

**Arkansas State University  
Department of Communication Disorders  
Five Year Strategic Plan  
2021-2025**

**Preface:**

The Department of Communication Disorders began the current strategic planning process by comparing our departmental mission statement to the mission statements of the College of Nursing and Health Professions University and Arkansas State University. We also reviewed the 2020 Certification and Membership Standards of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the standards for maintaining the accreditation of our Master's in Communication Disorders degree program awarded by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. The goals, objectives, and strategies articulated in this strategic plan were designed for two specific purposes: 1) to guide the Department's efforts in addressing issues that have the ability to better prepare our students for professional practice in the dynamic environment of professional service delivery, and 2) to allow periodic revision as program and student needs, challenges, aspirations, resources, and assets change.

**Arkansas State University's Mission:**

Arkansas State University *educates* leaders, *enhances* intellectual growth, and *enriches* lives. (ASU =  $e^3$ )

**College of Nursing and Health Professions Mission:**

The mission of the College of Nursing and Health Professions is to provide quality education to students, graduates and health care providers in a variety of health disciplines. To fulfill this mission, we foster collaboration with our larger community in education, research and service. Recognizing its unique position in the lower Mississippi Delta region, the College provides educational programs that are designed to promote lifelong learning based on the expressed needs of its varied constituencies. The College assesses the attainment of this mission in terms of the contributions its graduates make to health and health care in the Delta region and beyond.

**Department of Communication Disorders Mission:**

The mission of the Department of Communication Disorders is to prepare competent speech-language pathologists to provide ethical, professional services to a broad spectrum of individuals with communication disorders. In addition, students are trained to work with other professionals in a wide variety of service delivery settings.

**Department of Communication Disorders Core Values:**

- **Student-Centered:** The Communication Disorders faculty and staff are committed to undergraduate and graduate education, inquiry, and service in order to meet students' changing needs.

- **Learning-Centered:** We nurture the acquisition of knowledge and skills by integrating teaching, research, and interactive learning to promote continuous student improvement as measured by systematic formative and summative assessments.
- **Excellence:** We commit to the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence for faculty and students.
- **Diversity:** We embrace all dimensions of diversity realizing that mutual respect for individuality and the inclusion of all are vital for both personal and departmental success.
- **Integrity:** We are committed to high standards of character and integrity as we prepare students to become ethical professionals in communication disorders.

**Goal 1:** Encourage and increase undergraduate student research

- **Objective 1:** Develop incentives for capable undergraduate students to become engaged in collaborative research with faculty members

*Target Date for Completion:* Annually

*Persons Responsible:* All CD faculty members

- **Strategy 1:** Move CD 4873 Research Problems in Communication Disorders to the senior fall semester so that undergraduate students have time to conduct research projects to completion.
- **Strategy 2:** Employ the use of Honors sections of courses to provide faculty-guided assistance to undergraduate students as they collaborate on potential research ideas or projects with faculty members
- **Strategy 3:** Through active faculty mentorship, encourage and assist undergraduates in the development and dissemination of collaborative research projects at available on-campus and off-campus venues, including CREATE@STATE.

**Goal 2:** Increase publications from graduate thesis projects

Objective 1: Provide a plan for thesis to publication within the 19-month graduate program.

*Target Date for Completion:* Annually

*Persons Responsible:* All CD faculty members and perspective/declared thesis students

- **Strategy 1: Follow a Step-by-step plan**  
**Step 1:** Each faculty member develops a set list of research topics or research questions for student inquiry.

**Step 2:** Utilize the set list of research topics in the undergraduate and graduate research classes. Students must choose from provided topics/research questions. Each faculty member must supply a specified # of research questions/topics. Instructors for these classes ensure equity of topic division (Faculty research interest) amongst students.

**Step 3:** Faculty mentor and thesis student develops Intro and Methods sections during the fall semester.

**Step 4:** Thesis student collects data during spring semester

**Step 5:** Faculty mentor and thesis student prepares results and discussion sections in summer

**Step 6.** Faculty mentor and thesis student submit manuscript for publication in fall

Objective 2: Publish 3 graduate thesis projects in peer reviewed journals

*Target Date for Completion:* 2025

*Persons Responsible:* All CD faculty members and perspective/declared thesis students

**Goal 3:** Increase diversity of students at the undergraduate and graduate level

Objective 1: Develop a diversity plan within the department to target recruitment and retention of diverse undergraduate and graduate students.

*Target Date for Completion:* Annually

*Persons Responsible:* CD Faculty

- **Strategy 1:** Form a CD Diversity Committee to examine, discuss, and determine ways to increase diversity within the undergraduate and graduate student population the CD program.
- **Strategy 2:** Actively recruit from on-campus organizations which offer more diverse students.
- **Strategy 3:** Develop a student-centered mentoring group to assist all students within the program who are struggling either within the program or within particular courses.

Objective 2: Work with members of the Office of Diversity and the Multicultural Center to improve departmental knowledge and efforts regarding diverse students.

*Target Date for Completion:* Spring 2022

*Person responsible:* Amy Shollenbarger and Christina Akbari

- **Strategy 1:** Invite speakers to faculty meetings to help the department with better recruiting strategies and interactions with diverse students
- **Strategy 2:** Visit with faculty from other universities to learn what they are doing for recruiting diverse students in their CD programs.
- **Strategy 3:** Contact ASHA for help with increasing the diversity of our students in the undergraduate and graduate program.

**Goal 4:** Increase faculty research productivity as it leads to tenure, promotion, merit pay increases, departmental identity/status, and contributes to the scientific knowledge base of the profession

Objective 1: Mentor pre-tenured faculty

- **Strategy 1:** Assign a tenured faculty in the department to a pre-tenured faculty.
- **Strategy 2:** Each tenured and pre-tenured faculty pair will meet monthly to address progress on PRT requirements, assist with research and publications, and review service opportunities.
- **Strategy 3:** Each tenured and pre-tenured faculty pair will work together to submit publications in peer-reviewed journals.
- **Strategy 4:** Each faculty pair will work together on submitting presentations to state and national conferences.

*Target Date for Completion:* Annually

*Persons responsible:* CD Faculty

**Goal 5:** Explore and develop an undergraduate Speech-Language Pathology Assistant program

Objective 1: Complete a needs analysis for a SLPA program

*Target Date for Completion:* August 2021

*Persons responsible:* Arianne Pait and Amy Shollenbarger

Objective 2: Develop a course plan for a SLPA program

*Target date:* August 2021

*Persons responsible:* Amy Shollenbarger and Arianne Pait

Objective 3: Submit new program approval for to undergraduate curriculum committee.

*Target date:* January 2022

Persons responsible: Amy Shollenbarger

Objective 4: Complete all undergraduate bulletin updates needed for the SLPA program.

Target date: Spring 2022

Person responsible: Amy Shollenbarger

Objective 5: Begin SLPA program Fall 2022

Target date: Fall 2022

Persons responsible: CD faculty

**Goal 6:** Develop an American Sign Language certificate

Objective 1: Complete new course proposals for the ASL Certificate

- **Strategy 1:** Develop an American Sign Language 3 course and submit new course proposal to the undergraduate curriculum committee for approval.
- **Strategy 2:** Develop a Deaf Culture course and submit new course proposal to the undergraduate curriculum committee for approval for approval.
- **Strategy 3:** Submit American Sign Language certificate approval form to the undergraduate curriculum committee and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

Target date: December 2021

Persons responsible: Amy Shollenbarger

Objective 2: Hire a full-time ASL instructor

Target date: Fall 2022

Persons responsible: Amy Shollenbarger