Department of Communicative Disorders  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette  
STRATEGIC PLAN: 2015-2020

VISION STATEMENT

The program will be a national and international leader in providing educational excellence in master’s, doctoral and continuing education in communication sciences and disorders that nurtures the development of practitioners, researchers and future leaders and advances the well-being of individuals with communication disorders.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Communicative Disorders employs the following mission statement: “To understand how communication works and how it breaks down so that we can design and implement better ways for the prevention of communicative disorders as well as designing and teaching better intervention procedures to enable individuals with communication disorders to lead richer, fuller and more productive lives.” For the Masters of Science program, therefore, our mission is to prepare individuals to function professionally and ethically as speech/language pathologists in a variety of employment settings, to educate individuals who are able to serve as resource persons to families of the communicatively handicapped and to the community at large, and to provide graduate students the opportunity to learn to use research as a viable clinical tool and to become a discriminating consumer of the research of others.

The following 5 focus areas were identified by the departmental faculty based on input from students, graduates of the program, off-campus supervisors/employers & clients and/or parents of clients receiving services through the on-campus clinic. Each focus area was then aligned with a strategic imperative from the University’s strategic plan. The University imperative for each focus area is given in parentheses on the following pages.

INTEGRATION INTO UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The University has focused on four specific areas in our 2015 -2020 Master Strategic Plan:

- **Student** experience as it contributes to academic success,
- **Faculty** resources to facilitate teaching, research and service,
- **Research** resources that support cutting-edge research and insightful scholarship,
- **Governance** structure that will improve the capacity of the administration to prioritize, enhance and support the academic functions of the university.

Of these four areas, the department of Communicative Disorders has emphasized three areas that are specific to our students, faculty and mission – student experience, faculty involvement, and research advancement. As will be seen in our document, we have specific aspects of the
curriculum and clinical education foci that fits the student experience; foci on the curriculum, clinical education, collaboration, and program administration that impacts faculty resources and the clinical research and collaboration foci that addresses the university’s commitment to research. In these areas of foci, therefore, we are well integrated into the University Master Strategic Plan for 2015-2020.

**FOCUS AREA: CURRICULUM**

**ISSUE One:** A consistency in the knowledge and skills taught in both academic and clinical settings will facilitate our student’s ability to integrate more theoretical principles and their applications into the coursework as well as translate theory and research into clinical practice. This will help us implement our educational policy that within our program, the curriculum drives the clinical practices employed.

**OUTCOMES:**

Students will be versed in the theoretical foundations and implications for intervention within the primary communicative impairment categories.

Students will experience a seamless transition from classroom experience to clinical practice in both on-site and off-site clinical practicum

**INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:**

90% of students will respond with a rating of 3 or higher on a 5 pt scale when asked how consistently their required clinical practices employ strong theoretical principles and their applications.

90% of students will respond with a rating of 3 or higher on a 5 pt scale of satisfaction when asked about the relationship between coursework and clinical practice on the graduate student exit survey

80% of employers/supervisors will respond with a rating of 3 or higher on a 5 pt scale of satisfaction when asked about the academic and clinical preparation and training of our students

**STRATEGIES: Multiple Years—2015-2020**

1. A working collaborative committee of two clinical supervisors and three tenure track faculty members will review the practices within the on-campus clinic to determine how consistently clinical practices integrate the best practices taught in academic classes into the clinical process
2. Clinical supervisors will continue to be given release time during the semester to take required and elective courses with the master’s and doctoral curricula to promote continuity between what is taught in the classroom and practiced in the clinic.

3. Faculty teaching in the graduate core curriculum (504, 508, 522, 526, 531, 535, 540) will incorporate defensible theoretical principles and the use of case studies, clinical projects, etc. to provide hands-on activities in assessment and treatment of communicative and/or swallowing disorders.

4. Academic faculty with CCCs will become actively involved in clinical cases within their areas of expertise on an as needed basis. Academic faculty without CCCs will be available for consultation and regularly observe therapy in order to be familiar with the types of clinical cases typically seen in the on-campus clinic.

5. A yearly orientation workshop with paid CEUs will be offered to all adjunct clinical supervisors and off-campus supervisors who collaborate with the Department of Communicative Disorders. This will provide both theoretical and best practices training that is consistent with our curriculum.

6. One of the department’s Grand Rounds for Master’s students will focus on how to respond to non-efficacious service delivery by others once the student is a professional and how to advance best practices in a collaborative fashion. This will be presented on a once every two years basis.

7. Second year master’s students will continue to complete a clinical action research project using one of their clinical cases and present the results of their research at the CODI graduate conferences held in the spring of each year.

FOCUS AREA: CLINICAL EDUCATION

ISSUE: Enhancements of several areas of clinical expertise within the department will establish the on-campus clinic as a center for excellence and cutting-edge clinical service delivery and increase the clinical skills of all student clinicians.

OUTCOMES

1. Increased quality of clinical preparation of students.

2. Increased revenue for the department through increases in clinical populations.

INDICATOR OF SUCCESS

1. 80% of employers/supervisors will respond with a rating of 3 or higher on a 6 pt scale of satisfaction when asked about the clinical background and clinical skills of our students.
2. Revenue from on-campus clinic will increase over the five year period

**STRATEGIES: Multiple Years—2015 - 2020**

1. The specialty clinics operating within the clinic during the summer session (language and literacy group, preschool group, adult neurogenic group, adolescent fluency group, ASD social group, AAC group) will be maintained and the possibility of carrying some of these into the regular seminars will be explored.

2. The department will invest in upgrading the infrastructure of the clinic, including a state-of-the art video/audio observations and recording system to facilitate supervision of students, to improve student learning by providing recorded sessions for analysis and observation and to allow for access to clinical sessions for research purposes.

3. The Clinic Director will continue to focus on recruiting and scheduling diverse clients in sufficient numbers for the on-campus clinic to provide sufficient learning experiences for all students while also providing quality services for underserved clinical populations within our community.

4. The Department Head will work with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts to secure additional clinical supervisory lines to ensure quality clinical education as well as expand the capacity of the on-campus clinic.

5. The Clinic Director will investigate the possibility of using additional spaces across the campus as well as in the community to accommodate additional specialty clinics and group experiences for the students.

**FOCUS AREA: DIVERSITY**

**ISSUE:** Expansion of our knowledge base within courses and clinical education and our experiential base during clinical activities with issues revolving around service delivery to individuals from diverse cultural/linguistic/experiential backgrounds and fonts of knowledge will prepare our students to meet the communicative needs of a diverse population. In addition, an effort to increase the diversity of the students in both the Master’s and Doctoral programs will provide both faculty and students opportunities to interact with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds.

**OUTCOMES**

1. Increased exposure to information and theory on diversity issues.

2. Increased exposure to clinical procedures and practices oriented to meeting the needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds during the clinical activities.
INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

1. 90% of students will respond with a rating of 3 or higher on a 5 pt scale of satisfaction when asked how well their experiences with diversity issues in coursework and clinical activities prepared them for service delivery with diverse populations.

2. Increase in applicants from under-represented groups for MS and PhD program as well as increased acceptance rate and retention of these students.

STRATEGIES: Multiple Years 2015-2020

1. Each graduate core course will include pertinent content on diversity issues that reflect on service delivery. This will include both theoretical and practical content.

2. A graduate level course on Diversity and Special Education will be instituted for the graduate students and offered yearly as a primary elective with the master’s and doctoral offerings. This course will involve theoretical and practical considerations addressing linguistic/dialectical diversity, cultural differences and fonts of knowledge, poverty, empowerment, and other pertinent topics.

3. Targeted recruitment of students from under-represented minorities with improved financial support and mentoring of students once enrolled

FOCUS AREA: COMMUNITY LIAISONS/COLLABORATION

ISSUE: The establishment of strong bonds between the department and the professional community will generate a positive image for the department & promote scientific-based best practices in delivery of speech-language-hearing services throughout the region.

OUTCOMES:

1. Increase in number and variety of off-campus clinical placements.

2. Sustained collaborative research with clinicians and facilities outside the university setting.

3. Increased departmental impact in local and state professional organizations.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

1. 70% of students will be placed in at least one setting that matches their top priority for off-campus placement.

2. Contacts and collaboration between the university faculty/staff and the professional community will be increased.
3. Continued representation by faculty in governance and active participation in national, regional and state professional organizations

STRATEGIES: Multiple Years—2015 -2020

1. Demonstration sessions for practicing clinicians will be incorporated into clinical research projects/specialty clinics (literacy, adult neurogenic, fluency, AAC). Professionals from the community will be invited to visit summer specialty clinics to gain first hand-experience in setting up similar programs in their clinics, schools, private practices.

2. An interactive Website will be established within the Department and the Doris B. Hawthorne Center to provide best practices research and demonstrations as well as updates on the most recent research in various areas of Human Communicative Sciences and Disorders. This will serve as a professional forum and conduit for interaction between the university faculty and the community of professionals.

3. Academic and clinical faculty members will seek opportunities to partner with non-profit agencies to promote clinical services offered by our clinic and increase the visibility of the department in the community.

4. The department will support academic and clinical faculty who accept leadership roles in regional and state professional organizations with resources to help them accomplish their duties (GA assistance, release time and travel funds to attend meetings, office supplies and support).

FOCUS AREA: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

ISSUE: Increased funding for clinical and research activities will enhance the department’s image as a high-producing research unit within the university.

OUTCOMES:

1. Sustained support for maintaining computers and other specialized equipment for both clinical and research components of the department.

2. Maintenance of or increased funding for faculty travel and salary support for summer research.

3. Increased funding for supplemental pay/benefits for faculty/staff providing clinical supervision.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

1. Increase in foundation support by $10,000 across the 5 year period.
2. Increase in number of external grant proposals submitted by the department.

STRATEGIES: Multiple Years—2015-2020

1. Faculty will prepare and submit BoRSF proposals for enhancement grants each time the department is eligible.
2. The Department Head will maintain student clinical course fee (401, 510, 512) to offset costs associated with clinical instruction.

FOCUS AREA: CLINICAL RESEARCH

ISSUE: Increased focus on clinical research to determine best practices within clinical settings utilizing defensible theoretical foundations and their implications.

OUTCOMES:

1. Improved clinical practices based upon clinical research conducted in authentic communicative/clinical settings.
2. Increased clinical research presented and/or published in professional outlets.
3. Increased clinical laboratory activities within the department.
4. Increased applications for research funding directed at best clinical practices.

INDICTORS OF SUCCESS:

1. Increased presentations/publications from department on clinical research issues.
2. Increase number of specialty clinics with an active clinical research component attached.
3. Increased research presentations/publications addressing clinical issues.
4. Increased grants applied for addressing best practices research.

STRATEGIES: 2015-2020

1. Academic faculty will develop and direct clinical research projects in conjunction with specialty clinics giving students first-hand knowledge of how research and practice work hand-in-hand.
2. Senior faculty will work with junior faculty on best practices research in several impairment-oriented clinics.
3. Senior faculty will work with the research office to identify national grant opportunities and submit proposals to generate funds for faculty support, student support and infrastructure improvements.

4. Research interest groups will be formulated within the department to focus on specific issues involving best practices in clinical research.