

# Strategic Planning Annual Report (SPAR) 2017-18

## Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

### Department Accomplishments

#### Expanded the MA program

**Part I:** Worked with curriculum committee to phase in the new curriculum that includes teaching two sections of required courses in order to accommodate expanding MA program. Created a 4-year projection of course rotations to assure all professors have opportunities to teach seminars and/or electives, as well as accounting for 4<sup>th</sup> year course releases as new faculty pass third-year review. Updated all MA advising procedures, including working out a schedule of meetings for both fall and spring admits, updating all agendas and corresponding Powerpoints, and adapting all Powerpoints to conform to the needs and important dates for spring admits.

**Part II:** Recruited and retained outstanding new faculty to expand our program and provided ongoing support for two new assistant professors hired last year. Dr. Haebig joined our faculty this fall, and we recruited a pediatric dysphagia researcher with whom we are negotiating. We worked to provide sufficient support to Dr. Haebig to enable her to establish her labs and strengthen the child language disorders components of our department.

STRATEGY – assign faculty mentor; help new faculty make campus and off-campus contacts as needed; make sure they are aware of resources at HSS and the broader university.

The new assistant professors have made excellent strides. Dr. Chung received a prestigious New Investigators Research Grant from our national organization (\$10,000), and currently has a Board of Regents proposal under review (\$187,692). She was also selected as an attendee to a competitively invited program that is part of our national organization's research mentoring network. She has one publication submitted, three in preparation, and two in data collection, all as first or sole author. Dr. Duncan also was selected for the research mentoring network and attended 14 workshops related to grant writing and research in neural modeling and brain imaging. She published two first author papers in top-tier journals, and has a third accepted for publication and was awarded a BoR grant (\$125,000). She submitted two additional large grants (Pennington Biomedical Research Center and the Sloan Foundation that were not funded). Our new hire, Dr. Haebig, had an outstanding first year. She came to LSU with highly productive collaborative relationships with nationally recognized researchers in her specialty area. This collaboration has resulted in four publications in 2017, three first author and one second author, all in top-tier journals. She has another first author top-tier journal article in press. She established her lab and has begun to collect data at LSU as well as establishing collaborations here. This has resulted in the submission of a Board of Regents grant (\$176,100) currently under review.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduation class). To date, we have 36

acceptances for the 2018-19 admits and expect to fill our quota of 40. This 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 also will host our first undergraduate orientation meeting where we will talk about how to get into your preferred graduate school, the strategy of studying a bit every day for the GRE, UG research opportunities, and other topics to provide them with a long-term perspective. I also have had my lab students send a daily email to all UGs with the daily vocabulary word and the daily math problem from a GRE study program. We also share these daily activities with students from Southern University.

## Use of Technology

We significantly improved the use of technology in all aspects of the program. In addition to successfully transitioning to Workday and LSU Faculty 360, we also established privacy carols for students using the Raintree system for all clinical records. This is a HIPPA compliant system for managing all clinical records for the Speech and Hearing Clinic. We greatly expanded the computers available to students who must write all reports and other documents from our building, logged into Raintree. 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. We have begun to explore implementation of Teletherapy, or the application of telecommunications technology to the delivery of speech language pathology services at a distance by linking clinician to client for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation. We are targeting the rural hearing impaired population and are in initial talks with the School for the Deaf.

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.

## Research and Publications

- a) We produced a high record of publications and dissemination of research. A total of 35 articles and book chapters were published, All 11 graduate faculty members published, for an average of 3.0 manuscripts. Thirty-three of these were first or sole author; 8 were second author. In addition, 8 additional articles are in review, for a total of 43 articles. The number of articles in preparation is 23.

All 11 grad faculty also disseminated research at conferences, including 14 international venues for a total of 34 conference presentations. In addition, our faculty reviewed 33 papers from 10 different journals as well as reviewing grant (5 national) and conference (3 national) proposals. Three faculty submitted substantial BoR proposals, with one funded. Two other large grant proposals were not funded. A range of smaller grant proposals were also funded, and several faculty completed 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> years of three-year awards,

Our undergraduate participated at a high level in research. Ten studies were presented at LSU Discover Day. . Both are COMD majors from the Honors College. Amanda Holley presented her President's Future Leaders in Research study, and 8 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.

Two MA students completed theses, both presenting their papers at conferences. In addition, we have eleven doctoral students actively engaged in research, and we recruited one additional doctoral student to begin in fall of 2018. Two are scheduled to defend dissertations by August. Five of the doctoral students began this fall (2017) 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.

## Diversity

We actively recruited minority students and males into UG, MA, and Ph.D. programs, and 2 new African American students joined our MA program in 2017 as well as 1 male, and 2 Hispanic doctoral students were recruited for fall 2017. 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 recruited at Xavier in New Orleans. We are beginning to see positive effects. This year six minority students applied to the MA program and were highly recruited. We also established the only chapter of NBSHA in this state and 4-state region in cooperation with Southern University.

We have begun work on a recruitment brochure that prominently includes minority students. 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.

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

- a) Space has been an issue as well as flooding and construction. We appreciate all that HSS has done to help remove these barriers and are looking forward to expanded facilities next year.
- 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 are implementing ad comp stipends of \$4000 per semester for supervisors generated by contracts from external sites to begin in fall 2018. This will begin 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 2018-19 as another source of salary supplements. .

d) HSS has been amazingly supportive and helped in every way possible. Thank you

Our next program review is scheduled for 2021

## Planning for Upcoming Year

### Priorities and resource allocation

1. Move faculty forward on the promotion and tenure ladder. One associates is submitting a portfolio for promotion to full professor; one assistant professors is submitting promotion and tenure documents this year and one next; one assistant is in her 3rd year review, and four new assistants who need mentorship to assure they remain 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 new 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.

4. Implement our expanding MA program plan. This year we a) planned for an expanded MA program, including successfully recruiting a new assistant professor, b) developed a course schedule in which we could for the first time teach 2 sections of each required graduate course, c) recruited a target of 30-33 fall admits to the MA program, d) recruited the top LSU graduates to our program by implementing a spring admission policy, developed 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 one cadre of FastTrackers who are admitted but who need to complete undergraduate prerequisites. We also developed a plan for expanding clinical practicum sites to accommodate a greater number of MA students and added Key Academy to our satellite program (hired an LSU supervisor who supervises students in an off-campus site), 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. To make this plan fluid, we hope to successfully negotiate with our recruit for the pediatric dysphagia position.

Resource Allocation: Each faculty member indicated what their ideal teaching schedule would be (courses and times) and we accommodated nearly every wish. Four years of rotation of seminars and electives was mapped out, accounting for course releases and other irregularities, to assure students have the courses they need and faculty each have opportunities to teach seminars and electives.

5. 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, held a faculty retreat to establish goals and strategies and established timelines for implementation, updated our Strategic Plan, and established strategies for receiving more feedback from employers and alumni.

6. Plans for expanding our physical space have progressed. Research in COMD is increasingly becoming high-tech and requiring large units of technical equipment that will require increasing room sizes. For example, the collaboration of two faculty resulted in acquiring new ultrasound equipment for Fall of 2018. We also will be establishing an assisted dialing living suite (ADL) for TBI clients who need to establish communication in functional contexts. We will begin to establish these new sites as soon as renovations are completed and furniture purchased this summer.

Resource Allocation: Plans for the new space were worked on for a year with input from all faculty members.

7. Increase the number of PhD and MA stipends. We have 5 doctoral students entering for the fall, for a total of 11. We currently have 10 stipends and only have partial funding for the final student. 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

1. We are currently working on establishing an alumni association including an alumni donation page. We had a planning meeting with a retired faculty member who agreed to serve as the founding member and chair. To date we have a draft of the 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.
2. For the past two years we have requested assistance from Krista Allen's office, but other than an initial meeting we have not heard back from them and thus have initiated an alumni 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 five 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 been granted 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 grad 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 are also hoping to establish 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 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 been assigned new space that is being renovated and will be available in the fall. We have also initiated the first alumni program and have an enthusiastic director.

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