

The University of Alabama
Department of Communicative Disorders
Strategic Plan
Fall 2012-Summer 2017

Service

I. Enhance service to department, university and community

A. Speech, Language and Hearing Screenings

We currently provide speech, language and hearing screenings to students and faculty who independently make appointments for these services. We would like to increase the number of screenings we provide to our local university community by proactively providing these screenings.

Goals

Two-Year Goal: Make contact with the UA faculty, staff (e.g., maintenance, housekeeping), and student groups (e.g., musicians) to determine interest in providing speech, language, and hearing screenings for these individuals.

Five-Year Goal: Provide an in-house speech, language and hearing screening service for faculty, staff and students.

B. Enhance the visibility of our department in the university and local communities

We can improve the visibility of our department by increasing the number of presentations we provide to the university and to the surrounding community. The purpose of the following goals is to increase awareness of our services to the university and local communities.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Provide at least 3 presentations to university-based groups (e.g., voice therapy, hearing protection, autism)
2. Consult with eTech/OIT to provide tips for enhancing our website

Five-Year Goals:

1. Offer at least 4 presentations to on- and off-campus groups (e.g., rotary, optimist club)
2. Consult with an eTech/OIT consultant each year to enhance department website.

C. Enhance Service Learning

One of the goals outlined in UA's strategic plan is to "increase the recognition of the University's service priorities that enhance the quality of life for all Alabamians." The goals outlined below address UA's larger interest in fostering service to the community.

Goals

Two-Year Goal:

1. The nature of our profession is to engage in service learning. Within the first two years of this strategic plan we will develop a relationship with the Community Service Center on campus to identify Communicative Disorder courses that satisfy service learning components.

Five-Year Goal:

1. All Communicative Disorders courses that have a service learning component will be identified through Service Learning Pro, a web-based database through which all parties involved in service learning (i.e., community partners, students, faculty, staff) can organize these service-learning relationships.

Clinic

1. Develop and foster the clinical education of the students by enhancing the clinical service delivery to the local and surrounding community

A. Enhance student educational experience

To provide the best educational experience for our students we need to continue to develop our clinical program as our student population grows. The goals outlined below address the needs of our growing student and clinical population.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Hire one additional clinical supervisor to develop the adult clinical program.
2. Develop an audiological practicum experience for the graduate students.
3. Foster student research through collaborative relationships with clinical staff and faculty.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Hire an additional clinical supervisor to enable more individualized interaction with students and their clinical supervisors and to improve the services provided to the local Hispanic community.

B. Incorporate new technological equipment and software programs into our clinical program

When our students graduate from our program they will need to be familiar with technological advances that have occurred within the profession of speech-language pathology. The goals outlined below will help our students become familiar with record-keeping and video-capturing programs.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Explore various electronic recording methods and their use in our clinical program
2. Install at least 4 video recording cameras into separate individual therapy rooms

Five-Year Goals:

1. Incorporate electronic recording keeping into our clinical program
2. Install a centralized video-observation program

C. Needs of the facility

Our program is housed in an aging building which requires continual monitoring and upkeep. Additionally, because of our growing student population our physical needs are changing. The goals outlined below address the needs of the physical space of our clinical program.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Assess our physical space and make updates where necessary (e.g., replace ceiling tiles, update furniture in waiting room and small-preschool classroom)
2. Form a clinical facility committee to assess effective use of clinical space

Five-Year Goals:

1. Clinical facility committee will report their findings and appropriate enhancements to physical space will be completed.

Teaching

I. Continue to provide quality educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students.

A. Foster the development of writing skills in undergraduate students

The teaching-learning process is largely influenced by the student's ability to write. Clinical practice in the fields of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology require excellent writing skills. Improving the overall writing ability of undergraduate students majoring in Communicative Disorders will better prepare them for success in graduate school.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Incorporate a rubric-based writing assignment into CD 244, CD 275, CD 443, and CD 444 to provide students with an on-going opportunity to improve their writing ability prior to entering graduate school.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Incorporate collaborative writing techniques within the courses that have writing assignments, and additionally, measure the effectiveness of these techniques for improving writing skills.

B. Address complexities of increasing enrollment in the department

The undergraduate student enrollment at the University of Alabama has significantly increased over the past few years, and consequently, the number of CD majors and the number of students in all CD classes has dramatically increased. Larger class sizes can result in reduced interactive and individualized instruction opportunities for students.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Assess the overall rate of student increase in the department during the past 5 years.
2. Explore feasibility of requesting an additional faculty member.
3. Increase number of full-time Graduate Teaching Assistantships from 9 to 12.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Request additional faculty member if it is warranted.
2. Increase the number of full-time Graduate Teaching Assistantships from 12 to 15.

C. Participate in College and University-based Technology Initiatives

The College of Arts and Sciences provides multimedia classrooms with significant technology support for classes taught throughout the college. Individuals teaching courses in the Department of Communicative Disorders must integrate academic information, research, and clinical practice in courses with high enrollment. We feel that maximizing the use of technology is vital to the educational process in such a dynamic and growing field of study.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. 100% of faculty and clinical supervisors will be competent in available course technology, such as Blackboard, Tegrity, clickers, multimedia equipment, and cloud technology.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Some form of technology will be used in 90% of CD courses. The use of technology in the classroom has the potential to also address the complexities associated with increasing class-sizes.

D. Assess effectiveness of undergraduate and graduate curricula

The Department of Communicative Disorders is accredited by the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Accreditation requirements provide a template for curriculum development. The Knowledge and Skills Assessment Form (KASA) is used by CAA to document student preparation.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Tie curriculum requirements to the Knowledge and Skills Assessment (KASA) used by CAA to document student preparation. Link course objectives to KASA requirements on each course syllabus.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Assess changes in CAA expectations and revise curriculum if necessary.

2. Consider emerging research to address changes in evidence based practice and introduction of new courses which could be important to the profession.

E. Maintain and support a faculty with expertise across the scope of practice of the profession

During the past few years the department has undergone significant changes in the faculty and it is expected that within the next five years further changes will be made.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Assist junior faculty in establishing mentoring relationships within the University and with outside sources as well.
2. Provide financial support for continuing education and research within the faculty member's focus areas.
3. Provide graduate assistant support for teaching and research.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Annually review faculty interests and activities to ensure that emerging professional topics are being addressed.
2. Support faculty and clinical supervisors in developing expertise in new or expanding areas of interest.

Research

I. Enhance departmental involvement in research

A. Integrating faculty, clinical staff, and student research projects

Research faculty will determine projects to be implemented by clinical staff with student support. Projects should be developed to help increase funded faculty research and collaborative extramural research. These efforts will increase recognition of the research program at a regional, state, national, and international level.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Develop incentives to increase involvement of graduate students in new and ongoing research projects in the Speech and Hearing Center.
2. Undergraduate students involved in research projects in our department will be provided with a number of seminars and workshops throughout each semester addressing various issues associated with the development of research projects and data collection and analysis.
3. Encourage undergraduate research as part of the admission process for graduate school.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Increase number of graduate students seeking research experience.
2. Develop infrastructure (i.e., grant funding, lab development, equipment) to enhance ongoing research, secure outside funding, and to attract students interested in research

B. Increase faculty research productivity

Throughout the next five years we would like to increase our publication rate (currently, our faculty members produce on average 1.2 publications per year), increase the number of internal and external grants submitted and awarded to the department, and increase the number of conference presentations at the state, national, and international levels.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Each faculty member will develop a specific plan for securing intramural or extramural funding to advance individual faculty goals
2. Faculty members will collaborate with clinical supervisors and students to achieve long-term research goals.
3. Establish collaboration with community partners who are interested in participating in and conducting research.
4. Faculty members will publish at least one manuscript per year in a peer reviewed academic journal.
5. Increase number of refereed conference presentations at the state, national, and international levels.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Increase community based research by providing opportunities for community participants to become involved in research.
2. Train local service providers (i.e. physicians and teachers) on symptoms of communication disorders.
3. Expand breadth of research expertise to cover full scope of speech and language development and disorder.
4. Faculty will continue to average at least one referred journal publication per year.
5. Faculty members will continue to increase number of refereed conference presentations at the state, national, and international levels.