Present:  Abdel-Motaleb, Brantley, Boutin, Coller, Dawson, Douglass, Falkoff, Gordon, House, Martin, Molnar and Shortridge

Guests:  Daniel Boutin, Associate Professor; Derryl Block, Dean of Health and Human Sciences; Beverly Henry, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Sherrill Morris, Chair and Associate Professor Speech- Language Pathology; Raymundo Munguia, Assistant Professor; Chris Parker, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment; Jeff Reynolds, Director of Academic Analysis and Reporting; Joy Robackouski, Clinic Director- SLHC & PT Clinic; Ritu Subramony, Director of Academic Accreditation;

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of September 15, 2014 and the motion passed unanimously.
It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of September 22, 2014 and the motion passed unanimously.

One announcement was made. For future APC meetings, all supplemental materials will now be posted on Blackboard instead of being sent by E-mail.

Daniel Boutin, Associate Professor; Derryl Block, Dean of Health and Human Sciences; Beverly Henry, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Sherrill Morris, Chair and Associate Professor; Raymundo Munguia, Assistant Professor; Janet Olson, Assistant Professor and Area Coordinator; and Joy Robackouski, Clinic Director – SLHC & PT Clinic were at the meeting to discuss the programs from the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders.

Block mentioned these are programs with a dedicated staff that are providing an opportunity for a quality education. She further stated that this is being done with limited program resources.

Morris further stated that these programs have significant clinical components which are necessary for accreditation and for training of the students.

The meeting was turned over to Marc Falkoff for the presentation of the subcommittee reports.

There are many strengths noted in the departmental context section. The department is educating about a third of undergraduate students studying communicative disorders in the state. It is a cost effective program with a high passing rate for certification.

There was a question regarding faculty composition. It was mentioned that it is difficult to classify and differentiate instructors between programs as they often teach in multiple areas and programs.
Do you feel like you have enough faculty to cover the various programs you are charged to administer?
We do not have enough faculty. We lack sufficient faculty that would allow us to support each other in the way we need to be supported. To look at it another way, in the last 7 years we have lost 24 faculty in Communicative Disorders.

This doesn’t mean that you have 24 less instructors now, just that you have had a tremendous turnover, correct?
Yes, we have had 24 people leave. At times, we have had to replace the same position twice. This makes it very difficult to provide quality education and the needed support for staff.

It looks to me like there are two potential major issues here: 1. Is there enough staff to effectively teach students? 2. Is the staff so stretched and stressed that they are not able to do research and other expected activities, which then causes them to look for employment elsewhere?
I would say yes, I have adequate staff to teach our courses, but they are stretched so thin that they cannot then focus on other activities such as research.

It is commendable that you have a strategic plan. Within your strategic plan, do you currently have specific benchmarks that you would like to achieve?
This is the first plan that we have had for our department in the last 10 years. So, although I think it would be great to have benchmarks, we don’t currently even know what our baseline is. I would rather start with something as a way of moving forward, than have nothing to work towards.

You’re concerned that faculty are leaving due to a lack of research opportunities, what do you plan to do about that?
I do not know, but would be open to suggestions in this area. We have also asked for additional resources and are waiting to see if those will eventually come through.

The B.S. in Communicative Disorders was designed to be a stepping-stone to a graduate study program. This is because the entry level positions that this program is prepping students for will require they have a graduate degree. However, substantial numbers of students are not doing well enough to qualify for graduate schools. And although you are working with these students to help them to get a job down the road, there is still the challenge of many students not reaching the goals that we’ve set for them. Are there other ways of dealing with that?
In the past, there were many more opportunities for someone with only an undergraduate degree in this field. There are a wide range of employment opportunities within the field and those numbers continue to grow. When job requirements transitioned from Bachelors to requiring a Masters (approximately 25 years ago), there were still many opportunities for someone with only a Bachelor’s degree. That is no longer the case. Our program is no different than any other program across the country in terms of a large undergraduate population with a smaller graduate population. It is a very popular degree and program and, because of that, the requirement for getting into the program is a GPA of 3.7. So you might have a great student with a GPA of 3.2 who is still not competitive enough to get into our program or any of the other programs across the country. We are working very hard to determine how we can help students so they are able to get some employment that is connected with communicative disorders and is an acceptable job. Our program also gives students
the basis of critical thinking and problem solving and the information about developmental disorders.

**Do you know what undergraduates that do not get into a graduate program end up doing?**
Some students might choose other graduate programs. And, we are further working with students to give them other solutions that would allow them to work within the field.

Additionally, this then brings up the question of limited enrollment vs. limited retention and how to find the appropriate balance between the needs of the student, the program and the university.

The strengths of the M.A. in Communicative Disorders Specialization in Speech-Language Pathology is that is it one of the bigger programs in the state. Additionally, graduate students are performing well above the national average on Praxis exam.

The following questions were asked of the department:

**It appears as though the chief issue here is your difficulty finding qualified people to act as clinical faculty?**
This is a problem. The amount of money that we can provide clinical speech-language pathologists to work at NIU is significantly less than what they can make on the outside. This causes a challenge to get qualified candidates that are willing and interested in working here. Additionally, we have also increased our insurance billing, which increases revenue, but also limits the amount of people that a single supervisor can oversee at one time. Because of this, we have had to decrease our enrollment from 30 students at one time, down to only 20 at one time.

Please note, there are a series of discussions taking place with the department and the Office of the Provost about the balance between the practice time vs., student time to see if this ratio can be optimized. It is something that we are working towards, but have not achieved yet.

**The report stated: “The program remains concerned that separating from Communicative Disorders may put the program at risk for elimination due to its small size”.**
Separating the specialization from Communicative Disorders has been discussed in the past. Part of the difficulty involved in this potential separation, is in making sure that it is understood that faculty for these programs are also teaching undergraduate courses (which have higher enrollment). This then helps to justify the need for the faculty that we have.

**What is the growth opportunity for this degree?**
The growth opportunity is great.

**Are graduates getting jobs?**
Yes, before they even graduate. Many are getting hired while they are still in their final semester of training (internship).

The strengths of the Doctor of Audiology program include that NIU has the largest enrollment of Doctor of Audiology programs in a public institution in the state. Their graduate students have a high passing rate on the certification exam and 100% of graduates are employed within one year after graduation.
The following questions were asked of the department:

**The report stated: “The site visitors were unsure whether the program’s faculty had authority and responsibility for the program.” What does this mean?**

At that time, the program director was the department chair who was not a certified Audiologist or Speech Pathologist. This caused concern about who had ultimate authority and responsibility for the program. This has since be addressed and is no longer an issue.

The strengths of the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic include it is a state of the art facility for clinical operations, the demand of the Clinic’s service is high in the community, and it provides engaged, service learning experience to our students.

The following questions were asked of the department:

**Is the clinic being utilized to its full capacity?**

The Clinic’s mission is to provide services to the community and to teach. Students, as part of the program and based on accreditation, are required to participate in a certain amount of hours before they are able to go out on externals. Many of these are done within the Clinic. Additionally, the clinic staff spends part of their time in the classroom teaching.

**Is the clinic being used to its potential? Is it serving as many students as you would like it to?**

From a facility standpoint, I think we could serve more, but from a staffing standpoint, we are at the limit of what we are able to do. We are currently at the tipping point of not being able to do any more without additional faculty members.

The report stated: “It is challenging to get clinic areas maintained to the standards acceptable for client care activities.”

This is a building services issue. We all know we have challenges with cleanliness and making sure that the clinic is being maintained to the standard of any other health care facility. This would include not only daily cleaning, but also making sure that maintenance items such as painting and repairs are addressed and completed in a reasonable amount of time.

**Is there only one exam for Praxis?**

There is only one exam and it is external.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Essex