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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SPEECH PATHOLOGY MASTER'S PROGRAM ACCREDITED

CHARLESTON, IL.--Eastern Illinois University's master's degree program in Speech-Language Pathology has been accredited by the Educational Standards Board of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

The five-year accreditation will give Eastern's program national distinction, according to Dr. Jill Nilsen, Chairperson of the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences (CDS).

"Although we already have a quality program in Speech-Language Pathology, it is a very important step for our program to be approved. The accreditation process indicates we have undergone a rigorous review," Nilsen said.

Nilsen said Eastern will now appear on all published lists of accredited programs including the Guide to Graduate Education in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, and Asha journal, as well as periodic lists published separately and sent on request to many individuals each year.

The Department of CDS offers a bachelor of science degree program and a one- or two-year master of science degree program. A student, upon completion of the graduate degree, will have met the academic and clinical requirements for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech Pathology as determined by ASHA, Nilsen said.

She explained that most states require a master's degree for teacher certification and insurance companies and Medicare/Medicaid require it as proof of competence.

"CDS emphasizes the close relationship between theory and practice, between classes and hands-on application of what is learned in class. Students learn the basic scientific method in classes and then apply it, under supervision, to see what works in a specific situation and what needs to be changed or modified," Nilsen said.

Last year, the department, through its Speech-Language Hearing Clinic located in Eastern's Clinical Services Building, provided free speech-language-hearing services to 900 individuals. CDS majors screened all EIU students enrolled in the basic speech course for speech and hearing problems. They also tested hearing, speech and language abilities for people in the community.

Remedial services are available for a variety of speech-language-hearing disorders. Students provide treatment for stuttering, lisping, nasality, stridency, and problems with pitch.

"We also work with the suddenly disabled, those who because of a car or motorcycle accident or a stroke cannot communicate as they always have," Nilsen explained.

Graduates may be found in a variety of work settings providing direct clinical services or administration in both speech pathology and audiology. "Employers are highly pleased and have described CDS graduates as 'outstanding,' 'excellently prepared clinically and academically,' and 'very professional.' With 10 million Americans--one out of every 20 persons--suffering from a speech-language disorder, CDS majors are filling an obvious need and filling it well," Nilsen said.

For more information about Eastern's CDS programs and clinical services, individuals may contact Nilsen at 581-2712.