



Northern Illinois University

2015 Program Review Report

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Program: B.A. in German (16.0501)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Second language skills are increasingly important in our multicultural global society and Germany is increasingly influential as Europe's economic powerhouse. Students electing the B.A. in German major select one of two emphases: *Language and Literature* or *Business and Translation*. Students in both emphases must demonstrate core written and oral language competencies and meet standards related to German culture, geography, and literature. Students selecting the emphasis in *Language and Literature* gain additional exposure to important German cultural works and are especially well suited for careers as educators and foreign language teachers. Students selecting the *Business and Translation* emphasis obtain additional skills that enable them to function within the German business context and are prepared for careers in translation/interpretation, international business, and immigration. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 46 percent growth in demand for interpreters and translators from 2012 to 2022. In addition, the Illinois Department of Employment Security projects 15 percent growth in demand for foreign language and literature teachers. Overall enrollment declined during the review period from 19 students in 2009 to 12 students in 2013. This trend is consistent with that experienced by other German programs in the state and NIU's share of the total enrollments at public universities has remained relatively steady at 22 percent. The department is actively promoting a minor in German to students from other disciplines—especially Business—and the number of students with a German minor has remained relatively constant with approximately 14 students seeking a minor (each year) during the review period.
- Major findings and recommendations: Despite overall enrollment declines during the review period, interest in German as a supplement to other majors remains steady and enhances the career prospects of graduates. In particular, the minor is of interest to students from management, marketing, and political science. Much of the department's credit hour production is related to service to other university programs (e.g., to meet the foreign language requirement for the B.A. degree). The program provides numerous engagement opportunities through study abroad experiences, its Foreign Language Residence Program, and capstone projects. The Foreign Language Learning Center and students' access to TRADOS (a translation memory software widely used by professional translators) are departmental strengths. Based on the cost data available, the program remains at or below state-wide averages for instruction in German.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review, the department has increased its course offerings at the 300 level providing greater flexibility for faculty and giving students a wider array of courses to choose from. The department has also added a course (FLAL 400) that focuses on the development of an electronic portfolio. This course helps students to develop a resume (in both English and German) as well as supporting evidence of proficiency in German that will be of interest to potential employers. The department has recently developed pre- and post-test measures of German proficiency that will be used for assessment purposes in the future.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In this review, the department was encouraged to continue to

develop courses in German that would be of interest to majors outside of the department and expand participation in both the German minor and certificate in German. The department is encouraged to expand its use of student portfolios and to make greater use of this vehicle for assessing student learning. The department is encouraged to establish greater ties with alumni to create an advisory board, provide increased internship and mentoring opportunities for students, and to help in recruiting prospective students. Finally, given decreased enrollments, the department is being asked to implement strategies to attract new students and increase enrollments and to produce a follow-up report on enrollments by fall 2016.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing (follow-up report on enrollments due in fall 2016)

Explanation: The B.A. in German is a cost effective program that provides numerous opportunities for student engagement and intensive study. Increasingly, a German minor and certificate in German provide enhanced career opportunities for students from other majors such as management, technical disciplines, and political science. Strategies currently being undertaken by the department to increase enrollments will be monitored in the coming year.

Program: B.A. in French (16.0901)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: As noted previously, second language skills are increasingly important in our multicultural global society. Students electing the B.A. in French major select one of two emphases: *Language and Literature* or *Business and Translation*. Students in both emphases must demonstrate core written and oral language competencies and meet standards related to French culture, geography, and literature. Students selecting the emphasis in *Language and Literature* gain additional exposure to important French cultural works and are especially well suited for careers as educators and foreign language teachers. Indeed, the majority of students who choose the *Language and Literature* track become middle or high school teachers. Students selecting the *Business and Translation* emphasis obtain additional skills that enable them to function within the French business context and are prepared for careers in industries such as translation/interpretation, international business, and immigration. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 46 percent growth in demand for interpreters and translators from 2012 to 2022. In addition, the Illinois Department of Employment Security projects 15 percent growth in demand for foreign language and literature teachers. During the review period, enrollment rose from 27 students in 2008 to peak at 38 students in 2010 then return to 28 students in 2012. This trend is consistent with that experienced by other French programs in the state and NIU's share of the total enrollments at public universities has remained relatively steady at roughly 20 percent. Degree completion has remained relatively constant during the review period with the number of graduates fluctuating between 6 to 8 students per year. The department is actively promoting the minor in French as a means of enhancing students' career competitiveness. The number of students seeking a minor in French has increased through the review period from 23 students in 2009 to 34 students in 2013.
- Major findings and recommendations: Although overall enrollments have been relatively flat when looking across the review period, interest in French as a supplement to other majors has increased. As noted previously, the department provides service to the university with much of its credit hour production generated by students from other majors. The program provides notable engagement

opportunities through study abroad experiences, its Foreign Language Residence Program, participation in undergraduate research programs, and capstone projects. The Foreign Language Learning Center and students' access to TRADOS (a translation memory software widely used by professional translators) are departmental strengths. Based on the cost data available, the department remains at or below state-wide averages for instruction in foreign languages. Based on alumni survey data gathered from 2009 to 2012, 91 percent of graduates report a high level of satisfaction with their degree and 100 percent indicate that the time to degree completion was satisfactory.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review, the department has developed increased study abroad opportunities such as its program in Bordeaux, France. The department has worked to build stronger relationships with area community colleges in an effort to recruit students with associate's degrees and facilitate their transfer to NIU. The department has also worked to increase student retention by offering free language tutoring through its Language Learning Center and providing increased advising support for those students who appear to be struggling academically. The department has implemented an electronic portfolio course (FLAL 400) that requires students to create resumes in both English and French while providing additional guidance related to successful job placement. Finally, the department has implemented pre- and post-test measures of French grammar and vocabulary proficiency.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Recent faculty turnover has created a need for enhanced recruiting to meet the continued demand for French majors and minors. The department is encouraged to establish greater ties with alumni—especially those working in the K-12 system—to help in recruiting prospective students. The department is encouraged to create an advisory board of employers and alumni to provide suggestions for program enhancement and increased internship and mentoring opportunities for students.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: Student interest in French remains high as evidenced by the steady demand for the major and increasing numbers of students electing to minor in French. The department provides a high level of service to the university with the bulk of its credit hour generation coming from non-majors.

Program: M.A. in French (16.0901)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Although career opportunities for graduates with second language skills remains strong, interest in the M.A. in French has declined and been relatively weak across the review period. In 2008, 9 students were enrolled and in subsequent years has since ranged from 4 to 6 students during the 2009 to 2012 time period. Similar declines are occurring at other public institutions in Illinois and there is little interest in offering the degree at private institutions.
- Major findings and recommendations: The Academic Planning Council recommended that the department consider carefully the future of this program. If a decision is made to continue the program, the department is encouraged to reach out to successful graduates, create an advisory board, review and possibly redesign the curriculum, and consider offering the program in additional formats (e.g., on-line or

hybrid courses).

- Actions taken since the last review: FLAL intended to revise and update its graduate curriculum in French following the last program review, however, these changes were never completed. In an effort to increase outreach to graduates, the newsletter, *Lingua Links*, was initiated after the last program review; it was published for several issues, but then – because of costs (materials and faculty time) – not pursued further. The advisory board, which was suggested during the last cycle, also was not put in place.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Based on the lack of students, recent loss of program faculty, and lack of follow-up on recommendations made in the last review, the future viability of the program is in question. A decision has been made by the department to close the program to new students and devote remaining faculty resources to support the degree completion of the students still in the program.

Outcome

- Decision:

 x Program closed to new students (a decision as to whether to permanently discontinue offering the M.A. in French will be made in 2015-2016).

Explanation: Declining student interest and difficulties in retaining program faculty led to a decision to close the program to new students. Existing students will be supported to degree completion. As NIU is one of only three programs in the state that offer the M.A. in French, a decision will be need to be made as to whether NIU should continue to offer this degree.

Program: B.A. in Spanish (16.0905)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: With the changing demographics of the United States and the increasing number of Hispanic citizens, Spanish language skills are increasingly important. Students electing the B.A. in Spanish major select one of two emphases: *Language and Literature* or *Business and Translation*. Students in both emphases must demonstrate core written and oral language competencies and meet standards related to Hispanic culture, geography, and literature. Students selecting the emphasis in *Language and Literature* gain additional exposure to important cultural works and are especially well suited for careers as educators and foreign language teachers. Students selecting the *Business and Translation* emphasis obtain additional skills that enable them to function within a multi-lingual business context that is increasingly important and sought after in the Northern Illinois region. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 46 percent growth in demand for interpreters and translators from 2012 to 2022. In addition, the Illinois Department of Employment Security projects 15 percent growth in demand for foreign language and literature teachers. Although interest in Spanish is highest among the foreign languages offered at NIU, enrollment has declined during the review period from 140 students in 2008 to 98 students in 2012. This trend is consistent with that experienced by many other Spanish programs in the state. NIU's share of the total enrollments at public universities has fluctuated from approximately 14 percent to 17 percent over the review period. Degree completion rates have increased across the review period, going from 33 percent in 2009 to 47 percent in 2013. Interest in the Spanish minor has remained strong with 317 students in 2009 and 343 students in 2013.
- Major findings and recommendations: The department provides a tremendous variety of student engagement experiences, including: the Foreign Language Residence program, study abroad experiences,

its Language Learning Center, the Spanish Club, excursions to local Hispanic cultural sites, civic engagement activities, and both in-course and capstone honors experiences. The increase in graduation rates from 33 to 47 percent is noteworthy. The decline in the number of majors is of concern but interest in the Spanish minor remains high. The department's assessment data and students' exit interviews indicates that students' proficiency in oral communication is an issue that bears attention. The department notes that students participating in immersion activities, such as study abroad or the Foreign Language Residence program, generally perform better on this competency. According to alumni survey data collected between 2009 and 2012, 100 percent of graduates were satisfied with their degree and 95 percent were satisfied with the time required for completion. Graduates with a B.A. in Spanish report higher employment rates than that reported by other majors at NIU (88 v. 78 percent).

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review the department has worked to increase students' engaged learning opportunities. These have taken a number of different forms and include increased study abroad opportunities with opening of a center in Guadalajara, Mexico, a required electronic portfolio course, an internship class, and creation of the Spanish Club. The department has also increased its course offerings at the 300 and 400 level in order to provide more options for students and increase faculty teaching flexibility.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of this review, the department intends to: 1) develop more options for study abroad programs, 2) to continue to develop course offerings that would be of interest to non-majors, 3) continue efforts to assess and improve students' oral proficiency, 4) establish an alumni advisory board.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: The B.A. in Spanish draws more interest than any other foreign language program at NIU. Although enrollments have declined, this trend is being felt at other public institutions in the state and NIU's percentage of enrollments has remained fairly constant. Interest in the minor continues to grow and the department's credit hour production indicates a high level of service to other university programs.

Program: M.A. in Spanish (16.0905)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: As the prevalence of Spanish speakers in U.S. society has increased, advanced study in Spanish affords graduates with enhanced career opportunities. Graduates completing the M.A. in Spanish are prepared for further graduate study and are qualified to teach at the undergraduate level at both liberal arts colleges and community colleges. In addition, graduates become increasingly attractive for positions in translation/interpretation, in the social services serving largely Hispanic populations, and for positions in government and commerce. Illinois Department of Employment Security projects greater than double digit growth in occupations benefitting from graduate study in Spanish including: postsecondary teachers (12 percent), teachers of foreign languages and literature (15 percent), and interpreters/translators (37 percent). Students enrolled in the M.A. in Spanish have the option of completing a thesis or completing a practicum, depending on their occupational interests. Increasingly, the program attracts non-traditional students returning for further graduate study and place bound students such as in-service teachers. The department is increasingly supportive of these

groups by offering classes in the evening and in hybrid formats. Enrollments in the program have held relatively constant across the review period.

- Major findings and recommendations: The program is one of only five institutions in Illinois that offer the M.A. in Spanish and the only one that is readily accessible to students from the Chicago suburbs. The program structure is flexible and caters to the needs of both traditional students and working students seeking additional credentials. The program provides opportunities for study abroad in Toledo, Spain and in Guadalajara, Mexico. A number of departmental resources, including the Language Learning Center and availability of TRADOS translation software, are assets to the graduate program. The department is concerned about availability of courses in linguistics and translation which may contribute to potential delays in degree completion.
- Actions taken since the last review: The last review recognized the increased demand for advanced Spanish instruction among non-traditional students and the department has been working to increase its evening and hybrid course offerings. In order to facilitate timely degree completion, the department now provides individually tailored advising.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: This review has highlighted the need to add course offerings in linguistics and translation and provide more intensive advising to assist students' timely degree completion. The program recognizes the need to maintain closer ties with alumni and is working to establish an alumni advisory board. Additionally, the department is encouraged to establish additional partnerships with regional K-12 school districts to create graduate cohorts—a model that the department has had some success with in the past.

Outcome

- Decision:

 x Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: The M.A. in Spanish provides an attractive option for non-traditional students in the Northern Illinois region who do not want to travel into the city of Chicago. The program is increasing its evening and hybrid course offerings as a means of continuing to grow enrollments.

Program: Doctor of Jurisprudence (22.0101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Despite Bureau of Labor Statistics employment projections indicating that job growth for lawyers (9.9%) will be comparable to that for all occupations (10.8%), law schools across the country have been experiencing declining applications. Enrollments at NIU's College of Law, however, have increased with 297 students in 2009 growing to 333 students in 2013. Further, NIU's share of enrollments at public institutions in the state has edged up as well. To enhance its competitiveness, the program has developed two new clinics: the College of Law Health Advocacy Clinic and the Foreclosure Mediation Clinic. In addition, the program has created five new certificates to enhance students' career prospects. These include programs in Civil Advocacy, Criminal Practice, Business Law, International Law, and Public Interest Law. Lastly, the College of Law is partnering with other NIU Colleges to recruit promising students and increase affordability by providing an accelerated 3+3 simultaneous degree option in which students can shave one year off of the normal time required to complete the baccalaureate and J.D. degrees.

- Major findings and recommendations: The program has been successful in its efforts to recruit a diverse student body and to ensure that they graduate successfully. Efforts to enhance the curricular offerings to better prepare graduates to pass the bar exam have begun to yield results; first time pass rates have risen from 80 percent in 2009 to 85 percent in 2013 and are now more in-line with state pass rates (90%). The openings of the two new clinics noted above, in addition to the existing Civil Justice and Juvenile Justice Clinics, have helped expand student engagement opportunities and enhanced the program's reputation for public service. The Academic Success Program helps ensure student academic and career success. Graduate employment rates are favorable when compared with those of competitors. Faculty research productivity, although improving, remains an issue.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review in 2007 and accreditation review in 2010, the program has instituted a number of changes to improve the program. A particular area of emphasis has been to improve first-time pass rates for the bar exam and students' career readiness. Specific curricular changes have included the addition of new courses (such as the Legal Analysis: Skills and Strategies), not-for-credit bar preparation classes, and an expanded student Academic Success Program. The college has also expanded experiential learning opportunities through additional clinic and externship experiences so that each student now has the opportunity for one or more clinical or externship experiences. In order to encourage broader faculty engagement in scholarship, the college has appointed a director of Faculty Professional Development and has instituted incentives such as summer stipends and merit raises tied to publishing.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: A number of the suggestions emerging from this review reinforce on-going improvement efforts, including: expand the 3+3 dual degree program as a means of attracting students; continue to cultivate relationships with external organizations to increase externships and experiential learning opportunities; continue to support faculty research via summer grants and graduate research assistants. New improvement suggestions include: 1) consider offering the program at off-campus locations or in a hybrid delivery format; 2) expand efforts to cultivate more relationships with alumni in order to help with recruitment, internships, placement, and increased donations; and 3) develop marketing strategies that emphasize the program's competitive advantages (e.g., support for diversity, low cost, public service focus).

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: In spite of the nation-wide trend of declining applications to law programs, the Doctor of Jurisprudence has continued to attract qualified and diverse students. The program provides ample opportunities for externships and engaged learning that enhance student success. The program is cost effective relative to other public institutions in the state.

Program: Bachelor of General Studies (24.0101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor in General Studies (BGS) is intended to provide an avenue for degree completion for students where another NIU baccalaureate degree is not a good match with their interests, previous record of academic courses, or life circumstances. Often the degree is a good fit

for non-traditional, adult learners who have previous academic credit that does not meet the specific requirements for another major. Although it is the oldest and largest off campus degree offered by NIU, students in the BGS program have the option of taking courses in any format (in-person, on-line or hybrid) at any NIU location. Many of the students who are enrolled in the BGS are working full-time and the program offers them a flexible path to completion of a baccalaureate degree that can enhance their present career and enable further advancement. In this way, the BGS degree directly contributes to goal #1 of the Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success (Increasing Educational Attainment). As noted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2012, individuals who complete a baccalaureate degree will earn approximately 62 percent more and be 47 percent less likely to be unemployed relative to those without a post-secondary degree. Although enrollments had peaked (at 243 students) at the beginning of the review period, they have remained fairly constant during the 2010 to 2013 time frame with approximately 190 students enrolled each year. Approximately 30 percent of BGS students are traditional minorities and roughly 75 percent are non-native (i.e., transfer) students. Currently, two NIU colleges, Liberal Arts & Sciences (LA&S) and Health & Human Sciences (HHS), offer the BGS apart from the contract major. Enrollments in the BGS degree at a number of other public institutions in the state have increased markedly over the review period and include Chicago State University, Western Illinois University, and Eastern Illinois University. NIU's share of enrollments at public institutions in the state has declined somewhat from 10 percent in 2009 to 9 percent in 2012.

- Major findings and recommendations: The BGS degree provides an important option for degree completion for non-traditional students, those with prior academic credit that doesn't fit with other specific majors offered by NIU, and those who can't travel to DeKalb to attend classes. The individualized advising, as provided through the College of LA&S version of the BGS, is a model for other colleges. As implemented in the College of HHS, awarding credit for prior learning can speed degree completion for adult learners with relevant professional certifications and could be expanded in other NIU colleges. Improved marketing of the BGS degree could be an effective way to appeal to adult learners with some academic credit to enable them to complete a baccalaureate degree. While the decentralized administration of the BGS allows NIU colleges to tailor the degree to fit the needs of their students, some centralized coordination of the program is useful for identifying potential students, improving marketing efforts, and developing policies/procedures for expansion of awarding credit for prior learning. Lastly, assessment of student learning in the BGS program largely relies on indirect measures and is not tied to specific student learning outcomes.
- Actions taken since the last review: As an overarching issue, the previous review noted that there is no campus-wide attempt to continuously improve the BGS program. Although the BGS program is implemented differently within the two colleges that most often use the degree (i.e., Liberal Arts and Sciences & Health and Human Sciences), overall responsibility for the degree now resides within the Office of the Vice Provost. This office is responsible for developing an overall strategy for how to use the BGS degree to facilitate degree completion for non-traditional students across the university, while recognizing that each college within the university has different challenges and opportunities in meeting the needs of this population. The previous review noted that BGS students want additional faculty contact which is being addressed through enhanced advising support and the now wide-spread use of the Blackboard learning management system. Recommendations to track BGS alumni achievements and obtain feedback from employers have not yet been undertaken.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: This review has suggested a number of improvements for the BGS degree: 1) provide a BGS director in the College of Health and Human Sciences to help expand and improve the program as implemented in that college; 2) develop and implement an assessment strategy based on the NIU baccalaureate student learning outcomes; 3) create a faculty advisory board to provide guidance on the future direction of the BGS, increase its visibility, and foster its growth; 4) develop strategies to more effectively market the program—especially to disaffected former students who

would like to complete a baccalaureate degree but aren't aware of this option; and 5) expand internship and engagement opportunities for BGS students.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing, follow-up requested (review of assessment and marketing plan in 2017)

Explanation: The BGS degree provides an important avenue for degree completion for non-traditional students. Establishing assessment and marketing plans for the degree would help NIU to better serve the needs of this population.

Program: B.S. in Communicative Disorders (51.0201)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Students graduating with a B.S. in Communicative Disorders learn about the development and use of speech, language, and hearing. The program is intended to prepare students for further graduate study (in audiology, speech-language pathology, or a related area) or for employment in a variety of education or health related fields. The Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates faster than average growth through 2022 in health care and human service settings that provide speech, language, hearing, swallowing, and vocational rehabilitation services. A variety of factors account for these needs including: increases in the average age of the population, increased survival rates of trauma and stroke victims, and increases in premature infant births. Additionally, federal mandates to provide services to those with disabilities provides employment opportunities in day care centers, rehabilitation centers, and hospitals. Reflecting these trends, the number of students in program has grown across the review period (from 187 in 2009 to 198 in 2013) with more than half of enrollments coming from transfer students. Recruitment of minority students has been a particular focus and their representation has increased substantially from 18 percent in 2009 to 33 percent in 2013. At the end of the review period, NIU accounted for 30 percent of enrollments and baccalaureate degrees conferred in communicative disorders at public institutions in Illinois.
- Major findings and recommendations: The program is growing both in terms of major enrollments as well as in providing service courses to other majors at NIU (particularly those from psychology and education). The department provides opportunities for engagement through study abroad, service learning, and undergraduate involvement in research. Alumni report high levels of satisfaction with the program and that it prepared them well for their job or graduate school. The program is encouraged to continue its successful minority recruitment efforts. The department has experienced a high degree faculty turnover and is encouraged to develop ways to mentor young faculty and provide greater research support for faculty in general. The program is encouraged to establish greater ties with program alumni that could lead to increased donations or internship and mentoring opportunities.
- Actions taken since the last review: In response to the last review, the program has worked to increase enrollments and adopted strategies to enroll additional minority students (primarily through targeted recruitment materials). In 2009, the program conducted a curricular review that produced changes in the major requirements that afford greater student flexibility in planning a program of study and enable the pursuit of a minor that is relevant to students' career goals. The department has also worked to increase

opportunities for engaged learning through undergraduate participation in research, internships, and service learning experiences.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of this review, the program is working to expand the opportunities for undergraduate involvement in research. In order to establish closer ties with program alumni, the department is collecting contact information from graduating seniors and conducting personal follow-ups six months after graduation. Program learning outcomes are being revised to foster increased alignment with the NIU baccalaureate student learning outcomes and to facilitate more course imbedded assessment. In order to continue to improve minority graduation rates, faculty and peer mentoring initiatives are being implemented. Finally, recruitment of additional sites for undergraduate internship placements are being conducted.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: The NIU B.S. in Communicative Disorders accounts for 30 percent of the degrees conferred by similar programs in public institutions within Illinois. The programs is cost effective and successful at recruiting and graduating minority students.

Program: M.A. in Communicative Disorders (51.0201)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: Students pursuing an M.A. in Communicative Disorders can elect either a specialization in Speech-Language Pathology or a specialization in Rehabilitation Counseling. With a specialization in Speech-Language Pathology, students receive the course work and clinical experiences that make them eligible to become certified speech-language pathologists. Students who perform clinical hours in a school setting may also pursue a professional educator license from the state of Illinois. In 2008, the program moved into a new Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic that provides needed community services and greatly expanded clinical and research opportunities for students and faculty. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2012 edition), the need for speech-language pathologists is expected to grow by 23 percent from 2012 to 2020 and U.S. News and World Report identified speech pathology as one the 25 best jobs for 2012. Similarly, career prospects for students with a specialization in Rehabilitation Counseling are also expected to grow by 20 percent from 2012 to 2020. Graduates are employed in settings that serve individuals with disabilities such as military veterans and individuals recovering from stroke or trauma. Across both specializations, beginning and ending enrollments have been relatively constant across the review period and NIU's program has accounted for approximately 30-35 percent of public enrollments. Beyond an initial set of core courses, training for the two specializations has diverged with tailored electives and accrediting bodies for each specialization; the Council for Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) and the Council of Rehabilitative Education (CORE). NIU's M.A. in Communicative Disorders is accredited by both organizations.
- Major findings and recommendations: Indications of program quality are evident in that both specializations were reaccredited by their respective governing bodies; Speech-Language Pathology received was reaccredited by CAA in 2010 and Rehabilitation Counseling was reaccredited by CORE in 2013. Students with the speech-language pathology specialization have a 99 percent pass rate on the

PRAXIS exam and students are successful at securing external placements in competitive externship settings. Students have ample opportunity for engagement and practicum experiences. Over 95 percent of graduates secure employment within three months following completion of the program. Faculty retention and turnover are issues for the program. Securing additional lines for clinic faculty will be necessary to grow the program. The program is also encouraged to continue to implement its assessment plan and provide avenues for including greater input from alumni.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review, the curriculum for each specialization have been reviewed and revised so that course offerings provided a clearer match to the different certification and accreditation requirements. In addition to expanding the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, other changes have been implemented to better coordinate students' clinical experiences including the appointment of a clinical director and external coordinators. Revision of the program's assessment plan is on-going with increased faculty buy-in for its implementation.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Actions identified as a result of this review include the following: 1) create a path to tenure for clinical faculty; 2) increase student involvement in research and use of the thesis option; 3) expand bilingual clinical education and outreach services; 4) provide incentives for faculty to pursue external funding; 5) determine the advantages and feasibility of establishing a separate degree program in rehabilitation counseling.

Outcome

- Decision:

__x__ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: Program enrollments have been increasing and account for a large proportion of M.A. in Communication Disorders graduates within the state of Illinois. Assessment, certification, and accreditation results are all indicative of a quality program that produces well qualified graduates.

Program: Doctor of Audiology (51.0202)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) is an entry level degree that prepares graduates to provide clinical audiology services. The program was established in 2008. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2014-2015 edition), the employment outlook for audiologists is expected to increase 34 percent during the 2012-2022 time period; much faster than the average of all occupations. Enrollments in the program have remained relatively constant over the review period and have ranged from 27 to 38 students. NIU has the largest Au.D. program, based on enrollments, of public institutions in the state. A major component of the program is clinical training, 3 years of which are provided through the Speech-Language- Hearing Clinic and 1 year within an external placement. Clinical services provided through the clinic provide much needed services to the community in the Northern Illinois region.
- Major findings and recommendations: The Au.D. program provides high quality training as evidenced by high certification pass rates on the PRAXIS exam (95 to 100 percent) and employment of 100 percent of its graduates within one year. The program was accredited by the Council for Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology in 2010. The program provides notable service to the Northern Illinois region through the Speech-Language- Hearing Clinic.

- Actions taken since the last review: This program was established in 2008 and has not been previously reviewed.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As it is a relatively new program, the initial emphasis has been to develop a high quality curriculum consisting of coursework and clinical experiences and to secure CAA accreditation. Now, the program has recognized a need to emphasize student and faculty research. In the coming years the program will aim to: 1) increase external funding for faculty research, 2) encourage students to publish worthy capstone projects, and 3) attempt to interest more students in pursuing the Doctorate in Audiology.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: This CAA accredited program produces well-qualified graduates with strong employment prospects. NIU's Au. D. program is the largest of those offered at public institutions within the state of Illinois.

Program: B.S. in Nursing (51.3801)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: A number of national and societal trends (such as increased emphasis on preventative care, lowering health care costs, and meeting the needs of an aging populace) portend a growing need for trained nurses. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment for registered nurses will increase by 19 percent from 2012 to 2022. In its 2010 report, *The Future of Nursing*, the Institute of Medicine called for increasing the number of baccalaureate trained nurses to 80 percent of all registered nurses (RNs) from the current 50 percent. In Illinois, the Department of Financial and Professional Regulations predicts a shortfall of 21,000 nurses by the year 2020. In an effort to help meet this demand, in 2010 NIU's School of Nursing increased enrollment in the B.S. in Nursing program from 160 to 200 students per academic year. The program has also expanded sites where RN completion courses are offered to include a number of area community colleges (Illinois Valley, Oakton, and Wilbur Wright). NIU's share of state-wide nursing student enrollments has hovered around 20 percent during the review period and is only surpassed by Southern Illinois University and Chicago State University. The diversity of the student body has increased in terms of both the number of ethnic minority students as well as the number of male students (nursing is a female dominated field). The percentage of transfer students enrolled in the program has also increased substantially over the review period, with approximately 66 percent of current students being transfers. In 2011, the curriculum for the B.S. in Nursing was revised in accordance with revised standards published by the American Association of College Nursing (AACN).
- Major findings and recommendations: The NIU B.S. in Nursing program accounts for a significant number of nursing graduates in the state of Illinois. Overall, 20 percent of students enrolled in public nursing programs are at NIU and 24 percent of all graduates come from NIU's nursing program. As noted above, the program has significantly increased enrollments during the review period in order to meet the occupational demand. Each academic year approximately 1,000 qualified applications are considered for the 200 program openings. The program maintains close relationships with community college nursing programs to ensure a steady supply of applicants and assure a seamless RN to B.S.

transition. The curriculum is designed in accordance with AACN standards to ensure that students are prepared for the discipline's licensure exam (the NCLEX). The department's Formative Student Success Program helps ensure that students are provided with the support they need early in the program. Graduates are well prepared as indicated by first-time NCLEX pass rates of 81 to 97 percent during the review period (relative to the 75 percent state standard). The program provides opportunities for student engagement through study abroad experiences, simulation labs, portfolio development, clinical experiences, and internships. Over 90 percent of graduates report being employed within a year after graduation. The program's portfolio process and commitment to assessment of student learning help to insure the quality of the curriculum. Resources have been stretched due to the program's rapid growth and there is a need for additional classroom and laboratory space. The ratio of tenure track faculty to instructors has fallen during the review period and the instructional demands associated with larger cohorts have negatively impacted faculty's ability to conduct research and apply for external funding.

- Actions taken since the last review: Following the last review the program was advised to monitor costs, to consider adjusting program capacity in light of occupational demand, to monitor student success on the NCLEX licensure exam, to systematically implement its assessment program, to develop strategies for increased RN to B.S. degree completion, and to adopt strategies for increasing the diversity of the student body. As indicated above, each of these findings has been addressed during the review period.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: This program review has highlighted the need for the following actions: 1) increase program resources for classroom and lab space; 2) develop formative assessment strategies and program checkpoints that assure students are prepared to pass the state licensure exam; 3) add administrative support positions (such as student advising) to help manage the department's recent enrollment growth; and 4) to develop greater ties with program alumni to increase internship opportunities; increase the proportion of tenure track faculty in instructional roles.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: The B.S. in Nursing at NIU accounts for approximately 24 percent of all nursing graduates in the state. Based on available data, program costs are below state-wide averages. The curriculum prepares students well for both state licensure and career success.

Program: M.S. in Nursing (51.3808)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The M.S. in Nursing program provides advanced graduate study that prepares students to become licensed as advanced practice nurses (APNs). The program provides training for two subspecialties of primary nurse care practitioners (the family nurse practitioner and adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner) and one subspecialty of clinical nurse specialist (adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialist). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the demand for advanced practice nurses will continue to grow by 31 percent to keep pace with the aging populace and the increasing need for urgent care facilities. The program also prepares graduates as nurse educators who can assume roles as community college teachers, clinical educators in a baccalaureate program, or as educators in healthcare facilities. According to a recent (2012-2013) survey by the American Association of College Nursing (AACN) nearly 80,000 qualified applicants for baccalaureate study were turned away

due to a lack of faculty and clinical sites. Commensurate with these trends, the number of applicants has increased substantially over the review period and actual enrollments have grown from 182 in 2009 to 239 in 2013. Minority student representation has also increased from 17 to 22 percent over this period. The program also accounts for an increasing percentage of the degrees conferred by public institutions in Illinois (16.6% in 2009 to 20.6% in 2012). As salaries for advanced practice nurses have risen, the number of students choosing the nurse educator specialization has declined. The curriculum has been redesigned to align with the standards outlined in AACN's 2011 publication, Essentials for Master's Education in Nursing.

- Major findings and recommendations: Graduates of the program are well prepared to serve as advanced practice nurses. Over 95 percent of graduates are employed within a year. Students testing for the family nurse practitioner certification during the past three years have scored between 85 and 100 percent (well above the national average). Graduates and their employers both agree that the program has prepared them well for their present jobs. The program is fully accredited through 2021 through the Commission of Collegiate Nursing education (CCNE). However, resources have not kept pace with the increased student demand and the number of available internships placements is a limiting factor for future growth. The growth of the program has also negatively impacted faculty's ability to apply for grant monies and engage in clinical practice required to maintain their advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) certifications.
- Actions taken since the last review: In the previous program review the program was encouraged to continue to monitor costs and adjust capacity in light of occupational demand. Student enrollments have since increased to the point where enrollments are now capped with no additional increase in faculty. A major change since the last program review—in order to keep pace with the changes occurring within the field—is the development of a doctor nurse practitioner (DNP) program. It is anticipated that, in the future, the DNP will become the primary credential for students seeking advanced study in nursing. The new DNP degree at NIU was approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education on August 11, 2015.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: A number of improvement actions have been highlighted as a result of this review: 1) additional faculty and administrative positions are required and will be hired to support the program and its current enrollments; 2) direct assessments of student learning to replace the indirect measures currently in use will be added; 3) the baccalaureate nursing portfolio program will be expanded to include the graduate program; 4) increased classroom and laboratory space are being sought; and 5) the department will implement plans for the DNP degree.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: The M.S. in Nursing is a high quality, CCNE accredited program that serves an important need for advanced nurse practitioners and nurse educators in the state. Implementation of the DNP degree will ensure that the program stays current with professional standards.

Program: Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic (90.5102)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic is the teaching, research, and

service unit of the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders. The central mission of the clinic is the transmission, expansion, and application of knowledge through teaching and learning, research, and public service. In 2009, the Speech-Language-Hearing-Clinic moved into its new, larger, and well equipped home in the NIU Family Health, Wellness, and Literacy Center. This move allowed expansion of the scope of both traditional and specialized clinical services as well as clinical research capacity. Within the clinic, approximately 4,500 square feet is dedicated to audiology services, 5,500 square feet is dedicated to speech-language pathology and rehabilitation counseling services, and 2,000 square feet is dedicated to research space. Both academic and clinical faculty are active with clinical research projects and research focused capstone/thesis projects. Most research conducted in the clinic involves human subjects and during the reporting period, more than fifty (50) research projects have utilized clinic space, clinic equipment, and/or the clinic research database to locate potential research subjects. Currently, clinic research facilities support a \$250,000 R15 grant from NIH. The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic has professional service contracts for audiology and speech-language pathology services with Kishwaukee Community Hospital, Kishwaukee Outpatient Center, and St. Mary's School. Currently, there are nine clinical faculty (FTE of 8.3) who provide clinical services on a twelve-month basis and four office support staff.

- Major findings and recommendations: During the review period, revenue from client billing and external contracts increased 24 percent from a low in 2008 (\$671,190) to a high in 2012 (\$835,042). General revenue support for the clinic decreased 16 percent from its high in 2008 (\$459,263) to its funding level in 2012 of (\$385,689). No other direct line-items support the clinic. Many costs associated with clinical salaries, business operations, professional liability insurance, reserved parking for clients, equipment maintenance, supplies, technology upgrades, and insurance credentialing must all be paid from funds generated through client billing and professional service contracts. During the past five years, 185 graduate students participated in engaged, service learning and provided care to over 10,000 individuals and/or families. Additionally, 600 - 700 undergraduate students utilized the clinic for structured clinical observations. Clinical services and outreach programs continue to be in high demand as witnessed by the 24 percent increase in revenue from client billing and professional service contracts during the review period. Services in high demand include: bilingual services for the Hispanic population; early intervention services for children age 0-3; interdisciplinary language, literacy and listening services for school aged children; interdisciplinary services for children with autism; augmentative and alternative communication services for children; and hearing aid fitting and dispensing across the life span. Additionally, demand is also high among lower income families because there are no restrictions on the number of Medicaid clients and an income based sliding fee scale available for those without health insurance. Currently, 35 percent of clinical services are provided to low income or clients with disabilities utilizing Medicaid benefits
- Actions taken since the last review: As noted above, efforts to enhance the research productivity of the clinic have been a major focus that has paid dividends in the form of new research projects and external grant support. In an effort to improve the financial viability of the programs, the clinic transitioned to a fee-for-service model during the review period. Clinical faculty are now credentialed with private insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid so they can bill for their professional services. Most clinical services are covered by health insurance plans or are paid to the clinic by local agencies. Additionally, an income based sliding fee scale is available for those clients without insurance and/or agency coverage for services. The clinic has also worked to address challenges associated with the recruitment and retention of clinical faculty.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The clinic has identified, and created action plans for several areas needing improvement which include: 1) clinical faculty recruitment and retention, including the addition of bilingual (Spanish) clinical faculty; 2) consistency of clinical services and program offerings; 3) development of a comprehensive and data driven business plan; 4) consistent assessment of clinical

and outreach activities, including benchmark comparisons with similar facilities at peer institutions; and
5) securing and utilizing an electronic health record for clinical services documentation.

Outcome

- Decision:

___x___ Program in good standing (review in 8 years)

Explanation: The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic provides graduate students with opportunities for engaged, service learning and care provision, and undergraduate students with opportunities for structured clinical observations. The clinic serves a critical role in NIU's mission in relation to serving the region with 35 percent of clinical services provided to low income clients or clients with disabilities. Academic and clinical faculty are active with clinical research projects including a \$250,000 R15 grant from NIH.