ACCREDITATION ACTION REPORT

Re-Accreditation Review

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology took the following accreditation action at its February 16 – 19, 2022 meeting, as indicated below.

Name of Program: University of Rhode Island

File #: 176

Professional Area:

- [ ] Audiology
- [X] Speech-Language Pathology

Modality:

- [X] Residential
- [ ] Distance Education
- [ ] Satellite Campus
- [ ] Contractual Arrangement

Degree Designator(s): M.S.

Current Accreditation Cycle: 12/1/2013 - 11/30/2021

Action Taken: Continue Accreditation

Effective Date: February 19, 2022

New Accreditation Cycle: 12/1/2021 - 11/30/2029

Next Review: Annual Report due February 1, 2023

Notices: The program is advised to adhere to the following notices that are appended to this report.

- PROGRAM COMPLIANCE EXPECTATIONS
- PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF DECISION AND ACCREDITATION STATUS
In the context of the institutional and program mission statements and in consideration of the credentials for which the program is preparing students, the CAA conducted its comprehensive review and found the program to be in compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, except as noted below.

**AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

The CAA found the program to be not in compliance with the following Standards for Accreditation. Non-compliance means that the program does not have in place the essential elements necessary to meet the standard. The program must demonstrate its compliance with these standards when responding to prior concerns in the next annual report or reaccreditation application or by the time line specified below. The CAA will indicate in its review of that report whether the program has addressed these areas sufficiently to achieve compliance. Failure to demonstrate compliance with the standards may jeopardize the program’s accreditation status or require the CAA to place the program on probation.

A program will be placed on probation or accreditation withdrawn after the review of a second consecutive report reveals that issues continue for the same standard(s) and the program remains not in full compliance with all standards (effective January 1, 2021 - see CAA Accreditation Handbook, Chapter XVII).

**Standard 3.1B**  An effective entry-level professional speech-language pathology program allows each student to acquire knowledge and skills in sufficient breadth and depth to function as an effective, well-educated, and competent clinical speech-language pathologist (i.e., one who can practice within the full scope of practice of speech-language pathology).

The education program is designed to afford each student with opportunities to meet expectations of the program that are consistent with the program’s mission and goals and that prepare each student for professional practice in speech-language pathology.

**Requirement for Review:**

The master’s program in speech-language pathology must perform the following functions:

- The program must provide sufficient breadth and depth of opportunities for students to obtain a variety of clinical education experiences in different work settings, with different populations, and with appropriate equipment and resources in order to acquire and demonstrate skills across the scope of practice in speech-language pathology, sufficient to enter professional practice. Typically, the achievement of these outcomes requires the completion of 2 years of graduate education or the equivalent.

**Evidence of Non-Compliance:**

The CAA requires that programs must provide sufficient breadth and depth of opportunities for students to obtain a variety of clinical education experiences in different work settings, with different populations, and with appropriate equipment and resources. The site visit team observed examples of students who had not obtained experience with certain clinical populations (e.g., hearing and voice) and/or had not obtained breadth and depth of experience in other areas (e.g., evaluation and treatment in all clinical areas, experience with diverse ages). The program response included a document listing the average
hours earned by several cohorts in all areas of evaluation and treatment. Some cohorts show no experience in child or adult hearing evaluations, and others show insufficient breadth and depth in other areas (e.g., evaluation and treatment in all clinical areas, experience with diverse ages).

The program’s response explained that the necessary skills in the deficient areas are provided in didactic coursework through case reports and practice on other students. They also stated beginning with the cohort graduating in spring 2022, they will audit clinic hours accrued by each student to ensure that the breadth and depth of clinical experience will be more fully represented outside didactic courses. Students will be assigned additional contact hours either face-to-face or through Simucase.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the next annual report, provide evidence that all students receive sufficient breadth and depth of opportunities to obtain clinical experiences of evaluation and treatment in all clinical areas with a diverse age group.

Standard 3.6B The clinical education component of an effective entry-level speech-language pathology program is planned for each student so that there is access to a base of individuals who may be served that is sufficient to achieve the program’s stated mission and goals and includes a variety of clinical settings, populations, and age groups. The comprehensive clinical experiences must include direct contact with individuals seeking service, consultation, recordkeeping, and administrative duties relevant to professional service delivery in speech-language pathology.

Requirement for Review:
The program must demonstrate that it has mechanisms to develop comprehensive plans of clinical educational experiences so that each student has an opportunity to:

- Experience the breadth and depth of clinical practice
- Obtain experiences with different populations
- Obtain a variety of clinical experiences in different work settings
- Obtain experiences with appropriate equipment and resources
- Learn from experienced speech-language pathologists who will serve as effective clinical educators

Evidence of Non-Compliance:
The CAA requires that programs demonstrate that it has mechanisms to develop comprehensive plans of clinical educational experiences. The site visit team observed examples of students who had not obtained experience with certain clinical populations (e.g., hearing and voice) and/or had not obtained breadth and depth of experience in other areas (e.g., evaluation and treatment in all clinical areas, experience with diverse ages). The program response included a document listing the average hours earned by several cohorts in all areas of evaluation and treatment. Some cohorts show no experience in child or adult hearing evaluations, and others show insufficient breadth and depth in other areas (e.g., evaluation and treatment in all clinical areas, experience with diverse ages).

The program’s response explained that the necessary skills in the deficient areas are provided in didactic coursework through case reports and practice on other students. They also stated beginning with the cohort graduating in spring 2022, they will audit clinic hours accrued by each student to ensure that the
breadth and depth of clinical experience will be more fully represented outside didactic courses. Students will be assigned additional contact hours either face-to-face or through Simucase.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the next annual report, provide evidence that all students receive sufficient breadth and depth of opportunities to obtain clinical experiences of evaluation and treatment in all clinical areas with a diverse age group.

**Standard 6.6** The program has access to clerical and technical staff that is appropriate and sufficient to support the work of the students, faculty, and staff. The access is appropriate and sufficient for the program to meet its mission and goals.

Requirement for Review:
- The program must demonstrate adequate access to clerical and technical staff to support the work of the students, faculty, and staff.

Evidence of Non-Compliance:
The CAA requires programs to demonstrate that they have adequate access to clerical and technical staff. The department has a fiscal clerk who supports the department that has been working additional, overtime hours on a temporary basis, but has not hired full-time clerical staff to manage medical billing for the clinic.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the next annual report, demonstrate that the program has adequate access to clerical and technical staff to support the work of the students, faculty, and staff.

**AREAS FOR FOLLOW-UP (clarification/verification)**
The CAA did not find the program to be out of compliance with the following Standards for Accreditation at this time. However, the program must provide additional information or an update in the program’s next annual report or reaccreditation application for clarification or verification of these issues, in order to monitor the program’s continued compliance in the stated areas.

- There were no areas for follow-up with accreditation standards.
PERFORMANCE WITH RESPECT TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The CAA has evaluated this program regarding its performance with respect to student achievement and provides the following report, required as an accrediting agency recognized by the US Secretary of Education [34 CFR 602.17(f)].

Comments/Observations:

| X | Program Completion Rates |
| X | Employment Rates |
| X | Praxis Examination Rates |

PROGRAM COMPLIANCE EXPECTATIONS

As an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, the CAA must comply with Criterion §602.20 [34 CFR 602.20]. This criterion requires that if an accrediting agency’s review of a program indicates that the program is not in compliance with any standard, the CAA must provide a written timeline to the program to come into compliance that is reasonable, as determined by the CAA, based on the nature of the finding, the stated mission, and educational objectives of the program. The timeline may include intermediate checkpoints on the way to full compliance and must not exceed three years for programs, regardless of professional area. If the review of a second consecutive report reveals that issues continue for the same standard(s), regardless of which requirements for review were identified, and the program remains not in full compliance with all standards, the CAA may act to place the program on probation or withdraw its accreditation status in accordance with the policy and procedures outlined in the Accreditation Handbook. The CAA may place a program on probation or withdraw accreditation from a program prior to this time when there is clear evidence of circumstances that jeopardize the capability of the program to provide acceptable educational experiences for the students.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THIS DECISION AND ACCREDITATION STATUS

The CAA publishes a notice of final accreditation actions on its website after comprehensive reviews are completed in accordance with its published policies. In the event an adverse action is taken and becomes final (i.e., withdrawal or withholding of an accreditation status), the CAA is required to publish a brief statement summarizing the reasons for withholding or withdrawing the accreditation status of a program, together with the comments, if any, that the affected program may wish to make.

The Criteria for Recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education requires all recognized accrediting agencies to provide for the public correction of incorrect or misleading information an accredited or preaccredited program releases about accreditation or preaccreditation status, contents of site visit reports, and accrediting or preaccrediting actions with respect to the program. [34 CFR 602.23(d) and 602.23(e)] The program must make accurate public disclosure of the accreditation or preaccreditation status awarded to
the program, using the language provided in the Accreditation Handbook (see Chapter XII Informing the Public) on the academic accreditation website. If the program chooses to disclose any additional information within the scope of the ED rule, such disclosure also must be accurate. Any public disclosure of information within the scope of the rule must include the CAA’s name, address, and telephone number as described in the Accreditation Handbook. If an institution or program misrepresents or distorts any action by the CAA with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, its accreditation status, the contents of the site visit report, or final CAA accreditation actions or decisions, the CAA will inform the chief executive officer of the institution and the program director that corrective action must be taken. If corrective action is not taken, the CAA will release a public statement that provides correct information and may invoke other sanctions as may be appropriate.