

Department of Communication Science and Disorders

FY 2013 - 2017

[Updates to Department Plan (FY 2008 - FY 2012)]

Mission

The **mission of the Communication Science and Disorders (CSD)**

Department is

- To conduct basic and applied research into the following:
 - the processes underlying human language, speech, voice, swallowing, hearing, and balance
 - the nature of their disorders, including etiology and pathology
 - the prevention, evaluation, differential diagnosis and management of these disorders
- To equip graduates with the scientific grounding and technical, administrative, clinical, general problem-solving, and life-long learning skills needed to engage in the multiple activities and settings that comprise the discipline, and to imbue in these graduates a desire to become leaders in the field
- To provide academic and clinical education that exceeds the nationally-established accreditation standards in our disciplines
- To provide continuing education to post-graduates
- To be consumers of and contributors to the theories, models, and methods relevant to the discipline and the professions that it serves and to related academic disciplines both inside and outside of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS).

Goals

The long and near-term **research goals** of the department include the promotion of high quality research, scholarly publication, and extramural funding achieved through the encouragement of frequent grant applications, including a broadened array of potential funding sources. To do this, the CSD department will continue to maintain high quality research faculty. An additional key to success is a continued commitment to acquire and maintain adequate laboratory space for all funded CSD investigators. Other research goals include: 1) the maintenance of current (100%) levels of extramural finding for all assistant professors in the tenure stream, 2) increase number of tenured and non-tenure stream faculty holding extramural research funding from the current 13 to 16; with an increased commitment to new relevant funding sources including those from the department of education, industry and the manufacturing sectors.

There are two primary long and short-term **instructional goals** for the CSD department. The first is the maintenance/recruitment of high quality faculty with a dedication to teaching. As a result of an acute national shortage of faculty in Communication Science and Disorders, there are extreme pressures to recruit successful faculty from existing programs. We plan to be vigilant to those external recruitment efforts of our highly sought-after faculty. The second goal stems from the

recent growth in the number of students, primarily at the undergraduate-level, generating a need for additional course sections and didactic-teaching faculty to teach them.

CSD has a goal of increasing the number of stipends and tuition supports through training grants for CScD and AuD students and increasing the number of paid clinical placements for CScD students. It is imperative that the CSD Department continue to pursue agreements within the UPMC to provide recurring clinical training sites for our clinical masters SLP as well as sources of support for CScD students through the securing of third year, fourth year, and fifth years. This relationship will also enhance access and integration of clinical research for both students and faculty within the Department. A continuing goal is the didactic and clinical refinement of the professional/clinical doctorate programs in Speech-Language Pathology (CScD) and Audiology (AuD).

Because the Department of Veterans Affairs has discontinued its support for research doctoral students, we have lost an important source of funding for our Ph.D. students in both audiology and speech-language pathology. We have a goal of exploring/securing doctoral training grants to replace and enhance this source of support for our research doctoral program. We will maintain 100% funding for all research doctoral students (Ph.D.) through research and training grant support.

We are dedicated to the enrichment of teaching quality through continuing education of the faculty in emerging teaching methods and technology. The clinical and research faculty work together to foster teaching at all levels of the curriculum. This approach is very attractive to applicants of the caliber that we strive to recruit. Pass-rate on national certification exams is 99%, and CSD graduates commonly receive multiple job offers and/or are hired where they do their clinical externship or post-graduation clinical fellowship experience. Despite such success, continued success in the competitive market of professional education in CSD will require continued scrutiny, refinement, and garnering of relevant opportunities.

Following administrative approval, CSD will initiate an online/distance education curriculum for the one-year post-bachelor's certificate in communication science and disorders. This program prepares individuals for application to graduate school in communication science and disorders who have a bachelor's degree in another discipline.

We have a record high enrollment in the undergraduate communication science major. Sparked by this growth, we have a near-term goal of examining the undergraduate curriculum and its effectiveness as a preparatory major for admission to professional graduate school and as a degree suitable for admission to other professional graduate programs. It is anticipated that some curricular revision will be required as a result of this examination and modest increases in curricular offerings may be required. The recent addition of a full-time faculty-level position that will assist with undergraduate advising, recruitment and the additional course sections that the increased enrollment necessitates will facilitate this revision.

Our long-term **clinical education goals** include the continued development of quality clinical education experiences, which include an expansion in their breadth, depth, number, and diversity to accommodate developing demands of professional doctoral programs and the high enrollments for the clinical SLP master's program. We will continue to provide training to our clinical instructors focused on the application of evidence based practice in clinical teaching to enhance effectiveness of educating our AuD and SLP clinical students. We will also achieve continued review and development of the didactic courses mandated by the core curriculum for each program as the profession and its standards evolve and as the faculty directs in response to research developments. We have as a priority, the continued development of clinical and research grand rounds across the Department to expose our students and faculty to the very latest trends in clinical research and practice and for faculty continuing education. Our efforts will continue to include piloting and developing normative guidelines of clinical performance on formative assessment tools including the further refinement and development of methods of student feedback/evaluation for AuD preceptors and CScD clinical mentors.

We will maintain **professional accreditation** of our clinical education programs through continued curriculum development, continuous monitoring, and refined record keeping of student performance. Reaccreditation of the program by the Council of Academic Accreditation was completed in 2010 and the program will be evaluated for reaccreditation in 2018. We will continue our formulation of a major curricular revision of the Masters Degree program in Speech-Language Pathology designed for better clinical and theoretical integration. Implementation of this curriculum is targeted for the 2015-2016 academic year. It remains a goal to refine the research masters of science in audiology and SLP and to promote them to foreign markets. We anticipate that these degrees will continue to be attractive to foreign higher-degree seekers to help improve their chances at the doctoral level by first developing a record of accomplishment in the US system. We will continue to develop both professional doctoral program (the **CScD and AuD**) curricula (e.g. comprehensive examinations, sequence of curricular requirements, problem-based learning components, etc.). A pediatric-focused program-of-excellence combining both audiology and speech-language pathology has received extramural funding and will be continued in an effort to improve program marketing and to enhance the acquisition of extramural funding to support both research and clinical education.

We have as a goal the enhancement of our **continuing education (CE)** offerings beyond current levels. In order to accomplish this, we will continue to seek opportunities to capitalize on routine teaching commitments developed for dual purposes, guest speakers, grand rounds, and targeted short courses directed at local and national practitioners in audiology and speech-language pathology. Increased emphasis will continue to be placed on revenue-generating continuing education (CE) curricula to permit the acquisition of a faculty member to drive the CE program. An additional goal is the development of distance mechanisms and programs where opportunities and resources are available to support them.

Space Resources

Current space for the CSD department includes 18 offices dedicated to individual faculty members, eight teaching laboratories (essentially all of which are shared among faculty members and serve instructional, student and faculty research needs), one shared part-time faculty office, and one small instructionally dedicated laboratory (6010B). We face a number of challenges to our existing space allotment, many of which are associated with the increase in breadth and depth of both research and clinical CScD and AuD education programs. Space in Forbes Tower continues to be insufficient to meet the needs for faculty offices. However laboratory needs for extramurally funded research remain a challenge. Existing Forbes Tower classrooms have been enhanced, however, teaching space for large classes is in demand and many courses are taught out of the building. This has provided a burden for the instructors as many of these courses are instrumentation dependent and transporting clinical instruments is not always possible. This has become increasingly evident where advanced clinical courses have been activated, particularly where small group interactions and experience- and problem-based assignments are becoming a central part of the curriculum and the learning process. Such experiences are critical to the preparation of students seeking the doctorate. Therefore, it is clear that expanded traditional teaching *and* research teaching spaces are required. There is an immediate need to expand the clinical training lab in 6010B Forbes Tower. This multi-use lab has, for many years, been under significant pressure to serve the training needs of students in courses such as the Audiology Clinical Procedures Labs, Speech Science, and Speech Anatomy & Physiology Labs, and is required for general clinical teaching and student laboratory practices. It has come to serve (as well) as the site of a demonstration/model lab for the development of a distance clinical teaching tool dedicated to removing physical barriers to student observation (i.e., obviating the expense and limitations of structurally dependent observations rooms). It thus is necessary to approximately double this teaching space and equip it with the same projection and computer facilities that are available in other classrooms throughout the Department and School.

The Department faces a growing need for research space as well. While we will continue to self-scrutinize space utilization for optimization through creative partnering-across teaching labs to enhance sharing resources while fostering multi-sub-disciplinary collaboration, the absence of new options will necessarily limit expansion of our research doctoral program.

Noteworthy changes:

- Final approval from the Provost-level has been received; the Masters Speech-Language Pathology program will initiate a fundamental curriculum change that is highlighted by a reduction in the number of credit hours for courses in pathologies from 3 to 2 and the initiation of 3 credit integrative laboratories that will be taught in problem-based-learning format.
- The Doctor of Clinical Science (CScD) in medical speech-language pathology, the only clinical doctoral program of its kind to date, has received recognition from

the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties as the only clinical degree that is considered equivalent to the Ph.D. This recognition allows its holders to obtain the rating of “consultant”, a designation that is the highest afforded to practitioners. This designation provides the highest level of authority, autonomy and possibility for position advancement.

- Faculty members in CSD, serving as PI’s have recently received 2 awards from the Veterans Administration Rehabilitation Research and Development worth \$2.2 million dollars and a third application that has received a merit score that will likely be within the funding range for an additional \$1.1 million. Each of these awards provides salary support for CSD faculty as well as funding for Ph.D. students.