

**Department of Communicative Disorders (CMD)
The University of Rhode Island**

**STRATEGIC PLAN: 2007-2010
Final Draft: May 17th, 2007**

FOCUS AREA I: Development of a course and clinical practicum model offering more daytime graduate classes and clinical activities; a reduction in courses offered after 7 p.m.

ISSUE: Because of the location of the department in southeastern Rhode Island and the necessity for students to avail themselves of clinical placements in the Providence, RI area, travel time plays some role in our ability to schedule courses during the daytime and early evening only. Our need to share classroom facilities with another department (Physical Therapy) also presents the need for some scheduling accommodations. Many of our students live an hour or more from the Kingston campus making classes ending past 9:30 p.m. difficult for them and for the faculty who teach them.

OUTCOMES:

1. A schedule that provides opportunities for course work two days per week with clinic availability for the remaining three days.
2. No classes that meet later than 6:45 p.m.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

1. A schedule of proposed didactic course offerings and clinic placements that can be implemented in a predictable manner so that students, faculty, and the clinic director will be aware of their weekly time constraints at least one semester in advance.
2. Both full-time and part-time students will be able to move through the degree process equally unimpeded in terms of their ability to take the courses they need to graduate in a timely manner.

STRATEGIES: 2007

1. By September 1, 2007, a subcommittee will investigate the ramifications of adopting such a plan to the completion of course work and clinical placements for at least two students each who are expected to complete their degrees in two years (UG major in CMD) attending full time, in three years (no UG degree in CMD) attending full time, and completing their degree on a part-time basis. This information will be used to inform #2 below.
2. By the end of the fall, 2007 semester a plan will be in place for the FY '08-'09 school year to limit didactic courses to Tuesdays and Thursdays and clinical placements to Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. No courses will be taught later than 7:00 p.m. on either Tuesday or Thursday.

STRATEGIES: MULTIPLE YEARS

1. Implementation of the new semester time plan will be adopted for the fall, 2008 semester.
2. Data gathering will determine whether there are any problems with the new plan beginning with enrollment for the fall, 2008 semester (i.e., Are students still able to fit in all of their course work in two years including one summer?, What clinical practicum opportunities have been enhanced or hindered by the new system?).
3. Following the spring, 2009 semester, the faculty will meet to discuss the implementation of the new program schedule and informed by #2 above, will make any necessary changes to the operating plan.

FOCUS AREA II: Increase collaboration and cohesion between course instructors and clinic supervisors to improve effectiveness and efficiency of our clinical training program and service to the community.

ISSUE: We have observed many instances of mismatch between on-campus faculty and supervisors; specifically, supervisors have been unaware of what the faculty was teaching in class and the faculty was unaware of what the clinical instructors' expectations were for performance in the clinic.

OUTCOMES: When faculty and clinical instructors are not clear about the expectations each has for students' acceptable performances or know what the students have been exposed to in class, this can lead to a negative learning experience for the students and negative teaching experiences for the faculty both in the classroom and in the clinic. A venue for better communication among all those responsible for teaching our students will result in delivery of a seamless curriculum.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

1. Faculty teaching didactic course work and clinical supervisors responsible for in-clinic teaching will meet every six months to discuss their syllabi and evaluation procedures as well as expectations for performance.
2. Jointly-developed definitions of what constitutes "A", "B", "C" and failing work in the clinic will be created.
3. Handbooks provided to off-campus supervisors containing compilations of concepts introduced in the didactic and clinical experiences to the student clinicians in all of the disorder areas to facilitate understanding of the graduate students' background and entry skill levels.

STRATEGIES: 2007

1. By September 1, 2007 the on-campus faculty and supervisors will divide themselves into working groups as per topic area (e.g., Language Disorders in Children: G. Theadore, B. Connors, A. Weiss, D. Kovarsky; Adult Language Disorders: M. Kim, C. Gelfuso, L. Mahler, B. Connors; etc.) and meet to set an agenda for developing cohesion in the transfer of information by students from the classroom to the clinic.
2. By December 31, 2007, each of the groups will report back to the faculty as a whole during faculty meetings re: their progress.

STRATEGIES: MULTIPLE YEARS

1. By December, 2008, each of the topic area groups will present an outline of the teaching points that represent the constructs that comprise the in-class and in-clinic instruction for the students.

2. By June, 2009, handbooks for each topic area will be ready for distribution to all off-campus supervisors following a CE-activity and luncheon thanking off-campus supervisors for their service to URI graduate students.
3. By December, 2009 feedback from the off-campus supervisors will be compiled and discussed by the members of the individual topic areas.
4. By September, 2010 feedback will have been incorporated into the handbooks and they will be re-distributed to faculty and supervisors.
5. The handbooks will be re-visited once a year and changes will be made where appropriate.

FOCUS AREA III: Consider curricular changes at both the undergraduate and graduate course levels.

ISSUE: Given the loss of our Au.D. Program, our mission has somewhat shifted so that training M.S.-level clinicians in SLP is our sole graduate focus. In order to best utilize the resources we continue to have with regard to hearing professionals on faculty, the shortage of persons to fill the Au.D. and Ph.D. needs in both academic and clinical contexts we can explore new ways to achieve a best fit with our student base. Further, with our focus now more singularly marshaled to finessing the SLP M.S. program, are there changes that would enhance the learning experience of these students.

OUTCOMES:

1. Determine whether a minor in the area of audiology is feasible and/or desirable. If it is both desirable and feasible, develop a sequence of courses that will serve this purpose.
2. Explore the possibility/feasibility of offering an additional course beyond CMD 454 and CMD 551 to better prepare graduating undergraduate seniors to apply for Au.D. graduate programs.
3. Explore the feasibility of providing a language disorders course at the undergraduate level to provide the undergraduate students with better preparation for their potential graduate course work.
4. Explore the possibility and feasibility of adding a course to the first-year M.S. students' programs that would serve as a bridge between didactic course work to their clinical course work (practicum).

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

1. An undergraduate minor in audiology will be developed and implemented.
2. An additional undergraduate course in audiology, designed to provide students interested in pursuing an Au.D. program will be developed and implemented.
3. An additional course covering language disorders will be developed and implemented as part of the undergraduate CMD major.
4. An additional course will be developed and implemented to provide first-semester M.S. SLP students with a bridge between didactic course work and clinical course work (practicum).

STRATEGIES: 2007

1. By September 1, 2007 the committee formed to determine the possibility and feasibility of offering an undergraduate major in audiology will report back to the faculty.
2. By December 31st, 2007 the committees formed to determine the possibility and feasibility of developing an additional undergraduate course in audiology, an additional undergraduate course in language disorders, and an additional graduate course for M.S. students in SLP for the purpose of bridging students' experience from the classroom to the clinic.

STRATEGIES: MULTIPLE YEARS

1. By June 1, 2008 the department will reach consensus about implementation of additional course work and if the decision is made for implementation, committees will be formed to complete the paperwork necessary for proposals related to this (or these) course(s).
2. By December 1, 2008 the proposals for these courses will be completed and submitted to the college and university curriculum committees.
3. By the fall, 2009 semester, these new courses, pending acceptance by the college and university curriculum committees, will be implemented in the undergraduate and graduate curricula.

4. By December, 2010 these new courses will be reviewed for their desired effectiveness in preparing both undergraduate and graduate students.

FOCUS AREA IV: Streamline administrative activities and facilitate connections with alumni.

ISSUE: Given that we are a small faculty, it would be helpful to make more transparent to our students (and each other) any of the administrative tasks related to advising of students and this includes better utilization of our web site. Further, we have under-utilized our alumni as a source of state and national visibility, and contributions to our degree programs financial or otherwise.

OUTCOMES

1. Identification of a web site manager to provide continuity for ongoing web site maintenance.
2. Identification of those areas of our web site that need changing to be in compliance with both ASHA standards and URI standards.
3. Development of an annual alumni newsletter that will be a vehicle for conveying information about departmental programming, inviting alumni to send us information about their professional affiliations, and solicit contributions to our department's foundation account.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

1. Hiring of a web site manager.
2. Dissemination of an annual newsletter to departmental alumni.

STRATEGIES: 2007

1. By December 31st, 2007 a plan for hiring a web site manager will be completed.
2. By December 31st, 2007, a committee will be formed to investigate the costs (both financial and time-wise) involved in publishing and disseminating a four-page newsletter prototype once per year.

STRATEGIES: MULTIPLE YEARS

1. By May, 2008 a new web site manager and management plan will be in place.

2. By December 31st, 2008 the mock-up of the first issue of the CMD department's newsletter will be completed, pending the decision to proceed with this plan.
3. By December 31st, 2009, the department will review the efficacy of the use of the newsletter in terms of developing collaborations with former students.

FOCUS AREA V: Enhance the opportunity for scholarly productivity for the faculty.

ISSUE: We need to re-examine departmental and collegial mechanisms for supporting research and grant writing by our faculty and facilitate their use. In addition, we need to increase the likelihood that students have multiple opportunities to participate in research projects.

OUTCOMES

1. The number of presentations made by CMD faculty and students will increase per annum.
2. The number of publications produced by CMD faculty will increase on an annual basis.
3. The dollars accrued by CMD faculty through grant writing will increase per annum.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

1. Each tenure-track faculty member will be involved in at least one grant-related activity.
2. Each tenure-track faculty member will present at least one paper/seminar/poster session per year.
3. Each tenure-track faculty will publish at least one paper/chapter per year.
4. Student involvement in research projects will increase either through the commitment to directed essays, theses and registration for independent studies. An increase in the involvement of undergraduate students in research will also be evident.

STRATEGIES: 2007

1. By December 31st, 2007 each faculty member will commit to an area of research development necessitating the writing of grants for

- support of these projects. Teams will be developed among faculty with similar research/clinical training interests.
2. By December 31st, 2007 an audit of M.S. students will be completed determining the numbers and proportions of students involved in directed essays/theses versus comprehensive examinations for the years 2002-2007. Another audit will tally the number of students who have presented papers at conferences to determine trends and baselines.

STRATEGIES: MULTIPLE YEARS

1. At the end of the spring, 2008 semester, students who have completed directed essays and theses will have an opportunity to present their products to the departmental faculty and students.
2. By December 31st, 2008 and at the end of each year thereafter, each faculty member will report to the group re: progress made toward grant submission, grant evaluation, and grant outcomes.
3. By December 31st, 2008 and at the end of each year thereafter, totals for both faculty and students' participation in presentations and publications will be tallied and reported to the group.