

**Oregon Universities Position Statement of Support
Regarding SB 287 – Change in TSPC Licensure for Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs)**

Introduction

Portland State University, Pacific University and the University of Oregon are the three universities in the state of Oregon that offer a Master's degree program in speech-language pathology (SLP). Students who graduate from these programs meet the requirements of a Conditional License in Speech-Language Pathology from the Oregon Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (Board). While holding the Conditional SLP license, individuals complete a 9 month full-time clinical fellowship (CF), which is the transition period between being a student and becoming an independent provider of speech-language pathology clinical services. The CF involves being mentored by an SLP holding the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) who completes the Clinical Fellowship Skills Inventory, which is then submitted to ASHA. Upon successful completion of the CF, graduates have satisfied the requirements for the Certification of Clinical Competence by ASHA – the national SLP professional credential – as well as full licensure by the Board. The speech-language pathology programs at the three universities in Oregon must meet national accreditation standards promulgated by ASHA. The programs also must be approved by the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) so that graduates can choose to apply for an Initial Teaching License issued by TSPC with an endorsement in Communication Disorders.

Position Statement

The three university programs strongly support a change in TSPC's licensure of speech-language pathologists and support one license for all SLPs to be granted by the Board. Licensure and continuing education requirements of the Board are closely aligned with requirements for certification by ASHA and, as a result, better represent SLPs who are certified to work in educational, medical and other clinical settings. By streamlining state licensure under one agency – the Board of Examiners – we can focus on training graduates who meet a single set of high standards for the profession.


Portland State University, Pacific University and the University of Oregon all strongly support universal licensure in the state of Oregon, as envisioned in the passage and implementation of SB 287. We sincerely appreciate all of the support TSPC has provided to the SLP community over the years. We are pleased that at its August, 2014 meeting, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission voted unanimously to support this single licensing structure in Oregon, including the "grandfathering" of current TSPC-licensed SLPs as outlined in SB 287.

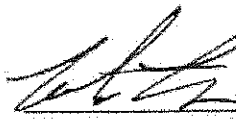
Rationale

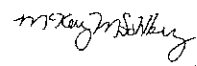
1. Communication Disorders and Sciences programs are providing academic and clinical education to graduate students who will be licensed and certified to work with individuals across the lifespan and in a variety of settings that include public schools, hospitals, private clinics, outpatient rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities, home health and private practice.

2. Knowledge and skill competencies that are required for certification by ASHA and Board licensure are specifically related to evaluation and treatment of individuals with communication disorders. While there is certainly overlap with competencies required for teachers, the required knowledge and skills, in addition to the licensure terminology, do not necessarily align with TSPC teacher requirements.
3. Testing requirements for the TSPC Initial Teaching Licensure are different than testing requirements for speech-language pathology Board licensure and ASHA certification. At the three Oregon universities, all applicants to the graduate program are required to take the GRE General Test. Upon completion of the graduate program, students take the Speech-Language Pathology Praxis test. A score of 600 or higher is required for Oregon Board licensure and ASHA certification. The Praxis in Speech-Language Pathology is aligned with ASHA certification standards that cover nine disorder areas in addition to basic sciences and normal developmental processes.
4. The three Oregon university programs have faculty whose area of expertise is school-based speech-language pathology. Each program requires all graduate students in speech-language pathology to complete at least one practicum in a school setting, and graduates are prepared to work with children who qualify for speech and language services from birth to age 21. In addition, the three programs have course work that includes all aspects of working in a school setting as an SLP, including developing Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs), Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), understanding and implementing school law, and Response to Intervention (RTI). This will not change if TSPC no longer licenses SLPs.
5. ASHA's Public Policy Agenda includes advocating for comprehensive universal licensure in all states. Through national certification (ASHA CCCs) SLPs are uniquely qualified to assess and treat individuals with communication disorders, regardless of geographical location or practice setting. However, state regulatory agencies can create unnecessary barriers by requiring individuals to seek and maintain different licenses and/or certifications depending on practice setting. Many states have recognized the advantage of issuing a single license for SLPs to practice and this national trend is now being planned for Oregon.

In summary, the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Portland State, the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Pacific University, and the Communication Disorders and Sciences Program at the University of Oregon strongly advocate for universal licensure in Oregon for SLPs and encourage support of Senate Bill 287 in the 2015 Legislative Session.


Christina Gilderseeve-Neumann, PhD, CCC-SLP
Portland State University


Martin Fischer, PhD, CCC-SLP
Pacific University


McKay Sohlberg, PhD, CCC-SLP
University of Oregon