



Division of  
Communication  
Disorders

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## Undergraduate Program Fee Proposal

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### Undergraduate Program Overview & Recent History

The Bachelor's of Science in Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences is a pre-professional degree program for students who will pursue graduate education in speech-language pathology, audiology, as well as other related health and education fields. The Division of Communication Disorders offers the BS degree as well as "leveling" courses for students with a bachelor's from another area, but wishing to pursue a career in speech-language pathology or audiology. There is a critical shortage of speech-language pathologists and audiologists in Wyoming, the Mountain-West region, and nationally. There are very strong job growth projections for 2012 to 2022, with speech-language pathology ranked 13th out of the 20 large-growth occupations. The course of study of the BS degree includes 45 credits of major coursework in Speech Pathology (SPPA). The "leveling" coursework is comprised of 30 credits. Like the graduate program, the undergraduate program has Tier 1 status with the majority of students gaining admittance to graduate programs or entering the field to work in related areas.

This past year the Division lost 4 Academic Professional Positions, all of whom contributed to the undergraduate curriculum. None of these positions have been filled/replaced. Prior to this fee request the Division has relied on state funding to support the clinical education opportunities in the undergraduate curriculum and we have not had fees. Our program is forward thinking and we are ready to implement methods to diversify the funding for the clinical education expenses associated with the BS program. As a pre-professional program, we must provide our student with clinical opportunities and with infused clinical focus across the curriculum. Clinical education is a necessary but expensive component of the undergraduate program; the following proposed fees will assist in addressing some of these added expenses.

### Proposed Program Fees

The Division of Communication Disorders proposes an undergraduate program fee of **\$46 per credit hour of SPPA courses**. Table 1 presents the total fees for the BS and leveling programs.

<b>Table 1. Total Fees for BS and Leveling SPPA Program Fees</b>	
<u>BS student fees (45 credits)</u>	<u>Leveling Students (30 credits)</u>
\$2,070	\$1,380

## **Costs and Justification**

Fees generated from average year of projected enrollment (1,080 SCH) for SPPA courses will be approximately \$50,000. Table 2 and the narrative below provide an overview of how the fees will support the undergraduate clinical expenses.

**Table 2.**

<b><u>Undergraduate SPPA Clinical Expenses</u></b>	
.6 Clinical Educator with EPBs	\$46,200
Standardized Assessment & Protocols Updates	\$1,980
Speech, Swallowing and Hearing Laboratory	\$1,500
<b>Total UG SPPA Expenses</b>	<b>\$49,680</b>

**Clinical Educator.** The Council on Academic Accreditation in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (CAA) requires that Communication Disorders undergraduates and leveling students obtain 25 hours of clinical experiences (clinical observation and/or clinical screening/treatment hours). This requirement is meant to occur prior to graduate education and is linked to state licensure and national certification standards. Formal clinical observation occurs across the undergraduate curriculum, and requires clinical educators and supervision. Undergraduate/leveling clinical experience spans the “Big 9 Disorder Areas,” including disorders in the areas of: articulation; fluency (stuttering), voice/resonance; language (receptive and expressive); hearing; dysphagia (swallowing and feeding); cognitive aspects of communication (e.g. brain-injury, autism and others); and communication modalities (alternative and augmentative communication, such as device usage and/or sign language). Undergraduate/leveling clinical experience also must include patients across the lifespan and include individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Simulation cases are now accepted by the CAA, and will assist our program in meeting the demand for undergraduate clinical experiences. Clinical educator supervision is required in order for these simulation cases to count towards the required 25 hours. In sum, undergraduate/leveling clinical experiences require a minimum of .6 of a clinical educator.

**Standardized Assessment Tools and Protocols.** SPPA coursework and clinical experiences require updating and replacement, due to wear/use, of standardized assessment materials standardized language assessment tools (pediatric/adult); standardized speech assessment tools (pediatric/adult); cognitive assessment tools (for developmental disabilities; learning disabilities; as well as acquired disorders such as stroke and traumatic brain injury); fluency assessment tools and related recording devices; and trial materials for augmentative communication. Protocols are also required for each of these assessment tools. These are critical needs since state and national regulations require that current and updated assessment tools and protocols be used in the assessment and diagnosis of speech-language and related disorders.

**Speech, Swallowing and Hearing Laboratory.** Many of the expenses related to this labs are part of SPPA 3265 Anatomy and Physiology of Speech, Swallowing, and Hearing. In order to understand disorder related to

physiological differences, instructors must have access to speech, swallowing, and hearing anatomical models. The Division currently has inadequate models. In addition, virtual/simulated models; are preferred for swallowing, the fees will allow for this update. The speech and swallowing physiology coursework also require access to calibrated, updated and maintained endoscope and nasometers: while the hearing components of SPPA 4340 Audiology and SPPA 4150 Aural Rehabilitation require access to calibrated and updated audiometry equipment. All three courses listed are required of undergraduate/leveling students, lab fees are needed in order to adequately demonstrate/teach the related speech, swallowing and hearing standards (required for accreditation and licensure).

### **Market Comparisons**

**Table 3.**  
**Tuition & Fees for Regional Communication Disorders BS Programs**

<b>Institution Name</b>	<b>In-state Tuition &amp; Fees Undergraduate 30 Credits</b>
Utah State University	\$6,506
University of Northern Colorado	\$8,888
University of Colorado	\$12,018
University of New Mexico	\$6,950
The University of Montana	\$6,238
Metro State University Denver	\$9,179
<b>Average peer programs</b>	<b>\$9,185</b>
<b>University of Wyoming (including proposed fees for 30 credits)</b>	<b>\$6,482</b>

Table 3 present tuition and fees for 30 credits in regional undergraduate programs. These programs were selected for market comparisons because students from our region would likely attend these programs, and residents of these states also frequently attend our program. They are the best regional comparisons for BS/Leveling SPPA coursework in the Mountain-West Region.

PleaseAlso note, that the data above is based on 30 credits of SPPA fees in a given year, and that there is a total of 45 credits of SPPA spread across the 4 years for the BS students. So these data actually accurately represent the “leveling” year for students who already have a BS/BA in a related area. Even so, with the undergraduate fees applied, our program remains the most affordable and definitely within the market range.

### **Benefits Provided To Students**

#### **Clinical Experiences**

Clinical experiences will provide or BS/leveling students with experiences and mentoring in clinical setting, and will better prepare them to be effective speech-

language pathologists, audiologists, and related health or education providers. BS/leveling students are required to gain experiences with the Big 9 Disorders and with diverse cultural groups. The fees proposed will support this expense and will allow for enhanced clinical teaching across the curriculum.

### **25 Hours of Clinical Experience**

The proposed fees will ensure that BS/Leveling students have the required 25 hours prior to applying to graduate programs. These experiences will insure that students are not behind or overlooked when applying as applicants to professional graduate programs. Infused clinical experiences will also enhance the undergraduate program and better prepare students to work with patient/student populations in the state.

### **Access to Current Standardized Assessments and Laboratory equipment.**

As mentioned earlier, current and recent assessments must be used in training professionals, the proposed fees will support student access to current materials and . The fees will also support access to clinical laboratory equipment, including models, speech physiology equipment, and audiometry equipment, and virtual-video models and simulation cases.

### **Summary**

Despite the additional cost incurred for SPPA coursework, the University's low tuition rates still results in the most affordable BS/leveling program in Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences in the region. Although additional fees are critically needed to sustain the program and to offer students the CAA required clinical experiences, student access and career choice are not expected to be adversely impacted