

University of Arkansas Communication Sciences and Disorders Program

Strategic Plan Summary 2020-2025

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 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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