

From: [Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders](#)
To:
Subject: A message from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Date: Monday, July 27, 2020 3:11:00 PM

July 27, 2020

Dear California State University – Sacramento Stakeholders,

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSAD) would like to formally express our deepest gratitude to all students, alumni, part-time faculty and clinical instructors, master clinicians, community clinicians, and others for their emails, letters, and phone calls over the past two months. We have listened to our students, alumni, and stakeholders who have reached out to express their experiences in our department. We acknowledge and believe their stories of lived experiences within our department, as well as within our field. For the hurt, pain and trauma experienced throughout our department and field by our students, alumni and other stakeholders, we sincerely apologize.

We believe that Black Lives Matter. We remain outraged at the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Stephon Clark, and countless others. On June 5, 2020, we, as a department, posted our initial statement, followed by the publication of our [Preliminary Action Plan](#) on June 8, 2020. **We are and will continue to remain receptive to feedback, utilize feedback to modify our direction, and continue pursuing sustained, long-term action toward a program that is anti-racist, inclusive, and grounded in cultural humility.**

As speech-language pathologists and audiologists, we acknowledge that systemic bias and threads of exclusionary practices permeate our established institutions. We all have much more work to do. We understand and acknowledge that **systemic racism and ableism are traumatic**, prevent individuals from marginalized backgrounds from successfully entering the field, and lead to attrition and burnout of those who struggle to make change “from the inside.”

As a department, we recognize that institutional power structures have made it very difficult for students and alumni to come forward with their concerns. We are thankful that they chose this moment in history to share their concerns with us. We believe that individuals -- working together -- change the world. **We deeply respect our students and alumni, and have taken the time to thoughtfully respond to their requests for action. We believe in actions over words: to do less is meaningless.**

Specifically, we have been asked by our stakeholders to address the following issues:

In response to the request for the department to create safe spaces for students and alumni to dialogue about issues of systemic racism, ableism, and bias in our program, including microaggressions that may not rise to the university definition of harassment,

- The CSAD Department is creating a department-level task force, the Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity (IDARE) Agents of Change Committee. To that end, **we are directly soliciting your feedback** as to the processes by which constituents would like to provide feedback, and the priorities of our constituents ([Action Item #2](#)).
- To share your feedback and participate in this process, we invite and encourage you to complete [an anonymous Qualtrics survey](#).

- We will also provide constituents with updates via email and/or posting on our department website regarding university-level bias reporting systems as referenced in President Nelsen’s message on May 30, 2020, and Dr. Tate-Vermeire’s message on July 8, 2020.

In response to the request for the department to examine curricula, textbooks, and instructors throughout our program, specifically as it relates to issues of systemic racism, ableism, bias, and inequity,

- Many of the curricular requests we have received involve the CSAD 143 course, *Communication Disorders in Multicultural Populations*. We recognize that this course requires further attention and careful reflective consideration. As a starting point, the following actions are currently under consideration:
 1. Added information on cultural humility, microaggressions, and culturally responsive practices for SLPs and audiologists,
 2. Removal all units pertaining to specific groups such as Asian, African-American, etc.,
 3. Added information about federal and state laws and policies regarding service delivery to students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds in school settings,
 4. Invite CLD guest speakers from the community to share their experiences with the class,
 5. Increased use of case study analysis for application of text and course material to CLD students with potential and actual communication disorders,
 6. Increased focus on second language acquisition and bilingualism and their impact on CLD students’ developing oral and literate English skills,
 7. Increased focus on differential diagnosis of speech and language differences vs. speech and language impairments,
 8. Increased focus on culturally responsive intervention for CLD students with communication disorders,
 9. Increased practice on contrastive analysis activities for differentiating language and speech differences vs. disorders with CLD students; this will include much more practice with phonetic transcription,
 10. More emphasis on research studies pertaining to service delivery to CLD students,
 11. A variety of textbooks, journal articles, and other relevant resources are being reviewed and considered.
- In addition to the CSAD 143 course, **the Curriculum Committee has committed to engaging in ongoing examination of our curriculum** both from a top-down perspective and from a bottom-up perspective for every undergraduate and graduate course. We recognize there are ways that we can improve our curricula to better address these issues ([Action Item #3](#)).

In response to the request for the department to adjust admissions criteria for the CSAD MS SLP program, and

specifically to remove GRE requirements,

- Currently, the MS SLP Program does not require the GRE for applicants with GPAs over 3.5 in the major. For the 2021 cycle, the CSAD MS SLP program is **not** requiring GRE scores for any MS SLP applicants due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The CSAD Department Admissions Committee is committed to completing additional training that specifically addresses anti-racism and bias, and utilizing this new lens to **thoroughly review admissions criteria for the MS, SLPA, and AuD programs** prior to the 2021 application cycle. The department is committed to engaging in ongoing examination of admissions practices ([Action Item #4](#)).

In response to the request for the department to demonstrate that faculty participate in anti-racism and equity training,

- All full-time faculty have pledged to participate in a minimum of two trainings in the 2020 - 2021 academic year. All faculty will be participating in ongoing trainings.
- The Department has secured the attendance of staff from Services to Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to attend the department's Fall Faculty Retreat in August 2020. SSWD staff will promote and support the discussion on the intersectionality of racism and ableism, legal accommodations and access.
- **We fully support continuing education across the lifespan in topics including but not limited to anti-racism, anti-ableism, cultural humility, social categorization, implicit and explicit bias including stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and intergroup bias.** All full-time faculty have pledged to participate in further training in the upcoming year and beyond ([Action Items #5 and #6](#)).

In response to the request for the department to increase diversity in our hiring practices,

- This request aligns with both departmental goals and campus-wide initiatives, and **the department is in agreement that it be added to our Action Plan while providing constituents with regular updates.**
- Currently, there is a system-wide CSU hiring freeze (March 26, 2020 – present). As a result, we were required to close an existing faculty search, and we are not sure if the department will be able to conduct a search for the position of Clinic Director of the Mary Jane Rees Language Speech and Hearing Center. If the hiring freeze is lifted and we are able to resume/conduct searches for these positions, we will engage in intentional searches that engage and support applicants from BIPOC backgrounds.

The CSAD Department understands that not all of your questions and concerns have been addressed at this time. Please know that the department will continue to provide updates to all stakeholders throughout the year. Again, we sincerely thank you for your communication and we welcome your continued feedback. Our faculty have pledged to focus the 2020 - 2021 academic

year on sustained, long-term action to systematically examine and update our policies, processes, procedures, and curriculum to ensure they are anti-racist, inclusive, and grounded in cultural humility. We remain committed to holding ourselves accountable to substantive, meaningful change.

Again, we invite and encourage you to complete the anonymous Qualtrics survey here: https://csus.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8w6PHpjPh8nMobX

Respectfully,

CSUS CSAD Full-Time Faculty

Appendix A: Preliminary Action Plan

The full Preliminary Department Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism Action Plan is available here: https://www.csus.edu/college/health-human-services/communication-sciences-disorders/_internal/_documents/policy/csad-preliminary-department-inclusion-equity-and-anti-racism-action-plan.pdf

Items referenced in document are **bolded**.

1. FT faculty meet with the Division of Inclusive Excellence in development and implementation of the department action plan.
2. **Development of the Inclusion, Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Equity (IDARE) Agents of Change Committee to meet biannually and/or as needed for the purpose of fostering a safe environment to express concerns/issues related to bias and racism.**
3. **Review all curricula for bias; increase content in the area of racial disparities in healthcare & education; review textbook selections.**
4. **Review graduate and SLPA admissions criteria.**
5. **All full- and part-time faculty to complete on-campus and/or online training in areas of anti-racism, diversity, inclusion, cultural humility and equity that are presented by outside speakers.**
6. **Faculty Professional Development workshops by outside speakers to focus on racial disparities, cultural humility, and/or anti-racist pedagogy.**
7. Faculty available for additional collaboration, guidance, and mentorship to Sac State's NSSLHA in pursuit of their mission relating to diversity, cultural competency, and cultural humility.
8. (NEW) In compliance with the current CSU-wide hiring freeze, engagement in an intentional search process for applicants from diverse backgrounds for both faculty and staff positions.

