

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

# Department of Communication Disorders

## ASHA Strategic Plan January 2008

Focus Area	College/University Value
1. Filling Vacant Positions	Recruitment and retention initiative

### Issue

CDO currently has three national searches under way for one faculty (in SLP) and two clinical supervisors (one in SLP and one in Audiology). There is also a faculty position in audiology that has been frozen for the past four years. Both the SLP and Audiology graduate programs are at risk because of these vacancies and the need for many current faculty and clinical supervisors to constantly be on overload. This undoubtedly negatively impacts the quality of student clinical and academic education, the morale of the members of the department, and the ability of faculty to maintain productivity in research and creative activities. It also has the potential to reduce the amount of contact between students and instructors in methods courses and in clinical supervision and the ability of students to qualitatively apply those skills in their clinical work.

### Outcomes

1. Fill the tenure track faculty position in speech-language pathology as soon as possible but by no later than the beginning of the fall 2008 semester.
2. Fill the full time/part time faculty position in speech-language pathology as soon as possible but by no later than the beginning of the fall 2008 semester.
3. Unfreeze the tenure track frozen position in audiology during the fall 2008 semester.

### Strategies

1. For position 1 above, a national search is underway and all reasonable strategies for attracting suitable applicants have been and are being taken. A pool of applicants has been identified and interviews will be scheduled in the near future.
2. For position 2 above, a national search is underway and all reasonable strategies for attracting suitable applicants have been and are being taken.
3. For position 3 above, the reason interim provost stated that the position remained frozen was because the applicant pool for students seeking admission to the Au.D. Program for the 2005-2006 year had diminished significantly and only seven students were admitted for the fall 2005 semester. The CDO Department, the Division of Audiology and the College of Health Professions' Admissions Office (CHPAO) supported a more aggressive marketing campaign for the 2006-2007 year and the pool of applicants more than doubled. Twelve students were admitted for the fall 2006 semester. This was the target number. During 2007-2008 the CDO Department has supported the Division of Audiology in the amount of \$10,000 for recruiting purposes. The CHPAO is working with the department and the division to ensure the success of the recruiting campaign

again for students entering the Au.D. Program in fall 2008.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. Filling the first two positions with the highest qualified and excellent personnel.
2. Unfreezing the third tenure track faculty position in audiology during the fall 2008 semester and successfully completing a national search to fill the position as soon as possible thereafter but certainly by the fall 2009 semester.

## **2. Planning for CDO retirements**

### **Recruitment and retention initiatives**

#### **Issue**

In the near future retirements of two or more faculty are anticipated. In the next few years additional faculty and clinical supervisor retirements are expected. Replacing these members of the department will be a serious challenge, especially with the shortage of Ph.D.s across the nation coupled with the fact that the department will be in fierce competition with most other state and national audiology and speech-language pathology programs because of the “baby boomer” generation who are at or near retirement.

#### **Outcomes**

1. Allow for a smooth transition as personnel retire from the department.
2. Ensure minimal disruption particularly to the CDO major, the Au.D. graduate program and the M.A. in speech-language pathology.
3. Attract well qualified personnel to replace retiring faculty and clinical supervisors.

#### **Strategies**

1. In conjunction with the dean, develop a five year strategic plan by March 2008 in order to anticipate likely retirements and proactively fill any vacant positions that result.

#### **Indicators of Success**

1. Experience a smooth transition as personnel retire from the department.
2. Have minimal disruption to the CDO major, the Au.D. graduate program and the M.A. in speech-language pathology as a result of retirements.
3. Appoint well qualified personnel to replace retiring faculty and clinical supervisors.

## **3. Undergraduate Enrollment Management**

### **Maximizing student success**

#### **Issue**

The undergraduate major program has been growing substantially. There are approximately 330 signed majors at present...more than we can cope with. With the shortage of faculty and clinical staff outlined above, and with the increasing demands by students wanting to become audiologists and speech-language pathologists, an enrollment management program in the undergraduate CDO major is a must.

#### **Outcomes**

1. More manageable enrollment in major methods courses.
2. Improvement of overall student quality in upper level classes.
3. Better tracking of student performance early in prerequisite courses to promote timelier

academic and career path advising.

4. Instilling in students, early in their college career, the competitive nature of taking a major in CDO.
5. Underscoring the importance of seeking CDO academic advising.

**Please note:** Implementation of such a plan will likely result in a decrease in the SCH production for CDO and the College of Health Professions, and the CDO Department will have to work closely with the Dean's Office to maintain support for this outcome and to advocate to the higher administration for continuation of undergraduate enrollment management.

### **Strategies**

1. Admit students to the major program by implementing a competitive process twice each year.
2. Accept approximately 40 students from each application period.
3. Implement an approval process for admission to prerequisites for post BA students.
4. Include the number of Post BA students in overall number accepted to the program.
5. Develop cohort groups from each admission period with class schedules lock-stepped.
6. Implement group advising for cohort groups to insure understanding of course progression and requirements to remain in the major.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. Class sizes of approximately 40 in upper level methods courses.
2. Student learning gains as methods courses are taken in specific order designed to build on curriculum objectives.
3. Positive review of program as judged by student summative assessment.
4. Promoting competitive Bachelors candidates for application to graduate programs.
5. Promoting earlier recognition of need for a career path change for those students who are not competitive in the CDO major.

#### **4. Recruitment/Retention of Graduate Students**

**Maximizing student success. Continue efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty and student body.**

#### **Issue**

- A. Traditionally the ¼ GA support for first and second year Au.D. students has depended on the size of the classes. If possible, support is provided to all first year students to help with recruiting and to ensure that the students pay in-state tuition throughout their graduate programs. Without this incentive we would have great difficulty competing with more than 75 other Au.D. programs across the nation. As it is, we lose some of the top pool of applicants to other programs. We also support as many second year students as possible with ¼ GAs. It must be emphasized that the four full-time GAs traditionally received for students in the first year of their program have not continued for the selected students into the second and third years of the program. This situation has been somewhat alleviated with the recent allocation of two additional full-time GAs for up to four years starting in the fall 2009 semester. For the remaining Au.D. students, however, there is no GA support for their third year. Fourth year students are out on externships in placements around the country. During this year they typically receive a salary or stipend from the

clinical externship sites.

This approach to the support of all current students and all but two future students who win the full GAs each year for up to four years is characterized as a “bait and switch” approach because the GA support is there at least in part during the first year, it diminishes and then dries up during the second year and it is completely gone in the third year.

- B. In the graduate speech-language pathology M.A. program University fellowships used to be available to CDO graduate students. Our SLP graduates were very competitive in winning graduate fellowships. We were often successful in having two or three awarded each year and this greatly helped recruitment of the most qualified students. The present Graduate Research Fellowships are still available for some of our students but having these tied to “diversity” has certainly limited the opportunity for graduate funding for many of the SLP students applying to our M.A. program each year. The shortage of GA support means we lose a number of top students to other programs. Last year we lost 7 of the top 10 students who applied to the CMU/CDO/SLP graduate program. This is a travesty!

Another consideration is that for most of the graduate courses in SLP, the students are charged an additional fee of \$30 a credit hour to help to defray the expenses related to an intensive clinical program and to enable the department to purchase equipment that will enhance the education of these graduate students.

Traditionally the  $\frac{1}{4}$  GA support for first-year students has been maintained at around 15. If possible, support is provided to this number of students to help with recruiting and to ensure that the students pay in-state tuition throughout their two-year graduate program. Without this incentive we would have great difficulty competing with other SLP programs within the state of Michigan, with those from surrounding Midwest states and from the Province of Ontario.

We also support approximately five second year students with  $\frac{1}{4}$  GAs but for the fall semester only. Typically the students are then placed in internship sites and spend the spring semester of their second year gaining clinical experience off campus. They are not usually paid during this internship experience.

Again it must be emphasized that the two full-time GAs in the first year do not retain their full time GAs into the second year of the SLP program. This situation has been somewhat alleviated with the recent allocation of one additional full-time GA for up to two years starting in the fall 2009 semester. With the exception of this one GA position awarded each year this approach to support of graduate students in the SLP program is also characterized as a “bait and switch” approach because the GA support is there at least in part during the first year, and it diminishes and then completely dries up during the second year.

## **Outcomes**

1. Obtain full GA funding for two Au.D. students for the first three years of their program.
2. Obtain full GA funding for 1 SLP student for the complete MA program (2 years).
3. Obtain enough ¼ GAs to support 15 SLP students for their entire MA program (2years).
4. Obtain enough ¼ GAs to support all Au.D. students not receiving full GAs for the first three years of their program.

**Strategies**

1. Apply to the provost for increased GA support for both divisions.
2. Increase the number of successful grants/contract proposals by the faculty to support department GA funding.

**Indicators of Success**

1. Increase the percentage of the top ten applicants who enter the Au.D. and SLP programs.
2. Increase the percentage of out-of-state and international students enrolled in the Au.D. and SLP Programs.

**5. Provide state-of-the-art equipment**

**Maintain and revitalize computer/technical resources for students. Enhance student learning through financial, mentoring and technical resources.**

**Issue**

CDO equipment is sophisticated and often very expensive. The state-of-the art clinical/academic equipment currently enjoyed will need to be replaced and new equipment purchased if we are to continue to provide excellent clinical and academic opportunities for current and future students. It is imperative that the college and department coordinate efforts to prepare for the future equipment needs of these programs. To accomplish this college and department budgets specifically designated for the replacement and purchase of clinical and academic equipment need to be established.

**Outcomes**

1. Develop a college/department sinking fund for repair and replacement of current clinical equipment.
2. Develop a college/department budget for the purchase of state-of-the-art clinical equipment.

**Strategies**

1. Develop a plan for the replacement of current clinical equipment in conjunction with the Carls Center for Clinical Care and Education and the College of Health Professions. Each current piece of equipment should have an estimated lifespan and replacement schedule linked to the sinking fund.
2. In conjunction with the Carls Center for Clinical Care and Education and the College of Health Professions, clinical directors should monitor national conventions and equipment manufacturers to determine the need for additional equipment purchases to keep CMU “state of the art”.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. Development of a reasonable sinking fund for replacement of clinical equipment.
2. Keep a year-by-year record of current equipment and maintain the same level of equipment as five years ago.
3. Every year purchase one piece of state-of-the-art equipment that allows for the implementation of a new or improved diagnostic/rehabilitative technique in the Carls Clinic.

## **6. Internationalization of programs**

## **Partnering. Maximizing student success.**

### **Issue**

The department currently has strong ties to the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) program at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand where a number of undergraduate students from CMU/CDO have studied abroad for a semester. The department has the potential to develop international ties to additional New Zealand programs particularly in Auckland. Potential international links are being sought with other CSD programs in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia. Typically each year the SLP division admits approximately five (5) students from Canada into the graduate M.A. degree program. The SLP Division has an affiliation agreement with Brock College in Ontario, Canada. In addition, there is a memorandum of agreement between the Au.D. program at CMU and the Non-Resident Indian Academy of Sciences Medical College in India to strengthen educational exchanges and cooperation between the two universities. There is potential for increasing study abroad opportunities for our students, establishing clinical internship sites, student /faculty/ clinical staff exchanges, and sabbatical leave opportunities in the future.

### **Outcomes**

1. Solidify and fund the undergraduate study abroad opportunities for Communication Disorder majors.
2. Increase the international diversity of the 15% of admissions earmarked for international students (Currently 100% Canadian).
3. Increase the internationally based internship sites, above those serving our Canadian graduate students.
4. Increase study abroad opportunities for our students.
5. Establish clinical internship sites, student /faculty/ clinical staff exchanges, and sabbatical leave opportunities in the future.

### **Strategies**

1. Develop and support contractual agreements for undergraduate study abroad opportunities in New Zealand and Australia.
2. Develop and support contractual agreements to review and accept international students from outside of Brock College and Canada.
3. Develop and maintain one international internship site, outside of Canada.

**Please note:** New contractual agreements (see item 2 under strategies) may result in a decrease in the acceptance of students from CMU and other schools. Thus an increase in

international diversity does have a potential downside for students from within the department, within Michigan and from the rest of the United States.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. Maintain and fund two study abroad semester opportunities annually.
2. Increase the diversity in our annual acceptance of international students, to include one additional country (currently 100% Canadian).
3. Create and maintain at least one additional affiliation agreement for an international and non-Canadian internship site.

## **7. Increasing continuing education and on-line/distance learning opportunities      Excellence**

### **Issue**

CDO has been offering the Au.D. Degree through distance learning for the past ten years. This program is no longer accepting new students and will be phased out within the next three years. There are opportunities to develop continuing education courses for audiologists in the field. These opportunities are currently being explored by a CDO committee. In addition, the SLP division has developed three distance education courses. Unfortunately, only one of the courses has been offered once and the other two courses have not yet been made available to students. There are numerous other opportunities in these arenas including the potential to develop on-line undergraduate courses in the major.

### **Outcomes**

1. Develop and teach niche CEU courses for audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the field.
2. Teach CDO online/distance courses that have already been developed.
3. Develop and teach CDO online courses/programs designed to (a) alleviate the pressure of enrollment in the CDO undergraduate major courses and (b) provide alternative opportunities for on-campus and distance learning undergraduate students in the CDO major, students from other universities and students globally.

### **Strategies**

1. Work with interested CDO faculty, appropriate IT staff in the Health Professions Building and in Profed with the aforementioned outcomes in mind.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. Teach niche CEU courses for audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the field on a semester or annual basis.
2. Teach CDO online/distance courses that have already been developed on a semester or annual basis.
3. Develop and teach CDO online courses/programs designed to (a) alleviate the pressure of enrollment in the CDO undergraduate major courses and (b) provide alternative opportunities for on-campus and distance learning undergraduate students in the CDO major, students from other universities and students globally on a semester or annual

basis.

## **8. Improving the use of Blackboard and Communication updating and enhancing the CDO website(s).**

### **Issue**

The CDO website needs to be enhanced and updated. The opportunities afforded by Blackboard need to be explored more aggressively than has been the case in the past. Both of these initiatives will improve communication with students in the areas of academic and clinical advising among others, with CDO alumni, and with patients and parents of children in the clinical programs.

### **Outcomes**

1. Improved accuracy of information available to public.
2. Enhanced tool for advising students enrolled in CDO major and graduate programs.
3. Enhanced communication with clientele via blackboard media.
4. Enhanced use of Blackboard for faculty and staff in their academic and clinical teaching.

### **Strategies**

1. Develop an ongoing plan to monitor and update the CDO website to include pictures of all staff, accurate contact information, and user friendly navigation.
2. Expand programmatic information on website to include technical standards, CDO major program admission requirements, CDO scholarship and financial aid offerings, and philosophy of academic and clinical training.
3. Enroll CDO Majors as Cohort groups on Blackboard so communication between faculty and staff and students can be intensified.
4. Offer Discussion forums for students in the major on Blackboard to answer any questions or concerns or to stimulate ideas for program improvement.
5. Do needs assessment survey of faculty/staff regarding Blackboard needs and contact FaCIT to arrange training in needed areas.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. Continually monitor to ensure accurate information about department personnel and programs.
2. Improved access and understanding of requirements of the major.
3. Enhanced ongoing communication with CDO Majors on a weekly basis.
4. Improved teaching and learning by enhanced use of Blackboard to deliver course material and interaction.

- 9. Expand the audiology and speech-language pathology clinics to support more diverse patients and clinical activities. Maintain existing and develop new grants/contracts. Maximizing student success. Partnering.**

### **Issue**

In order to maximize student success and to insure that our graduates are the best they can be, it is necessary to provide them with as wide a variety of clinical experiences as possible. Although we are faced with a relatively small urban population within the area surrounding Mount Pleasant, for many years we have maintained active speech-language pathology and audiology clinics both on and off campus. Recent initiatives have included the Falls and Balance Center (FBC) and the Pediatric Cochlear Implant Center (PCIC). We have yet to consolidate the viability of the FBC. We have recently appointed an audiologist to develop the PCIC. This position is funded for three years. Subject to success in filling the other vacant positions in the department, the potential new initiatives may also include the establishment of an interactive language program for children, and enhancement of a guided communication program for individuals with dementia.

### **Outcomes**

1. Enhance early childhood speech-language pathology program through increased parent/caregiver education, training and consultation.
2. Enhance adult intervention for individuals diagnosed with dementia through guided verbal communications.
3. Enhance audiologic clinical services by providing services to cochlear implant patients.
4. Enhance audiologic clinical services by increasing the number of patients seen for vestibular testing.

### **Strategies**

1. Engage in implementation of interactive language intervention.
2. Engage in implementation of a guided communication curriculum/activities for adults with dementia.
3. Increase marketing efforts focused on vestibular testing within the mid-Michigan geographic area.

### **Indicators of Success**

1. a. Improved interactive communication indicators – pre and post.  
b. Informal and formal methodologies – pre and post.
2. a. Improved quality of life indicators – pre and post.  
b. Statistical indicators for social connective and communicative interactive style – pre and post.  
c. Increased student volunteer and direct learning opportunities.
3. Schedule at least two vestibular assessments per week to expose more students to this type of clinical testing.