

University of Arkansas Communication Sciences and Disorders Program

Strategic Plan Summary 2020-2025 2021-2022 Progress Report

Mission and Goals

Our mission is to advance knowledge of speech, language, swallowing and hearing disorders through basic and applied research, graduate clinician training and community service. To accomplish this mission, faculty and M.S. students participate in scholarly research activities, provide clinical services in a state-of-the-art facility and promote community outreach projects.

Our primary goals are to produce innovative scholarly work and train competent speech-language pathologists to provide services to individuals and their families across the life-span.

Vision Statement

The Communication Sciences and Disorders Program at the University of Arkansas aspires to become a leader in the field of speech-language pathology in the areas of teaching, research and service. Our program aims to disseminate quality interdisciplinary basic and applied research relevant to speech and hearing sciences and related fields. We strive to promote evidence-based practices by educating students through the integration of academic coursework, diverse clinical practicum experiences, research opportunities and service in the community. We expect our graduate alumni to be well known in the community for providing clients with outstanding clinical services.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Communication Sciences and Disorders program at the University of Arkansas is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in our research, teaching, and clinical practice, as well as in our recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff. We embrace the strength that can be derived from an environment in which diverse identities and experiences work in tandem toward a common goal of improving communication outcomes for all, including those with marginalized identities. We understand that the world will fully reflect diversity, equity and inclusion only when every person has an effective means to communicate. Therefore, we work to complete rigorous research that enhances the knowledge needed to create such a world and prepare speech-language pathologists with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the creation of that world.

Values

- We strive to meet our educational commitment by sharing and generating knowledge with students for patients, families, the general public, and collaborating colleagues.

- We strive to improve our community through collaboration, research efforts, and community engagement.
- We accept the challenge and responsibility to advance scientific understanding of communication sciences and disorders through basic and clinical research in collaboration with practicing clinicians in the community.
- We pledge to provide the highest quality of ethical clinical care to the people of Arkansas and to all others who entrust us with their care.
- We commit to foster a positive environment that protects free expression of thought and encourages honesty, openness, and integrity.
- We hold ourselves to the highest criteria of professional and scholarly ethics.
- We recognize that to accomplish our goals we must diligently work together as a team, support and encourage one another, and reward teaching others as we collaboratively share this responsibility.

Goals

Teaching and Clinical Education:

Long term goal: *Ensure excellence and growth in the CDIS program through teaching, mentorship, advising, and diverse learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Increase student understanding of professional and ethical issues related to research, academia, and clinical practice by offering consistent training opportunities.*

Rationale: It is imperative that students graduating from the CDIS program are well prepared for professional opportunities upon graduation, with all undergraduate CDIS majors who apply for graduate school being accepted into a graduate program of their choice and all students who graduate with a master's degree finding employment in their setting of choice.

Objectives:

1. Ensure course curriculum and the program of study align with ASHA standards using effective, innovative, and engaging methods.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty Time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program Faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** Reviewed and updated annually
 - d. **Expected Results:** Annual review and updates made to syllabi
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Course syllabi were reviewed. Faculty listed ASHA Standards targeted in courses on course syllabi.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. Course syllabi were reviewed by all faculty. Faculty listed ASHA Standards targeted in courses on course syllabi.
 2. Faculty engaged in discussions to add more hands-on learning in academic coursework. Hands-on learning labs were added to 2 courses.
 3. Professional development workshops with SLPs with clinical specialties were provided.
 4. Added additional diagnostic workshops to allow for more opportunities for clinical education in the provision of diagnostics.

2. Maintain state of the art teaching facilities in ECHP, including a computer lab, research space, and a regular classroom
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty and staff time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty and staff
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Secure funding as needed to maintain and update teaching and research facilities
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Given the pandemic, teaching facilities, labs, research space and classrooms were used minimally if all this year. Maintenance of all spaces was completed through regular cleaning. Updated equipment for the aphasia research lab was ordered and is scheduled to be installed in the fall of 2021.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. Maintenance of all spaces was completed through daily and weekly cleaning. A checklist of needed cleaning for weekly tasks was created for the UA Speech and Hearing Clinic.
 2. New software was purchased for the Voice Lab in the UA Speech and Hearing Clinic.
 3. New equipment was purchased for the Swallowing Lab in the UA Speech and Hearing Clinic.

3. Support and maintain a high level of outreach and engagement with community partners and alumni.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program Faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Identify ways to consistently communicate with program alumni and community partners on an annual basis
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Due to the pandemic, minimal community outreach was possible this year. Faculty, staff and students were innovative during this time and quickly transitioned to providing clinical services via telepractice.
 2. Students worked to establish and provide the “RazorReaders” online Youtube channel so school-age students could watch recorded readings of books during the pandemic.
 3. Faculty and staff worked to draft the first edition of the program newsletter that was sent to all undergraduate and graduate level alumni from the program as well as community partners.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. The CDIS Program Newsletter was sent to all program alumni and community partners in December of 2021 and in June of 2022.
 2. Due to the pandemic, engagement with community partners continued to be limited this year.

4. Develop innovative clinical training/research/service programs and secure funding to implement the programs.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty Time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Faculty Time
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025

- d. **Expected Results:** Provide clinical training workshops and identify opportunities for interdisciplinary clinical research
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Clinical training transitioned to telepractice during the pandemic. Students also completed simulated case trainings online.
 2. In the spring of 2021, the Clinical Education Coordinator secured a grant to secure funds for equipment and training for students to treat voice disorders. Training is set to start in the fall.
 - ii. **2021-22**
 1. Clinical training transitioned back to face-to-face this academic year. Clinical education workshops were provided in the areas of:
 - a. Billing and Coding
 - b. Health Literacy
 - c. Clinical Fellowship Year
 - d. Professional Licensure
 - e. Clinical Supervision
 - f. Advanced Swallow Competencies
 - i. Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluations (FEES)
 - g. Swallow/Communication following Tracheostomy and Mechanical Ventilation with COVID considerations
 - h. Professional Development and Preparation
 - i. Resume building
 - ii. Interview skills
 - i. Behavior Regulation and Neurodiversity
 2. In the spring of 2022, the Clinical Education Coordinator again secured a grant to secure funds for equipment and training for students to treat voice disorders. Training was initiated in the summer of 2022.
5. Increase faculty beyond currently vacant lines to provide instruction in areas not currently covered.
- a. **Resources:** Funds for faculty lines and faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty and Department Head
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Hire one tenure-track professor and two full-time clinical professors
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. In January 2021, the Clinical Education Coordinator was hired.
 2. A vacant faculty line will open in the spring of 2021. (Update: A retirement was postponed; therefore, the position did not open).
 3. Faculty have continued to advocate for additional faculty lines. There continues to be a significant need for faculty for clinical education and academic teaching.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. In June of 2022, a part-time Clinical Instructor was hired to provide clinical supervision and clinical services at the UA Speech and Hearing Clinic.
 2. A vacant faculty line will open in the fall of 2022.
 3. Faculty have continued to advocate for additional faculty lines. There continues to be a significant need for faculty for clinical education and academic teaching.

6. Students will be exposed to professional and ethical issues from multiple sources in academic coursework and in clinical practica.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Faculty will identify opportunities to teach and engage in discussion with students on topics of contemporary professional and ethical issues
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. During the summer 2020 session, students thoroughly reviewed the ASHA Code of Ethics with their Clinical Educator. Students had opportunities to discuss concerns and questions about current and previous experiences.
 2. Faculty discussed ethical issues indirectly and directly through course content.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. During the summer 2021 session, students again thoroughly reviewed the ASHA Code of Ethics with their Clinical Educators. Case studies were provided and discussed.
 2. Faculty discussed ethical issues indirectly and directly through course content.

Research and Outreach

Long-Term Goal: *Generate influential research in our areas of expertise.*

Rationale: To have an impact on the lives of those with communication disorders and research in our areas of expertise, it is critical that our research efforts have a meaningful impact on our understanding of communication disorders, clinical practice, and support for community members who have a communication disorder, their families, and the professionals who serve them in the state of Arkansas and beyond.

Objectives:

1. Provide support for and incentives to increase federal grant submissions.
 - a. **Resources:** Internal funding opportunities and program faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Research faculty will combine to apply for or be involved in a minimum of 2 federally funded grants per year
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Departmental leadership is on board with providing course buy-outs for federal grants awarded.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. Departmental leadership is on board with providing course buy-outs for federal grants awarded.
 2. Faculty both applied for and were involved in four federally funded grants this year.

2. Support and maintain a high level of outreach and community engagement by faculty.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program Faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Faculty will identify opportunities to combine community outreach and research efforts
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Due to the pandemic, the Adult Fluency Support Group was unable to meet.
 2. The Adult Cochlear Implant Support Group was unable to meet in the fall but transitioned to monthly video conference meetings in the spring.
 3. Faculty continued to be actively involved with the non-profit organization, Arkansas Hands & Voices by providing a webinar, serving on the Board, and connecting students to assist with online family programming.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. Due to the pandemic, the Adult Fluency Support Group was unable to meet.
 2. The Adult Cochlear Implant Support Group met monthly via video conference meetings in the fall and resumed in-person meetings in the spring of 2022.
 3. Faculty continued to be actively involved with the non-profit organization, Arkansas Hands & Voices by serving on the Board and connecting students to assist with online family programming.
 4. The Clinical Education Coordinator established clinical education partnerships with a local brain injury support group and an aphasia support group.
 - a. Under the supervision and guidance of the clinical education coordinator, graduate students enrolled in CDIS 5443 will create and deliver community education presentations to each group as part of their clinical coursework starting fall 2022.
 5. A faculty member became actively involved as Director of University Relations for the non-profit organization Dysphagia Outreach Project.
 6. A faculty member also began serving as Secretary of the Arkansas Affiliate of the National Black Speech-Language and Hearing (AR-NBASLH).

3. Increase the value of innovative clinical research through interprofessional collaboration.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program Faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Research faculty will identify opportunities for interprofessional collaboration for clinical research.
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Faculty were involved in an action-research grant involving the providing of intervention via telepractice for augmentative and alternative communication.

2. Faculty continued leadership, data analysis and scholarly writing through the “Teaming for Transitions” personnel prep grant. Eleven first year graduate students and eight second year graduate students participated in this program that includes interprofessional collaboration between counseling, communication sciences and disorders, and special education.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. An opportunity for interdisciplinary clinical research was identified between the Elanor Mann School of Nursing (EMSON) and the CDIS program. Initial data collection started in the spring of 2022.
 2. Faculty continued to be involved in an action-research grant involving the provision of intervention via telepractice for augmentative and alternative communication.
 3. Faculty continued leadership, data analysis and scholarly writing through the “Teaming for Transitions” personnel prep grant. Eleven second year graduate students graduate students participated in this program that includes interprofessional collaboration between counseling, communication sciences and disorders, and special education.
4. Evaluate departmental Honors program and undergraduate research experiences.
- a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Faculty will create a spreadsheet to monitor and track Honors research and Honors project experiences in the CDIS program
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. The CDIS Program currently has 68 undergraduate Honors Students. 24 CDIS Honors undergraduate students graduated in the spring of 2021.
 2. Faculty have identified there are far more Honors mentees than CDIS mentors available. Faculty will continue to work to identify steps to improve research experiences while managing faculty capacity.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. The CDIS Program currently has 47 undergraduate Honors Students. 18 CDIS Honors undergraduate students graduated in the spring of 2022.
 2. Faculty will continue to work to identify steps to improve research experiences while managing faculty capacity.
 3. Increased opportunities to completed Honors Projects that included clinical education and experience were identified across the state.
5. Increase opportunities for graduate research experiences.
- a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program Faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Faculty will identify opportunities for graduate students to be involved in research annually
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**

1. Graduate students were encouraged to complete a Master's Thesis during all advising appointments. One graduate student successfully defended a thesis in 2021. Three graduate students have theses in progress with plans to defend by the spring of 2022.
- ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. Graduate students were encouraged to complete a Master's Thesis during all advising appointments.
 2. Three graduate students successfully defended their theses in 2022.
 3. One graduate student was admitted into a Ph.D. program.

Diversity & Inclusion

Long-Term Goal: *Promote diversity and inclusion of populations historically underrepresented in the undergraduate and graduate programs to align with ASHA demographics, state demographics, and those in the University of Arkansas System.*

Rationale: We subscribe to the same affirmations regarding diversity and inclusion as our governing body, ASHA "We affirm the value of diversity and the importance of inclusion, and are committed to ongoing dialogue across cultural lines as a strategy for excellence in serving our members (students), for addressing the needs of an increasingly diverse society, and as a mechanism for equipping" our graduates "to appropriately meet the needs of their clients, patients, and (future) students."

Objectives:

1. Strategically recruit males and under-represented minorities in undergraduate and graduate programs.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Identify opportunities to recruit under-represented minorities
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. The program made efforts to highlight the work of under-represented minorities and males in the undergraduate program and graduate programs through social media posts and nominations for student awards throughout the year.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. The program made efforts to highlight the work of under-represented minorities and males in the undergraduate program and graduate programs through social media posts and nominations for student awards throughout the year.
 2. One faculty member was elected to serve on the Arkansas Affiliate of the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing (AR-NBASLH).
 3. A faculty member served as a mentor to students in CSD from under-represented populations through ASHA's Student to Empowered Professional (STEP) Mentoring Program.

2. Increase faculty and student awareness of cultural competence to support colleagues and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program Faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Faculty will identify opportunities to increase awareness for cultural competence and practice cultural humility in academic and clinical settings
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Departmental leadership provided all faculty with a recommended reading list of books related to cultural competence.
 2. The undergraduate program started offering a course in “Cultural Diversity in Communication Sciences and Disorders” in the spring 2021.
 3. The Program Director provided monthly email updates to all graduate students with opportunities for cultural competence trainings and multicultural opportunities and experiences available on campus.
 - ii. **2022-22 Progress:**
 1. The undergraduate program established the “Cultural Diversity in Communication Sciences and Disorders” course as a required course for the undergraduate degree.
 2. The Program Director provided monthly email updates to all graduate students with opportunities for cultural competence trainings and multicultural opportunities and experiences available on campus.

3. Provide students with a broad range of academic and clinical experiences addressing culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
 - a. **Resources:** Faculty time
 - b. **Responsible Person(s):** Program faculty
 - c. **Projected Completion Date:** May 2025
 - d. **Expected Results:** Faculty will review coursework and identify new opportunities for students to gain academic and clinical experiences with diverse populations
 - i. **2020-21 Progress:**
 1. Graduate students track clinical experiences using an electronic software program. In this program they document the culturally and linguistically diverse populations with which they gain experience. All graduate students gained experience with culturally and linguistically diverse populations this year.
 2. Faculty made a concerted effort to provide examples, research, and academic content addressing culturally and linguistically diverse populations throughout each semester.
 - ii. **2021-22 Progress:**
 1. Graduate students continued to track clinical experiences using an electronic software program. In this program they document the culturally and linguistically diverse populations with which they gain experience. All graduate students gained experience with culturally and linguistically diverse populations this year.

2. Faculty reviewed syllabi and course content to make a concerted effort to provide examples, research, and academic content addressing culturally and linguistically diverse populations throughout each semester.