

A Core Value of the Profession: Education

By ACAE Board of Directors

When Dr. Jerger convened the meeting with the founders of the Academy, they recognized that quality education was a basic tenet and foundation of a successful and independent profession. This led to the doctor of audiology (AuD), and a continuing commitment and recognition that education is a core value and pillar of the Academy. Education provides the foundation upon which everything else is built. We could not have achieved our autonomy, legislative successes, and practice independence without our transition to doctoral education.

Yet, are we satisfied with our current audiology educational system? Are we satisfied with the quality of the academic programs training the future of the profession? Are we concerned that there are not enough graduates to meet future demand for services? Are the current standards for audiology education preparing graduates to meet the needs of our patients?


It only is in recent years that doctoral programs have either received or applied for accreditation by the new and more stringent Accreditation Commission for Audiology Education (ACAE). Until we own the educational process and associated standards that undergird the profession, we will have no claim on the educational process or outcomes (e.g., issues such as

certification for supervisors, doctoral-entry with degrees other than the AuD, changes in state licensure, changes in the scope of practice, equitable education across programs, etc.). The profession has transitioned to the doctoral degree, but the transition cannot be considered complete until academic programs adopt standards that represent the core values and pillars of our profession.

Since its inception, and with relatively limited resources, the ACAE has been successful in creating a rigorous, cooperative process of accreditation with value-added data for programs and the profession rather than the typical punitive design. Two programs have already completed the ACAE beta version, and a number more have applied for accreditation and are in various stages of the process.

Our work is just beginning. Like anything else that is new, there are early adopters and those who are more cautious. Certainly, this was true with the entire doctoral-education movement. The majority of programs waited many years before transitioning and the majority began offering the doctoral degree only in the last four to five years. Broader acceptance of the new accreditation system developed for AuD programs is not far behind, especially if clinics, hospitals, and practices give priority to externs and graduates of ACAE-accredited programs knowing that

they will be working with students from rigorously evaluated programs.

As a profession, we must continue to strive for quality education and standards that are the foundation of our profession. We must be sure that we do not regress to accepting the status quo and be sure that our future remains controlled by audiologists. It is our responsibility to make our commitment to the educational pillar known to the Academy's board, and our alumni academic institutions through letters and actions that will demonstrate our support for quality and equitable educational standards. It is only through rigorous and standardized educational processes, of and by audiologists, that we will become the truly autonomous and well-respected profession that we all desire—and that consumers deserve. 

For more information about ACAE, visit www.acaeaccred.org.

