Strategic Plan 2014-2017
The Department of Communication Disorders
California State University, Los Angeles

1.0 MISSION

The mission of the Department of Communication Disorders at California State University, Los Angeles is to prepare students to enter professional careers in audiology, speech-language pathology, and/or speech-language science in a multicultural society. The education program is designed so that students develop an understanding of normal speech, language and hearing, and the broad spectrum of disorders of communication at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level, students are expected to acquire clinical skills to assess and treat these disorders.

2.0 VISION

The primary objective and vision of the Department of Communication Disorders for the last ten years has been our quest to become the top-rated and recognized program in Communication Disorders in the Southern California. Now that our reputation of excellence has been recognized, our vision is to continue preparing and graduating high quality professionals through a current and updated semester curriculum, attracting and retaining faculty, and maintaining physical facilities that are inviting and conducive to effective learning.
3.0 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The key factors that need to be addressed to achieve the vision and mission of the department are as follows:

3.1 Maintaining credibility and standards by ensuring re-accreditation from the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA).

3.2 Establish a hiring plan for both full-time and part-time faculty in order to attract high caliber instructors and researchers to fill the positions recently vacated and manage the ever expanding student body.

3.3 Monitor trends and current needs in service delivery in order to continually improve and modify the undergraduate and graduate program curricula.

3.4 Conduct a financial analysis to determine the resources needed to update the physical facilities and expand support staff.

3.5 Submit requests to administration for more space allocated to the department in order to handle the increased student growth in the major.

3.6 Develop a tracking system through the use of Individualized Projected Schedules in order to determine course need and effectively manage course enrollment and registration.
3.7 Establish a new Audiology Assistant Certificate Program to provide another alternative for students who are unable to enter an SLP program but still seek employment in the professions of speech, language, and hearing.

3.8 Continue to pursue the development of an Audiology doctoral degree (Au.D.), through a partnership with another institution, an approved independent program, or a consortium program with other CSU institutions.

4.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the undergraduate and graduate programs in Communication disorders have been developed to be consistent with standards set forth by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. These goals have also been established to be consistent with the mission and goals of both the College of Health and Human Services and California State University, Los Angeles.

4.1 The Program

4.1.1 Semester Conversion

A primary focus on this campus beginning this year is the process leading to conversion to the semester calendar
beginning the Fall of 2016. At the department level, retreats and other meetings will take place to re-evaluate the undergraduate and graduate programs; their content, focus, units, and sequencing. The faculty will prepare course modifications for all courses and prepare new course offerings to make the appropriate program adjustments and curricular changes, which will subsequently be submitted for approval.

4.1.2 ASHA Re-Accreditation

An ASHA accreditation report will be submitted in the Spring of 2016 with a Site Visit to take place tentatively in the Fall 2016. The report will not only focus on the status of the year being reviewed (2014-2015), but also the updates and modifications taking place in the program initiated by semester conversion.

4.2 The Faculty

4.2.1 New Tenure Track Faculty

Two new tenure track positions have been approved and a search will take place beginning Fall of 2014. One of these positions will be to replace the position vacated by Ed Klein’s retirement. The areas of expertise will be open, but applicants in child language disorders and neurological disorders will receive stronger consideration. The intent is for the new faculty to begin Fall quarter 2015.
4.2.2 Part-time Teaching Pool

As the demand for the Communication Disorders major continually increases, there is a corresponding need for a larger part-time teaching pool. Specifically, the change to semesters will concentrate course offerings from three terms to two terms, requiring more faculty needed to teach at the same time. Therefore, faculty for all areas; sign language, audiology, basic science courses, speech, and language, will be needed to fill the course offerings. Advertisements will be distributed to provide an applicant pool to select the most qualified and experienced instructors.

4.3 Physical Facilities

4.3.1 Image Change

The location of the department offices, the clinic, and some classrooms are located in the basement of King Hall, one of the older buildings on campus. Currently, the desks, chairs, counters, some carpet, wall coverings, some audiology equipment, and audio-visual equipment are very dated. Many cupboards are still filled with 30 and 40 year old books, journals, and materials. In order to enhance the image of the program and department as a whole, all rooms will be remodeled and furniture replaced as follows:
A. Disposal of all dated materials in the cupboards in the B119 department offices, the B122, B109, and C167 rooms, and the clinic control room.
B. B119 - Replacement of the department office counters, sink, painting of the cupboards and replacement of all desks and chairs. Additional filing cabinets will be added to the clinic materials room.
C. B109 - Installation of new desks, chairs, lockers, and computers in the part-time office.
D. B108 - The audio-visual equipment, monitors, and cupboards in the clinic control room will be removed and replaced with a new digital A-V and software system, three computers, desks, and chairs, as well as new cupboards and shelving.
E. B108 - The clinic rooms will be updated with new cameras, tables and chairs, and an addition of cupboards.
F. C167 - The speech science lab will be renovated with new textured walls, lighting, carpet, chairs, desks, and cupboards.
G. B106 and B118 - New desks and chairs will be assembled and installed in all faculty offices.
H. B122 - The Audiology clinic will be updated with new desks, chairs, and filing cabinets. Purchase of a new middle ear analyzer and three hearing aid programming computers will be included.
I. B115 - The graduate student/clinic preparation room will be renovated with new tile flooring, and the removal of the large cabinets and old refrigerators.
New cabinets, two new refrigerators, chairs, three new counters, and six new bar stools will be installed.

4.3.2 - More Space

Requests will be made for more office space and a larger graduate student preparation room, preferably in close proximity to the existing offices.

4.4 Enrollment Management

4.4.1 Petition and Permit Process

In order to manage enrollment, improve graduation timeliness, and give priority to senior students, a petition process has been established. This requires students not enrolled in one of the core courses to petition to be given one of the remaining seats in the class. The petitions are then reviewed by the chair and other faculty to determine their eligibility and priority for students to be given a permit. This is a cumbersome and unpleasant process as students compete for the remaining seats. A new system will be implemented that will require all COMD undergraduate majors to complete an individualized projected schedule. The schedules will then be inputted into a database and used to determine the demand for each course and establish a priority listing of students to be enrolled in each class section.
4.4.2 Graduate Program Enrollment

Each year, the faculty have the difficult task of turning away many qualified applicants for the Masters program in speech-language pathology. This is generally due to the small size of the department and faculty and the increasing difficulty of maintaining the policy of providing every graduate student a placement in both a school and a hospital. Some options for obtaining outside resources will be pursued through local contracts or grants to relieve the faculty undergraduate workload and thereby allow for an increase in enrollment of each graduate cohort.

4.5 Audiology

4.5.1 Audiology Assistant Certificate Program

A growing need in the profession of audiology is the use audiology assistant support staff. This demand is primarily caused by the lack of audiologists in the state as well as the decreasing reimbursement from third parties. There have been no specific programs to offer formal training for audiology assistants. The Department recently received approval for a new Audiology Assistant Certificate program beginning Fall 2014. The goal will be to promote the program and provide clinic resources as part of the curriculum, and then to sustain the program year to year going forward.
4.5.2 The Audiology Doctoral Degree (Au.D.)

Despite many attempts over the years to partner with other institutions in offering the Au.D., it has still not come to fruition and demand for audiologists still increases. The one program at San Diego State University as well as graduates coming from out of state only fills a small fraction of the positions available. This department will continue to pursue an Au.D. program, whether it be a joint degree with another institution, an independent stand alone program, or a consortium program, subject to legislative changes.

4.6 Office and Staff

4.6.1 Financial Resources and Management

The COMD Department currently has three sources of revenue: 1) The Operating Expense Budget from the College, 2) Funds obtained from Open University Enrollment (now PAGE), and 3) Fees collected by the Robert L. Douglass Speech-Language Clinic. Because of the high student demand for undergraduate courses, the five Summer quarter courses typically offered through PAGE yield a high enrollment and substantial resources to supplement any programs needs. In the last few years, the department has been frugal in using these funds and the Dean of the College of HHS has encouraged the department to use those funds. Therefore, access to these funds makes it feasible to fulfill the goal 4.3.1, Image Change. The funds derived from clinic services are generally used primarily to purchase clinic supplies and update assessment tools, etc.
4.6.2 New Staff

The ever increasing students and faculty necessitate more support staff. Currently the department is staffed with an administrative assistant (Cindy Mendoza), a student advisor (Marcie Mora), and one part-time student assistant. The goal will be to request more funds from the college to hire a full-time secretary/receptionist primarily to assist with the clinic. Current resources from the OE budget and PAGE funds will also be used to hire more student assistants.

5.0 SUMMARY

The vision and mission of the Department of Communication Disorders has been set forth in this Strategic Plan facilitated by specific critical success factors. Twelve goals have been developed to focus the efforts of the department to achieve its vision and mission and give direction for the next three years. Following the conversion to semesters, the accomplishment of each of these goals can then be evaluated or modified to continue the upward trajectory of the department reputation and the success of its graduates.