Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences

Strategic Plan for Master's and Au.D programs in Speech-Language pathology and Audiology

Report from Academic Year Fall, 2013 – Spring, 2014

General UB Mission Statement

“The University at Buffalo is a comprehensive, research-intensive public university dedicated to academic excellence and engagement with the regional, national, and international communities we serve.”

UB Mission Statement for the Graduate School:

“The mission of the Graduate School is threefold: to promote and maintain excellence in graduate programs and in the scholarly and creative activities of graduate faculty and students; to stimulate and promote interdisciplinary research and education; and to improve and preserve the academic environment within which graduate education and research occur.”

Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences: Mission Statement

“The mission of the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences is to continue to expand our active research program as a source for the clinical and scientific education of our students, and as a vehicle for professional growth for our faculty. Through our commitment to academic and clinical excellence, the mission of the CDS Department is to continue to grow in the areas that our field is developing as well as to raise our national ranking and international reputation for the graduate programs in Communicative Disorders and Sciences. Our mission is to achieve a combination of academic, scholarly, and clinical excellence.”

Coordination of Department and University missions: The mission of academic excellence is in keeping with the University Mission Statements seen above. Although the University and Graduate school do not have specific missions for producing clinical excellence, their missions are consistent with the Department mission for maintaining excellent graduate training programs.

Long-term goals from prior Strategic Plan:

1. Formalize the department strategic plan process (See below)

Outcome: There is now a formal strategic plan process that includes an Annual Faculty retreat. We have conducted five annual retreats since the site visit in Spring, 2009. The first Annual retreat was on December 19, 2009. The most retreat took place on January 21, 2014. The retreats included a half day discussion with all faculty where feedback from all aspects of the program are discussed. Specifically, student evaluations, client feedback, Externship supervisor feedback on students, Student evaluation of Clinical supervision – both in the Department and in External locations, Employer feedback, and Alumni feedback are discussed relative to ASHA specified competencies according to most recent standards for education of graduate students in the Master’s degree program for Speech-language pathology and the Doctor of Audiology degree program. The objective is to improve clinical training for students and clinical services for patients. The Department also
considers the Curriculum Plans for both clinical programs, looking to make changes as necessary. One change was to reduce the credits and time offering for the Cleft Palate elective and the Advanced Phonology elective. Each is now conducted for eight weeks in the Fall semesters, with students earning two credits for each. That allows students to have a broader offering of course information that is needed with the topics related as much treatment for children with Cleft Palate that is required involves phonological treatment. In the 2013 retreat, it was discussed to consider eliminating one currently required course in Audiology (Objective Measures) to reduce redundancy with other classes and then allow students to take an additional course that is more currently necessary such as Auditory Perceptual Disorders. The latter change in Audiology is still in progress. The most recent retreat formalized Probation policies for graduate students as well as the Dismissal procedures. The newest procedures were posted on the Department’s website in Feb., 2014.

2. Establish routine assessment time for curriculum development.
Outcome: This was also satisfied by goals at the annual Faculty Retreat.

At one retreat, it was decided to alter the curriculum for the Undergraduate program and the Master’s degree program in Speech-Language pathology. The undergraduate program added an additional writing requirement added to further ASHA’s mission for students to have necessary spoken and written skills in English. The Master’s curriculum program for Speech-Language Pathology was be changed to included one additional required course in Child Language Disorders so that students will now have two courses: 1) Birth to Five Years, 2) School-aged and older language disorders. Those courses are in addition to our course in Adult Language Disorders.

In addition, the documents that we use to monitor KASA compliance for all students’ training were scrutinized by all clinical and academic faculty. Changes were recommended to update both the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology forms to accommodate curricular changes that had occurred previously (including – changing where students learn about fluency/stuttering and how basic speech science knowledge is acquired). At the 2014 retreat the results of adding into the Undergraduate Curriculum, the additional writing course was discussed. Faculty believed that there was no observable change to students’ writing from the additional requirement and that it was more necessary to have graduate students put an emphasis on writing. Thus, the recommendation was to remove the additional writing course requirement in the Undergraduate curriculum. Changes were made to the undergraduate program and submitted to the College for eventual approval through SUNY in Albany in the Spring semester, 2014.

3. Increase the number of culturally and linguistically diverse externship placements for Speech-Language pathology.
Outcome: This goal is still in progress. We did add a new contract for students to participate in routine screening in one of the local school systems near the University at Buffalo. Students are able to continue to participate in Head Start screenings of hundreds of young children per year. Both Speech-language pathology and Audiology students participate in the Head Start evaluations.
**Strategic Plan**

1. The Faculty of Communicative Disorders and Sciences will in addition to monthly faculty meetings where minutes are kept, meet on an Annual basis in a Faculty retreat to perform four basic objectives:

   A) Knowledge and Skills Analysis review and Curriculum Changes – Make sure that competency areas are covered in classes and clinical practice.
      - Objective: Consider curriculum changes that will accommodate new requirements and improve education of graduate students and clinical services for patients. Done annually.

   B) Consider feedback from all sources to learn how courses, clinic may be improved.
      - Objective: to continue to develop online survey techniques to improve survey outcomes for all measures by Spring, 2013. In progress.

   C) Consider how to generate additional finances to support new equipment, education/training materials, and faculty continuing education/development improvement of graduate programs in Speech-Language pathology and Audiology
      - Objective: Determine if an Advisory Board will be helpful in Development and donation needs for department. The Executive Committee in Spring, 2013 decided that a Clinic Advisory Board would be potentially beneficial and was working on asking appropriate candidates to join. The goal is to locate three willing individuals to begin an External Advisory Committee. Attempted but to date have not found suitable external individuals to serve.

   D) Results of Strategic Plan – are distributed to faculty and staff, and posted on the Department's Shared drive.
      - Objective: development of a Facebook page and Twitter account that will be linked to a newly developed Department Website that will be renovated in by Spring, 2013. A new Facebook page was initiated and linked to our Website. The website changes will be addressed by Spring, 2014 now that new procedures in Admissions through CDSCAS (CAPCSD) have been instituted. Web changes are still in progress. The Facebook page has been successfully used by the Director of Admissions particularly for graduate recruitment. There is no Twitter feed yet. The Department still hopes to bring the website into the format used by most of the College with help by CAS personnel in 2014-2015.