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TRANSMITTAL

DATE: March 2, 2003

TO: Cindy Todd
Senate Council

FROM: Becky Fister
Graduate Council

The Graduate Council met on November 14, 2002, and approved the following:

PROGRAM

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

The Kentucky Virtual University Collaborative Master's Degree Program in Communication Disorders (M.S.C.D.)

Program is designed to enable participants not only to earn a master's degree from their "home" university, but also to provide the necessary additional course work and professional experiences needed for initial state certification (Rank II for "Teachers of Exceptional Children and Youth-Communication Disorders," certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and Kentucky licensure in Speech-language pathology.
(includes courses CD 521, 673, and 701)



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

September 7, 2002

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Memo to: Douglass Kalika

From: James O'Reilly



Subject: Collaborative M.S. Degree Program in Communication Disorders

In its first year of operation, the Kentucky Virtual University (KyVU) funded several initial "pilot projects" across the Commonwealth in which entire degree programs in critical areas would be converted over to and delivered by distance-learning technology. UK's M.S. degree program in Communication Disorders (M.S.C.D.) was one of these. There was, and still is, a critical need in the Commonwealth for well-trained and licensed professionals in communication disorders both in school systems and various social agencies. To help address this critical need, our department of Communication Disorders collaborated with their counterparts in four other state universities to offer this degree program by a combination of Internet and compressed video/ITV technologies. The pilot project was of two-year duration: Two cohorts of 20 students each were admitted in Fall 1999 and Fall 2000; the students and the courses to be taught in the program were divided up approximately evenly among the participating universities.

As this project involves both mixed-media delivery of courses and off-campus programming, there are special University and SACS approval and "reporting" requirements that must be met. The basic objective of the attached document is to address these requirements.

A number of people participated in the preparation: Sharon R. Stewart, Acting Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Health Sciences; Judith Page; Jodelle Deem, the Division Director and Director of Graduate Studies in CD; and myself. We submit this document to you and the Graduate Council for consideration and approval.

The Department of Communication Disorders rose to the challenge of addressing a critical state need. Especially because of licensing and certification requirements, the five participating universities organized and planned their efforts very thoroughly. It was imperative that they ensure that this special KyVU distance-learning delivery of their courses and overall degree program was entirely equivalent to their certified "regular" on-campus version.

I have carefully reviewed their efforts and the voluminous documentation that Communication Disorders has provided. I believe that this special version of the M.S.C.D. is fully equivalent to their current approved degree program. I therefore ask for that you review this document and transmit it to the Graduate Council with your positive recommendation for approval. I further recommend that the distance-learning courses that UK has contributed to this cooperative program (CD 521, 673, and 701) be approved as "equivalent" to their on-campus versions, and be reported to the Senate. They have provided extensive syllabi for the courses. I reviewed all their documentation and have attached most, but not all, of it here owing to the large number of pages involved.

THE KENTUCKY VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN COMMUNICATION DISORDERS (M.S.C.D.)

The Commonwealth of Kentucky established and approved a special time-limited distance-learning, collaborative master's degree program in Communication Disorders to be offered through the Kentucky Virtual University (KyVU). This was one of the nine funded "pilot projects" the KyVU initiated its first year of operation.

Five state universities participated in putting together a well-defined program involving the shared offering of course work for the degree and the "hosting" of the students participating. No one institution had the faculty and other resources needed to develop and deliver a full M.S.C.D. program statewide via distance-learning technology. A major impetus for this effort was the critical state need for properly trained and certified professionals in this area. The institutions involved were Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), Murray State University (MuSU), the University of Kentucky (UK), the University of Louisville (UL), and Western Kentucky University (WKU).

The KyVU program put into place called for two 20-student cohort groups that would begin the three-year course of studies in Fall 1999 and Fall 2000. Currently, there are no plans to continue it for future cohorts of students. The program is designed for full-time working professionals. The course work is offered in a set sequence at the rate of two courses per semester or summer session. The total offering is designed to enable participants not only to earn a master's degree from their "home" university, but also to provide the necessary additional course work and professional experiences needed for initial state certification (Rank II) for "Teachers of Exceptional Children and Youth - Communication Disorders", certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), and Kentucky licensure in Speech-language pathology. Thus the total program offered through the KyVU is substantially larger than the standard master's degree, as is the case at the individual participating institutions.

The fundamental purpose of this document is to show that this special distance-learning KyVU version of master's degree in Communication Disorders is *equivalent*, although not necessarily *identical*, to the current, approved, on-campus UK M.S.C.D.

KyVU M.S.C.D. COURSES

The special KyVU master's program in Communication Disorders includes 15 organized (regularly scheduled) courses, a clinical practicum, and student teaching. All the organized courses are 3 credits, for a total of 45 credits. A clinical practicum and/or student teaching are also completed. The courses are offered by a combination of Compressed Video/Interactive TeleVision (CV/ITV) and Internet technologies. The full KyVU curriculum is shown listed in Table I below. Note that at EKV courses numbered at the 700- and 800-level are classified as graduate-only courses. The two 800-level courses listed below are not professional-level courses as at UK.

TABLE I. KyVU M.S.C.D. COURSES AND TOPIC AREAS

University Course Number	General Topic Area	Delivery University
CD 504	Language Intervention	WKU
CD 505	Pediatric Organic Disorders	WKU
CD 507	Aphasia	WKU
CD 521	Nonspeech Communication	UK
12 credits		
CDI 601	Professional Issues	MuSU
CDI 615	Speech and Hearing Science	MuSU
CDI 620	Phonology	MuSU
CDMS 661	Language Assessment	UL
CDMS 663	Voice Disorders	UL
CDMS 669	Cognitive Disorders	UL
CD 673	Motor Speech	UK
21 credits		
CD 701	Research Methodology	UK
SED 771	Neuroanatomy	EKV
6 credits		
SED 877	Fluency Disorders	EKV
	Dysphagia	EKV
6 credits		
CD 691	Clinical Practicum/Student Teaching	WKU

UK M.S.C.D. DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The current UK master's degree in Communication Disorders is a 30-credit Plan B (non-thesis) program. It meets all the broad fundamental criteria set by the Council on Post-secondary Education (CPE) and the UK Graduate School. The basic requirements are:

- 30 Credits total
- 24 Credits of course work in Communication Disorders
- 6 Credits of Clinical Practicum (Approved Electives may be substituted)
- At least 15 credits at the 600-700 level
- At least 20 credits in organized (regularly scheduled) classes

The specific courses and course titles are listed in Table II below. In addition, the course numbers and delivery university for the courses offered in the special KyVU program that are equivalent or of similar content area are indicated in the rightmost column for reference.

TABLE II. COURSES REQUIRED IN THE UK M.S.C.D. DEGREE PROGRAM

UK Course	Title	Equivalent KyVU Course(s)
CD 521	Nonspeech Communication	UK CD 521
CD 647	Advanced Language Disorders	WKU CD 504
CD 655	Advanced Diagnostic Procedures in Speech and Language Pathologies	UL CMDS 661
CD 670	Disorders of Phonation	UL CMDS 663
CD 672	Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Disorders of Language	WKU CD 507 EKU SED 771 UL CMDS 669
CD 673	Neurogenic Disorders of Speech and Language	UK CD 673 EKU SED 879
CD 674	Disorders of Fluency	EKU SED 877
CD 701	Research Methodology in Communication Disorders	UK CD 701
CD 657	Clinical Practicum in Speech and Language Pathology	WKU CD 691

In order to facilitate comparison to UK courses, Table III below lists the official course titles of non-UK courses offered in the KyVU curriculum.

TABLE III. TITLES OF NON-UK KyVU COURSES

University Course Number	General Topic Area	Course Title
WKU CD 504	Language Intervention	Seminar in Language Disorders
WKU CE 505	Pediatric Organic Disorders	Orofacial Anomalies
WKU CD 507	Aphasia	Dysphasia
MuSU CDI 601	Professional Issues	Seminar in Current Trends and Issues
MuSU CDI 615	Speech and Hearing Science	Experimental Phonetics
MuSU CDI 620	Phonology	Phonological Disorders
UL CDMS 661	Language Assessment	Assessment of Child Language Disorders
UL CDMS 663	Voice Disorders	Voice Disorders
UL CDMS 669	Cognitive Disorders	Cognitive Disorders
EKU SED 771	Neuroanatomy	Neural Bases of Communication
EKU SED 877	Fluency Disorders	Seminar: Fluency Disorders
EKU SED 879	Dysphagia	Dysphagia

ACADEMIC POLICY VARIANCES

Perhaps the major academic policy variance between the KyVU program and the approved UK M.S.C.D. degree program occurs in the nominal maximum number of transfer hours allowed for a master's degree. The standard UK rule for a 30-credit degree is that a maximum of 9 credits may be transferred into the program from graduate work taken at another university. In this special KyVU offering, this limit will need to be exceeded. There will effectively be 21 transfer credits applied toward the 30-credit degree program.

We believe this is a reasonable variance for this special, limited program. The participating universities have all worked together to assemble a unified and coherent curriculum. We believe that this is a modest adaptation to standard policy made in the interests of statewide cooperation.

As is the case for all transfers of credit, those students who will earn their M.S.C.D. from UK will need to submit a complete official transcript to the Graduate School from each of the institutions at which they took courses needed for the UK degree. In this special situation, the grades in the courses that are officially transferred in for the 30-credit degree will be included in the computation of the overall minimum GPA of 3.00 required for any UK master's degree.

In keeping with the totality of the KyVU curriculum and treating the "UK students" fully as "our" students, it will also be necessary to transfer in courses with grades of C in some cases. This is not normally allowed. However, it is only fair to view our students and their degree programs in a holistic manner; the "regular" graduate students in the M.S.C.D. do sometimes also earn C grades and these are counted in their degree program. To ensure uniformity of treatment any C grades will be calculated into the overall GPA needed to earn the degree, as indicated above.

EQUIVALENCE OF DEGREE PROGRAMS

We believe that the special collaborative KyVU M.S.C.D. degree program is equivalent to the approved UK degree program for a number of reasons. The minimum requirements for the UK degree program are met. This equivalence extends to credit and distributional requirements, course content, performance standards, the manner in which students are evaluated, and the nature of the content delivery.

One important overriding factor is that the degree programs and the courses resultant therein of *all* the participating universities are heavily driven by the exacting requirements of their professional accrediting agency -- the ASHA. As a general rule, degree programs in professional disciplines that require licensure or certification are much more similar than those in disciplines that do not.

Standards, program content, performance criteria, and continuing assessment procedures for both ASHA accreditation and state teacher-certification have been discussed in great detail in a lengthy report prepared by the Communication Disorders program in August 2000. At its core, this document addresses the issue of whether the special KyVU degree program and its distance-learning format are equivalent to the "regular" UK program and meet the criteria of these two accrediting agencies. Communication Disorders does not wish to endanger their accreditation by participation in a lesser collaborative effort.

Each of the participating institutions offers an accredited M.S.C.D. degree and must therefore individually meet ASHA accreditation requirements. In addition, each program has reported its participation in the KyVU project to ASHA in its annual reports.

Each of the courses in the KyVU program is taught by a member of the graduate faculty at the participating institution. There is no evidence to suggest that the standards for graduate faculty membership at any of the regional comprehensive universities are any lower than those at UK. For example, all these institutions are fully accredited by SACS at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and the Graduate School routinely accepts transfer of credit from these institutions. Our criteria are that the courses be taken from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, and the program's director of graduate studies recommends the transfer. In addition, faculty from some of these programs have been appointed to the graduate faculty in the Rehabilitation Sciences Doctoral program established in 2000. Faculty are reviewed and recommended by their respective graduate deans for membership on the UK graduate faculty and

must provide a full vita for the UK graduate dean to review, just as is the case for UK faculty members.

The Advisory Committees of the M.S.C.D. students who will be graduating with their degrees from UK are composed completely of UK faculty. Each of the collaborating institutions is conducting its own final examination for its degree students. This will also serve to ensure that the students in the special KyVU offering will be assessed in the same manner as are all other UK M.S.C.D. students.

Finally, the total KyVU program is composed of 45 credits of didactic course work, plus multiple credits of Practicum and/or student teaching. The critical issue at hand is whether the totality of the experience is at least equivalent to *only* the UK 30-credit master's degree in topical content and overall quantity and quality. We feel there is compelling evidence that a great deal more than the minimum degree requirements are met.