



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025

College of Health and Human Development
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders



PennState
College of Health and
Human Development

Communication Sciences and Disorders

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MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS

Communication is essential to all aspects of life and is fundamental to health and human development. All individuals have the right to functional communication that promotes their participation in educational, vocational, health-care, community, and social activities, across the lifespan. Through our research, teaching, and outreach services, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders collaborates with our students, our clients, their families, and community members to provide access to the knowledge, skills, and tools that can transform the participation available to individuals with diverse communication needs.

VISION STATEMENT

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders will:

- enhance high quality interdisciplinary research to advance knowledge in communication development and challenges in speech, language, hearing, and feeding/swallowing and to improve outcomes across the lifespan;
- advance and sustain the highest quality undergraduate and masters level instruction in a student-centered environment to prepare the next generation of researchers and practitioners and to promote the development of leadership skills;
- prepare doctoral students as future researchers, university faculty, and leaders in the field;
- prepare graduate students to conduct and become consumers of research, as well as competent professionals;
- provide outreach to individuals with challenges in speech, language, hearing and feeding/swallowing and their families in the University and surrounding community, as well as assist relevant private and public agencies and engage in advocacy to address the needs of those we serve;
- provide professional development to alumni and other practicing clinicians through the dissemination of cutting edge research and clinical practice; and
- promote and sustain a culture of acceptance, diversity, inclusion and global engagement among students, faculty, staff and clients.

GOAL 1 THEME: RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

GOAL 1: LEADERS IN RESEARCH

Goal 1 Description: *For the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to be an international leader in research that improves the quality of life for individuals with communication disabilities, promotes the understanding of communication-disabilities, and contributes to the knowledge of communication in individuals with typical development.*

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Enhance research in our world-leading Augmentative and Alternative Communication program through

- active involvement of all AAC faculty and AAC doctoral students in research to advance knowledge and improve outcomes for individuals who require AAC;
- the establishment of a comprehensive AAC research program with projects across the spectrum from basic research to clinical evaluation to implementation science;
- regular publication of AAC research in high quality peer reviewed journals to disseminate new knowledge and evidence-based practices;
- regular presentation of AAC research at key state, national, and international conferences to promote the translation of research to practice
- regular dissemination of research via social media to reach all stakeholders (e.g., individuals who rely on AAC, families, clinicians) and support the effective translation of research to practice; and
- regular submission of AAC grants and /or active grants in AAC with external funding to support research.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Percent of AAC faculty actively engaged in research each year
- Percent of AAC doctoral students actively engaged in research each year
- Number of research projects at each stage of development
- Number of peer-reviewed publications in high quality journals by AAC faculty including altmetric scores; number of downloads and number of citations of publications
- Number of peer-reviewed conference presentations by AAC faculty
- Number of grants submitted/in progress and amount of external funding

Action Items

- Updates on dissemination through submission of monthly impact reports
- First author on publication submit information to social media staff so that staff can disseminate the information
- Resubmission of RERC grant

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Establishment of a new national/international network of leading researchers to tackle the most complex problems in the field of AAC

Timing:

Achieve by 2023

Key Performance Indicators:

- Consortium of AAC researchers from the United States and internationally meeting virtually on a bimonthly basis to develop and conduct collaborative research projects.

Action Item:

- Development of implementation plan for initial meeting

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Enhance research in language and language disabilities across the lifespan using the tools of cognitive science and neuroscience by

- increasing the number and variety of research projects utilizing departmental EEG, eye-tracking, and fNIRS systems, and SLEIC facilities by language and language disabilities faculty and doctoral students;
- increasing the number and variety of collaborations with colleagues in neuroscience/neurology, psychology, and linguistics by language and language disabilities faculty;
- increasing the number of internal and external grant submissions to support such research projects and collaborations by language and language disabilities faculty; and,
- disseminating findings through publication in top-tier peer-reviewed journals by language and language disabilities faculty.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of projects using these technologies
- Number of individual researchers (faculty and students) and collaborations using these technologies
- Number of grants submitted and amount of external funding obtained
- Number of peer-reviewed publications in high quality journals; altmetric scores; number of downloads and number of citations of publications

Action Items:

- Submission of collaborative SSRI grant

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Continue our establishment of research programs in speech production and perception using innovative paradigms and technologies under the aegis of the Speech Core by

- submitting collaborative external and internal grant proposals by faculty;
- increasing dissemination of findings through publication in appropriate peer-reviewed journals by faculty;
- increasing the number of presentations at national and international conferences by faculty;
- increasing the number of collaborative projects among the faculty of the Speech Core; and
- increasing the involvement and training of graduate and undergraduate students in research in speech science.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of grants submitted/in progress
- Amount of external funding
- Number of peer-reviewed publications in high quality journals; altmetric scores; number of downloads and number of citations of publications
- Number of peer-reviewed conference presentations
- Number of collaborative projects
- Number of undergraduate and graduate students involved in Speech Core

Action Item:

- Submission of collaborative grant

OBJECTIVE 1.5: Continue to expand research in oral motor, somatosensory, voice, and swallowing related to aging to establish the CSD department as experts in the areas of oral motor behaviors (e.g. voice and swallowing) across the lifespan by

- developing relationships with researchers across the university to answer complex questions related to aging and oral motor behaviors;
- increasing the number of grant submissions to local, state, and national funding agencies by oral motor faculty;
- disseminating research findings through conference presentations and publications by oral motor faculty; and
- engaging with the local community to act as a resource for education and support for healthy voice and swallowing by oral motor faculty.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of collaborators and programs collaborations established with
- Number of grant submissions and amount of funding obtained
- Number of conference presentations
- Number of publications; altmetric scores; number of downloads and number of citations of publications
- Number of contacts with local community to provide expert assistance

Action Item:

- Collaborative grant submission

GOAL 2 THEME: LEARNING AND TEACHING

GOAL 2: LEADERS IN EDUCATION

Goal 2 Description: *For the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to be recognized globally as a premier Department for the education of clinicians and researchers in communication sciences and disabilities*

OBJECTIVE 2.1: To expand and ensure the superior quality of the doctoral program through the recruitment of high performing students and training them in current scientific knowledge and cutting-edge technology by

- increasing applications for doctoral training grants that will support recruitment of highly qualified doctoral students and provide opportunities for training in cutting-edge technology and current scientific knowledge; and;
- recruiting and retaining diverse students, especially those from underrepresented and underserved groups.

Timing:

2020-2022

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of applications for doctoral program per year
- Demographics of applicants and matriculated doctoral students
- Provision of opportunities for lab rotations and training in cutting-edge technologies

Action Items:

- Submission for renewal of AAC doctoral training grant
- Submission of an additional doctoral training grant
- Formalizing lab rotations as part of the doctoral curriculum
- Use of social media for active marketing of the doctoral program nationally
- Submission of application as a participating program in the Dual title Ph.D. program in Social and Behavioral Neuroscience

OBJECTIVE 2.2.: Development of a national/international network of doctoral students and early career researchers in AAC to build future research capacity in the field

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of collaborative experiences involving doctoral students and early career researchers in AAC

Action Item:

- Annual meeting with virtual component for sharing of doctoral student and early career faculty research in AAC

OBJECTIVE 2.3: To expand and ensure the superior quality of the nationally accredited master's program in speech-language pathology through recruitment of high performing students and the use of innovative teaching and learning experiences by

- increasing the number and level of qualifications of applicants to the master's program;
- expanding problem-based learning across the masters curriculum (e.g., SimuCase, MBSimP for dysphagia training);
- expanding content related to cultural and linguistic diversity in all relevant courses;
- developing interprofessional learning opportunities;
- implementing innovative teaching technologies (e.g., simulation clinic, laboratory demonstrations); and,
- involving master's students in research and translation of research to practice.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of applications for master's program per year
- Demographics of applicants and matriculated master's students
- Number and description of problem-based learning opportunities
- Number and description of interprofessional learning opportunities
- Number of master's students involved in research/presenting at conferences/co-authors on publications
- Average passing score on Praxis exam for graduating master's students

Action Items:

- Use social media for recruitment
- Apply for training grants to support recruitment of highly qualified masters students
- Development of problem-based learning simulation lab

OBJECTIVE 2.4: To continue to develop the undergraduate program through the institution of course curricula and learning experiences that will prepare our students to meet the current and future challenges of service provision to individuals with communication needs by

- expanding coursework in American Sign Language;
- developing distance-learning opportunities for undergraduate CSD courses;
- establishing undergraduate internship opportunities through the development of connections with relevant organizations; and
- expanding content related to cultural and linguistic diversity in all relevant courses; and
- recruiting and retaining diverse students, especially those from underrepresented and underserved groups including male students

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of offerings in American Sign Language
- Number of distance learning opportunities for undergraduate courses in CSD
- Number of undergraduate internship opportunities
- Portions of courses that have integrated content related to cultural and linguistic diversity
- Demographics of undergraduate majors in CSD

Action Items:

- Receive approval for search for additional FTE nontenure track faculty to teach American Sign Language courses
- Use social media to increase awareness of professional opportunities and benefits of an undergraduate education in communication sciences and disabilities

OBJECTIVE 2.5: To continue exploring the development of a doctorate of audiology program in collaboration with the Department of Otolaryngology at Penn State Hershey College of Medicine contingent upon obtaining a commitment from the university for the resources of personnel and space needed to develop a high quality research and educational program while maintaining the high quality of the existing CSD program.

Timing:

2020-2022

Key Performance Indicators:

- Approval of the plan by the Provost, the Dean, and the Graduate School
- Establishment of an agreement for the proposal plan with the College of Medicine and Department of Otolaryngology at Penn State Hershey
- Hiring of initial faculty for development of the program

Action Items:

- Develop a business plan for presentation to the Dean and Provost

GOAL 3 THEME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL 3: LEADERS IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Goal 3 Description: *For the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to serve as a source of knowledge, education, clinical expertise, and advocacy for the community in the area of communication disabilities and feeding/swallowing disabilities.*

OBJECTIVE 3.1: To serve as a source of expert clinical services to the community effecting the translation of research to evidence-based practice by

- providing outstanding services in the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic and development of new service programs;
- expanding clinical offerings to include a wider diversity of clients, especially those from underrepresented and underserved groups;
- establishing a model demonstration center for state-of-the-art AAC service delivery;
- making changes/improvements based on regular surveys of client satisfaction; and,
- collecting outcome measures for clients served by the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic to assess effectiveness of services and to serve as a foundation for research in evidence-based practices.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of clients served by the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic and diagnostic codes
- Demographics of clients served by the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic
- Number of clients referred to the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic for AAC services
- Outcome measures for clients served by the Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic

Action Items:

- Development of a client satisfaction questionnaire to obtain feedback on clinical services
- Establishing a method for recording specific outcome data for all clients

OBJECTIVE 3.2: To build and maintain collaborations with external service providers to maximize provision of service in communication disabilities and feeding/swallowing disabilities by

- maintaining links with schools, hospitals, and care communities (e.g., SCASD, Juniper Village, Hort Woods, SVRCS, Encompass Health, Mount Nittany, Foxdale Village);
- advocating for individuals with communication disabilities through partnerships with local and state community members and agencies;
- increasing visibility and support for student organizations, including NSSLHA, Sign Language Organization, Audiology Club, and NBASLH; and,
- developing and maintaining relationships with alumni, as well as adjunct and emeritus faculty.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of agreements with external service providers
- Faculty reports of advocacy activities
- Number of students who are members of CSD-related student organizations
- Number of events in collaboration with alumni

Action Items:

- Planning events in collaboration with the APG for 2020-2021
- Renewal of agreements with external service providers
- Establishment of agreements with new external service providers

OBJECTIVE 3.3: To provide professional development to alumni and other practicing clinicians through the dissemination of cutting edge research and clinical practice by

- providing opportunities for continuing education to practicing clinicians;
- providing opportunities for professional development through use of web-based platforms and similar technologies; and
- establishing a national AAC clinical network of practitioners.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Approval as an American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Continuing Education Unit Provider
- Number of continuing education opportunities provided annually
- Number of opportunities for professional development provided through technological dissemination
- Number of members in an AAC clinical network of practitioners

Action Item:

- Submit application for approval as an American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Continuing Education Unit Provider

GOAL 4 THEME: GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

GOAL 4: CONNECTING GLOBALLY

Goal 4 Description: *For the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to engage in an interconnected global society to share our knowledge with and to learn from others in the disciplinary areas of speech, language, augmentative/alternative communication, and feeding/swallowing.*

OBJECTIVE 4.1: To maintain and expand international opportunities for students (in/outbound) by

- expanding study abroad opportunities;
- exploring international clinical education opportunities;
- engaging students in internationally based research and scholarship; and,
- hosting international students for engagement in research and clinical coursework.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of new study abroad opportunities
- Number of clinical education opportunities provided within study abroad opportunities
- Number of students engaged in internationally based research and scholarship
- Number of international students engaged in research and clinical coursework from international institutions.

Action Item:

- Pursuit of opportunity for CSD undergraduates to enroll in CSD courses at the University of Canterbury under the aegis of a study abroad program

OBJECTIVE 4.2: To support faculty in engagement in international research and outreach (in/outbound) as

- co-authors on conference presentations and publications with international collaborators;
- co-authors on grant submissions with international collaborators;
- participants in international professional associations;
- visitors to the research programs of scientists from around the world;
- providers of expert clinical education internationally;
- longer term visitor scholars with international academic institutions (e.g. visiting professorships);
- hosts for international scholars for engagement in research; and
- developers of an international network of the leading researchers in AAC to address the most challenging problems in the field.

Timing:

Ongoing

Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of international collaborative activities reported by faculty on an annual basis
- Number of visits by faculty to international programs for sharing of research or clinical expertise reported by faculty on an annual basis
- Number of international scholars hosted by CSD for engagement in research

Action Item:

- Establishment of a fund to support faculty involvement in international collaborations using departmental gift funds