

# Lamar University

## Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

### Long-Term Strategic Plan (2009-2014)

#### Departmental Mission Statements:

The department consists of two divisions: Audiology, and Speech-Language Pathology, which committed to the instructional, research and service goals of the college and university. The divisions work together cooperatively with individual mission statements that characterize their similarities and differences.

**Audiology:** The Audiology division is committed to the advancement of knowledge and services in hearing processes and disorders through integrated programs of professional training, research, and community service. To meet our mission, the division

- a. provides academic instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the scientific foundation of sound, auditory processes and behaviors, and in the evaluation, diagnosis and non-medical treatment of hearing disorders;
- b. provides opportunities to integrate academic knowledge with clinical application through a variety of clinical experiences within on-campus and off-campus practicum sites in local, regional, and national audiology centers;
- c. supports faculty and student research that contributes to the prevention, identification, and treatment of hearing disorders and their consequences;
- d. provides the highest quality of hearing health care for the community, including advocacy and support services for the needs of persons with hearing impairment and their families.

**Speech-Language Pathology:** The Speech-Language Pathology division is committed to preparing competent and compassionate clinicians, motivated scholars, and ethical professionals for entry into the field of speech-language pathology. To meet our mission, the division

- a. provides academic instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels that ensures a foundation of knowledge within the professional scope of practice in order to provide comprehensive evaluation and treatment to patients with difficulties in communication processes and/or swallowing;
- b. provides students with clinical training that promotes independent integration of academic knowledge with clinical application through a variety of clinical experiences within on-campus and off-campus practicum sites, involving business, educational, governmental, and medical agencies, located throughout the Southeast Texas region;
- c. supports faculty and students in research activities that add to the knowledge base and the clinical diagnosis and treatment of speech, language, and swallowing related processes and disorders;
- d. provides an educational, cultural, scientific, and technical resource for the southeast Texas region in the areas of communication disorders and swallowing.

## **Department Objective 1: Undergraduate Student Recruitment and Retention**

Over the 5 year period covered by the current long-range plan, the department will seek to improve the quality and quantity of undergraduate students enrolled in the program.

### **Action Plan:**

1. The department faculty will seek opportunities to present at high school career fairs and to disseminate information to the offices of high school guidance counselors in order to increase awareness of the field of communication sciences and disorders.
2. The department will seek opportunities to increase funding for students at the undergraduate level through grant writing, involvement with scholarship programs, and involvement in community-based support sources (e.g. Sertoma club).
3. The department faculty will review the current undergraduate curriculum in order to ascertain if it is of the highest possible caliber. A committee will be appointed to review the undergraduate curriculum and to prepare a report on the efficacy of the curriculum in meeting educational objectives.

### **Outcomes: (updated annually)**

1. **2009** At the end of 2009, a committee consisting of Dr. Vickie Dionne, Dr. James Baer, Dr. Monica Harn, and Dr. Timothy Meline was appointed to review the undergraduate curriculum and to make recommendations to the department faculty based upon their findings.
2. **2010** In 2010, several changes to the current undergraduate curriculum were proposed to the department faculty. Two new courses were added to the undergraduate curriculum including a “Professional Report Writing” course and an “Instrumentation” course. These areas were deemed to be deficient in the curriculum. The department faculty voted to adopt the recommended changes.
3. **2010** In 2010, the undergraduate curriculum review committee proposed that the department revise its strategy for accepting students into the major. It was proposed that students be required to apply for acceptance to the program. Students would take fewer courses within the major prior to completing university core courses. After acceptance to the program, the curriculum would focus almost exclusively on courses required for the major. This measure was enacted in order to assure that only the highest quality students be admitted to the Bachelor’s degree program. The proposed changes were voted upon by the department faculty and were accepted. This change is anticipated to be enacted by the fall of 2011.

## **Department Objective 2: Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention**

The department faculty will increase efforts to recruit the highest possible quality of graduate students to the doctoral program in audiology. Additionally, the program will attempt to increase

enrollment in the Au.D. program to approximately 40 students and enrollment in the M.S. in SLP program to approximately 55-60 students.

**Action Plan:**

1. The audiology division faculty will seek to review the audiology curriculum in order to ensure that the highest possible quality is maintained. Additionally, the audiology faculty will ensure that the most current techniques and evidence based practices are being addressed in the curriculum.
2. The audiology division will seek to increase funding for graduate students enrolled in the Au.D. program through the provision of assistantships funded through clinical revenue. Additional sources of funding will be sought through grant writing.
3. The audiology division faculty will seek to increase the number of program applicants through increased awareness of the audiology program. Outreach efforts may include high schools, undergraduate programs, and public speaking opportunities.
4. The speech-language pathology division faculty will seek to increase the number of program applicants through reserving recruiting tables/booths at both the ASHA and Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association annual conventions.
5. The speech-language pathology division will seek to increase funding for graduate students through grant writing and through expanded partnership with area Sertoma clubs.

**Outcomes: (updated annually)**

1. **2009** The audiology faculty reviewed the graduate curriculum and added several courses to the program. Courses included: Cochlear Implants, Acoustics, and Electrophysiology III: Advanced Vestibular Diagnostics. Some courses were combined in order to facilitate these changes. The Otoacoustic Emissions course was combined with Electrophysiology I. Several seminars with unspecified descriptions were eliminated from the curriculum.
2. **2009** The audiology faculty developed a new program brochure in cooperation with the College of Fine Arts and Communication Public Relations and Marketing personnel. The brochure was sent to every university in the United States which offered a degree in Communication Sciences/Disorders.
3. **2010** Applicants to the audiology program increased from an approximate average of 15 per year, to over 30 applicants for admission in the 2010 academic year. This may be partly attributed to increased awareness of the program through dissemination of the newly developed brochure. Applicants to the SLP graduate program increased from an average of 60 to over 100 applicants for admission in the 2010 academic year.
4. **2010** A plan was developed which would move the staff audiologist's salary to a state budget line rather than being paid from clinical revenue. This plan has not yet been

implemented, but if successful will increase the availability of clinical revenue to fund student assistantships.

5. A personnel prep grant that would provide funding for students in both the AuD and the M.S. programs is currently under preparation.

### **Department Objective 3: University Outreach and Increased Community Involvement**

The audiology division will seek to become more involved in community outreach activities. This will benefit the community, benefit students by demonstrating the importance of community involvement and philanthropy, and benefit the audiology program through increased awareness of clinical services offered.

The speech-language pathology division will continue its partnerships with area school districts and evaluate potential expansion of service delivery to additional sites.

#### **Action Plan:**

1. Faculty will become more involved in public health fairs and other community events. When possible, free hearing screenings will be offered at these events in order to promote awareness of audiology and of hearing health.
2. The Deaf Co-op program will continue and be expanded if possible. The Deaf Co-op program provides audiology services for students in school districts which cannot afford to hire an independent audiologist. Provision of contract services affords graduate students the opportunity to experience educational audiology as well as to become involved with service provision for school-aged patients.
3. The SLP division's current partnerships with Port Arthur Independent School District and West Orange-Cove Independent School District will continue provided that the number of available graduate student clinicians and clinical supervisors is sufficient to deliver services specified in the contracts. The SLP faculty will monitor service delivery capacity across partnership sites and the university clinic in order to determine if additional partnerships can be entertained.

#### **Outcomes: (updated annually)**

1. **2009** The faculty became involved with the St. Katherine Drexel annual health fair. This event afforded graduate students working under faculty supervision the opportunity to provide hearing screenings for over 100 individuals. Additionally, the vast majority of community members who received services were from traditionally medically underserved populations.
2. **2009** A program which provided state certification to provide hearing screenings was implemented to all doctoral students at Lamar University. Dr. James Baer became state certified to teach hearing screening certification courses and offers this certification to students. Certification allows students to provide hearing screenings through the Student

Academy of Audiology (SAA) student group as both community service events and as a means of fundraising for the SAA organization. Funds raised through hearing screenings provided by SAA members are utilized to fund student travel to local, state, and national conferences.

3. **2009-2011** The Port Arthur and West Orange-Cove School Districts have continued to partner with our SLP program. Two other districts (Silsbee and Fort Bend Independent School Districts) have sought to establish partnerships with our program, but we have determined that we do not presently have the resources needed (additional graduate students and clinical supervisors) to take on additional service delivery sites.
4. **2010** The SLP program initiated a Lee Silverman Voice Treatment program for patients with Parkinson's disease in the southeast Texas region. The program was funded in part by a grant from Capital One Bank Foundation.

#### **Department Objective 4: Resources**

Both divisions will attempt to improve resources at the University in order to improve clinical service offerings and to expose students to a greater range of clinical practices. These additional resources will help to improve the quality of education offered at Lamar University.

#### **Action Plan:**

1. The faculty will attempt to procure new state-of-the-art equipment for the university clinic.
2. The divisions will seek new computers for the audiology doctoral student office and the master's student offices, respectively.
3. The Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences will attempt to acquire new technology for use in the classrooms in order to facilitate learning in a manner consistent with younger, more technologically savvy graduate and undergraduate students.

#### **Outcomes: (updated annually)**

1. **2010** A brand new Austoma audiometer was acquired for the audiology clinic. This equipment was acquired through the efforts of Dr. Vickie Dionne and was given to the university through an equipment grant.
2. **2010** Lamar University administration committed over \$200,000 to the acquisition of a new rotational chair, a new computerized dynamic posturography (CDP) unit, and a new Video Nystagmography (VNG) unit. The equipment was installed in March of 2010.
3. **2010** Nine new Macintosh computers were procured for the audiology doctoral student office. Ten new Macintosh computers and a Dell computer were procured for SLP graduate student offices.

4. **2011** A new portable Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) unit was procured. This OAE unit will facilitate the research of Dr. Connie Howard. The OAE unit is also used on a daily basis in the audiology clinic.
  
5. **2011** Over \$18,000 in Higher Education Assistance Funds (HEAF) were obtained with which to purchase new equipment for both graduate programs. The audiology program will purchase a new tympanometer while the SLP program will add a nasometer to its Kay Pentax Computerized Speech Lab.