far more students apply for the graduate programs than can be accepted. For example, last year's average acceptance rate for the six universities in the SUNY system that have an SLP graduate program was 17%. That is, these graduate SLP programs were only able to admit 17% of the students who applied. In other locations, the acceptance rates are far lower. For example, this year at the University of Colorado Boulder, we had 624 applications for 30 MA-SLP slots (acceptance rate of 5.2%). Consequently, serving a very large student population with undergraduate degrees in communicative disorders, linguistics, psychology, and other related areas should result in many students applying to the program. Given the enrollment of Binghamton University, (17,000 students) the fact that BU is the largest comprehensive university in a 50-mile radius, and that the only other university with a significant population of students in the area is Cornell University (which does not have an SLP program), the regional student population should be attracted to this program,

especially since Binghamton University (BU) has a profile as a high-quality academic institution with a lower cost than private universities in the region.

The current proposal has suggested that the program will enroll 45 students during its first year and then 60 students every subsequent year (pages 13 & 14). While I have no doubt that the number of applicants and the numbers of students admitted could achieve these numbers, I would recommend against it. This type of graduate education has academic and clinical coursework that requires intensive effort. I believe that the size of the faculty is too small for such large graduate student cohorts. Given the enrollment of 60 SLP graduate students a year, that would soon result in 120 students handled by 6 tenure/tenure track faculty members (a student teacher ratio of 20:1). As an illustration of what established programs try to handle, within the six SLP programs in the SUNY system, the average student-teacher ratio is 3.61:1 with a range from a student-teacher ratio of 7.0 to 2.3 students per teacher. A more realistic number of graduate students a year would be 30. While still resulting in a high student-teacher ratio (10:1), this is a manageable ratio.

10. The proposal has a strong plan for **student recruitment** and **enrollment** within this program. According to the needs assessment, many undergraduates at BU have historically completed various undergraduate degrees and then sought a graduate degree in SLP at other universities following graduation. These “homegrown” students might prefer to enroll in such a graduate program at Binghamton. This will provide a viable undergraduate interest group and a pool of potential applicants to the program. Recruitment activities outside of BU will include a large-scale marketing plan to promote the program throughout the University, New York State, the North East, and the USA, and this plan will include brochures and information sessions. This marketing will target universities in New York and the northeast that have undergraduate degrees in SLP or communication disorders. Additionally, the marketing will focus on universities that have undergraduate degrees in SLP but do not have a graduate program (e.g., Elmira College). In this type of relationship, highly qualified students from these institutions could be given priority admission or early admission to the MS-SLP program.

Given the lack of sufficient graduate SLP admission opportunities to a large population of interested students across the nation, this program should have no difficulty in recruiting and admitting enough students to establish a strong graduate program. The additional marketing will only increase the numbers of applicants.

11. To help ensure equity and inclusion in the recruiting and participation within the graduate program by **persons from underrepresented groups**, the proposal aligns the recruitment procedure with the University’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and its Road Map goal of fostering a diverse and inclusive campus culture. This should be effective since Binghamton University and the Decker College of Nursing have a

history of serving these populations (pages 20 to 22). Currently the University has several national and state grant funded initiatives to increase recruiting of underrepresented students. These programs are oriented to provide access, academic support, and financial aid to students who show promise for succeeding in a graduate program but who may not have otherwise been admitted. By being involved in any of these grant programs, the SLP graduate program will provide support to these applicants both during recruitment and once admitted to the program by providing tutoring and inclusion in all program activities. Examples of recruitment efforts by this program include attendance and recruitment of underrepresented students at the annual state-wide CSTEP conference in the Spring, the establishment of other recruitment events in partnership with the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and development of marketing materials that target students from underrepresented groups in a positive way. Other planned activities should also attract underrepresented students to this program. Given the University and College history of efforts in recruiting underrepresented students, this program should be able to attract a reasonable number of students from diverse backgrounds. As with other students, these groups should be drawn to Binghamton University's reputation and the relatively low cost of the program.

12. Once students are admitted into this program, **student progress** and **performance** will follow the procedures as specified by the University and the CAA standards for accreditation. Based upon the curriculum map, students are required to enter and progress through the two-year program as cohorts. One cohort (40% to 50% of admitted students) will begin the program in the summer for the academic year while another cohort (remaining student admitted) will begin the program in the fall of the academic year. Both cohorts will be enrolled in the same graduate coursework (based upon the curricular map), but the summer cohort will begin their clinical assignments at that time while the fall cohort will begin clinical activities in the fall. This will enable the first clinical experiences by untrained students to be less pressured and more supported by clinical instructors (page 13) since the beginning "clinical cohorts" are reduced by approximately half. As discussed previously, the design of the coursework and evaluation of progress are based on the standards put forth by ASHA's CAA. Within the two-year program, student progress will be monitored both clinically and academically. Clinically, student progress will be determined by each student's demonstration of the skills necessary for prevention, assessment, and treatment of individuals across the scope of practice in speech-language pathology. The monitoring and evaluation of these clinical skills will be accomplished by the clinical supervisors who directly supervise at least 25% of the student's clinical sessions. Formative assessment will be completed each semester for the didactic and clinical coursework. Academically, students must earn a grade of a B or higher. If this is not achieved, a remediation plan directed by the instructor of the didactic course will be formulated and agreed upon by the student and instructor. Students will only be allowed two remediations for coursework and one remediation for clinical activities. Summative assessment will be accomplished by a final research project and evaluating the student considering the Student Learner Outcomes.

Since much of the curricular map, the SLOs and the remediation process are directed by the CAA requirements, this approach to the monitoring of student progress is consistent with most of the other graduate programs in speech-language pathology and these approaches have been demonstrably effective.

13. As stated within the proposal (pages 16 & 17), the **post-graduate success of students** in SLP MA/MS programs is very positive. Not only in the Binghamton/Southern Tier region but across the country, there are unfulfilled needs for SLPs, especially within the rural public-school systems (see section on program focus). During the needs assessment there was overwhelming support from various constituent groups for establishment of the graduate program. It was repeatedly noted that there is a shortage of available SLPs in the Binghamton area, with many positions left unfilled over the past few years. Further, the feasibility study conducted by Academic Solutions LLC documented the regional needs (suggesting an overall need in the region of a 17.8% increase in SLPs). This is also the case throughout the nation; there are many available SLP positions in each of the service-delivery contexts (schools, hospitals, community clinics, private practice). It is for this reason that most SLP graduate programs indicate that their graduates are typically fully employed within six months of their graduation. Given the pressing need for SLPs throughout the region and the nation, graduates of this program should have little difficulty in obtaining clinical positions in a variety of potential settings.

IV. RESOURCES

14. One of the bright spots within this excellent proposal is the availability of **resources** and **facilities** for this proposed program (pages 29 to 31). Within the new Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences, new and additional resources have been employed to help grow the programs in health and rehabilitative sciences. One important resource is the newly acquired and renovated college facility in Johnson City. Access to this facility was made available to the reviewers via a guided video tour. Meeting all the ADA codes, the facility has state-of-the-art simulation labs, full audio/visual and networking capabilities, and modern amenities for the students. Based upon this tour and further discussions, the new facility will provide important and needed space for this proposed program. Within the facility, the fifth floor will include space allocated to this program, and this includes a Speech and Language Analysis Lab (SLAL), office space for faculty and staff, research labs, and classroom and clinical space (including tele practice facilities). The SLAL includes all equipment and supplies needed for teaching, clinical activity, and for some research activities. There are also study spaces, a well-stocked academic library, meeting rooms, and an extensive set of technology equipment and the expertise to use the available technology. Over the two-day interviews, there were several meetings with the impressive support staff for Decker College. They do appear ready to work with this proposed program.

In terms of clinical resources and opportunities for internships off campus, there are 3 hospitals in the greater Binghamton area, with several others in a 60-mile radius of BU. There are 12 public school districts in Broome County that include 57 public schools with 31,000 students, and there are 10 long-term and rehabilitation facilities offering care to older adults. Combined with the population of approximately 350,000 individuals within a close distance from BU, there appear to be more than enough clinical sites for student internship placement within the region.

15. In speaking with various administrators at BU regarding the proposal, it was this reviewer's impression that the **institution's commitment** to the proposed program is very high. Dr. Gabel has been given resources to prepare this proposal, monies have been committed for faculty and staff positions (6 full-time faculty and some part-time clinical supervisors/instructors and staff), monies for equipment (including \$320,261 from Decker Family Foundation) and release time for research. An excellent example of this support is that most of the faculty will be hired a year or more before the first entering class; this enables them to help Dr. Gabel with the establishment of the program and with their own research and course preparations. Providing such time even before the initiation of the program emphasizes administrative support.

V. SUMMARY COMMENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This proposal is well prepared and effectively provides all the information needed to determine the feasibility of the program and the appropriateness of its purpose and objectives. Further, the program structure, the proposed faculty, the plans for student recruitment and retention in the program, and the resources available and committed to this program all support its successful implementation. Based upon this review, it is the recommendation of this reviewer that **the program should proceed with a few modifications**. Given the state of the profession of speech-language pathology and the high quality of this proposal, **this program is expected to be very successful in both recruiting students and preparing** them as professional within the discipline of communicative disorders.

16. When evaluating the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of this proposal and the program described herein, the following strengths and weaknesses were observed:

Program

A. **STRENGTHS**

- a. The program meets all the discipline-specific requirements provided by ASHA and the CAA.
- b. Based upon this proposal and the curriculum map, the program should provide first-rate didactic and clinical preparation.
- c. The implementation strategy is well constructed and should result in a fast start for this graduate program.

- d. The program purpose and objectives, first rate professional training and a focus on rural service delivery, are very relevant to the discipline; the needs and potential solutions for rural service delivery are ripe for investigation
- e. Strong and comprehensive Student Learning Outcomes that meet all necessary requirements for certification and licensing.
- f. The program has established strong ties to the other two major rehabilitative programs in the college (Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy).
- g. The program fills a space for the professional need for more speech-language pathologists, particularly in rural areas.

B. WEAKNESSES

- a. The number of students targeted for admission into the program is too optimistic. Given the number of faculty, admitting 60 students a year would provide an unsustainable student-teacher ratio (20:1)
- b. The number of clinical internships per student is also too optimistic. Although there should be plenty of sites for internships, four sites per student seems needlessly excessive.
- c. The research course (SLP565) was not found within the curricular map or schedule of courses.
- d. The University does not have an undergraduate major in speech-language pathology, only a proposed minor. This may reduce the number of applicants from BU to the program.

Faculty

A. STRENGTHS

- a. The recruitment of Dr. Rodney Gabel, a widely known and experienced academic, is poised to provide leadership and continuity to this newly minted program.
- b. The qualifications that have been proposed for the recruitment of tenure/tenure track faculty are strong and appropriate.
- c. The qualifications for Clinical Coordinator and potential clinical supervisors/ instructors are appropriate to the expected job responsibilities.
- d. The shared schedule for the hiring of tenure/tenure track faculty and the Clinical Coordinator provides each faculty member time to be hired and adjust to the program before the first cohort of graduate students arrive.

B. WEAKNESSES

- a. Linking part-time clinical supervisors/instructors to the doctoral program in *Community Research and Action PhD* program is problematic. This degree program may not qualify these individuals with this doctorate as an area related to communicative disorders and so these individuals may be reluctant to enter this program.

- b. If 60 graduate students are admitted into the proposed program annually, that means after two years the student-teacher ratio would be 20:1. That is far too high for effective academic and clinical teaching.

Students

A. *STRENGTHS*

- a. There is strong support and a large population of students (both at BU and elsewhere) who are interested in entering graduate school in this program.
- b. The proposal has a strong and viable recruitment and admissions plan with excellent student criteria for admission.
- c. The proposal has a strong set of strategies for the marketing and recruitment of underrepresented students.
- d. There are strong measures in place for monitoring student progress and for creating remediation procedures if a student has trouble within the program.
- e. There are many employment opportunities for speech-language pathologists who graduate from accredited programs like the one proposed here.

B. *WEAKNESSES*

- a. There is an insufficient discussion and designation of the money available for student support as teaching assistants or research assistants.

Resources

A. *STRENGTHS*

- a. Strong support from upper administration, especially from Dean Mario Ortiz and Provost Donald Nieman regarding budgets and the time frame for implementation.
- b. Excellent equipment and consultative resources within the Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
- c. A newly renovated building for the entire college with this program having designated space on the fifth floor.
- d. The population density surrounding Binghamton is sufficient for both a viable graduate education program in speech-language pathology and for sufficient clinical sites to provide clinical internships to these students during their second year in the program.

It has been a pleasure to provide this evaluation of the Binghamton SLP-graduate program proposal. I am hopeful that this critique accurately represents the strengths and weaknesses of this excellent program and that the

recommendations are those that are most critical for advancing and sustaining the many fine attributes of the program. Additionally, I am hopeful that these recommendations will be embraced by the incoming faculty and can be acted upon by the university administration to resolve the weaknesses and propel it to the next level of excellence.

Jack S. Damico

Jack S. Damico, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, ASHA Fellow
Professor and Chair
University of Colorado Boulder