Title:
Undergraduate Academic / Clinical Preparation for Successful Acceptance in Au.D. Programs

Abstract:
This undergraduate student mentoring program allows students to make an informed choice in changing their profession from speech-language pathology to audiology and to be better prepared when entering an Au.D. program. Eleven students receiving this mentoring program were accepted into an average of 86% of the Au.D. programs that they applied to.

Summary:
Audiology undergraduate course work usually involves two courses: a course in aural rehabilitation and an audiology introduction course, usually placed in the student’s junior academic year. Minimal academic exposure to the field of audiology may take place 12-15 months prior to graduating with an undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology. (This is when the undergraduate student who desires to become an audiologist voices this possibility after enrolling in one of these two basic audiology courses). This minimal undergraduate audiology training continues to be the norm as numerous master’s degree programs closed between 2002-2007 due to the change in certification and licensure (for most states) in audiology (i.e., the Clinical Doctorate in Audiology degree (Au.D.)).

The Department of CDS at SUNY Fredonia closed the audiology master’s program in 2002. We implemented an undergraduate audiology mentoring program (since 2002) that has been found to be successful in two ways. Such a mentoring program provides the student with an education that will assist the student in making a more informed choice to change professions and allows the student the ‘rare’ academic/clinic foundation for successful acceptance into an Au.D. program.

All eleven undergraduate students who took part in this mentoring program were accepted, as first round acceptances, into an average of 86% of the Au.D programs that they applied to. Five students were accepted into all four or all five of their Au.D program choices, one student received funding as a graduate assistant, another student received first year tuition funding and a third student received a four-year scholarship.
The mentoring program involves advising, shadowing, and clinical and academic preparation:

- The student receives a packet of Au.D. programs to review. The student is encouraged to begin to check programs in geographical areas they would like to live.
- The summer prior to the beginning of the senior academic year the student “shadows” an audiologist in at least two different settings (i.e., hospital, private practice, rehabilitation clinic, VA Hospital).
- For the fall senior semester the student enrolls in a graduate clinic section (with the faculty audiologist), and an Independent Study (to learn how to properly research and write a review of literature term paper on an audiology topic).
- For the spring senior semester the student enrolls in another graduate audiology clinic section and another Independent Study (to perform a research study based on the learned content from the fall Independent Study project). Additional course work such in counseling and natural sciences may be taken from the psychology or science departments.

The graduate clinic course consists of three to six hours (per week) of clinic exposure in amplification fittings and diagnostics (e.g., otoscopy, pure tone audiometry, tympanometry, speech audiometry, otoacoustic emissions, auditory processing disorders (APDs), and ENGs). The student learns to administer all of the above diagnostic tests except for ENGs and APD testing and is exposed to hearing aid fittings.

CDS Departments that are unable to offer an Au.D. program may find this information useful. This undergraduate student mentoring program fulfills two needs for undergraduate students pursuing an advanced degree in audiology: allowing the students to make an informed choice in changing their profession from speech-language pathology to audiology and to be better prepared (academically and clinically) when entering an Au.D. program. Further, the undergraduate preparation for an Au.D. program is an area of instruction that has been missed in the development of the Au.D.

This data was presented at the 2009 ASHA and 2011 AAA national conventions.