Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in supporting the Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) Department at [University]. Our students continue to excel. The 2007 graduating class received a 100% pass rate on the PRAXIS-SLP national exam. The [University] chapter of the National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association (NSSLSHA) received the NSSLSHA national Chapter of the Year Award at the ASHA annual convention in Boston in November 2007. At the state convention in Pittsburgh in spring 2008, the NSSLSHA chapter also received the Pennsylvania Speech-Language Hearing Association (PSHA) Membership Award for 100% membership. At the convention, one of our MU students was the recipient of the Von Drach Memorial Scholarship that is awarded to an outstanding graduate student from the entire state of Pennsylvania. Our students co-published 3 papers with graduate and presented numerous papers with faculty members at state and national conferences.

The faculty in the Department received numerous grants. Funding from various sources, including Proctor and Gamble, Prudential Financial, First National Bank, PNC Bank, the E.W. Angels Fund of the Language Foundation, the Bureau of Disabilities, and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development’s Keystone Innovation Starter Kit, has been the key to providing cutting-edge clinical services and maintaining state-of-the-art clinical and research facilities. The faculty also have published papers and books, and presented at numerous conferences-raising the profile of the SLP Department locally and nationally. The Department was featured in several newspaper articles. The publicity also has increased the awareness of the Department in the community and has resulted in a significant increase in the number of clients who are receiving services in our Speech-Language and Hearing Center.

Apart from some of the accomplishments noted above, the Department has hired [Dr. Hunter Manasco] as a tenure-track assistant professor. Dr. Manasco recently completed his Ph.D. at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama. His areas of interest include aphasia, motor speech disorders, dysphagia, anatomy and physiology, and speech and language pathologies.

The Department will soon be moving to a new location. This facility will house the entire Speech-Language Pathology Department as well as other departments and conference rooms. The new facility will include a Speech-Language Pathology classroom, a student resource area, several Speech-Language Pathology research laboratories including a Speech-Science Lab, a Fluency Lab, an AAC Lab (i.e., assistive technology), and a Cognitive Science Lab. The new facility will also include our in-house state-of-the-art Speech-Language and Hearing Center. We intend to train and educate our talented undergraduate and graduate students to enter the workforce and become consumers of research and exceptional clinical practitioners.

Take a moment to browse through our Department website (www.misericordia.edu/slp) and learn more about the SLP Department.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[University]
Notes from the Field
An Amazing Experience in a Fast-Paced Hospital by Eric Raj - '09 Graduate Student

I just completed my hospital placement and the experience that I gained during my semester as a student clinician was absolutely incredible. I was lucky enough to be placed at Riverview Medical Center, a hospital that has maintained a proud health care tradition since 1928 in that it is comfortable, caring, and close to home. Riverview is a 476-bed acute care community hospital located in New Jersey’s central shore area.

While at Riverview, I had the opportunity to assess, diagnose, treat, and help adults of all ages with speech, language, cognitive-communication, voice, swallowing, fluency and other related disorders. My supervisor and I worked with our patients to develop individualized care plans tailored to each person’s needs. We assisted with recovery, reliable communication, and swallowing skills so the clients could fulfill their educational, vocational, and social roles.

One of the main things I was able to assist in regularly was the Modified Barium Swallow Study (MBSS). Any procedure that takes place within a hospital is always a bit frightening, so I made sure that I explained the MBSS to every patient. I showed patients all the food and liquid that they were expected to swallow. I always tried to joke around with them with a big smile on my face, saying, “It isn’t everyday that you get to eat an amazing gourmet dinner as part of a hospital procedure!” Adding this bit of humor to the situation really seemed to make each patient feel more at ease. Thus, the experience made a little more pleasant.

If I could give advice to a graduate student who is about to begin a hospital placement, it would be to try to make the patient feel calm during any and all situations. Complement patients, crack a joke about hospital food, or simply give them a warm and sincere smile. Actions like these really make a difference! The fieldwork hospital placement is a time in graduate school career that I will never forget. My supervisor truly cares about the profession of Speech-Language Pathology. She wanted to provide me with a positive educational experience and she succeeded. She was always there for me with every question that I had. Words cannot describe how amazing she was, and it is people like her that really make me proud to be a part of this ever-growing profession.

To all of my wonderful peers that are a part of the Speech-Language Pathology program at Misericordia University, you have made a fantastic decision to be a part of this field. To those who are about to begin their fieldwork, a hospital placement will be an experience filled with fast-paced excitement. There will never be a dull moment and you will surely be on a great ride. Always remember: you will be well prepared—you are a Misericordia student.

Clinical Fellowship and Placement Update by Jessica Sofranko, MS CCC-SLP - '07 Graduate Student

I graduated from Misericordia in May 2007 and completed my Clinical Fellowship Year (CFY) and currently work at the Janet Weis Children’s Hospital at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pennsylvania. At this acute and outpatient facility patients are seen from birth to 21 years for physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language therapy. The Janet Weis Children’s Hospital also has a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, two standard hospital floors, and a Pediatric Rehabilitation department. I evaluate and treat patients who require services in articulation, language, comma, stimulation, dysphagia, stuttering, phonological awareness, processing deficits, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and cognitive deficits. I am also part of a feeding team. We perform modified barium swallow studies, oral motor stimulation therapy, and dysphagia treatments.

I enjoy working at Janet Weis because it is a teaching/research hospital. I love working with challenging cases and assess and treat many complex patients including various syndromes and rare diseases. This setting is a wonderful placement for entry-level speech therapists who want to complete my CFY at a facility that would provide me with the best experience as well as excellent mentoring from my supervisor and other colleagues. In my opinion, this has been a really rewarding job that has made me an independent clinician. Your training at Misericordia is excellent. You have the tools to develop into an excellent clinician. So, if you are planning to select a site to work, pick a place that you know will be challenging. Best of luck!