Department of Communication Science and Disorders

Strategic Plan[1] 2021-2026

Department Mission

The mission of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to promote and advance knowledge of the nature, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of communicative and related disorders through all stages of the lifespan and across all individual backgrounds. As the leading graduate and research program in communication sciences and disorders in South Carolina and one of the leading programs in the nation, it seeks to prepare students as clinical scientists through excellence in clinical training, scientific research, instruction, and service. The department seeks to fulfill its mandate in providing an open and welcoming environment where all can develop to their highest potential.

Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan is consistent with the missions of the Department, School, and University. It moves the Department forward by creating innovative programs and strategies to further strengthen the quality of key target populations within the department and the Montgomery Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic.

[1] At minimum, this Strategic Plan will be reviewed biannually to remain nimble and responsive to opportunities and to restructure, revise, add, and eliminate goals as agreed upon.

Long-term Goal	**Specific Measurable Objectives**	**Strategies for Attaining Goals and Objectives**	**Schedule for Analysis of Outcomes**	**Met/Unmet**
Strengthen the USC undergraduate to graduate applicant pool.	COMD will provide one or more new opportunities for non-COMD students: Provide one or more honor's course(s). Every research lab will have one or more UG paid or unpaid volunteer/year.	An Honor's College course will be developed and offered. Department Chair and/or research Labs will contact the honor's program to seek volunteers or paid research assistants.	Summer/Fall 2023 Spring 2022	Met Met (on-going)

Long-term Goal	**Specific Measurable Objectives**	**Strategies for Attaining Goals and Objectives**	**Schedule for Analysis of Outcomes**	**Met/Unmet**
Increase teaching revenue as a result of strategic course enrollment.	Increase UG student enrollment in COMD 500 and other COMD courses with instructor permission.	Add a summer offering of COMD 500 Advertise selected upper level COMD courses to other departments. Develop a list of courses that UG and Doctoral students may take for publication on website.	Spring 2022 Spring 2023	Met (ongoing)

Work to lower economic and social barriers to graduate school attendance in Communication Science and Disorders.	Conduct four recruitment activities or admissions modifications focused on attracting students from a variety of social and economic backgrounds.	The Breaking Barriers Scholarship Committee, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee will assume responsibilities. Admissions committee will review applicants with a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Faculty will participate in mentoring programs for students who experience barriers to graduate school attendance. Department faculty will work with faculty from HBCU's and UG programs who serve students with social and economic barriers. Invite three or more former students into a variety of courses to discuss how the program prepared them for their current job. Faculty will discuss the effect of dropping the GRE score requirement for applications with a 2021 start date.	A minority scholarship (Breaking Barriers) was created for a 2021 start date. Admissions in 2020 for a 2021 start date. Spring 2023 Discuss the effect of GRE requirement change at the Faculty Retreat, 2021.	Met and on-going. Met and on-going Partially met and ongoing Met, faculty agreed to continue to not require the GRE.

	Increase funding of Breaking Barriers fellowship by 10%. 100% of the students provided the Breaking Barriers Scholarship will graduate from the program.	At least 50% of labs will apply for NIH funding. Breaking Barriers subcommittee will invite Anna Wippold, ASPH Marketing and Digital Content Manager and Lauren Johnson, Senior Director of Development to market the Breaking Barriers scholarship.		

Long-term Goal	**Specific Measurable Objectives**	**Strategies for Attaining Goals and Objectives**	**Schedule for Analysis of Outcomes**	**Met/Unmet**
The curriculum will reflect cultural competence and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.	Faculty members will weave cultural competence and DEI into course lectures, assignments, and activities on syllabi.	Graduate Director will review syllabi each semester for cultural competence and DEI. COMD Leadership team will review the US Department of Education guidelines and share with faculty in a department meeting.	Spring 2023	Met, ongoing
COMD will maintain top-notch externship placements	COMD will hire an additional part-time clinical professor or staff member to focus exclusively on contributing to the externships. COMD will hire a part-time recruiter or assign a staff member to increase the number of available externship sites.	Complete steps to hire a temporary or permanent staff or clinical instructor to manage MOUs and student placements for clinical externships. Complete steps to identify a recruiter of externship clinical sites.	Discuss at the Fall retreat 2021 Hire by August 2022 Hire or assign role by August 2023.	Met Met

Develop and maintain a course curriculum that prepares students for success in practicum and clinical fellowship while proactively addressing graduation requirements by incorporating both theory and practice into high-quality classes.	75% or more of the graduate courses will be taught by full-time faculty. 60% or more of the graduate courses will be taught by faculty with terminal degrees. Doctoral students who teach for the first time will be mentored and observed at least one time per semester. Part-time faculty will be observed during their first semester of teaching and then again after 3 years. Director of DE will continue to assist instructors of distance program courses with course development.	Determine full-time faculty members' top three teaching preferences and assign one. Identify required courses where no teaching expertise exists among full-time faculty. Hire part-time instructors only for those courses. Doctoral mentors will observe student and provide feedback to graduate director. Teaching mentors will be assigned by the Department Chair and mentoring will be documented by the Graduate Director. Director of DE will distribute DE course information and meet with instructors as needed. Part-time and full-time faculty will be offered $1200 for re-recording a distance education course once every 3 years or when the faculty member changes.	December 2022 December 2022 May 2024 Dec 2022 November 2022 Spring 2023	Met and on-going Met and on-going Met Met Met, ongoing Met

	Add multiculturalism course to the elective choices - COMD 728 Cultural Responsiveness in Clinical Practice (2 Credits)	COMD 728 will be developed and approved. COMD 728 will be advertised to non-COMD students and COMD students.	November 2022	Met, ongoing
	The COMD curriculum and current syllabi will be reviewed, and a multi-year plan will be created to incorporate a competency based- approach to the curriculum.	Utilize competency-based learning strategies to demonstrate skill outcomes whenever appropriate.	Begin immediately, implement changes after accreditation visit.	Ongoing
	Use the CALIPSO evaluation to ensure classes meet CAA/CFCC clinical skill requirements where possible.	Ensure classes meet University standards (e.g. number of learning minutes per credit hour) Maintain a balance between academics, practicum, free time, and extracurricular activities (e.g. GA responsibilities) in order to ensure students acquire knowledge/skill/practicum requirements with a sustainable weekly schedule.		
	Employ clinical simulations to proactively address skill acquisition and to prepare students for anticipated clinical experiences.	Create a structured and proactive approach to providing simulations as a part of practicum courses and/or academic classes for both DE and residential students. Ensure the primary modality for obtaining skill outcomes is through live practicum.	May 2024	

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Foster Department Cohesion and Mutual Understanding	Hold two or more Wed evening presentations and chats ('Poolside chat' meetings, focus groups, or pizza parties) per semester.	Master's Leadership team will develop programming and discussions for poolside chats/focus groups/pizza parties.	Fall, 2022	Met, ongoing
		Director of Graduate Program, Director of the Distance Education Program and Chair of the Department will schedule meetings. Members of the Master's Leadership Team will host.	Fall, 2022 and ongoing	Met, ongoing
	Hold 1 or more doctoral meetings (Prosem per semester)	Doctoral Chair and Coordinator, doctoral mentors, and student leaders will develop programming for Prosem.	Fall, 2022 and ongoing	Met, on-going
		Events will be posted on the Bb site for master's and doctoral students.	Fall, 2021 and ongoing	Met Fall 2022 ongoing
		Develop a way to recognize / reward student participation in 'poolside chats'/focus	Spring 2023	Met, Spring, 2023 pizza, gift cards

		groups and Prosem. (leadership roles, gift cards)	Fall, 2021	
		Graduate Program Director, Director of Distance Education, and Admissions coordinator will coordinate and document master's program meetings.	Fall, 2023	On-going
	Form an Honor's and Awards Committee that includes faculty, staff, and students to identify opportunities to increase honors and awards faculty, staff, and students of the program.	The Master's Leadership Team, the Doctoral committee, the Doctoral Student Representative and the Honors and Awards Committee will be responsible.		

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All students (master's residential, master's Distance Education, doctoral, and post-doctoral) will have the opportunity to interact with a range of faculty and staff for academic, clinical, research, and social support.	Master's and doctoral students from minoritized and/or underrepresented backgrounds will be given the opportunity to participate in a mentoring program. Two students will participate in a mentoring program	The Diversity committee will develop a procedure either independently or in cooperation with the ASPH DEI committee to develop a mentoring program. Students will be made aware of mentoring opportunities created by COMD (community externship supervisor mentors, peer mentors), the ASPH DEI, the ASHA Student to Empowered Professional (S.T.E.P.) online mentoring program, and the Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Branch of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS).	August 2022 Spring 2023 Diversity Committee Meeting	

Long-term Goal	**Specific Measurable Objectives**	**Strategies for Attaining Goals and Objectives**	**Schedule for Analysis of Outcomes**	**Met/Unmet**
Maintain a doctoral program with a vibrant scholarly community. The doctoral program will demonstrate excellent research training and excellent teacher preparation tailored to students' career goals and result in desired job placement.	Create more social and service opportunities for doctoral students. COMD will maintain the size of the doctoral program by sustaining students who have funding through a national or international government program. Doctoral students will apply for F31 and T32 NIH funding mechanisms to sustain funding.	Plan ASHA Foundation Walk in August as an onboarding activity for new students to generate a sense of community. Other opportunities could include a walking challenge or annual research expo. Develop recruitment strategies to master's level SLPs, public health services and military SLPs, international programs (Fulbright program) that fund doctoral training. Contact potential funding sources or entities at U of SC who have international contacts. Doctoral students will receive instruction and support for applying for F31 and T32 through COMD and ASPH faculty. Doctoral program will create steps toward obtaining a T32 award.	August 2024 September 2022	Met Fall 2022 ongoing Met Fall 2022 and ongoing

Long-term Goal	**Specific Measurable Objectives**	**Strategies for Attaining Goals and Objectives**	**Schedule for Analysis of Outcomes**	**Met/Unmet**
Increase faculty and full-time/part-time adjunct instructors and research faculty from diverse backgrounds.	COMD will hire at least one tenure track or clinical faculty full-time or part-time instructor who is from an underrepresented minority group in the field of speech- language pathology.	LWW position was approved to fill by Dean's office and posted. Clinical Assistant or Associate Professor position was approved by the Dean's office to fill because of retirement/promotion. Solicit applicants and instructors who have expertise and skills needed to fill research and teaching positions.	August 2022 August 2023 August 2023	Ongoing

Long-term Goal	**Specific Measurable Objectives**	**Strategies for Attaining Goals and Objectives**	**Schedule for Analysis of Outcomes**	**Met/Unmet**
Increase support for tenure track and clinical faculty through mentoring programs	A mentoring program will be available to every faculty member. Mentoring programs will include NIH Bootcamp, COMD Tenure track Faculty mentoring program, COMD Clinical Faculty Mentoring Program, University Teaching mentoring programs	Department Chair will work with ASPH Administrative council to implement mentoring programs	Report on existing mentoring programs and faculty experience at the Fall 2021 Retreat Monitor and improve programs to 2026.	Met, ongoing
Conduct state of the art research consistent in the area of COMD and enhance departmental research productivity.	Streamline & augment grants support and coordination with ASPH office of research. Identify departmental, ASPH, or university supports and mechanisms for dissemination and publicizing research findings to public and scientific community.	Semesterly evaluation of pre- and post-award grant needs via faculty survey and discussion at research faculty meetings to identify needs. Explore ASPH resources (Erin Bluvas) and university communications resources available to highlight faculty research and develop mechanisms to maximize use. Share research communication pieces on COMD and ASPH social media and websites.	Sustained through 2026	Met, ongoing

	Develop materials and justification to advocate for space and other research supports Establish/maintain platforms for scientific engagement (e.g., brown bags, departmental colloquia, COMD get togethers). Develop infrastructure for doctoral and postdoctoral recruitment, training, and support.	Begin to document space needs and justification, to be ready to advocate when needed. Prepare higher-ups to anticipate needs (e.g., when next R01 hits we won't be able to accommodate space needs for this size award in Close-Hipp) Continue current efforts Begin to document and track information on doctoral and postdoctoral trainees so data is available when needed for training grant applications. Develop "boilerplate" description of doctoral program and resources to be used in F32 and other applications.		

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Increase the number of faculty supervised community experiences and diversity of university clinical experiences.	COMD will expand the base of community-based clinical training sites and the range of diagnostic and clinical services.	COMD will work with community partners and other University programs and departments to establish and coordinate clinical education and IPE/IPP experiences for students.	Summer 2026	Ongoing