

Arkansas State University
Department of Communication Disorders
Five Year Strategic Plan
2016 – 2020

Preface:

The Department of Communication Disorders began the current strategic planning process by comparing our departmental mission statement to the mission statements of the College of Nursing and Health Professions University and Arkansas State University. We also reviewed the 2014 Certification and Membership Standards of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the standards for maintaining the accreditation of our Master's in Communication Disorders degree program awarded by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. The goals, objectives, and strategies articulated in this strategic plan were designed for two specific purposes: 1) to guide the Department's efforts in addressing issues that have the ability to better prepare our students for professional practice in the dynamic environment of professional service delivery, and 2) to allow periodic revision as program and student needs, challenges, aspirations, resources, and assets change.

Arkansas State University's Mission:

Arkansas State University *educates* leaders, *enhances* intellectual growth, and *enriches* lives.
(ASU = e^3)

College of Nursing and Health Professions Mission:

The mission of the College of Nursing and Health Professions is to provide quality education to students, graduates, and health care providers in a variety of health disciplines. Recognizing its unique position in the lower Mississippi Delta region, the College provides educational programs that are designed to promote lifelong learning based on the expressed needs of its varied constituencies.

Department of Communication Disorders Mission:

The mission of the Department of Communication Disorders is to prepare competent speech-language pathologists to provide ethical, professional services to a broad spectrum of individuals with communication disorders.

Department of Communication Disorders Core Values:

- **Student-Centered:** The Communication Disorders faculty and staff are committed to undergraduate and graduate education, inquiry, and service in order to meet students' changing needs.
- **Learning-Centered:** We nurture the acquisition of knowledge and skills by integrating teaching, research, and interactive learning to promote continuous student improvement as measured by systematic formative and summative assessments.

- **Excellence:** We commit to the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence for faculty and students.
- **Diversity:** We embrace all dimensions of diversity realizing that mutual respect for individuality and the inclusion of all are vital for both personal and departmental success.
- **Integrity:** We are committed to high standards of character and integrity as we prepare students to become ethical professionals in communication disorders.

Goal 1: Encourage student collaboration in faculty research

- **Objective 1:** Develop incentives for capable undergraduate students to become engaged in collaborative research with faculty members

Target Date for Completion: Annually

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Use our undergraduate course CD 4873 - Research Problems in CD as an incubator for students' ideas for potential graduate thesis projects
- **Strategy 2:** Employ the use of Honors sections of courses to provide faculty-guided assistance to undergraduate students as they collaborate on potential research ideas or projects with faculty members
- **Strategy 3:** Through active faculty mentorship, encourage and assist undergraduates in the development and dissemination of collaborative research projects at available on-campus and off-campus venues
- **Objective 2:** Develop procedures and rewards for the inclusion of interested and capable graduate students in collaborative research with faculty

Target Date for Completion: Annually

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Establish research assistant positions from grant funds that would be equivalent to or higher than graduate assistant salaries currently available on campus
- **Strategy 2:** When possible, include student researchers in faculty research meetings

Goal 2: The Department of Communication Disorders will strengthen all methods of program assessment

- **Objective 1:** Modify CD program Employer Follow-up Survey to make it available online via Qualtrics or other appropriate platforms

Target Date for Completion: December 15, 2017

Persons Responsible: Mrs. Brantley, Dr. Neeley

- **Strategy 1:** Review current Employer Follow-up Survey for adequacy (Brantley)
 - **Strategy 2:** Determine the most efficient and productive methods for distributing surveys to employers (All CD Faculty)
 - **Strategy 3:** Enhance employer responses rates (All CD Faculty)
 - **Strategy 4:** Investigate the validity of the survey by contacting other program directors and comparing assessment procedures (All CD faculty)
- **Objective 2:** Periodically review Graduate Exit Survey and modify as deemed necessary

Target Date for Completion: January 30th, annually

Persons Responsible: Mrs. Pait and Dr. Shollenbarger

- **Strategy 1:** Examine graduate exit survey instruments from peer institutions for content and information sought (Dr. Neeley)
 - **Strategy 2:** If necessary, modify CD graduate exit survey prior to administration in early December each year (Dr. Neeley, Dr. Shollenbarger)
 - **Strategy 3:** Annually administer graduate exit survey at final check-out or clock hour audit prior to graduation (Mrs. Pait)
 - **Strategy 4:** Draft annual report and distribute to all CD faculty for analysis
- **Objective 3:** Periodically review the Graduate Follow-up Survey at 1, 3, and 5 years post-graduation and modify as deemed necessary

Target Date for Completion: January 30th, annually

Persons Responsible: Dr. Good and Dr. Akbari

- **Strategy 1:** Examine graduate follow-up survey instruments from peer institutions for content and information sought (Dr. Akbari)
- **Strategy 2:** If necessary, modify CD graduate follow-up survey prior to administration (Dr. Akbari)
- **Strategy 3:** Annually administer graduate follow-up survey in the spring semester at 1, 3, and 5 years post-graduation with MCD degree and draft a summary report for CD faculty analysis (Dr. Akbari and Dr. Good)

- **Objective 4:** Continue to monitor student success on the Praxis II Exam in Speech-Language Pathology

Target Date for Completion: Annually

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

Goal 3: The Department of Communication Disorders will recruit new faculty members to support the growth of the department

- **Objective 1:** Explore all funding sources necessary to employ a full-time clinical faculty member to supervise undergraduate and graduate student clinicians

Target Date for Completion: May 1, 2020

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Search for “soft money” in the form of grants or gifts to cover salary and fringe benefits for a clinical faculty member
- **Strategy 2:** Investigate “hard money” funds including CD’s potential for a new faculty line resulting from the reorganization of colleges with university support to cover salary and fringe benefits for a clinical faculty member
- **Strategy 3:** Investigate the feasibility of using income from student tuition to fund an additional faculty salary and benefits

Goal 4: Increase faculty research productivity as it leads to tenure, promotion, merit pay increases, departmental identity/status, and contributes to the scientific knowledge base of the profession

- **Objective 1:** Explore ways to engage all CD faculty in ongoing research leading to grant applications, peer-reviewed publications, presentations and poster sessions at professionally relevant conferences

Target Date for Completion: Annually

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Develop multi-faceted ideas for research that can involve all interested departmental faculty
- **Strategy 2:** Seek grant funds from a variety of sources to support individual and collaborative faculty research initiatives

- **Strategy 3:** Identify and protect “blocks” of research time in the typical work week of all participating faculty members
- **Strategy 4:** Identify and protect collaboration time for the design, implementation, data collection, analysis, and writing for publication of each research initiative
- **Strategy 5:** Seek peer-reviewed publications in respected journals, state/regional/national/international presentations and posters, and additional grant funds to support future research

Goal 5: Increase CD undergraduate and graduate students’ opportunities for interprofessional education experiences

- **Objective 1:** Explore the use of simulations to introduce CD students (both graduate and undergraduate) to the delivery of healthcare services by professionals other than SLPs to patient populations who typically require speech-language-hearing services.

Target Date for Evaluating Progress: Annually

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Implement virtual clinical experiences requiring students to make clinical decisions based on knowledge of Communication Disorders as well as information gleaned from other professions to provide quality IPE learning experiences (Mrs. Pait)
 - **Strategy 2:** Provide opportunities to role play mock diagnostic, therapy, and case staffing situations in order to understand the dynamic nature of professional service delivery (Shollenbarger, Pait, Neeley) Simucase and Healthy Ager activities may provide good opportunities for these types of activities.
- **Objective 2:** Monitor the number and level of participation of MCD students’ IPE opportunities in all off-campus practicum assignments.

Target Date for Evaluating Progress: Annually

Persons Responsible: All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Routinely survey MCD students about the type and frequency of IPE learning opportunities in off-campus practicum placements (Pait and Neeley)

Goal 6: Monitor the perceptions of undergraduate and graduate students in Communication Disorders regarding their level of cultural competence

- **Objective 1:** Develop a survey instrument for the purpose of establishing a self-perception of personal cultural competence for each student (Neeley)

Target Date for Evaluating Progress: September 1, 2016

Persons Responsible: Neeley

- **Objective 2:** Pilot the survey instrument in Objective 1 above with CD students enrolled in CD 2653 – Intro to Communication Disorders and CD 6001 – Instrumentation in Communication Disorders (Akbari and Neeley)

Target Date for Evaluating Progress: June 30, 2017

Persons Responsible: Akbari and Neeley

- **Objective 3:** Provide generic and discipline-specific opportunities for CD students to observe and interact with persons (including other A-State students) of various cultures/ethnicities/ages/religions/languages/learning styles, etc. and require a minimum of three documented episodes of interaction with persons of different cultures than the CD student.
- **Objective 4:** Administer the survey instrument developed in objective 1 above to all CD students prior to their undergraduate or graduate commencement exercise to measure any change in self-perception of cultural competence.