



DEPARTMENT OF
**COMMUNICATION SCIENCES
AND DISORDERS**

College of Arts and Sciences

**Draft of the 5- year Strategic Plan
Period of Implementation: January 2025-December 2029**

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I. Introduction

Department Overview:

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CDIS), situated within the College of Arts and Sciences at Oklahoma State University, is among the 24 distinct academic departments. Established in the 1970s, CDIS has a long-standing history as a leading clinical training program. It boasts a dedicated team of clinical and tenure-track faculty members, who are widely recognized for their expertise in research and clinical practice.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan:

A strategic plan will help our team work together toward common goals in pedagogy while educating students for real world encounters.

II. Vision and Mission

Vision Statement:

Our vision is to gain national recognition as an academic program that excels in equipping students with the skills to blend theoretical knowledge with practical applications. We will be known for our groundbreaking research in both fundamental and applied aspects of speech, language, and hearing sciences. Additionally, our commitment to evidence-based practice will enhance our service to individuals with communication disorders, ensuring they receive the highest standard of care.

Mission Statement:

We will achieve our vision by adopting a curriculum that will help students understand the benefits of infusing theoretical knowledge into their practical skills. We will empower our faculty to engage in cutting-edge research and offer equitable, effective, and compassionate care to individuals with communication disorders.

III. SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Diverse faculty for clinical and academic with an array of skills within an abundance of settings and populations.
- A strong demand for accountability and excellence within our program
- Resources available at Oklahoma State University for pursuing programmatic research
- Support from administrative leadership.
- Collaboration of current and future faculty to strengthen the pedagogical delivery of our skilled program.

Weaknesses:

- Physical space
- Limited professional relationships, collaboration and partnerships
- Marketing strategies of the current academic programs

Opportunities:

- Interdisciplinary professional relationships to grow our clinical skills and reputation.
- Demand for the profession of speech-language pathology and audiology.

Threats:

- Competing for student enrollment due to other programs in the state and neighboring states.
- Sufficient budgetary allocation

Curriculum & Instruction

Graduate Curriculum:

Goal 1: Students will be offered experiential learning opportunities that will allow them to integrate classroom knowledge to their clinic practicum.

- **Objective(s) 1.1:** The students will justify the rationale behind choosing treatment goals by incorporating theoretical knowledge on their daily treatment notes. To this end, a measurable component will be included in the students' evaluation document that will allow clinic faculty to track this.
- **Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 1.1:** Students' score for evaluating their skills in incorporating theoretical knowledge to their treatment skills as measured by the clinical faculty.
- **Action steps 1.1:** Teaching and clinic faculty will collaborate to discuss what is being taught in classroom and opportunities students can be provided in clinics to implement their theoretical knowledge.
- **Responsible party 1.1:**
 - Clinical faculty supervising the clinic practicum of graduate students.
 - Graduate teaching faculty

Goal 2: Students will be trained to engage in evidence-based practice.

- **Objective 2.1:** As a part of their assignment, students will develop a research protocol to answer a clinical question in one or more courses included in the graduate curriculum.
- **KPI 2.1:** The grades on the assignment focusing on evidence-based practice.
- **Action steps 2.1:** The faculty teaching evidence-based practice and if required faculty teaching other graduate courses need to design an assignment for students allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge on evidence-based practice.
- **Responsible parties 2.1:** Graduate faculty
- **Objective 2.2:** Students will document a combination of clinical work and coursework which demonstrates their ability to develop assessment and treatment plans which take into account 1) clinical experience, 2) a client's perspective and preferences, and 3) the scientific literature.

- **KPI 2.2.** Develop a portfolio documenting their skills acquired during their clinical practicum, CDIS 5210
- **Action Steps 2.2:** Students are trained to build a portfolio at the start of the program, students report progress on developing their portfolio at the end of each semester of 5210, portfolio is evaluated by faculty before student graduates
- **Responsible Parties 2.2:**
 - Clinic coordinator/manager completes initial training and progress reports,
 - Graduate faculty committee completes final portfolio evaluation.

Goal 3: Students will receive training to provide clinical service(s) to clients from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

- **Objective 3.1:** Students will receive classroom instruction on providing services to clients with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- **KPI 3.1:** Students' performance on classroom quizzes, exams, and assignments.
- **Action steps 3.1:** Graduate faculty will develop teaching modules on cultural and linguistic diversity that are specific to communication disorders taught in their course(s).
- **Responsible parties:** Graduate teaching faculty
- **Objective 3.2:** The clinic coordinator/manager will ensure that students will be assigned clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds or be offered virtual simulation experiences. The students' practicum supervisor will guide students on evidence-based care for clients from diverse backgrounds.
- **KPI 3.2:** Creating an additional grade-based rubric to evaluate the students' clinical skills to offer services to clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- **Action step 3.2:** Clinic faculty will receive professional development related to cultural and linguistic diversity and clinic supervision.
- **Responsible parties:** clinic coordinator/manager and clinical faculty.

Goal 4: Students will be provided opportunities to choose specialized tracks/electives that may enhance their educational experience.

- **Objective 4.1:** Restructuring the graduate curriculum to offer specialized tracks that would allow students to have core courses as well as some advanced electives based on

their areas of interest.

- **KPI 4.1:** Surveys of usefulness (graduates and employers, student enrollment numbers, and post-graduation employment trends).
- **Action steps 4.1:** To form an ad-hoc committee that would create these specialty tracks in consultation with stakeholders such as prospective employers and current graduate students.
- **Responsible Parties 4.1:** curriculum committee, graduate program coordinator, graduate program director, graduate/instructional faculty, and department head.

Goal 5: Improve size, diversity, and quality of grad applicant pool.

- **Objective 5.1:** To engage in targeted recruiting and general awareness campaigns about our graduate program.
- **KPI 5.1:** Number of diverse applied and admitted, average GRE and GPA of the students applied and admitted.
- **Action steps 5.1:**
 - Attend ASHA convention and state association conventions in Oklahoma and neighboring states to advertise our graduate program.
 - Talk to ASHA's multicultural constituency groups about our graduate program and publish it in their newsletters.
 - Engage with sovereign tribes to spread about the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology.
 - Responsible parties: grad program coordinator, grad adviser, graduate faculty, undergrad director and adviser (HS events), dept head

Undergraduate Curriculum:

Goal 6: Build/enhance academic options and student preparation for speech-language pathologist assistants (SLPA) and audiology assistant (AA) career paths.

- **Objective 6.1:** Develop clear SLPA track in the undergraduate curriculum, e.g., via a certificate, complete with all necessary coursework and externship hours required for state and ASHA (C-SLPA) certification.

- **KPI 6.1:** Number of students graduating and obtaining gainful employment in diverse work setting
- **Action steps:**
 - Ensure that all coursework can be completed online/remotely and advertise the program to distance students.
 - Promote SLPA path early in UG curriculum as alternative (but not inferior) path to SLP/grad school. Consider modifications to UG major to delineate the paths.
- **Responsible Parties:** Undergraduate advisor, undergraduate program director, externship coordinator, curriculum committee, faculty, and department head,
- **Objective 6.2:** Develop an AA track, e.g., via a minor, complete with relevant coursework and some internship/practicum hours toward ASHA certification (C-AA).
- **KPI 6.2:** Number of students enrolled, graduating, employed/certified or enrolled in Au.D. program within 1-2 years of graduation.
- **Action Steps:**
 - Determine demand, identify/ameliorate conflicts with other schools in the state, create plans of study, graduation checklists, agreements with externship supervisors, file degree paperwork.

Goal 7: Emphasize the undergrad CDIS degree as training to be a “communication scientist”.

- **Objective 7.1:** Improve student mastery of core skills: writing, information literacy, critical thinking, technical/professional communication, clinical writing, basic math, and responsible AI use.
- **Objective 7.2:** Incorporate scaffolded practice into undergraduate courses with increasing expectations across curriculum.
- **KPI 7.1&7.2:** Assessment of collective skills approximately three times during undergraduate program to demonstrate improvement.
- **Action steps 7.1&7.2:**
 - Coordinate skill needs and assignments across courses, train instructors and TAs in teaching and assessing. Train TAs annually in grading.
- **Responsible Parties:** instructional faculty, undergraduate program director, curriculum committee, and program assessment committee

Goal 8: Incorporate experiential learning into the undergraduate curriculum.

- Objective 8.1: Survey courses that can incorporate experiential learning thereby enhancing understanding and application of theoretical concepts among students.
- Objective 8.2: Ensure that the selected experiential learning activities align with the course objectives and learning outcomes.
- **KPI 8.1 & 8.2:** Formative assessment in the form of reflective essays, portfolios, or presentations as part of the assessment to encourage students to critically analyze their learning experience.
- **Action steps 8.1 & 8.2:**
 - Articulate the learning outcomes for each course and how experiential learning will contribute to the learning courses.
 - If required, faculty will redesign the course content and assessment methods to incorporate experiential learning.

Instruction

Goal 9: Enhance Scholarship of Teaching and Learning among teaching faculty

- **Objective 9.1:** Teaching faculty will attend at least 2-3 professional development events every year offered by ITLE or other conferences to be abreast of the recent trends in instruction.
- **Objective 9.2:** Teaching faculty will adopt evidence-based instructional methods that will enhance student's learning outcomes.
- **Objective 9.3:** Teaching faculty will participate in peer-review of teaching two-three times a year semester inviting department colleagues and ITLE staff.
- **KPI 9.1, 9.2 & 9.3:** Number of professional development events attended, number & quality of peer-reviews conducted, and student surveys.
- **Action steps:**
 - Towards the end of each semester, the teaching faculty will build a teaching portfolio including information on professional development opportunities attended, self-reflection on teaching, ways in which student learning outcomes were enhanced, and peer-review participation. This portfolio will be used to demonstrate competency in scholarship of teaching and learning.
- **Responsible Parties:** instructional faculty

Research

Goal 1: To enhance innovative and impactful research output.

- **Objective 1.1:** Enhance research infrastructure by investing in state-of-the-art equipment and software necessary for cutting-edge research in speech-language pathology and audiology. Additionally, secure lab spaces for housing research students and conducting experiments.
- **Objective 1.2:** Disseminate research findings in impactful peer-reviewed journals appropriate for the faculty member's area of research expertise, The average publication rate will be 1.5 publications/faculty member/year.
- **Objective 1.3:** Each faculty member will actively pursue extramural funding at least once every two years that will support research projects and infrastructure. In this context, extramural funding denotes the faculty's role as either a Principal Investigator or a Co-Principal Investigator on the grant application, which will be subjected to a rigorous peer review process by experienced professionals in the relevant field of research.
- **Objective 1.4:** Enhance scholarship of clinic supervision by having clinic faculty engage in evidence-based supervision of clinic practicum. Also, clinic faculty will be involved in pursuing professional education backed by evidence. Clinic faculty will train students to implement evidence-based practice during their clinic practicum.
- **Objective 1.5:** Encourage collaboration of clinical and research faculty on projects that will be either presented and/or published.
- **KPI 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5:** Number of peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations, availability of lab space and research equipment, number of grant applications submitted, and grant revenue, professional development events attended, students demonstrating competence in evidence-based practice.

- **Action items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5:**
 - Faculty will collaborate with faculty in the department or outside the department to seek grant funding.
 - Faculty will pursue programmatic research that will be published in impactful journals.
 - The department administration will secure additional lab spaces and purchase state-of-the art research equipment subject to funding availability.
 - Faculty will present at well-known conferences to elevate the visibility of the department.

- **Responsible parties:** Tenure-track and clinic faculty

Goal 2: The faculty of the Department of CDIS will explore the feasibility of starting a research doctoral program and advance to starting the program if conditions are viable

- **Objective 2.1:** The research faculty will form an ad-hoc committee to explore the requirements of starting a doctoral program including faculty availability, curriculum, resources, student recruitment, and student funding.
- **Objective 2.2:** Recruiting additional tenure-track faculty to support the doctoral program
- **Objective 2.3:** Faculty and department head will work together to submit application to start the doctoral program.
- **KPI 2.1, 2.2, & 2.3:** Submission of application for initiating the doctoral program, approval of the application for starting the doctoral program, number of student assistantships available, successful recruitment of tenure-track faculty, and recruitment of doctoral students that confers to requirements of the board of regents.
- **Action items 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, & 2.4:**
 - The department head will negotiate resources and faculty lines with the CAS Dean to support the doctoral program.
 - The tenure-track faculty will explore curriculum that will be offered to doctoral students.
 - Discuss ways to recruit students to the doctoral program.

Goal 3: To explore the feasibility of hiring research-intensive faculty (e.g. research assistant professor) across core areas of speech, language, and hearing to boost the department's research productivity

Objective 3.1: Conduct interviews or focus groups with current faculty to understand their perspectives on the need for research-intensive hires.

Objective 3.2: Explore the research focus of the department's faculty that need to be complemented by new research-intensive hires

Objective 3.3: Engage with CAS leadership to ensure alignment with broader college and university goals.

Objective 3.4: Develop a detailed cost analysis for hiring research-intensive faculty, including salaries, benefits, startup packages, and ongoing research support.

KPI 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 & 3.4: Boosting the research productivity of the department in key areas through successful hiring of research-intensive faculty

Outreach

Goal 1: To expand our clinical services to the community.

- **Objective 1.1:** To develop specialty clinics (e.g. reading clinic, dysphagia clinic, CAPD clinic)
- **Objective 1.2:** To offer new lines of treatments backed by evidence to clients with speech, language, swallowing, and hearing disorders.
- **Objective 1.3:** Establish contractual relationships with schools, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers to offer our services.
- **Objective 1.4:** Offer screening camps to OSU community and beyond
- **Objective 1.5:** Offer summer camps for individuals with communication disorders
- **KPI 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, & 1.5:** Number of returning and new clients receiving our services, number of contracts established, and number of screening and summer camps offered.
- **Action items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, & 1.5:**
 - The clinic manager and the medical insurance supervisor will work with the clinic staff to create resources that can be used to advertise our services to the local community.
 - The clinic staff will use social media to elevate the clinic's visibility.

Responsible Parties: Faculty, clinic coordinator/manager, clinic staff, and department head

Periodic evaluation of the strategic plan

The strategic plan will be evaluated annually at the beginning of the academic year. Data from the KPI will be used to evaluate the progress made in achieving the goals outlined in the strategic plan. Based on the evaluation findings, necessary adjustments to the strategic plan will be made, if required. This could involve setting new goals, reallocating resources, or changing timelines.
