The University of Alabama

Department of Communicative Disorders

Research Strategic Plan

Fall 2017-Summer 2022

**Research**

*I. Enhance Cross-disciplinary and Community-based Research*

*A. Foster new cross-disciplinary relationships*

Faculty will identify potential cross-disciplinary aspects of their research and develop relationships with potential collaborators across campus. Projects will be developed in an effort to 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 an open forum for researchers across campus to visit our research laboratories and present our research
2. Discover and explore interdisciplinary research resources across campus

*Five-Year Goals:*

1. Establish at least five inter-disciplinary projects
2. Generate at least six interdisciplinary publications
3. Develop and submit at least eight interdisciplinary grants

*B. Cultivate community-engaged research*

We will develop community-based research within the next five years. We will foster relationships with community services, commercial partners, and advocacy organizations. Through our community engagement, UA will increase its potential to become a Carnegie designated community-engaged institution.

Goals

*Two-Year Goals:*

1. Develop a departmental summer camp for children with fluency disorders
2. Foster relationships with at least 5 community partners

*Five-Year Goals:*

1. Develop at least 3 projects
2. Develop at least 6 publications
3. Develop and submit 5 grants

*II. Enhance Departmental Research*

*A. Enhance understanding and knowledge of faculty research within the department*

During the upcoming 5-year period faculty will provide regular research updates to the department. This increased communication will create a climate of understanding of the scholarship activities that are taking place in the department and ultimately enhance our productivity.

Two year goals:

1. Introduce five-minute research updates at the end of each Department meeting
2. Explore implications of increasing Professional Seminar presentations to twice a month
3. Create meeting before ASHA to review presentations
4. Provide summaries of departmental research in the annual newsletter

Five year goals:

1. Explore funding sources to help offset costs associated with bringing off-campus research collaborators for Professional Seminar presentations.
2. Continue to provide research opportunities for clinical faculty.

*B. Address barriers to research*

To enhance departmental research we will address barriers that impede faculty and staff from developing their research programs.

Two-year goals:

1. Explore feasibility of hiring a part-time professional to assist with grant-writing
2. Develop a list of equipment needs within the department
3. Explore possibility to increase research dedicated space within the department

Five-year goals:

1. Increase GRAs from 1 to 3 students
2. Explore funding resources for graduate students working on thesis projects

**Clinic**

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

1. *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. Provide an annual clinical training on resonance (cleft palate, VPI, etc.).
2. Appoint a clinical supervisor to attend specialty training in resonance.
3. Integrate audiological services for graduate and undergraduate students within speech pathology services (auditory processing skills, aural rehabilitation, etc.) in the SHC.

*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.
2. Hire a part-time OT to support various therapies such as feeding and sensory integration needs.
3. *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 SLP. The goals outlined below will help our students become familiar with electronic medical records and video-capturing programs.

Goals:

*Two-Year Goals:*

1. Explore electronic medical records for the SHC.
2. Install at least 4 additional video recording cameras into separate therapy rooms.
3. Consider therapy software programs for clinic and home program use.
4. Develop a pediatric iPad loaner library to be utilized with therapy and explore AAC software applications.

*Five-Year Goals:*

1. Incorporate electronic medical records in our clinical program.
2. Implement the use of software programs to enhance home carryover.
3. *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. Establish a Facility Assessment Committee to evaluate the physical space including flooring, paint, and furniture in the SHC.
2. Explore the possibility of a Sensory Integration Room.

*Five-Year Goals:*

1. Obtain funds for a Sensory Integration Room in order to promote a multidisciplinary approach to therapy.

**Service**

*I. Enhance service to department, university and community*

*A. Speech, Language and Hearing Services*

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

Goals

*Two-Year Goals*:

1. Make contact with the UA faculty, staff, student groups, and community groups to determine interest in providing speech, language, and hearing screenings for these individuals.
2. Continue to provide hearing screenings to groups and organizations with which the department has an ongoing collaboration.

*Five-Year Goal*:

1. Provide an in-house speech, language and hearing screening service for faculty, staff and students.

*B. Increase awareness of our department in the university and local communities*

We can improve the awareness 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 educational presentations to university-based groups (e.g., voice therapy, hearing protection, autism, etc.)
2. Consult with eTech/OIT to enhance our website by providing website links to speech, language, and hearing educational resources.

*Five-Year Goals:*

1. Offer at least 6 educational presentations to on- and off-campus groups (e.g., rotary, optimist club, etc.)
2. Consult with an eTech/OIT consultant each year to ensure departmental website is current and utilizing most effective technology resources available.

*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 Goals:*

1. The nature of our profession is to engage in service learning. Within the first two years of this strategic plan we will contact other departments and community partners to establish interdepartmental and community partner collaborations to enhance experiential service learning.
2. Ensure that all Communicative Disorders courses that have a service learning component are 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.

*Five-Year Goal:*

1. Continue to collaborate with campus and community partners to provide experiential service learning for students and faculty.

**Teaching**

1. Respond to the challenge ofserving larger numbers of students while enhancing a learner-centered approach to clinical education. As UA class size continues to grow, we will explore options for teaching large-enrollment courses in ways that are as interactive and individualized as possible, particularly for courses that target clinical education.

Goals

*Two-Year Goals:*

1. Request PTTIs to offer dual sections of larger clinical courses (i.e. 308, 309)
2. Offer CD 309 in FA and SP semesters so that all of our courses are offered in both Fall and Spring semesters.

*Five-Year Goals*:

1. Monitor SOIs and faculty assessment data to determine whether students and faculty are more satisfied with learning outcomes with smaller class sizes.
2. Monitor types of experiential learning offered in courses relative to SLOs.
3. Improve undergraduate retention in upper level courses.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Students will be informed about NSSLHA membership and activities, including the graduate school information panel, during 200-level courses
2. Each semester, a Qualtrics survey will be distributed to ask about student needs including advising and coursework.
3. Develop Student Affairs Committee whose focus will be to monitor student concerns, support and inform students of departmental activities, track student performance and retention at UG level, and manage CD Ambassadors Program.

Five-Year Goals:

1. Monitor retention rates at UG level. Maintain 70% retention.
2. Track reasons students transfer out of department.
3. Demonstrate integration of research literature, writing practice, and evidence based practice into curriculum.

Goals

Two-Year Goals:

1. Collect data on the number and type of research activities completed across undergraduate and graduate courses.
2. Collect data and performance criteria and outcomes on writing assessments completed in undergraduate and graduate courses.
3. Develop mechanism to measure how EBP is integrated into curriculum and how the knowledge of EBP maps onto clinical experiences for students

Five-Year Goals:

1. Monitor student perceptions of confidence in reading research literature, technical writing, and engaging in EBP.