ACCREDITATION ACTION REPORT

Candidacy Application

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: Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico

File #: 359

Professional Area:

- [ ] Audiology
- [x] Speech-Language Pathology

Modality:

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

Degree Designator(s): M.S.

Action Taken: Award Candidacy

Effective Date: February 19, 2022

Candidacy Accreditation Cycle: February 1, 2022 – January 31, 2027

Next Review: Annual Progress 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
The CAA conducted its comprehensive review in the context of the institutional and program mission statements and in consideration of the credentials for which the program is preparing students, and determined that the program demonstrated sufficient compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, unless noted below.

### Standard 2.2
The number, composition, and workload of all full-time faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program are sufficient to allow them to meet expectations with regard to teaching, research, and service of the sponsoring institution.

#### Requirement(s) of the Standard to be met:
- The program must demonstrate that all faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program and have obligations to provide teaching, research, and service as part of their workload
  - are accessible to students,
  - have sufficient time for scholarly and creative activities,
  - have sufficient time to advise students,
  - have sufficient time to participate in faculty governance,
  - have sufficient time to participate in other activities that are consistent with the expectations of the sponsoring institution.
- The program must demonstrate that faculty who are tenure eligible have the opportunity to meet the criteria for tenure of the sponsoring institution.

#### Compliance Expectation Determined: Planned
Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: Planned

#### CAA Concern:
The CAA expects that the program demonstrates that all faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program and have obligations to provide teaching, research, and service as part of their workload are accessible and have sufficient time to meet institutional expectations. The program’s updated faculty chart, which included expected teaching loads, suggested heavy teaching loads for the faculty with research doctorates, e.g., PhD, in the program. This raises a concern about the ability of tenure-eligible faculty to meet the institution’s expectations for tenure and all institutional obligations for faculty.

#### Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the first annual progress report, the program must provide an update on the faculty teaching and other workloads and note what impact they have on the faculty’s ability to meet institutional expectations, including progress towards tenure.
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(s) of the Standard to be met:
- The program must have written policies regarding the role of students in the selection of externship sites and the placement of students in the sites.
- The program must have written policies and procedures that describe the processes used by the program to select and place students in external facilities.
- The program must have written policies and procedures that describe the processes used to determine whether a clinical site has the appropriate clinical population and personnel to provide an appropriate clinical education experience for each student.

Compliance Expectation Determined: Planned
Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: Initiated

CAA Concern:
The CAA expects that all procedures related to student practicum placement are documented. At the time of the site visit, policies were not able to be verified for how students select sites and how it is determined sites have appropriate clients and personnel to support the student’s clinical education.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the first annual progress report, the program must provide the policies and procedures that address a student’s role in the selection of clinical externship sites, processes used by the program to secure placement for students, and processes the program uses to ensure that the clinical sites have personnel and populations for the clinical externship. The program must provide relevant handbooks and include how students and faculty have access to these policies and procedures.

Standard 6.3 The program has adequate physical facilities (classrooms, offices, clinical space, research laboratories) that are accessible, appropriate, safe, and sufficient to achieve the program's mission and goals.

Requirement(s) of the Standard to be met:
- The program must demonstrate that its facilities are adequate to deliver a program that is consistent with its mission and goals.

Compliance Expectation Determined: Planned/Initiated
Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: Initiated

CAA Concern:
The CAA expects that the program has adequate physical facilities that are accessible, appropriate, safe, and sufficient to achieve the program’s mission and goals. The program reported a delay of the construction to renovate space to accommodate clinical practicum on campus. Although university administrators estimated the completion date of the renovations to be sometime between September and December 2022 during the site visit, completion of the project has been extended until May 2023. The program indicated that
Contingency plans are in place to provide clinical opportunities for students in an alternative setting - the preschool building on campus – and will continue to use that space if renovations are not completed by May 2023.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the first annual progress report, the program must provide an update on the progression of the building construction and whether contingency space continues to be used for the clinical practicum in the preschool building on campus.

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<tr>
<th>Standard 6.4 The program's equipment and educational and clinical materials are appropriate and sufficient to achieve the program's mission and goals.</th>
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<td>Requirement(s) of the Standard to be met:</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The program must demonstrate that the quantity, quality, currency, and accessibility of materials and equipment are sufficient to meet the mission and goals of the program.</td>
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Compliance Expectation Determined: Planned
Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: Initiated

CAA Concern:
The CAA expects that the program has sufficient equipment and materials to support the academic and clinical education components of the program. Although the program does have some materials and equipment planned for purchase, the site visit team could not verify a comprehensive plan for securing necessary materials and equipment to cover the depth and breadth of the profession. The program provided an itemized breakdown of the purchasing plan for the first few years of operation and indicated that a supply budget will be implemented in Year 4.

Steps to Be Taken:
At the time of the first annual progress report, the program must verify that the materials and equipment that were expected to be ordered and delivered have been secured as expected. If any items were delayed that were expected for the first year of operations, the program should describe the plan and timeline for securing those items.

**PERFORMANCE WITH RESPECT TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

The CAA 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)]. Upon award of Candidacy status, no students are enrolled in the program; thus student achievement data has not been collected. However, the CAA assessed the program’s process for collecting and reporting student achievement data and found the program to meet or exceed the established CAA expectations as described in the Candidacy Compliance Continuum for accreditation standard 5.0 – Assessment.
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.