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Improvement of Under-Represented Minority Individuals in the Healthcare Field of Communication Sciences and Disorders

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Improvement of Under-Represented Minority Individuals in the Healthcare Field of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Allison Jordan Webb

University of Kentucky Honors Program
Background and Rationale

Personal Background

I grew up in a rural, Eastern Kentucky town. To be honest, *town* is not the best word to describe it, though I’m not entirely sure if another word exists that would be more appropriate. To be more precise, I grew up along a single-lane road with no neighbors for two miles on either side of our house. I was the first-born to two high school sweethearts who put aside their bigger aspirations for a small-town life, marriage, and mortgage. However, they both went to college. For that, I was very privileged.

Most people who grow up in Ulysses, Kentucky don’t go to college. In fact, until just recently, most people who grow up in Ulysses, Kentucky don’t finish high school. Traditionally, men in my hometown would accept jobs in the coal mines straight out of high school while women would marry young, have children, and stay home. This custom has shifted somewhat as the years have passed, though the stereotype remains the same. People, especially women, don’t go to college.

The statistics that weigh against the area I call home are undeniable. Eastern Kentucky has a lower socioeconomic status than any other part of the United States. Our unemployment rate, as a whole, is among the highest by-region nationwide. On average, we are less educated than people from other areas of Kentucky. Despite our shortcomings, however, I will always consider myself to be an Eastern Kentuckian. I believe in the adage “it takes a village to raise a child”, and I feel a great sense of responsibility to the village that helped raise me. Although I have defied the status quo of my hometown and have moved to Lexington in order to attend the University of Kentucky, my upbringing is important to me and fuels the passion behind my future career in Speech Language Pathology.
Connection to Research

The University of Kentucky Communication Sciences and Disorders Program Diversity Committee has been of interest of me not only because of my personal connection to an under-represented population, but also because I see the potential rewards of such an initiative. Moving this forward will help give so many other students direction in terms of what they want to pursue professionally. This paper will describe the steps we have taken in order to move this initiative forward in spite of the many challenges health care programs nationwide are facing in regards to recruitment of students from under-represented minority backgrounds. The Communication Sciences and Disorders Program has given me a sense of belonging. We wish to provide that same feeling to others.

Speech Language Pathology as a Profession

The Field of Speech Language Pathology

A bachelor’s degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders does not guarantee a career in Speech Language Pathology or Audiology. In order to become a Speech Language Pathologist, students must attend a two-year graduate program. Audiologists, on the other hand, pursue a doctoral degree. Many students who do not attend graduate school will instead use the undergraduate degree to pursue careers in sales, special education, interpreting services, music therapy programs, Speech Language Pathology Assistant positions, or in other related fields.

Upon graduation, Speech Language Pathologists can work in a variety of environments that are either medical or school-based. Medically, common sites for Speech Language Pathologists include nursing homes, hospitals, and the neonatal infant care unit, to name a few. School-based Speech Language Pathologists generally practice in a classroom environment, seeing children from kindergarten through their senior year of high school. This variability in the
workplace allows for Speech Language Pathologists to pursue research in many areas of study as well as specialize in their unique interests.

**Patient Populations within Communication Sciences and Disorders**

Two patients with the same disorder, from the same area, school, and sometimes even family can have completely different outcomes related to speech and language. If any part of the speech chain is interrupted, the patient will not be able to communicate even their most basic needs to others. Each patient is therefore like a puzzle, with distinctive pieces that will fit together in specific ways, often depending on compliance and the therapeutic technique implemented. Hundreds of communication disorders are recognized today, with aphasia, apraxia, articulation disorders, fluency disorders, dementia, traumatic brain injuries, and dysarthria being just a few. Speech Language Pathologists, therefore, must be flexible and willing to innovate their practices in order to meet the needs of a diverse clientele. From this information, it could be inferred that Speech Language Pathologists are at least as diverse as those patients they see each and every day. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

**Figure One**

This figure describes the speech chain. If any part of this is interrupted, the patient will not be able to communicate efficiently. It was obtained from CSD lecture materials.
Diversity Statistics Within the Current Communication Sciences and Disorders

Undergraduate Program

Table One

This table describes the diversity statistics within past and current Communication Sciences and Disorders undergraduate cohorts. Demographic information was obtained through the College of Health Sciences Office of Student Affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSD Undergrad Cohorts</th>
<th>Select Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total students in cohort</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Appalachian</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% First Generation</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pell Recipient</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Pell Recipient</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URM (any)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% URM (any)</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black or African American</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Multi-Racial</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Cohort indicates the year a student entered CSD undergraduate program.

Notes. Data as of census date (beginning Fall 2016, the census date is Oct. 15; prior to Fall 2016, the census date was approx. 1 week after start of classes). Students may be in more than one category; for example, a student may be counted as female, Pell Recipient, and First Generation. Percentages are number of students in a category/total student in cohort for a given year. For example, 18.8% of the 2016 cohort are Appalachian (9 out of 48 students).

This table demonstrates that as a program, there is little diversity present among students. These statistics compiled by the College of Health Sciences are consistent with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s findings regarding an overall lack of diversity within
accredited Speech Language Pathology graduate and undergraduate programs across the United States. One might predict that this phenomenon occurs because women have traditionally tended to be more interested in this particular career field than men. However, this projection fails to explain why the greatest presence of under-represented minority students in the last five years was only 8.7%.

Many would simply accept this lack of variability and move forward. However, stopping here would undermine our personal responsibility to increasing diversity within the field of Speech Language Pathology. If no changes are made in at least trying to increase the diversity of the students being accepted into this program, then nothing will ever change. Therefore, as future professionals, we should work towards improving our distribution of Speech Language Pathologists in terms of diversity and subsequently help future classes be better prepared to deliver services that are culturally appropriate for patients.

**American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Diversity Statement**

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has proposed that the lack of diversity among professionals within the field of Speech Language Pathology is likely due to a decrease in minority inclusion initiatives within Communication Sciences and Disorders programs and universities at large across the United States. According to their website, ASHA has historically been concerned about the range of diversity within the fields of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology. Today, their primary concerns include a need to recruit and retain larger numbers of racial and ethnic minorities into the professional disciplines, an obligation to deliver appropriate services to culturally and ethnically diverse groups of patients, as well as a necessity to promote multicultural competence in communication disorders. Simply put, ASHA has a desire for those pursuing careers in Speech Language Pathology and Audiology to be
diverse, possess competence in treating diverse patients, and understand how to effectively work alongside other professionals from different backgrounds.

Unfortunately, many methods that have been implemented in the past have been limited in terms of their success in recruitment of traditionally underrepresented groups. 92.4% of current ASHA members (practicing Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists) are white, while an estimated 6.2 million ethnically and culturally diverse people in the United States today who have a communication disorder. For some reason, we have historically failed to meet the diversity of our patients as a group of professionals. To decrease this shocking inconsistency, ASHA has initiated a new method of recruitment practices.

ASHA encourages accredited universities to express a commitment to diversity on part of their respective institution, department, and students. They recognize that each institution has their own essential way of doing things and hope that this new technique will produce further results. ASHA continues to allow freedom in how programs are constructed and implemented within universities while providing an overarching goal and resources for those who choose to heed their call. In coordinating our research objectives with University of Kentucky officials, department faculty and staff, as well as other students, our proposition for methods to increase minority enrollment within the College of Health Sciences Communication Sciences and Disorders Program is consistent with ASHA’s national standards.

**Diversity in Healthcare**

**An Overview**

Despite the diverse general population in the United States, former research has shown that individuals from traditionally under-represented backgrounds are particularly understated in health-related professions. In the United States today, less than 10% of health professionals are
of racial and ethnic minorities (Padula, Leinhaas, & Dodge, 2002). This statistic varies from professional field to field but is particularly prevalent in both Speech Language Pathology and Audiology. This is thought to be the case because minority students are less likely to exhibit career knowledge, positive attitudes, and successful study strategies in relation to careers in the health sciences (Arora, Schneider, Thal, & Meltzer, 2011).

Simultaneously, patients from under-represented minority groups are more likely to feel comfortable receiving care from ethnically and culturally diverse health care providers and, as a result, have higher levels of compliance when this is the case. This is because diversity and cultural competency in healthcare settings provide professionals with the necessary skills and attitudes associated with appropriate multicultural considerations (Goldsmith, Tran, & Tran, 2014). The discrepancy in health care regarding racial differences is so palpable, research has shown that providers of a different race than their patients are twice as likely to perceive them as poor communicators. As a result, providers are less communicative with racially-different patients regarding diagnoses, prognoses, and advice to improve their health (Phillips, Kumar, Patel, & Arya, 2014). In this regard, Speech Language Pathologists are clearly failing to meet the standards of health care from our patients. Because this underrepresentation negatively impacts the quality of care received by patients from marginal backgrounds, increasing diversity as early as at the undergraduate level is essential.

While there are many hypotheses regarding the cause of the diversity shortage, research conducted by Nnedu (2009) suggests that the minority scarcity begins at the undergraduate level. In his research, he claims several factors impact the enrollment of minority students in majors relating to healthcare. These factors include an inadequate preparation in mathematics and science courses, deficiencies in basic skills such as reading and communication, insufficient
knowledge of the admission process into such programs, lack of financial resources and 
information on financial aid, and a lack of academic reinforcement such as counseling services 
(Nnedu, 2009, p. 94).

Implications to the Diversity Committee

The Communication Sciences and Disorders Program’s challenges with diversity are 
similar to what’s happening nationally, as our demographic data is consistent with former 
research (see Table One). Several academics have attempted to address this issue and have 
proposed what might need to be done in order to counteract this shortage in health related fields. 
The actions and goals for the Diversity Committee were intentionally based upon similar 
strategies that have been identified by other programs as being effective.

In the planning stage of the CSD Diversity Initiative, several abstracts were reviewed in 
search of research that might be helpful in constructing intention, long-term goals. Three factors 
were used in order to deem whether an article was useful. Initially, it was ensured that the field in 
question within each article was health care related, or that the strategy could easily be applied to 
the CSD program. Second, articles were only considered if the recruitment techniques eventually 
proved effective. Third, used articles described potential causes of such a lack of diversity. In 
applying these factors, references were narrowed down to three key articles. Targets that can be 
used for middle school, high school, and college students are all discussed. Despite the first two 
articles addressing lower-level education, ideas in all three articles have been useful and have 
been implemented into the proposal in some facet. The strengths, weaknesses, impacts, and 
implementation techniques associated with each article are listed below.

Padula, Leinhaas, and Dodge Article: Linking Minority and Disadvantages High School Students 
with Health Professions Training found in Educational Gerontology 28(6), 2002
Strengths: This article highlighted a variety of recruitment techniques that were used in the hope of recruiting a higher number of minority high school students in health professions in geriatrics and gerontology. It was incredibly helpful in developing this proposal in that it provided specific ideas for techniques, provided insight into how these techniques were conducted to intentionally recruit minority students over the general population, and addressed potential barriers to providing recruitment plans with such variety in application.

Weaknesses: Since this article was published in 2002, many of the recruitment techniques implemented would be less effective in today’s technological world. Additionally, though the wide range of strategies described was helpful in terms of planning, the outcome measurements were not able to pinpoint which one was the most effective overall.

Impact on Our Proposal: This article places emphasis on the idea that shadowing opportunities were particularly meaningful to prospective students. Although health care and privacy guidelines prohibit potential students from coming into the University of Kentucky Speech and Swallowing Clinic, the committee felt that the next best thing the program could provide for students was a chance to shadow current students in classes. This idea is expressed in more depth later on.

Implementation: From reading this article, the committee decided that shadowing opportunities were essential to the success of the proposal. Shadowing opportunities with students who have already been accepted into the program will allow students to see the Communication Sciences and Disorders curriculum first-hand as well as build relationships with students ahead of them.
Goldsmith, Tran, and Tran Article: *An Educational Program for Underserved Middle School Students to Encourage Pursuit of Pharmacy and Other Health Science Careers* found in *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* 78(9), 2014

- **Strengths:** This article focused on hands-on experience as a key factor in developing interest in a career in the health sciences. The authors pointed out the idea that many students fear failure when it comes to these careers and that hands-on strategies help to decrease that apprehension. It helped the committee further develop the idea for shadowing opportunities. Even though prospective students would not be allowed to shadow us with patients, providing them with exposure to common therapy strategies, tools, and scenarios is often just as beneficial in terms of increasing their confidence.

- **Weaknesses:** Since the article was so narrow in its scope of recruitment, it failed to provide other ideas. Additionally, since it was focused on middle school students, it did not provide a discussion on where these students were considering perusing fields in these areas rather than just becoming familiar with them.

- **Impact on Our Proposal:** This article provided as many resources for prospective students as possible. It inspired the committee to provide more information regarding common speech language therapy techniques.

- **Implementation:** Shadowing opportunities were implemented within the proposal, as well as chances for students who are interested in the program to obtain therapy objects. This will be performed by the student they are paired up with. Additionally, a panel discussion with Speech Language Pathologists from around the area has been planned for April 2017.
Nnedu Article: *Recruiting and Retaining Minorities in Nursing Education* found in *Journal of the Association of Black Nursing Faculty* 20(4), 2009

- **Strengths:** Since this article focused on college-age students, it was more applicable to us and our proposal. It was found that the ideas in this article were the most in sync with what works with college students today. Although the primary focus will be with the shadowing opportunities, this article has provided insight into future endeavors and how to ensure that the committee will continue on with classes to come.

- **Weaknesses:** The research highlighted within this article was performed within a historically black town and university. Since the researchers had access to a greater number of people of variously ethnic and cultural backgrounds, their success cannot be expected with the current demographic information of Lexington and the University of Kentucky.

- **Impact on Our Proposal:** This research targeted the idea that finances prohibit many students from traditionally under-represented groups from being able to attend college to pursue degrees in health-related fields. Although the current developmental stage of the proposal prohibits much beyond initial goals, this is something that should be tackled in the future.

- **Implementation:** Financial aid sessions were included as a goal for discussion in the spring of 2017 with hopeful implementation in the fall of 2016.

**Diversity Committee Proposal**

The diversity committee initially consisted of two undergraduate students and a faculty member. However, it was quickly evident from the sheer workload and former recruitment projects discussed in the research that the plan of action would be far more effective if other
students were involved. Therefore, fellow classmates in the University of Kentucky Chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association were made aware of how they could get involved in the future. This also tied into the goal of the committee to promote awareness regarding future experiences offered to students and let current students know how they could get involved. Because of these efforts, two other students of rich ethnic and cultural backgrounds were recruited into the committee.

Various perspectives were present within the committee, which helped aid inclusion for all groups and steered the proposal away from particular biases. The committee consisted of one Appalachian student, two African American Students, and one Arabic student. These contrasting points-of-view aided in efforts to recruit individuals from various under-represented minority backgrounds. The committee, therefore, was very collaborative in nature.

After the committee was formed, it began working closely with a recruiting advisor from the College of Health Sciences Office of Student Affairs. He provided opportunities to speak to high school students interested in health sciences, provides our paper resources to prospective UK students, and helped fine-tune shadowing options for current UK students. This partnership was beneficial in both meeting long-term recruitment goals and with staying compliant to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s diversity stance regarding recruitment practices within the undergraduate level.

Multiple events have been planned for spring 2017, with the focus being on compiling a panel of current Speech Language Pathologists within the area. In researching formerly-enacted recruitment plans at other universities, it was found that the idea of hands-on experiences for prospective students came up time and time again. Since this field is limited in what prospective students can do in treatment, the next best thing to offer students is providing them with
experiential opportunities. Speakers will discuss the career as a whole, elaborate on their particular backgrounds and specialties, provide insight into what a normal day at work might look like, review their educational journeys to becoming a Speech Language Pathologists, and answer any questions students might have for them. This will helpful for prospective students who might have connected with current Communication Sciences and Disorders undergraduate and graduate students in shadowing opportunities but have had little experience communicating with practicing Speech Language Pathologists. Additionally, two members of the committee will travel to the National Black Association for Speech-Language Hearing in order to make presentations regarding efforts and findings. This will help the committee share ideas as well as gain new perspectives into how universities across the country are designing their recruitment practices.

The tables located below describe the diversity committee’s planning initiatives, past events, and prospective events for the future. Table Two shows preliminary planning events that were organized prior to the fall 2016 semester. Table Three presents events that have occurred through the fall 2016 semester. Table Four depicts the goals of the committee for next semester (spring 2017).

**Table Two**

This table describes all preliminary organizational events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Enactment Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Informational Flyer</td>
<td>Allison and Shaimaa</td>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alongside College of Health Sciences Office of Student Affairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicate Goals to Other Students in the University of Kentucky Chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Enactment Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate Goals to Other Students in the University of Kentucky Chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association</td>
<td>Allison and Shaimaa, with assistance from Dr. Olson</td>
<td>August-September 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit Members and Form a Diversity Committee</td>
<td>Allison and Shaimaa</td>
<td>Deadline: September 15, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table Three**

This table describes events that occurred during the fall 2016 semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Enactment Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Contacts With Local High School Guidance Counselors and Coordinate with the Office of Student Affairs to Provide Resources</td>
<td>CSD Program Diversity Committee</td>
<td>Deadline: September 30, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with The Office of Student Affairs to Attend Events, Speak at Seminars, Etc. As Needed and Appropriate</td>
<td>CSD Program Diversity Committee</td>
<td>Deadline: September 30, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table Four

This table describes events planned for the spring 2017 semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Enactment Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue Offering Shadowing Experiences, Responding to Student Emails,</td>
<td>CSD Program Diversity Committee</td>
<td>Entirety of Spring Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Attending Recruitment Events as Needed ( Particularly the National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Association for Speech-Language-Hearing National Conference in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer a Panel Discussion with Current Speech Language Pathologists</td>
<td>CSD Program Diversity Committee</td>
<td>Deadline: April 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop Contacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop Panel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brainstorm Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide Resources List to Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact of Intervention**

As previously discussed, there are many potential barriers that may explain why Communication Sciences and Disorders programs tend to lack diversity. However, accepting the status quo would not lend itself to growth of the program and field at large. This project aims to encourage persons from diverse backgrounds to apply to the program, equip them with the necessary tools and information for acceptance, and subsequently increase the number of diverse students within the upcoming classes. Accepting the lack of diversity in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program as the unchangeable would be doing a disservice to the students we aim to assist, as well as the diverse clientele we serve. The research performed throughout the previous semester has made the personal relations of the committee to this project meaningful. As we dove deeper, we were left with one lingering question. What more could we be doing?

Little to no recruitment efforts have ever been initiated within this program. Prior applicants to the program have often complained that University of Kentucky general advisors
had never heard of the program before or blatantly discouraged them from applying because it required a competitive admissions process. Since we are only one of two programs on campus that require an application, the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program has seemed daunting to both students and faculty for far too long. These intervention strategies aim to disprove some of those misconceptions and open a transparent line of communication between prospective students, current students, faculty, and staff.

Additionally, it is hoped that the implementation of the diversity committee will prove effective in the future. However, the outcome of such efforts is unknown at this time and it will be several semesters until the outcome becomes evident. In coordinating with UK officials and those in the College of Health Science’s Office of Student Affairs, sustainability became a huge concern. How do we convince current juniors in the program to join next year and keep the initiative alive? Involvement with underclassmen in the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, through shadowing opportunities, and through recruitment materials has sparked interest in the idea. The committee has been intentional regarding sustainability from the beginning and it is believed that it will continue into the future.

This program aligns perfectly with the University of Kentucky Strategic Plan for increasing diversity and inclusivity within the classroom. It is both student-run and student-centered. It aims to increase enrollment for the university as well as within the College of Health Sciences. It involves both curricular and co-curricular measures in order to collaborate with peers, faculty, in staff in providing students with the best opportunities possible. Best of all, according to research, it should be effective.

Although specific enrollment measures will not be available until the 2017-2018 school year, this proposal has been and will continue to be effective. Students have more resources now
than they ever have before as applicants into the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program. If former research and recruitment initiatives prove true, this recruitment plan should increase the interest and enrollment of students from under-represented minority groups. The committee will continue on with junior members of the University of Kentucky National Student Speech Language Hearing Association. Additionally, student resources will continue to be circulated around campus, at See Blue Preview Nights, and within the College of Health Sciences in order to keep this interest alive.

**Student Resources**

A flyer was created to communicate shadowing opportunities among students, faculty, and staff (see Figure 1 below). It was distributed to the College of Health Sciences Office of Student Affairs and was used at See Blue Preview Nights, in conferences with prospective students, and was integrated into the pool of student resources. It allows those who are interested in the program to make a contact with a current Communication Sciences and Disorders student prior to coming to campus and/or before filling out an application. According to our research, student-based activities are less daunting for prospective students and, because of this, we believe this activity will be much more impactful than previous college activities of this nature.

**Figure Two**

This flyer was used to advertise the undergraduate shadowing opportunities available for students interested in applying for the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program.
To ensure intentional recruitment of students from under-represented groups within the Communication Sciences and Disorders program, a committee to address these issues was formed. This committee met bi-weekly and discussed current activities, student contacts, and consistency in programming. In order to give those interested in the program a way of contacting committee members, contact cards were created (see Figure 2). These were made available at each recruitment event, were dispersed within the College of Health Sciences Office of Student Affairs, and were made available with other recruitment materials in the Communication Sciences and Disorders faculty lounge. Contact cards have been very effective in terms of
providing students a method of contacting current students as well as providing contact information for our division director.

Figure Three

Contact cards were circulated in order to give prospective students a method of contacting committee members.

Additionally, a template was created for presentations in order to ensure consistency among the committee as well as faculty and staff (see Figure 3). This presentation highlights the basic parts of the application for admission, encourages students to begin preparations early, and provides students with insight into the fields of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology. Depending on the audience of students, the presentation was slightly tweaked to reflect their particular interests and point in their academic career. According to research, many students from under-represented minority groups are less likely to pursue majors in which admissions are competitive. This was one targeted method of providing transparency and advice for students in the hopes of increasing their confidence and likeliness to pursue a career in this field.

Figure Four
This is the title slide associated with recruitment presentations delivered to students interested in health care fields.

**Outcome Measurements**

The University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences monitors and releases enrollment statistics on an annual basis. Therefore, specific outcome measurements regarding the efficiency of this proposal will not be available until the 2017-2018 school year. Efficiency of the proposal will be measured in relation to that data. The committee believes that because former research was implemented within the proposal and recruitment efforts were intentionally enacted at events for under-represented groups, the number of diverse students within the University of Kentucky’s Communication Sciences and Disorders Program will increase. The number of students who do not identify as Caucasian or as a female are expected to increase. Similarly, the amount of students who claim to be proficient in another language is expected to increase. For the first time, the committee hopes future students admitted to the program will be able to expect to see a class of students at least as diverse as the patients they plan to serve. This would produce
a unique class of future Speech Language Pathologists- more heterogeneous in nature and better equipped to serve culturally and ethnically diverse patients in the future.

The potential barriers to the success of the initiative include a lack of awareness among students and an increase in overall notice rather than minority-specific interest. However, the potential rewards are far greater. The University of Kentucky Communication Sciences and Disorders program has the opportunity to move forward with ASHA standards, increase the number of diverse students within their future graduating classes, and educate a class that will defy the diversity odds. The impact of the proposal is ongoing and the first-ever University of Kentucky Communication Sciences and Disorders Program Diversity Committee is particularly anxious to see the results. If this research-based proposal proves successful, the future graduating classes will possess the necessary characteristics and skills necessary to meet the needs of their patients like never before.

References


