



**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 20, 2009**

Department of Consumer Affairs
1625 North Market Blvd.
"Eldorado Room"
Sacramento, CA
(916) 263-2666

Committee Members Present

Lisa O'Connor, M.A., Chairperson
Carol Murphy, M.A.
Jennifer Hancock, M.A.

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
Lori Pinson, Staff Analyst
George Ritter, Legal Counsel

Board Members Present

Alison Grimes, Au.D.
Naomi Smith, Au.D.
Robert Hanyak, Au.D.
Monty Martin, M.A.

Board Members Absent

Paul Donald, M.D.

Guests Present

Susan Kaplan, University of California, Davis
Bill Barnaby Jr.
Rebecca Binge, University of California, San Francisco
Dennis Van Vliet, California Academy of Audiology
Kathy Sabel, Department of Health Care Services
Richmond Rada, Department of Health Care Services
Susan Kidwell, San Joaquin Delta Community College
Robert Powell, California Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Jeff Toney, Department of Consumer Affairs
Jody Winzelberg, California Academy of Audiology

I. Call to Order

Chairperson O'Connor called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

II. Introductions

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

**III. Review Board Comments on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Special Education Credentialing – Communication Development Specialist - Proposed
Regulations Title 5 California Code of Regulations Section 80048.6.**

Chairperson O'Connor referenced the Board comments as submitted to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) on July 31, 2009. She outlined these comments and indicated that one major concern noted in the comments was the lack of a clarifying definition for "assessments" as provided in the proposed Communication Disorders regulations. Chairperson O'Connor reported that the CCTC recently released a modified regulation document and public notice that responded to various comments and concerns received by the public during the initial regulation comment period. She stated that the CCTC did add clarifying language for the term "assessments," but simply identified "academic assessments" as the purview of the new Communication Disorders Specialist and noted that speech-language pathologists are responsible for "clinical assessments," which denotes a medical type of evaluation. Chairperson O'Connor further stated that the modified regulations did not define the difference between an "academic" versus a "clinical" assessment and, therefore, the modified regulations are still ambiguous. She stated that the public comment period for the modified regulation language closes on September 2, 2009.

M/S/C: Hancock/Murphy

The Committee voted to recommend to the Board that comments in response to the 15-day modified regulation text be developed and submitted to the CCTC expressing the following clarity issues: the ambiguity regarding the terminology of clinical versus academic assessments, a lack of defined program standards for training Communication Disorder Specialists, and the ambiguity in the intervention role and professional independence of the new Communication Disorder Specialist.

IV. Discussion of Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Training in California

A. Status of Audit of San Joaquin Delta Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program

Ms. Del Mugnaio provided background and a current status update on the San Joaquin Delta Community College (SJDCC) Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) Program audit. She explained that SJDCC was audited over a year ago and that the Board employed a site review team to conduct site visits at both the SJDCC campus and its Santa Rosa Community College satellite campus. Ms. Del Mugnaio referenced the audit documents as included in the meeting packets and explained that there are still compliance issues with the SJDCC SLPA program that have not been cleared, specifically surrounding inadequate program resources and inadequate administrative support for the students enrolled at the Santa Rosa satellite campus. She stated that the prior SLPA training program director had retired and that the last written communication she received from SJDCC, dated June 23, 2009, failed to adequately respond to the remaining compliance issues surrounding documented program resources and a teach-out plan of action for students enrolled in classes at the Santa Rosa satellite site. Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that she was prepared to request that the Committee make a recommendation to the Board regarding punitive action against the SJDCC SLPA program in light of the remaining compliance issues. However, Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that she received a call one week earlier from the newly appointed SJDCC SLPA Program Director, Ms. Susan Kidwell, who indicated that she could provide documentation satisfying the identified compliance issues if the Committee would be amenable to deferring its decision regarding the program until such time as she is able to gather the necessary documentation and submit it to the Committee for review.

Ms. Susan Kidwell addressed the Committee and stated that she assumed the Program Director position as of July 22, 2009. She explained that she was unaware of the outstanding compliance issues with the Board and had not been provided a copy of the audit response by the former Program Director. Ms. Kidwell indicated that, upon discussing the issue with Ms. Del Mugnaio,

she began gathering the necessary documentation and stated that she is confident she will be able to document and demonstrate that the outstanding compliance issues have been resolved for the SJDCC SLPA program, provided the Committee will agree to defer its recommendation until the next scheduled Board meeting.

M/S/C: Hancock/Murphy

The Committee voted to defer its recommendation to the Board regarding the status of the SJDCC SLPA program pending the receipt of further compliance documentation to be submitted to the Committee for review in advance of the next scheduled Board meeting.

B. Update on New Training Programs

Ms. Del Mugnaio outlined pressing issues regarding the qualification requirements for registration as an SLPA in California. She indicated that many students are finding it difficult to secure SLPA program placements and are turning to on-line program opportunities. Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that the problem with the on-line SLPA program option is that the programs have not been evaluated by the Board to determine academic equivalency with an on-site Board-approved training program. Also, there is no clinical component to the on-line program, which leaves students responsible for seeking fieldwork from another approved program. Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that the other issue facing the Board is the lack of bachelor programs that offer clinical experience in the undergraduate portion of the Communication Disorders training program. She reported that numerous calls are received at the Board office by bachelor's degree holders who are interested in registering as an SLPA but cannot find a fieldwork placement to complete the requisite seventy (70) hours of fieldwork training. Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that most of the SLPA training programs are impacted.

Chairperson O'Connor stated that she believes the Board made an error in opening the SLPA registration qualifications to bachelor's degree holders, as these students are not trained as paraprofessionals and that the vast number of undergraduate students attempting to pursue registration as SLPAs will likely over-saturate the market, especially in the public schools. Chairperson O'Connor indicated that the Board should not be concerned with finding placements for all of the bachelor-level applicants but should be concerned with maintaining high standards for training paraprofessionals. She also stated that she does not believe that Board-approved SLPA programs should be responsible for enrolling bachelor-level transfer students into their fieldwork training modules, as the SLPA program faculty has no knowledge of the students' academic merit, clinical, and/or interpersonal skills.

Ms. Del Mugnaio recommended that the Committee hold a joint meeting with both the SLPA training program representatives and the Communication Disorders undergraduate program personnel to discuss the professional and ethical issues surrounding providing options for clinical training of bachelor's degree holders and distance-learning students who are interested in registering as SLPAs in California.

The Committee agreed with Ms. Del Mugnaio's recommendation and delegated to her the responsibility for arranging a future joint meeting to be held in southern California.

Chairperson O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.