

Application for Sabbatical Leave

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Purpose

The purpose of this sabbatical is to develop a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) field experience option here at CSU, Chico. A field experience option will allow our CMSD B.A. degree graduates to 1) take a course covering scope of practice and ethical standards for SLPA, and 2) complete a field experience that will provide 100 supervised direct patient contact hours for a California SLPA license.

Background of the sabbatical project

The field of speech-language pathology is diverse depending on your professional focus. SLPs can be found across many settings, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, schools, and private practices. SLPs serve clients across the life span from birth to the last stages of life. No matter the setting or age of the client SLPs are responsible for prevention, assessment/evaluation, diagnostics, and treatment/intervention of individuals with communication disorders. The job market for speech-language pathologists is ever growing with a 21% increase in the last year (US Department of Labor, 2015). In fact the number of SLP job opening far exceeds the number of SLPs in the USA. As a result of this ever growing employment gap, the speech-language pathologist assistant (SLPA) was developed. A SLPA helps the SLP with the intervention component of their job, often the most time intensive aspect of speech-language pathology. In certain job settings, particularly schools (both county and districts) the use of SLPAs has become necessary to cover the legal SLP service obligations of the institution.

The CMSD program here at CSU, Chico offers two degree options, 1) B.A. in Communication Science and Disorders and 2) M.A. in Communication Sciences in Disorders. Minimum degree qualifications to practice as a licensed SLPA is a Bachelor's degree in CMSD and 100 hours of supervised direct patient contact. Minimum degree qualifications to practice as a licensed and certified Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) is a Master's degree in CMSD plus 400 hours of supervised direct patient contact. We currently offer all necessary qualifications to our M.A. students to become a licensed and certified SLP, however, we do not offer the necessary field experience to our B.A. graduates to become a licensed SLPA.

Contribution to the Profession

Currently there are two universities in California that offer an SLPA field experience option, CSU, Northridge and Loma Linda University. Both programs are set up to offer CMSD bachelor's degree holders a course that covers ethical standards and roles & responsibilities of an SLPA as well an internship (field experience) in which the students obtain the state required 100 supervised direct contact hours needed to apply for CA state SLPA licensure.

The opportunity that these two universities are offering CMSD baccalaureates is invaluable. However, given the number of B.A. graduates [688 reported in California alone in spring 2015], (CDS Educational Survey, 2016)) more SLPA field experiences need to be available.

Developing a field experience option here at CSU, Chico would not only benefit our local B.A. degree graduates we could potentially help other baccalaureates in the state fulfill the requirements necessary to obtain their SLPA license.

Urgency

There is a long standing shortage of SLP’s across the nation. Many states are attempting to recuperate from this shortage by hiring SLPAs to work collaboratively with SLPs in order to appropriately cover caseloads. Data does not indicate a recovery from the nationwide SLP shortage, in fact the need continues to grow each year. Developing an SLPA pathway for our B.A degree graduates will provide options to our local communities who need such support staff to remain service compliant. It will also provide a career options to our baccalaureates who do not meet the stringent criteria for acceptance into a graduate program but want to work within the field of CMSD.

Time Constraints

I am applying for a sabbatical for fall 2019. A fall 2019 sabbatical would allow the necessary time needed to develop a course on roles and responsibilities and ethics standards for SLPA as well as establish community connections to support SLPA field experiences. The culminating event of this sabbatical would be the launch of an SLPA option here at CSU, Chico during the summer of 2020.

Scope: Description of Project & Timeline

The sabbatical project will involve the following: 1) development of a 3 unit course covering scope of practice and ethical standards for SLPA, and 2) establishment of the necessary internship connections (in the north state region) to support annual cohorts of SLPA students.

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| August | Begin developing CSU, Chico SLPA Scope of Practice and Ethical Standards Course. Begin working on Internship in SLPA (Identify Educational partners in the North State as well as private sector partners who would be able to support SLPA interns). Collaborate with Regional and Continuing Education to discuss initiation of this field experience option. |
| September | Collaborate with personnel at CSU, Northridge and Loma Linda to review their SLPA field experience application process and their SLPA courses focused on scope of practice and ethical standards. Begin developing CSU, Chico’s SLPA field experience application process |
| October | Finalize CSU, Chico SLPA Scope of Practice and Ethical Standards Course
Initiate student placement contracts between CSU, Chico and SLPA internship partners. Submit any necessary paperwork to RCE regarding the field experience option. Finalize and seek approval of CSU, Chico’s SLPA field experience application process |
| November | Continue work on student placement contracts and regional partnerships.
Launch advertisement of the CSU, Chico SLPA Program. |

- December Finalize student placement contracts between CSU, Chico and SLPA internship partners. Finalize all necessary RCE paperwork. Open the application process to the public.
- January Begin reviewing submitted applications. Send acceptance letters to student applicant by the end of April.

University Resources

During this sabbatical I would collaborate with Regional and Continuing Education during the development of the 3 unit course covering Scope of practice and ethical standards for SLPA and the 3-4 unit field experience course. I would also work closely with Contracts and procurement to execute student placement agreements necessary for the field experiences.

Qualifications & Relationship to Previous work

I am in my eighth year at CSUC in the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences teaching in the Communication Sciences and Disorders program (CMSD). I was granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in spring, 2017. From fall 2013-Spring 2018 I served as Clinic Director and Internship Coordinator for the CMSD program. Additionally, I teach an average of one graduate and two undergraduate courses each semester.

The following points highlight my qualifications specific to this sabbatical project:

- Licensed and certified Speech-Language Pathologist with specialization in the school-based services
- Recent experience as CSU, Chico CMSD M.A. program internship coordinator. Strong relationships with the North State SLP community and the CSU, Chico contracts and procurement office.
- President -Elect for the California Counsel on Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Offering collaborative opportunities with all CA CMSD programs.

Coverage of My Responsibilities

I currently teach two undergraduate (6 units total) and three graduate level courses (6 units total) in the Fall semester. CMSD faculty would work together to identify current faculty or part-time adjunct faculty appropriate to cover my role as instructor for the fall 19' semester.

Benefits to the University, Program, Students

CSU, Chico is committed to offering meaningful academic experiences that will ultimately lead to valuable and meaningful careers for our students. Through the North State Initiative, we are also committed to identifying the needs of our community and supporting solutions to those needs. Developing an SLPA field experience option here at CSU, Chico will allow our large CMSD B.A. community a career option that will fulfill a longstanding need in our community, the North State region, our state at large.