



## History and Development of the Council

The first system for accrediting Canadian academic programs in CSD (communication sciences and disorders), was established by the Canadian Council of University Programs-Communication Sciences and Disorders (CCUP-CSD) in consultation with CASLPA. CCUP-CSD is composed of heads of the Canadian university programs in communication sciences and disorders. Historically, the purposes of CCUP-CSD were to provide a venue for directors of schools and chairs of departments that offer these programs to share information about education and research in CSD and to engage in exchange of information with representatives of CASLPA about policies or other matters having direct or indirect educational implications. An overarching objective was to strengthen the educational preparation of speech-language pathologists and audiologists in Canada. In 1995, consistent with this general objective, CCUP-CSD expanded its activities to include peer review and evaluation of member programs.

The principles and procedures for this accreditation process are outlined in the document, *Accreditation of Professional Training Programs* (December, 1995). Briefly, procedures involved CCUP-CSD appointing an accreditation team consisting of a program head, a faculty member from another program, a representative from the CASLPA standards committee, and a consumer of speech-language pathology or audiology services. This team gathered information about the program under review by examining a self-study document provided by the program and conducting interviews during a site visit to the program. The team subsequently prepared a written report of its findings and recommendations and presented the report to CCUP-CSD. CCUP-CSD rendered an accreditation decision, and the CCUP-CSD Chair communicated both the decision and the reasons for it to the head of the program and to relevant senior university officials.

Between 1998 and 2002, this process was used for the accreditation review of three programs. The primary audience for the findings was the program under review and its university. Programs benefited from the process because program heads were able to use the evaluations and recommendations to lobby their universities for resources needed to strengthen their programs. This process of accreditation review was appropriate for its purpose, that being improvement of existing programs, which were already highly standardized (as previously described).

The need for accreditation has changed, however. Consistent with the present context of globalization of the work force, it is not unusual for graduates of Canadian programs in CSD to seek employment in other countries. In addition, new university programs may be established in Canada to meet the need for more speech-language pathology and audiology services; clear standards are needed for guiding such program creation. Furthermore, there is increased regulation of professional practice of speech-language pathologists and audiologists by governmental bodies within Canada. In consequence, the audience for accreditation status of CSD programs has expanded to include licensing bodies, professional associations, and other stakeholders both within and outside Canada. These groups require assurance that graduates of Canadian programs in CSD meet acceptable academic and clinical educational standards for the practice of the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology. Given such a context, the accreditation process initially developed by CCUP-CSD in consultation with CASLPA requires revision. In particular, the accrediting body must be separated from CCUPCSD so that the process operates at arm's length from

the academic programs. Further, the standards to which programs are expected to adhere must be explicitly stated and accessible to stakeholder groups.

CCUP-CSD and CASLPA responded to the need for development of a new system by striking a Task Force on Accreditation in May, 2002. Task Force members Joy Arm-son (Dalhousie University), Luc De Nil (University of Toronto), Sharon Fotheringham (CASLPA), and Carolyn Johnson (University of British Columbia) examined numerous existing systems of accrediting university departments and schools—offering programs for educating other professionals as well as speech-language pathologists and audiologists in other countries— and subsequently developed a draft proposal for a Canadian system. The draft proposal provided background information, a description of governance of the accreditation entity, policies and procedures for the process, and standards to be used in reviewing programs. As set out in the first draft proposal, governance of the accreditation entity would be shared by CASLPA and CCUP-CSD. The Task Force distributed the proposal in May 2003 to all relevant stakeholder groups: CCUP-CSD, CASLPA and provincial/territorial associations, and the regulatory bodies. Regulatory bodies have a considerable stake in the quality of educational programs given their roles in licensing professionals. Therefore, their input was deemed critical to development of a successful accreditation system that would serve all stakeholders.

During the consultation process, the Task Force received input about the draft proposal from CCUP-CSD members representing the faculty members of all Canadian university departments and schools offering programs in CSD, CASLPA representing both themselves and the provincial/territorial associations, and the regulators. The regulatory bodies expressed a strong interest in participating in the accreditation process, and following further consultation with all stakeholders, the governance structure was modified to include regulators as a third partner in overseeing and administering the accreditation entity. A firm understanding of all stakeholders was that this three-way partnership was based on the provision that all three groups represent the interests of their constituencies nationally. In response to the feedback received, the Task Force revised the proposal and distributed a new draft in May 2004. At that time, the Task Force was expanded to include Anne Lopushinsky, Registrar, Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (ACSLPA), representing the regulatory bodies.

Using feedback from the second round of consultation with stakeholder groups, the Task Force made further revisions to the accreditation document and completed additional preparatory work. The new accreditation entity was officially launched in May, 2005.