

Strategic Planning Annual Report (SPAR) 2018-19

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

1. Department Accomplishments

a) Expanded the MA program

Part I: We implemented the second year of the curriculum and program changes in the MA program. With a few minor tweaks, it went well. Made changes to the BA program, including moving phonetics to the sophomore level so students can begin COMD courses earlier and complete the program earlier. This was important because we also made plans to implement the Accelerated MA program in the spring of 2020. I sent out surveys to look at interest level and then held an orientation meeting for freshman-juniors to explain the program and the entry requirements. From the data collected via survey and follow-up it appears we may have 6-8 students who qualify and are highly interested. I tracked the course sequence, and found they will at various times be taking courses with three different fall cohorts and thus we are making plans to advise them regularly and assure they don't fall through the cracks. We also need to keep them in various counts at admissions to stay close to our target of 40 students in each cohort. Only one faculty person is unhappy, complaining that we are "moving too fast" but the rest are excited about the potential to retain some of our strongest students.

We now have many MA students going through the program on different schedules a) regular fall admits with a COMD background, b) Fasttrackers who enter with no or some COMD prerequisites and will spend an extra semester or two before beginning the grad courses, c) spring admits for LSU students graduating in December, d) December grads for those who extended their program, and soon e) accelerated MA students. I appointed several different advisors for the various groups and worked myself with the December students who were graduating. The graduating students need advising to transition from school to the workforce, including information on ASHA Certification, state licensure, and getting a job/what to expect in an interview. This has long been a problem and complaint of students. If we give them the information at the beginning of the semester, they forget it by the time they need it. If we give it at the end, many have already located jobs and are unhappy they did not have the info before they had to figure it out themselves. The middle is difficult because they are in externships all over the city and we can never find a common date. So this spring I made three PANOPTO programs that they can view any time and as many times as they want. Student feedback was extremely positive so we shall see if it solves the problem. Perhaps we can put other topics on PANOPTO as well.

Part II: We attempted to recruit a new faculty member this year and last without luck. Our first of the six assistant professors hired completed his tenure and promotion review (we are waiting for results) and I am sending out the documents on the second tomorrow. Three of the others were successful in their third year reviews. The mentor program we established this year works well. I made an excel file showing when each person is required or eligible for promotions, with the same mentor throughout. Following the third year review, the mentor will also be responsible for nominating their mentee for a teaching or other award. Three of the six have already received highly deserved teaching awards. We have hired a remarkable group.

The new assistant professors have made excellent strides. Dr. Chung completed her New Investigators Research Grant from our national organization in December (\$10,000), and was awarded a Board of Regents grant (\$187,692). She and Dr. Gibson were awarded a \$45,692 Tech fee grant. She has three publication in review from top tier journals, and one in preparation, all as first or sole author. Dr. Duncan has a BoR grant (\$194,961) and is a founding member of the MINDS brain science speaker series. She published two first or second author papers in

top-tier journals, Our new hire, Dr. Haebig submitted a BoR grant that was recommended but not funded last year and resubmitted a version this year. She published three articles, one first author, in top-tier journals. Dr. Gibson has twelve articles published in top journals, all first or sole author, with one other submitted. He is submitting his documents for promotion and tenure. Dr. Hartzheim submitted five papers this year, all under review. We also have on professor recommended for full professor and another going up this year. So our associate professors are moving up on schedule as well.

Part III: We increased the number of MA students and diversity. Last year we increased our class size to 33 first year MAs (compared to 24 in the 2nd year graduation class). This year we have 34 acceptances for the 2018-19 admits and expect to fill our quota of 40 with spring admits. This year we lost nine of our top students to New Orleans (their hometown) but hope to keep a few of them with the accelerated MA program and change the culture of returning home after the BA (NO does not have an UG program). Last year we began to work on a prediction formula to provide us a better projection of how many students we need to invite in order to attain a class size of 40. This year will give us a third year of data to help us predict based on in/out-of-state, GPA, GRE, home town and other factors. We had more interest from Southern University students and admitted one so I hope the student does well to quell the concerns of several faculty members who are concerned about the weaknesses in their UG program. We are using GRE minority norms to make decisions.

We are also launching a new Speech-Language Pathology Aide program (SLP-A) starting this summer. These are students who did not make it into graduate school and want to work as Aides for a few years to gain some experience. To do so, they need to complete a minimum of 100 hours (up to 225 hours) of clinical practicum under university supervision. We are piloting the program with three students this summer and will expand if it is successful.

- b) We are implementing new one hour professional practice courses for MA and PhD students. These will cover topics that typically “fall between the cracks” of academic coursework and clinical practicum for MAs, and professional issues for PhD students.
- c) We continued to improve the use of technology in all aspects of the program. Our students are using the HIPPA compliant Raintree system for all clinical records. This is a HIPAA compliant system for managing all clinical records for the Speech and Hearing Clinic. All of our MA students now use SimuCase, or simulated assessment and therapy case examples that are used in classrooms and individually by students to prepare for new clients; a “brain lab” with physical and virtual models of the brain to manipulate and learn neuroanatomy; a state-of-the-art AAC (communication boards) lab enabling all of our students to learn to program and use the best technology with disabled clients; an NDI WAVE System enabling speech movements to be recorded with precision for people who stutter or who have neurogenic speech disorders, most thanks to tech fee or IIC grants. We implemented our first Teletherapy, or the application of telecommunications technology to the delivery of speech language pathology services and are looking for ways to expand this program.

These improvements in technology provide our students with a broad range of experiences with the most current diagnostic and therapy tools available, making them tech savvy and highly competitive for the best jobs. The technology is also highly effective for recruiting the best students to our MA and PhD programs.

We wrote a tech fee grant and received partial funding to put multimedia stations into the new seminar spaces on fourth floor. This will make this space infinitely more usable.

I organized a large project to make our online materials accessible to those with disabilities. I recruited 30 UGs to work on PowerPoints, Word, pdf and other documents and worked with IT to set up a OneDrive site where students could download, work on and return materials to faculty. I created screen shot by screen shot instructions for

making files accessible and held training sessions. It was a marathon effort to set up, but the UG volunteers made a remarkable dent in updating our many online files.

- d) We produced a high level of publications and dissemination of research. A total of 29 articles and book chapters were published, All 11 graduate faculty members published, for an average of 2.6 manuscripts. Sixteen of these were first or sole author; 8 were second author. In addition, 13 additional articles are in review, for a total of 42 articles. The number of articles in preparation is 12.

All 11 grad faculty also disseminated research at conferences, including 11 international venues and 27 national for a total of 28 major conference presentations. Twelve state conference papers were published. In addition, our faculty reviewed papers from 10 different journals as well as reviewing grant (5 national) and conference (24 national) proposals. Seven faculty submitted substantial BoR proposals, with 6 funded. Five other large grant proposals were not funded. A range of smaller grant proposals were also funded from national organizations as well as LSU programs such student impact and tech fees, and several faculty completed 2nd or 3rd years of three-year awards. Twenty two travel, Aspire, or summer research grants were also awarded.

Our undergraduate participated at a high level in research. Seven studies were presented at LSU Discover Day. Brooke Fourcade and Emily Neck earned 1st place in the LSU Discover Day Poster Presentation - Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts Division category and then Emily and Neck and Brooke Fourcade earned 3rd place in the Poster Presentation - Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts Division category. Five other undergraduates completed research projects affiliated with labs. In addition, 37 undergraduates volunteer time in faculty research labs, including running subjects, preparing materials, and entering data.

Five MA students completed theses, presenting their papers at conferences. In addition, we had eleven doctoral students actively engaged in research. Two successfully defended their dissertations in the fall and two completed general exams. Five of the doctoral students began in the fall of 2017 and one in 2018 with two mentored by assistant professors. This was a result of our goal this year to expand the doctoral program and the importance more junior faculty to take on this role (we only have 2 full and 3 associate professors). We have been very successful in recruiting minorities into the doctoral program. Five of Dr. Oetting's students since 2010 have been African American, four of Dr. Norris', and Dr. Hoffman's final student, or about 36% of our recent candidates. Two of our new recruits are Hispanic. We have had a representation of African American doctoral students since 1986.

- d) We actively recruited minority students and males into UG, MA, and Ph.D. programs, and 5 new African American students joined our MA program this year (compared to 2 last year). We had three applicants from Southern University. We graduated one African American doctoral student. We established a recruiting booth at the National Black Speech Language Hearing Association (NBSHA) to recruit minority students at the BA, MA and PhD levels. We also established the only chapter of NBSHA in this state and 4-state region in cooperation with Southern University.

Once recruited students are here, we are developing policies designed to incorporate them into study groups, department activities including NSSHLA, and forming a student advisory panel to generate ideas for increasing and retaining minorities.

- e) Program Evaluation has been a relative weakness for our department. We receive exit surveys from MA students, BA students inconsistently, clients in the clinic, and some from off-campus supervisors. However, we are very sporadic about getting data from PhD students, employers, schools, and other consumers. This year I created a program evaluation committee and pushed to assure the surveys were completed and sent to various groups. I look forward to receiving their report. We created an ad hoc schools committee to address issues such as the level of readiness they expect from students who do a school-based practicum etc. to work to address some concerns they expressed in a previous survey.

2. Major challenges and steps taken or planned to address them.

- a) Space has been an issue as well as flooding and construction for decades. This year we acquired, thanks to HSS, 16 beautifully renovated rooms of space for labs, PhD student offices, and projects such as Tiger Adapted Toys. The space was also furnished. We held an open house and also had potential incoming freshman tour the facilities and learn about COMD. We are infinitely grateful to HSS for investing in us. We flooded twice, but hope the fire marshall will approve the new Monster Walls that Dr. Sutherland's husband (civil engineer) donated to the department. We had zero water in the building in the most recent torrential downpour.
- b) The growing pains that go along with an expanding program. We have been in a state of constant change in reallocation of office and lab spaces, curriculum changes, technology changes, and finding sufficient clinical practicum sites for larger cadres of students. These things are both exciting and exhausting.
- c) Continued relatively low salaries to award the amazing efforts of the faculty, especially the lowest salaries for clinical faculty in the state, SEC, and probably the nation. We implemented ad comp stipends of \$4000 per semester for supervisors on a rotating basis generated by contracts from external sites to begin in fall 2018. This began with our three most senior supervisors for one semester the first year, with plans to gradually expand this to include all supervisors both semesters in successive years. We are also implementing taking insurance payments in the clinic on a small level (one company) beginning in 2019-20 as another source of salary supplements. One vocal faculty member opposes this program.
- d) On a related note, we are losing some of our top faculty to higher paying jobs, especially clinical instructors. We lost Wendy Jumonville last year who was an amazing clinical director and manager of clinic issues. She was hired by a national company to coordinate hearing testing in hospitals. This year we lost Courtney Gonsoulin who had the only university-based pediatric feeding and swallowing clinic in the state to Ochner's and the Health Science Center. We also lost Becky Gouvier, and this week learned that Keylonda Wheeler has been hired to coordinate telepractice services for a national company. These individuals love working with students and LSU, but can't turn down the salaries they are offered.
- e) Office accounting and budgeting has been a big headache in the department for years. This year Marla worked with us to set up more understandable categories of expenses but she didn't have time to generate regular reports and so we still don't have a good system. HSS enabled us to hire a full-time person and it was wonderful. So much was accomplished and the teamwork in the office was amazing. However, she has resigned and we are again looking for a replacement.
- f) HSS has been amazingly supportive and helped in every way possible. Thank you

3. Program review

Our next program review is scheduled for 2021

4. Planning for Upcoming Year

Priorities and resource allocation

- a) Move faculty forward on the promotion and tenure ladder. One associate should be notified of attaining full professor and another is submitting a portfolio for promotion to full professor; one assistant professor should be notified of promotion and another is submitting promotion and tenure documents this year and another person

next; two assistants completed their 3rd year reviews, and two new assistants are on track. It is important to advance people in that we currently have only 2 full professors and 3 associates.

- a. Resource Allocation: A calendar profiling the dates each faculty member needs to complete the steps for promotion and tenure as well as the assigned faculty mentor has been developed.
- b) Continue to support all faculty who are currently meeting or exceeding goals for obtaining grants, publishing articles, and disseminating information at conferences, and increase external grant funding, including NIH Small Grant program (R03) and larger collaborative program grants.
 - a. Resource Allocation: A reduction of department service is awarded for those with grants over \$50,000 with increasing reduction with size of grant.
- c) Recruit and retain highly qualified undergraduate students. Several years ago we had very large UG classes but a third didn't belong in the program and would not be accepted to grad programs anywhere. We increased our minimum GPA, added statistics to our UG requirements proactively (it has now become one of the national standards), and changed our science requirement to chemistry or physics which better prepares our students for our courses such as acoustics and neuroanatomy. We are once again getting large classes (80+) of much stronger students. We have higher than average retention in both our UG and Grad programs
Resource Allocation: We retain students first through advising. This includes both large group and individual meetings. Our UG advisor has implemented online scheduling so students can find a convenient time, an email group of all 300+ that enables here to keep in touch regularly via emails, and a department Twitter with regular updates regarding advising issues. She advises approximately 40 students individually per week.

When students start to struggle we have the IIC funded tutoring program. We also have very strong and caring teachers, several of whom have won teaching awards. We have service-learning courses where students work with either children or adults in the community.

We also have a very active National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association with monthly meetings. The students engage in fund raisers to sponsor trips to conferences as well as activities for fun and bonding. They also do community service, and are very active as peer ambassadors during student recruitment. We have also started a minority chapter.

We have large numbers of students who volunteer for research labs (30+) where they work very closely with graduate faculty members, and several who complete research projects.

- d) Implement our expanding MA program plan. This year we implemented an expanded MA program, recruiting a target of 34-35 fall admits to the MA program and 5-6 spring admits. We implemented and revised an advising and tracking plan to assure all students progress through the MA program on schedule, including 2 cadres of fall admits, 1 cadre of spring admits, and 1 cadre of FastTrackers who are admitted but who need to complete undergraduate prerequisites. We have worked hard to improve our advising program. We have one position for an new assistant professor unfilled.
- e) We also developed a plan for expanding clinical practicum sites to accommodate a greater number of MA students and served the new Key Academy satellite program, and added School for the Deaf and articulation therapy experiences in EBR schools. We had a remarkably smooth roll-out of our new plan for courses this year and will continue to implement plans for further growth in successive years.

Resource Allocation: We have an ad hoc schools committee to work on strengthening this relationship.

- f) Work to better coordinate academic course and clinic experiences. One of the biggest challenges in communication disorders programs is to coordinate what is taught in class with actual practice in the clinic. Students are confused when they are taught something different in class than they experience in their actual practicum. At the same time, there is research evidence supporting a wide range of approaches and there is not a

single way to provide treatment for a specific disorder. With all of our new faculty, favored theories and approaches are changing and we need to engage in discourse to enable faculty and supervisors to come to a consensus on approaches that will be implemented. Further, feedback from employers of our graduates are overwhelmingly positive but have pointed out some weaknesses that need to be addressed. Coordinated efforts are needed from both courses and practicum to improve the competencies of our graduates.

Resource Allocation: We formed committees to examine and evaluate student feedback, updated our Strategic Plan, and established strategies for receiving more feedback from employers and alumni.

- g) Increase the number of PhD and MA stipends. We have 10 doctoral students with 2 scheduled to graduate by December 2019. As our program grows, we need to find sources of funding for doctoral students. We also lose many of the top MA students we admit because they receive partial or full funding at other programs. We need to work with HSS foundation program to generate funds for students.

Resource Allocation: Charts have been developed showing the distribution of stipends, sources of funding, and the four year cycles of funding. We plan to use surveys to determine what attracts high performing students to our MA and PhD programs and then use these results to improve our candidate pool. We also plan to emphasize to UG the importance of maintaining high GPAs from the earliest courses.

Priorities for Fund Raising

- a) We received our first (future) large endowment from a former student this year. It will provide stipends to students. For the three years we requested assistance from the foundation, but other than an initial meeting we have not heard back from them/
- b) We established an alumni association including an alumni donation page. A retired faculty member agreed to serve as the founding member and chair but has had health issues. To date we have a mission statement, have established a COMD Friends and Alumni Donor Account through the LSU Foundation (Lori Pilley), and have initiated talks with the HSS contact for the Foundation to discuss alumni fund raising. We are really unsure how to launch this association.

Planned changes to strategic plan

The department generated a 2025 Strategic Plan. Among the changes are

- Increase interdepartmental and interagency collaborative research
- Increase student involvement in research at all levels
- Increase student knowledge and use of evidence-based methods and technology in coursework, research, and clinical practice.
- Increase student understanding of professional and ethical issues
- Provide annual faculty continuing education in cultural competence
- Increase community partnerships to help guide collaborative research projects
- Increase interprofessional and community-based education, clinical training, and clinical services.
- Increase advocacy efforts by educating the public and legislative leaders about communication and swallowing disorders.

Overall statement of status or “well being”

We have six, hopefully soon to have seven, new assistant professors hired in the last six years and are currently back to the size our department was twelve years ago. The new faculty are technologically adroit and have ambitious research agendas. We have received beautifully renovated new space we have been successful in obtaining new equipment in addition to the generous HSS start up packages so that each person has a state-of-the-art lab and private office. All 11 graduate faculty are publishing and we have an increasing level of grant efforts. We have nearly doubled our MA class and established several satellite programs in the community where all of these new students can obtain the required 400 hours of clinical practicum. We implemented and hope to expand innovative new clinical experiences such as teletherapy (remote therapy delivered via live video connection), and are using part of our space to create an adult assisted learning center to treat clients with strokes or TBI. We have exciting community engagement projects such as the Tigers Adapted Toys (TAT) lab that adapts electronic cars and other toys for children with cerebral palsy and other disorders so they can play using switches (a joint effort with the electrical engineering program). Our teaching evaluations are very high and we have innovative practices including clicker tracking responses and flipped classrooms. The curriculum has been restructured and faculty were assigned the classes they wanted to teach and at times that enable them to maximize their research and writing. The doctoral program is thriving and we have numerous undergraduates involved in research.

Our faculty appears to be excited about our program and LSU despite the long periods between salary increases. Our newest faculty member reported that one of the primary reasons for choosing LSU was the positive attitude of the faculty and overall satisfaction with their teaching assignments and research support. Our new recruit emailed, “Thank you for providing me with such a wonderful visit this week. The caliber of your faculty and your facilities is really astounding. Most impressive, however, is the collegial and kind environment that you have established. I have never landed in a new place, and immediately felt so welcomed, and at home in my life. You have much to be proud of.” We have made every effort to provide people with the resources they need for teaching and research, have been very successful obtaining funds through LSU and BoR programs, have enthusiastic lab assistants because it has become part of the undergraduate culture to volunteer 5 hr/wk, have excellent administrative assistants who help us run efficiently, and have worked cooperatively to expand the program and implement changes. We have also initiated the first alumni program but need to work on developing this.

We seem to be in a good place and like each other. That makes work a good place to be.