Background

The Department of Communication Disorders developed a new strategic plan as the previous plan was developed in 2006 and it was time to develop a strategic plan for the next five years. Also, the University and all of its Schools and Colleges have been engaged in the process of developing strategic plans. So the development of the department’s strategic plan was informed by discussions and planning at both the School and University levels. At this point in time, the Department has proposed the following Vision and Mission statements and Five Strategic Goals. Comments from faculty, staff, students, and the public on the department’s strategic plan are invited and can be forwarded to proginfo@comdis.umass.edu.

Vision

The Department of Communication Disorders will be a national and international leader in conducting innovative research and providing excellence in undergraduate, masters, doctoral and continuing professional education in communication sciences and disorders.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Communication Disorders is to offer high-quality educational programs at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral levels, to advance the knowledge bases that underlie our academic, clinical, and outreach programs through the conduct of original research, and to serve our university, community, state, nation, and international communities in ways that are responsive to identified needs.
**Goal 1: Increase research productivity and external research funding.**

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<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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| 1. Increase the number of peer-reviewed publications to an average of two per year per faculty member. | • Hold half-day monthly writing retreats where all faculty members are free to come together to write in a supportive and motivating environment.  
• Hold monthly, brown-bag departmental research meetings where faculty members discuss their current research and grant activities.  
• Offer internal peer-review of papers prior to submission to journals.  
• Develop mechanisms that faculty can use to set and track semester-long research and writing goals.  
• Encourage all faculty to find an accountability partner to whom they pledge/report their research and writing activities.  
• Ensure that each junior faculty member has access to a departmental research mentor.  
• Advocate for the continued reduction in course- and service loads for junior faculty in the pre-tenure years. | The number of peer-reviewed publications per year, averaged over a three-year period.  
The number of unique peer-reviewed publications per year, averaged over a three-year period. |
| 2. Increase the number of unique peer-reviewed publications to an average of one per year per faculty member. | | |
| 3. Increase external research grant activity to the level where each faculty member has external research funding each year. | • Hold half-day monthly writing retreats where all faculty members are free to come together to write in a supportive and motivating environment.  
• Hold monthly, brown-bag departmental research meetings where faculty members discuss their current research and grant activities.  
• Offer internal peer-review of grant proposals prior to submission to funding agencies.  
• Develop mechanisms that faculty can use to set and track semester-long research and writing goals.  
• Encourage all faculty to find an accountability partner to whom they pledge/report their research and writing activities. | The number of research grant proposals submitted per year.  
The number of grants awarded each year.  
The number of faculty members with external research funding per year. |
| 4. Develop a more robust research culture within the Department. | • Encourage faculty to contact the office of grant proposal development at the early stages of the grant application process.  
• Increase faculty participation in school- and campus-wide programs that support grant development.  
• Encourage faculty to make use of the available grant reader assigned to the SPHHS.  
• Ensure each junior faculty member has access to a departmental research mentor.  
• Advocate for the continued reduction in course- and service load for junior faculty in the pre-tenure years. | The increase in faculty and student ratings on a newly-developed “research environment survey.” (Results obtained at end of each year will be used to plan activities for following year.)  
The increase in research productivity as evidenced by an increase in the number of peer-reviewed publications, grant applications, and grant awards generated by all members of the Department. |
**Goal 2:** Strengthen and expand our academic programs to enhance learning experiences and attract the best qualified students.

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| 1. Grow faculty to expand and strengthen specialization areas. | - Raise funds through various grant mechanisms to hire research faculty.  
- Take advantage of Special Initiative Hires, Commonwealth College joint appointments, and Cluster Hires when they become available.  
- Develop online undergraduate courses. | The number of full-time faculty.  
The number of part-time, adjunct, and on-line faculty. |
| 2. Enhance connections between classroom learning and professional practice. | - Utilize simulated learning experiences through case studies that target KASA requirements, with ongoing review and coordination by the Curriculum Committee.  
- Expand the DVD assessment and treatment library, especially for adult clients.  
- Expand the use of peri-practicum pedagogy in which students move from theory to simulated practice in all appropriate communication disorders courses.  
- Increase off-campus placements for students.  
- Expand the use of web-based resources. | The number of DVDs in our library.  
The number of simulated learning experiences, peri-practicum pedagogy activities, and number of faculty using web-based resources.  
The number of off-campus placements. |
| 3. Increase post-graduation options for undergraduate students | - Strengthen advising procedures for undergraduate students to identify students at risk for failure.  
- Encourage double majors that will complement speech-language pathology and audiology and expand career opportunities.  
- Provide students with specific information and guide them to courses that are needed for the Masters degree in Education and an Applied Behavioral Analysis certificate.  
- Formalize and publicize the Speech-Language Pathology Assistants track.  
- Request post graduation information from our students to track the types of employment opportunities they have. | Development of new procedures to identify and counsel at-risk students.  
Development of information sheets for double majors, Masters in Education, ABA certification, and the SLP-A track.  
Completion of a survey of our undergraduate alumni. |
4. Increase University and community awareness of the department and of faculty specialty areas.

- Increase the visibility of faculty member specialty areas through the development of individual faculty website/blogs that can be linked to the department website.
- Establish departmental lab websites and links to these from the department’s website.
- Enlist the help of students in updating the website.
- Use Facebook and other social media to increase awareness of the department.
- Increase participation of faculty on University-wide committees.
- Publicize faculty, staff, and student awards and accomplishments through available University mechanisms (e.g., “In The Loop”, University homepage)

| The number of individual faculty and lab websites/blogs. |
| The number of postings about the department on Facebook and other social media outlets. |
| The number of “hits” on our department website. |
| The number of faculty serving on University-wide committees. |
| The number of postings about our faculty, staff, and students’ awards and accomplishments. |
### Goal 3: Increase public and private partnerships to benefit our academic and research programs.

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| 1. Engage communities in participatory research aimed at the development of effective interventions targeting communication disorders | • Develop and expand support groups and clinical groups as a mechanism to identify research subjects.  
• Participate in the Springfield Holyoke Alliance for Research and Engagement (SHARE).  
• Organize community activities such as the Aphasia Walk.  
• Increase membership on boards of local organizations (e.g., HCOP, Willie Ross School for the Deaf).  
• Publicize the above activities via press releases to local and UMass media (TV, radio, newspapers). | The number of support and clinical groups offered by The Center for Speech, Language, and Hearing.  
The number of people participating in support group meetings and community activities per year.  
The number of faculty and staff serving on boards of local organizations.  
The number of press releases in local and UMass media. |
| 2. Increase the number of community partnership projects each year | • Increase the number of off-campus graduate placement sites.  
• Increase undergraduate activities in the community via increased enrollment in Comm-Dis 398 (Undergraduate Field Experience) and Comm-Dis 496 (Independent Study).Develop courses that integrate community activities.  
• Incorporate service learning as a part of undergraduate courses, when feasible.  
• Meet with community groups to identify their needs.  
• Increase participation in the UMass-Baystate collaborative. | The total number of placement sites available for undergraduate and graduate students.  
The number of undergraduates participating in community activities via Comm-Dis 398 and Comm-Dis 496.  
The number of meetings with community groups.  
The number of faculty members |
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<th>3. Increase partnerships with health and human services agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry groups, and communities in need, to identify and address communication disorders</th>
<th>• Expand the number and type of screening programs offered by the Center for Language, Speech and Hearing (e.g., mild TBI in UMass and high school athletes, speech and hearing in preschoolers and the elderly).</th>
<th>The total number of screening services provided. The range of screening programs offered.</th>
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<td>4. Increase visibility of the department in the community</td>
<td>• Increase the number of presentations to community groups and speech-language-hearing professionals by UMass ComDis faculty and staff. • Increase the number of UMass faculty presentations at our Leadership Conference.</td>
<td>The number of presentations and appearances.</td>
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### Goal 4: Increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and our student body and increase cultural competence/understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity.

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| 1. Increase racial, ethnic, linguistic, SES, and gender diversity of graduating majors and graduate students. | - Participate in Holyoke Alliance activities to attract diverse students.  
- Advertise the Diversity course to undergraduates in the major.  
- Explore the possibility of additional sections of Comm-Dis 210, which fulfills the Diversity Gen-Ed requirement.  
- Publicize our program to undergraduates at HBCU undergraduate programs and Universities  
- Offer a department activity for undeclared majors with targeted invitation mailings to members of ALANA and other diverse campus groups.  
- Support and maintain the International Teaching Assistants program, including Conversation Partners (which increases the cultural-linguistic competence of the undergrad and grad students who participate).  
- Develop materials for local TV stations that are shown in the UMass residence halls.  
- Participate in faculty dinners in the residence halls on campus to attract more a diverse student population. | The racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of graduating undergraduate majors and graduate students.  
The number of faculty and students participating in activities listed under Strategies. |
| 2. Increase cultural sensitivity, competencies, and understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity of students and other individuals. | - Advertise Comm-Dis 210 especially to diverse groups such as ALANA and in residence halls on campus.  
- Include a diversity component in every course (when feasible), explicitly listed as a learning objective on the syllabus.  
- Develop material for local TV stations that are shown in the UMass residence halls.  
- Examine the current level of diversity content and infusion in our courses.  
- Evaluate student competency in the area of cultural and | The racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of graduating undergraduate majors and graduate students.  
The number of our courses that include a diversity component. |
| 3. Increase racial, ethnic, linguistic, SES, and gender diversity of faculty and staff | • Support faculty research and connections that maintain and enhance further our reputation in AAE.  
• Actively seek faculty and staff who are bilingual/bicultural, especially those with connections to more diverse communities by targeting HBCUs and universities known for graduating more diverse groups.  
• Establish links on our Department’s website to NSBLHA and other ASHA sites that may attract minority groups. | The number of faculty and staff based on gender, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and SES diversity. |
**Goal 5: Strengthen and expand our clinical programs to enhance learning experiences and better serve the community.**

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| 1. Expand our SLP and AUD placements. | • Extend summer placements to graduate students’ hometowns or other optimal location, and SKYPE the liaison meetings.  
• Extend placements to include tele-supervision and, where possible, contracted telepractice services to area schools and other settings. | The number of placement sites both within and outside of our immediate geographic area.  
The number of contracted telepractice sites. |
| 2. Increase the range of SLP and AUD clinical services offered. | • Expand our clinical offerings to include treatment groups such as toddler groups, reading groups, aphasia group, adult cognitive group, and parent support groups.  
• Expand our clinical offerings to include a wider variety of clients.  
• Explore new opportunities for expanding our clinical services (e.g., telepractice, contracts with local schools). | The number of services offered.  
The types of services offered.  
The number of treatment groups conducted per year.  
The number of patients utilizing each service. |
| 3. Increase our clinic revenues. | • Examine our fee schedule to assure that it is comparable with local and regional area rates.  
• Identify opportunities to expand our clinical contracts.  
• Schedule meetings with representatives from all health insurance companies to re-negotiate our reimbursement rates.  
• Re-examine and revise scheduling patterns in the clinic to increase efficiency. | The total number of active contracts.  
The number of clients serviced by our graduate students and supervisors.  
Increase in clinic revenue. |
| 4. Increase supervisory staffing hours. | • Provide supervisory staffing patterns sufficient to allow for the development of new programs and experiences for our students. | The number of active supervisors. |
| 5. Increase student exposure to new evaluation and treatment instrumentation | • Evaluate our current equipment inventory and determine priorities for new equipment acquisition.  
• Explore creative mechanisms for purchase of new equipment (e.g., combined research, teaching, and clinical use of certain equipment). | Establishment of a prioritized wish list for equipment.  
Increase in equipment inventory. | The total number of supervisory hours logged. |