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## Starting the Admissions Process

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The Admissions Corner is designed to help programs with the admissions process for graduate education programs in audiology and speech-language pathology. We want to provide information related to WebAdMIT (the program-facing program), CSDCAS (the applicant-facing program), application management, and multiple other issues related to admissions. We are focusing the next few Admissions Corner articles on preparing for different stages of the application process.

Last month we talked about application management and supporting students. Strategies include using the tools that are already built into WebAdMIT, objectively evaluating our own application processes, and supporting our own undergraduate CSD students in the application process.

This month's focus is on starting the admissions process.

Given the nationwide decline in undergraduate majors in Communication Sciences and Disorders, it is essential that all programs develop strategies to attract, engage, and hold on to applicants. Here are some strategies for this part of the process:

**(1) Make reviews flexible within the limits of your deadlines.** Some of your faculty reviewers will return from "vacation" recharged. Some of your faculty reviewers will return burned out. If you can, schedule both your online CSDCAS reviews and your online or in-person interviews in a way that maximizes your Admissions Committee energy and availability. Most universities start the Spring 2026 semester on Tuesday, January 20. Do you have pre-session courses that start the week before? If so, make accommodations for your faculty teaching pre-session courses who are reviewing applications. If you have non-university reviewers, their schedule rarely follows that of the typical university. Ask them if they have any additional availability to help out. If they are also your external supervisors, they have a vested interest in knowing who you are accepting into your SLP and AUD programs. You also might have the option of incentivizing them for extra service in a non-financial way. Work with them. And, as was mentioned before, seek out additional reviewers from non-conventional pools if you need help.

**(2) Accept the changing landscape, and adapt to it in a way that makes your program the best place for an applicant to be.** As mentioned in the last Admissions Corner, there has been at least a ten-year decline in CSD undergraduates. This means two things: (1) It is easier for an applicant to be attractive for admission to an MA/MS or AuD education program and (2) applicants to our education programs are more serious and have more options. We as a discipline need to nurture our CSD undergraduates as they move on to graduate education programs in CSD. Do you have an answer if your CSD undergraduate student says, "I'm considering a Master's degree in [another field]"? It is true that there are a hundred graduate degrees that are easier than ours in CSD, but a great place to start to answer the student's question is the U.S Department of Labor Statistics website for workforce data (<https://www.bls.gov/>). The median salary for both of our professions is rather compelling. Just make the case. Money is not the only one.

**(3) Invite applicant visits and sell your program as the ideal place for each applicant.**

Given the highly competitive nature of admissions in our graduate programs at this time, a campus visit is a perfect time to sell your program. Don't be afraid to answer every question honestly. Applicants who are accepted to your program appreciate honesty. What are the strengths of your programs? They don't care about this because programs share the same strengths. What are the weaknesses of your programs? They care about this because programs don't share the same weaknesses, and this is where you need to have an answer. Many historically competitive programs don't have the same funding, the same faculty, or the same university support that they had ten years ago. What is unique about your program? What can you offer an applicant who likely has multiple offers of admission? This is what you can tease out during a campus visit. Don't be afraid to employ your Office of Student Affairs; their paid job is to help you. Their role is to make your potential CSD graduate students welcome from the moment they step on your campus to the moment they leave for home.

If you need help with the admissions processes for your MA/MS and/or AuD graduate education programs, or you need help with WebAdMIT or CSDCAS, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Admissions Committee and CAPCSD's Director of Centralized Admissions.