COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS DEPARTMENT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON
STRATEGIC PLAN (2013-2018)

The long-term strategic plan of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders aligns long-term goals with the university mission statement and with ASHA objectives. The specific strategies to achieve these goals are italicized.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at California State University, Fullerton provides its majors with an understanding of speech, language, and hearing sciences and disorders, and also of the high-quality services that are delivered by professionals in speech-language pathology and audiology. Our faculty and staff aspire to combine excellence in teaching, research, and clinical practice for students in and out of the classroom. In the on-campus Speech and Hearing Clinic and off-campus medical, community, and educational training sites, we strive to provide graduates of our program with the essential knowledge and skills to become professional practitioners in speech-language pathology who are capable of serving in clinics, schools, community centers, hospitals, and private practice. We also strive to prepare our graduates to become advocates for people with communication disorders.

Positioned within a comprehensive, regional university with a global outlook in Southern California, our faculty expertise and diversity provide a distinctive opportunity for exploring, understanding, and developing an appreciation for normal and disordered human communication across the life span and across culturally/linguistically diverse populations. In our university, where learning is preeminent, graduates represent our aspirations to combine the best of current theory with contemporary clinical practices across the broad areas within our profession.
GOAL 1

To ensure the preeminence of learning by addressing the knowledge and skill areas delineated in the appropriate ASHA Standards for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology.

Objectives:

1. Annually review and update as needed 20% of our curriculum in the areas of basic communication sciences, articulation and phonology, cognitive aspects of communication, modalities of communication, fluency, receptive and expressive language disorders, social communication issues, voice and resonance, swallowing, and hearing across culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds and across the life span.

2. Incorporate evidence-based practices in the academic and clinical training of undergraduate and graduate students in the areas of: articulation and phonology, cognitive aspects of communication, modalities of communication, fluency, receptive and expressive language disorders, social communication issues, voice and resonance, swallowing, and hearing as measured by 95% or higher completion rate of the master’s degree program within the expected time frame, Praxis passing rate of 95% or higher, and 95% or higher employment rate.

Strategies:

a. Twenty percent of the curriculum will be reviewed annually for currency.

b. Curricular adequacy and currency will be demonstrated during curricular review by COMD faculty and by examining factors such as high M.A. completion rates, high passing rates on Praxis exams, and satisfactory ratings on the Survey of Graduates and Employers.
GOAL 2

To provide a high-quality program by ongoing identification of the most appropriate student learning outcomes.

Objectives:

1. Incorporate learning experiences that are consistent with our program’s specific mission and emphasis on cultural/linguistic diversity, including completion by all students of COMD 404, Communicative Disorders of the Bilingual/Multicultural Child, completion of over 80% of students of COMD 558C, Clinical Practicum: Communicative Disorders and Differences in Individuals from Diverse Backgrounds, and completion of some students of COMD 554: Seminar in Multicultural Issues in Communicative Disorders.

2. Integrate knowledge and skill areas with the ASHA Code of Ethics by 100% of graduate students passing a test on the ASHA Code of Ethics.

3. Provide opportunities to learn within off-campus communities through the completion of all students of external practicum, COMD 559A: Advanced Practicum: Communicative Disorders, and of either COMD 589A, Public School Practicum in Communicative Disorders, or COMD 559B: Advanced Practicum: Communicative Disorders.

4. Develop and maintain attractive, accessible, and functional educational in-house clinical facilities that support learning, including the conversion of the current VHS recording system to laptop computers in each observation room by the summer of 2018.

Strategies:

a. All M.A. students complete COMD 404 as a graduate program requirement, over 80% complete COMD 558C as a credential requirement, and some students complete COMD 554 as a graduate program elective.

b. All M.A. students will be adequately informed of the ASHA Code of Ethics by passing a test with 80% or higher on the COMD 501, Seminar in Speech-Language Pathology ASHA ethics exam.

c. All M.A. students complete COMD 559A as a graduate program requirement, and 80% or higher of students complete 589A as a credential requirement with the remaining students completing 559B.

d. Enhancement of clinical facilities (including technology/equipment) and space will be implemented with regards to the recommendations of the Clinical Services Committee and the COMD faculty.
GOAL 3

To incorporate formative and summative assessment instruments to evaluate student achievement.

Objectives:

1. Seek evidence of achievement in knowledge and skills areas by an initial passing rate on academic KASAs of 80% or more questions by graduate students.

2. Demonstrate graduate learning from alumni and employer surveys by having responses average 3 or higher points out of a maximum of 4 points.

3. Demonstrate undergraduate student learning by students averaging 70% or higher on an assessment of undergraduate students’ cumulative learning.

Strategies:

a. Adequate academic, diagnostic and treatment competencies will be demonstrated on academic KASA exams, including case studies, by passage of 80% of KASA questions.

b. High scores on academic and clinical KASA competency areas will be demonstrated on the Survey of Graduates and Employers averaging 3 points or higher on a 4-point scale.

c. Will implement an assessment in COMD 476 that encompasses all core undergraduate classes each semester, and the department chair will evaluate the data.
GOAL 4

To create an environment where students have opportunities to succeed.

Objectives:

1. Assist students in understanding and documenting their progress in acquiring their critical knowledge- and skill-based competencies, including identifying and remediating any areas of weakness.

2. Provide students, faculty, and staff access to and training in the use of advanced technologies supportive of research, scholarly, and creative activity.

3. Facilitate the development of life-long learners and professionals through instruction regarding the training requirements for obtaining the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology, the California State License in Speech-Language Pathology, and the California Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential in Language, Speech, and Hearing.

Strategies:

a. Documentation of progress on academic and clinical KASA competencies will occur systematically on the KASA website (the Calipso website from fall 2016 admits) with 95% of the information on the site current.

b. Faculty advisers conduct academic advisement sessions each semester and complete the on-line documentation of the advisement with log 95% of students per semester.

c. Systematic and ongoing remediation of academic KASAs as demonstrated by a 95% remediation completion rate by the exit interview in the first week of students’ final semester.

d. Adequate exposure of students to new technology will be demonstrated in coursework such as COMD 576 Augmentative/Alternative Communication and clinical practica such as COMD 568 Audiology Practicum.

e. Students will be adequately informed in the COMD 501 Seminar in SLP, teaching clinics, and regular advisement sessions of the need for continuing education/life-long learning in the profession.
GOAL 5

To strengthen institutional and community agency collaboration through expanded clinical site connections and educational partnerships.

Objectives:

1. Establish links with our alumni that optimize an ongoing commitment to the success of the clinical training within our program.

Strategies:

a. Annual meetings of the COMD Advisory Board will be scheduled so that it can address any clinical concerns and issues.
b. Expand the off-campus practicum sites for medical and public schools.

GOAL 6

Develop and maintain a curricular and co-curricular environment that prepares students for participation in a global society and is responsive to workforce needs.

Objectives:

1. Provide HIP/IPE collaboration opportunities for students to interact with faculty, their peers, and community partners.

Strategies:

a. Identify, expand and provide resources to curricular and co-curricular programs that advance students’ recognition of roles they play in an interdependent global community. These would include support for the local chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSSLHA). In addition, it encompasses including COMD 404, Bilingual/Multicultural Child, as an elective undergraduate course (relates to university-wide goal 1, objective c.).
b. Provide resources for programs that increase student participation in activities and services that link degree, career and community. This would include student assistants in the Speech and Hearing clinic, the COMD Peer Mentor program, NSSLHA, and any additional student groups focused on relevant issues such as diversity (relates to university-wide goal 1, objective c.).
GOAL 7

Improve student persistence, increase graduation rates, and narrow the achievement gap for underrepresented students.

Objectives:

1. 90% of students who receive a D or lower in COMD 241, 242, 307, or 344 will receive counseling as to their options, including the opportunity to repeat the course and strategies for improvement.
2. 80% of students will pass written KASA exams the first time, and 100 percent will either pass or successfully remediate.
3. 80% of a sample of students from under-represented groups will report that they find the educational environment in the department to be supportive, accommodating to special needs and circumstances, and conducive to success.
4. 100% of available positions for student clinic assistants and research assistants will be filled each year. 100% of graduate students will participate in clinical practicum classes according to their plan.
5. 70% of students who declare the major as undergraduates will successfully complete the bachelor’s degree within five years. 95% of students who start the graduate program will successfully complete it within 2.5 to 3 years.
6. The undergraduate advisor will receive a stipend or be assigned a course to teach during the summer to compensate for summer advising.

Strategies:

a. Identify and expand programs that have a documented impact on increasing student achievement in bottleneck, gateway and low success rate academic courses. This would include collecting data on the number of students who repeat the first core undergraduate courses of COMD 241, 242, 307, and 344 (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective a.).

b. Monitor the number of students who must remediate each individual KASA examination and the specific competencies they have most difficulty with (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective a.).

c. Identify and increase participation in new and ongoing efforts that support underrepresented student persistence and achievement. This includes faculty participation in EPOCHS as well as student participation in the COMD Peer Mentor program (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective c.).

d. Continue to support and encourage student participation in the following existing COMD program High-Impact Practices (HIP)
   - serving as student clinic assistants
   - students participating in service learning
   - students participating as research assistants
• students participating in mentoring programs such as the American Speech-Language Hearing Association’s career-related programs of Student to Empowered Professional and Minority Leadership Program (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective d.).

e. Establish accountability metrics at the program level to ensure progress on retention and graduation rate strategies. This would include the COMD chair tracking undergraduate and graduate student graduation rates (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective b.).

f. Strengthen the mandatory advisement requirement for graduate students each semester. There is currently an undergraduate advisement process in place (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective c.).

g. Provide a stipend for the undergraduate advisor or provide a one-course teaching assignment for his or her advisement activities during the summer (relates to university-wide goal 2, objective a., b., and c.).

GOAL 8

Recruit and retain a high-quality and diverse faculty and staff.

Objectives:

1. 70% of all full-time and part-time faculty members who are hired will be from diverse backgrounds
2. 80% of all new tenure-track faculty will be retained at least through the granting of tenure and promotion.
3. 100% of faculty will receive support for professional development, travel to meetings, completion of CEUs, and maintenance of licensure and certification.

Strategies:

a. Create and implement a Diversity Action Plan to improve recruitment and retention and to foster an inclusive environment (relates to university-wide goal 3, objectives a. and b.).

b. Enhance professional and leadership development opportunities to better support retention and engagement throughout all career stages. This would include, for pre-tenured faculty, the provision of a student assistant, release time, leadership mentoring by another faculty member, in addition to relief from student advisement for the first year. It would also include travel funds for all faculty members (relates to university-wide goal 3, objective d.)

c. Identify financial resources to support all full-time faculty and staff members’ required professional development, continuing education, certification, and licensure (relates university-wide goal 3, objective d.).
GOAL 9

Increase revenue through fundraising, entrepreneurial activities, grants, and contracts.

Objectives:

1. An alumnus of the year will be awarded each year and at least 20 graduate alumni will be invited to attend the department’s award event each year.
2. 50% of full-time faculty will participate in at least one activity each year in support of fundraising and development.
3. At least eight outreach efforts will be documented annually.

Strategies:

a. Implement a comprehensive development plan that moves the program toward increased stakeholder engagement and fundraising, which includes:
   • a scholarship fund for families in need receiving services through the Speech and Hearing Clinic
   • an alumni outreach newsletter
   • an invitation to selected alumni to Comm Week events
   • the establishment of an alumnus of the year award, to possibly be awarded at the NSSLHA year-end banquet (related to university-wide goal 4, objective a.).

b. Provide resources, enhance infrastructure, develop support systems and provide incentives necessary to increase faculty and staff engagement in fundraising, entrepreneurial activities, grants and contracts, including the following:
   • the exploration of the possibility of setting a faculty practice clinic in the Speech and Hearing Clinic that would involve faculty members providing assessment and intervention in their specialty areas
   • the provision of faculty release time to write external grants and work with the private sector to elicit funding to support research (related to university-wide goal 4, objectives b. and c.).

c. Enhance the program’s public relations by informing and educating alumni and other possibly interested contributors through the same mechanisms as bullet a. about the impact of the COMD department and our students in the region (related to university-wide goal 4, objective d.).