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: Stephen F. Austin State University

File #: 220

Professional Area:

- Audiology
- X Speech-Language Pathology

Modality:

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

Degree Designator(s): M.S.

Current Accreditation Cycle: 4/1/2014 - 3/31/2022

Action Taken: Continue Accreditation

Effective Date: February 19, 2022

New Accreditation Cycle: 4/1/2022 - 3/31/2030

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A program will be placed on probation or accreditation withdrawn after the review of a second consecutive report reveals that issues continue for the same standard(s) and the program remains not in full compliance with all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 1.9  The program provides information about the program and the institution to students and to the public that is current, accurate, and readily available.

**Requirement for Review:**
- Websites, catalogs, advertisements, and other publications/electronic media must be accurate regarding standards and policies regarding recruiting and admission practices, academic offerings, matriculation expectations, academic calendars, grading policies and requirements, and fees and other charges.

**Evidence of Non-Compliance:**
The CAA requires that all information that is published on the program’s website be accurate and current. The program website (Faculty and Staff) under Lydia Richardson states “Dr. Lydia Richardson, director of and assistant professor in SFA’s communication sciences and disorders program, received her PhD in speech-language pathology from Nova Southeastern University and her Master of Science and Bachelor of Science at SFA.” The program director does not hold a PhD; she holds an SLP.D. according to her vitae.

**Steps to Be Taken:**
At the time of the next annual report, provide evidence that Dr. Richardson’s biographical statement has been correct to accurately state her degrees.
Standard 3.9B  Clinical education obtained in external placements is governed by agreements between the program and the external facility and is monitored by program faculty.

Requirement for Review:

- The program must have processes to ensure that the clinical education in external facilities is monitored by the program to verify that educational objectives are met.

Evidence of Non-Compliance:
The CAA requires that programs have processes to ensure that the clinical education in external facilities is monitored by the program to verify that the educational objectives are met. The program recognized the absence of formal procedure for scheduled supervisor training for the distance cohort supervisors. The program has developed a plan for training supervisors beginning in June 2022.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the next annual report, provide documentation of the planned formal supervisor training for the distance cohort supervisors has been developed and conducted.

Standard 4.6  Students receive advising on a regular basis that pertains to both academic and clinical performance and progress.

Requirement for Review:

- The program must maintain records of advisement for each of its students.
- The program must maintain records demonstrating that students are advised on a timely and continuing basis regarding their academic and clinical progress.
- The program must maintain records demonstrating that any concerns about a student’s performance in meeting the program requirements, including language proficiency, are addressed with the student.

Evidence of Non-Compliance:
The CAA requires programs to maintain records of advising and overall student performance. The site visitors reported that the program does not record the students’ ability to meet all program requirements, specifically regarding language proficiency. The program describes how the faculty will be in-serviced regarding reporting student performance regarding their language proficiency but did not provide evidence of a policy.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the next annual report, provide documentation on how the program documents student progress and handles student language proficiency.
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.

Standard 2.1 The number and composition of the program faculty (academic doctoral, clinical doctoral, other) are sufficient to deliver a program of study that:
- 2.1.1 allows students to acquire the knowledge and skills required in Standard 3,
- 2.1.2 allows students to acquire the scientific and research fundamentals of the discipline,
- 2.1.3 allows students to meet the program’s established goals and objectives,
- 2.1.4 meets the expectations set forth in the program’s mission and goals,
- 2.1.5 is offered on a regular basis so that it will allow the students to complete the program within the published time frame.

Requirement for Review:
- The program must document:
  - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to acquire the knowledge and skills required in Standard 3
  - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to acquire the scientific and research fundamentals of the profession
  - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to meet the program’s established learning goals and objectives
  - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to meet the expectations set forth in the program’s mission and goals

Evidence of Concern:
In response to the site visit report, the program mentioned that the administration has approved one additional faculty line for the program. The position was posted in October 2021 and three applicants applied for the position, however the program did not indicate the hiring status of the additional faculty to fill the open faculty line.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the next annual report, provide an update on the status of the open faculty line and the program’s overall ability to have sufficient faculty.

Standard 2.3 All faculty member (full-time, part-time, adjuncts), including all individuals providing clinical education, are qualified and competent by virtue of their education, experience, and professional credentials to provide academic and clinical education as assigned by the program leadership.

Requirement for Review:
- The program must demonstrate that the qualifications and competence to teach graduate-level courses and to provide clinical education are evident in terms of appropriateness of degree level,
practical or educational experiences specific to responsibilities in the program, and other indicators of competence to offer graduate education.

- The program must demonstrate that all individuals providing didactic and clinical education, both on-site and off-site, have appropriate experience and qualifications for the professional area in which education is provided.

**Evidence of Concern:**
The program reports that the two capstone project courses are taught by a faculty member whose qualifications are not identified. However, the program’s application mentions that these capstone courses were discontinued. Also, several faculty changes are reported in the program’s response to the site visit report.

**Steps to Be Taken:**
At the time of the next annual report, provide an updated faculty and course lists, including new hires and their qualifications, and clearly indicate faculty assigned to each course.

**Standard 6.1** The institution provides adequate financial support to the program so that it can achieve its stated mission and goals.

**Requirement for Review:**
- The program must demonstrate
  - that there is sufficient support, consistent with the program mission and goals, for personnel, equipment, educational and clinical materials, and research activities.

**Evidence of Concern:**
The site visitors expressed a concern regarding administration’s support for additional faculty and support personnel (e.g., graduate assistants). In the program’s response to the site visit report, they indicate additional support has been allocated from the administration including an open faculty line. A part-time clinical secretary has been hired and the program has requested two additional faculty lines and two graduate assistants.

**Steps to Be Taken:**
At the time of the next annual report, provide updates on the hiring status of the additional faculty members and support for graduate assistants.
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:

The CAA assessed the program’s performance with respect to student achievement and found the program to meet or exceed the established CAA expectations (as described in accreditation standard 5.0-Assessment) in the following checked areas. Details regarding any of these areas found to be not in compliance are described earlier in this report in the context of the relevant standard.

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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.