

**FY16-FY20 Strategic Plan
Department of Speech and
Hearing Science**

1. OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

In the last ranking done by *US News and World Report* (2016-2017), the graduate program in audiology was ranked 9th and the graduate program in speech-language pathology was ranked 17th (both are the top-ranked professional programs in these areas in the state of Ohio). In terms of the speech-language pathology program, we are ranked below some of our peer Big Ten programs (University of Iowa, Northwestern, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Indiana University) and above most of the others (we are tied with University of Illinois). In terms of the audiology program, we are ranked below only the University of Iowa and Northwestern in the Big Ten. It is important to note that the Big Ten represents the strongest group of universities in the discipline of speech and hearing science. There are no separate rankings for undergraduate or PhD programs, nor is our discipline included in the NRC rankings.

A. Program Assessment

The assessment of the Department of Speech and Hearing Science (SHS) will be organized in terms of the four basic programs of the unit: the Undergraduate Program, the AuD program, the MA-SLP program, and the PhD program. SHS is also well recognized for its Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic which is recognized not only locally (by speech-language pathologists and audiologists working in hospitals, public education, nursing homes, clinics, etc.) but state-wide and nationally. The Director (G. Whitelaw) is often asked to talk about our clinic and its success (e.g., at the annual meeting of the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Science and Disorders, CAPCSD). This is clearly a strength of our professional programs. At the present time, SHS is perhaps most distinctive (in terms of publications, grant support and national reputation) in the academic areas of audiology, hearing science/psychoacoustics and speech perception/speech acoustics research (especially in the area of dialectology and second language acquisition). Currently, two of our faculty (Eric Healy and Rachael Holt) have multiple-year NIH grants.

1. Undergraduate Program

Over the past 10+ years the number of undergraduate majors in speech and hearing science has significantly increased. We had approximately 130 majors in AY 2003-04; in the spring of 2015-2016 we had over 400 majors. Obviously, this has been important to maintaining the department's budget under the current budget model. The Department and its faculty have been very active in recent years in the development of new disciplinary and interdisciplinary undergraduate programs (including streamlining its undergraduate minor). We are currently working with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to develop a joint major. The Department has also been developing courses that can be taken for GE credit. In addition, we have maintained the Summer Undergraduate Distance-Learning Program that allows undergraduate students from other disciplines to enroll in a set of core undergraduate

prerequisite classes (“leveling courses”) taught on a distance-learning basis.

Strengths. The strengths of the Undergraduate Program include the relatively high number of honors theses completed by our majors (who place in awards each year at the Denman Research Forum) and we place students in the top graduate programs (e.g., University of Iowa, Vanderbilt, Indiana University). In addition, undergraduates in our program have one of the best four-year graduation rates in the College.

Weaknesses. The number of majors has dropped somewhat over the past two years as have the number of students enrolled in our undergraduate courses. This likely has two sources: (1) semester conversion and a reduction in the number of credit hours taken and (2) recognition, by students, of the highly competitive nature of getting into a graduate program in speech-language pathology or audiology. We are working to make more of our undergraduate courses GE courses and in advertising to potential students other career paths with a major in speech and hearing science.

2. Graduate Programs

SHS has three graduate programs: a PhD program and two graduate professional programs (an MA in speech-language pathology and a professional doctorate, AuD, in audiology). As noted above, the quality of these graduate programs—as indicated by national ranking—is very good. The graduates of our professional programs also enjoy a 100% employment rate after graduation. Students in our professional program also have a first-time pass rate on the national Praxis Examination (need for certification and licensure) at nearly 100% (all have passed when required to take the exam a second time).

Given the very different nature of each of these graduate programs, they will be evaluated separately.

a. Professional Doctoral Program in Audiology (AuD)

Strengths. A strength of the 4-year AuD program lies in the quality of the faculty and staff. Five faculty members (all tenured; three associate professors [E. Bielefeld, R. Holt and C. Roup] and two professors [L. Feth and E. Healy]) have their major area of expertise in the area of audiology/hearing science. These faculty members have active research programs and provide the majority of the academic instruction in the AuD program. Several other faculty members in speech-language pathology/speech-language science area also contribute significantly to the AuD program. Three clinical educators (G. Whitelaw who holds a PhD degree and C. Goodman and Jodie Baxter each of whom holds an AuD degree) have a wealth of experience, and Whitelaw and Goodman have been with the Department for more than 15 years. Faculty and staff members in this area also have recently held important positions in our primary national organizations. For example, G. Whitelaw is past President of the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) and is currently Secretary for the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorder (CAPCSD). One faculty member (L. Feth) is fellow of both the Acoustical Society of America and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and has received the Honors of the Association by

ASHA (their highest honor). Several have functioned as associate editors of flagship journals (e.g., *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* and *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*). Another strength of the AuD programs lies in the opportunities available for student specialization and research, including an AuD/PhD option. Students can choose from existing prescribed sequences for Graduate Specializations and Minors (e.g., Gerontology, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, Early Intervention) or, in consultation with an advisor, can develop an individualized grouping of courses based on professional goals. We have been successful in making outstanding 4th-year externship placements for the majority of our AuD students (thanks in large part to Dr. Whitelaw's national standing). We have a very strong link with the Department of Otolaryngology at Ohio State.

Weaknesses. The program does not currently have a full-time tenure-track faculty member who can teach our balance course (we currently use a lecturer to teach this course). Reliance on adjunct faculty and/ or lecturers can be problematic—quality control can be an issue as can the administrative burden of integrating adjuncts into the teaching process. Another weakness of the program is that although a few students are appointed as graduate associates (and a smaller number are offered fellowships), we have no training grant to support student tuition—however, the mean GPA for incoming students in this program has been 3.8 for several years.

b. MA Program in Speech-Language Pathology

The 6-7 semester MA program in speech-language pathology (some students take courses and/or practice in the 2nd summer term) represents our largest graduate program. This is an important professional program and, we believe, well-respected nationally.

Strengths. The MA-SLP program is well-recognized in the state (as well as across the country) in terms of producing extremely well-qualified professionals and our graduates are extremely competitive when applying for positions within schools, hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation service providers, or nursing homes. Like the AuD program, a distinct strength of the MA-SLP program is the quality of the on-campus clinical experience. Students see a wide-range of clients (in terms of disorder, age, and ethnicity) and are guided by three extremely strong clinical supervisors. This past year (2015-2016) we were able to replace two retiring clinical supervisors with three new clinical assistant professors (Sonntag, Rory and Ray) who join a clinical assistant professor hired three years ago (Brello) and a clinical associate professor (Rabidoux). This is the largest number of clinical faculty/supervisors the Department has ever had. In addition, through a generous gift, we will be hiring a half-time clinical faculty member whose expertise will be in the area of fluency. Through another generous donation, we opened the "Aphasia Initiative" in 2015-2016. This allows student clinicians to interact with individuals with aphasia (and their families) on an on-going basis. We also have tenure-track faculty who are strong speech-language scholars including full professors (R. Fox, R. McCauley), an associate professor (M. Mills) and several assistant professors (A. Bean Ellawadi, S. Harnish, Y. Bae, Y. Lee) who are active in research; W. Secord (a lecturer and recipient of ASHA honors) maintains our school teacher-certification program. Dr. Yune Lee (who does fMRI research on language and music) will be joining our faculty in AU 2016 as a tenure-track assistant professor. I expect to have another search

approved for the 2016-2017 academic year in the area of neurogenic disorders (this is a continuation of a search which did not yield a hire in 2015-2016). The students admitted to the MA-level graduate program in speech-language pathology include outstanding students (especially those recruited through Fellowships).

Weaknesses. As in the AuD program, a significant weakness is the lack of a training grant to support student tuition. This does not necessarily affect the overall quality of enrolled students, however. As in the AuD program, the mean GPA for incoming students in this program has been 3.8 for several years. Currently, several of the speech-language faculty have research grants, but the grant submission activity has been increasing and we expect the proportion of faculty holding grants to increase over the next five years.

c. PhD Program in Speech and Hearing Science

The PhD program in Speech and Hearing Science has a long tradition and history at the Ohio State University, preceding the formation of the Department. The PhD program is very flexible with students normally taking courses in our Department as well as related departments (depending on each student's area of concentration).

Strengths. The senior faculty (Bielefeld, Feth, Fox, Healy, Holt, McCauley, Mills and Roup) as well the very productive junior faculty (Harnish, Ellawadi, Bae and Lee) as well as our research associate professor (Jacewicz) are very much the strength in the PhD program. Another strength is the availability of colleagues—many of whom are adjunct faculty members in SHS—in related departments including Psychology, Linguistics, Spanish and Portuguese, Otolaryngology and Computer Science and Engineering, among others.

Weaknesses. One of the greatest challenges to our PhD program—a challenge faced by the majority of doctoral programs in our discipline across the country—is the national shortage of individuals enrolling in and applying to PhD programs in speech and hearing science/communication disorders programs across the country. This has long been recognized and discussed by scholars in our field, and there have been ongoing initiatives supported by ASHA and CAPCSD. Currently, the number of PhD students in the Department is stable at around 18. Among the Big Ten programs, our numbers place us in the middle of the group in terms of number of PhD students with programs such as Northwestern and Wisconsin having much larger numbers (of course these also have many more regular faculty members than do we). Obviously, PhD students need to be provided with appropriate funding (a Fellowship or 50% GA position) and securing this funding is a continuing challenge for any PhD program, however we have generally been successful in funding all PhD students in the program for up to 5 years through University Fellowships, Graduate Associateships, and Training Grant positions.

C. Faculty and Student diversity

The tenure-track faculty maintains a balance between male and female faculty members. One of our tenured faculty members is African-American, and two tenure-track faculty are Asian-American. There is somewhat less diversity among our eight clinical

faculty/supervisors/preceptors: all are female, and one is African-American. The student population (in all three programs) is largely female and non-minority although we continue to seek diversity in terms of both gender/sex and ethnicity during the admission process.

D. The Current Budgetary Model and Student Enrollment

The Department currently has reasonable cash reserves. This cash comes primarily from the summer program teaching undergraduate courses through Continuing Education, the graduate courses taught for the Ohio Consortium through Continuing Education, release time expenditures from grants and marginal increases in our research indirects. The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic recently moved from an “earnings model” to an “educational model” as the College of Arts and Sciences (ASC) increased our budget in order to support all the clinical faculty/supervisors/preceptors. A large donation also helps to support one of our clinical assistant professors for her work in the Aphasia Initiative. Although there has been some “belt-tightening” across the Divisions and Departments in ASC, Speech and Hearing Science has had its budget relatively intact.

In terms of graduate enrollment, given the increase in the number of clinical faculty/supervisors, we will be increasing the size of incoming classes in the MA-SLP program (our largest graduate program) from 25 students to 32 students. Since the last strategic plan, we have improved the retention of students in all of our graduate programs through increased student quality. However, the retention of students in both the AuD and the MA-SLP programs would likely improve if we could increase the amount of student financial support. We plan to address this issue by the submission of training grants and increasing development activities. We also need to increase research grant submissions (which will, in turn, generate increases in the number of graduate associateships we can offer.

E. Interdisciplinary Activity by Faculty and Students

Many faculty members and students are active in terms of interdisciplinary scholarship. This includes cross-unit participation in undergraduate honors research and graduate/faculty research and teaching. For example, L. Feth, Mills, Bielefeld and R. Fox have all been active in development of interdisciplinary minors and are working with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to develop a joint major (primarily for potential bilingual speech-language pathologists).

F. Outreach and Engagement

The primary Outreach and Engagement of the Department comes from its Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic which serves hundreds of clients each year. From June 2015 to May 2015, the Clinic provided service to 1,467 clients for a total of 4,272 clinical sessions.

G. Donor Development and Alumni Communication Efforts

Speech and Hearing Science is striving to increase its development activities. In 2016 one donor provided \$500,000 (Aphasia Initiative) and another donor provided \$175,000 (helping

to support a hire in the area of fluency). Yet another donor provided support for a full scholarship (tuition and stipend) for a SLP doctoral student. We have plans to identify other donors who might be able to provide substantial gifts (but realize this is a longer-term prospect). We also have plans to develop an on-line newsletter to be given to donors and alumni and a “Grateful Patient” program.

H. Current Space and Equipment

The Department’s space is still quite adequate for our needs (and we have office and lab space for 1-2 more tenure-track faculty). We have budget that provides for periodic replacement of computers, audiology equipment, assessment tests, etc. We recently purchased two new “Real Ear” systems for the clinic, and updated all the computers in the Instructional Computer Lab. We have development accounts that will provide support for student research as well as faculty research. Our needs in this area involve primarily issues related to the infrastructure of west campus (pavements, walks, etc.); but ASC administration and Ohio State Office of Facilities Operations and Development is working with us to address these issues. The Chair consults with the Dean of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences on a regular basis (several times each year) regarding the basic department budget, needs and clinical operations.

2. DEPARTMENT GOALS FOR FY16-FY20

A. Realistic Goals for Quality

Given our ranking in the top 10 for audiology and top 20 for speech-language pathology, an obvious goal would be to have both professional graduate programs ranked in the top 10. To do this we clearly need to continue increasing the research productivity of the faculty (we have made very significant strides in the past 5-6 years in this regard and all faculty are now research active). We need to continue to make good hires. Tenure-track faculty members need to be more active in seeking research funding which, in turn, may increase the number and quality of PhD students. We can also maintain (and preferably increase) the quality of MA-SLP and AuD students enrolled if we can provide more financial support (for tuition and stipends). This will require training grants.

B. Program Priorities

- Successfully hire into the open neurogenic disorders/dysphagia faculty position
- Develop an additional Discovery Theme faculty position (in either speech or hearing)
- Hire an individual to do research and teach in the area of balance/vestibular disorders
- Increase the number of active research grants (NIH, NSF, and private foundations)
- Increase Donor Development activities in the Department (e.g., the Grateful Patients program)
- Secure funding for MA-SLP and AuD students in the form of training grants
- Increase number of PhD students (all funded through Fellowships, GTAs or GRAs), especially as we increase faculty members
- Increase collaborative research efforts between Speech and Hearing Science faculty and other Departments/Colleges

C. Student Research

We normally have 10-15 honors undergraduate majors completing honors theses. We would like to increase the number of MA/PhD and AuD/PhD students who would need to complete research projects as well. We are also working on a proposal for dual enrollment in the AuD/PhD program.

3. BENCHMARKS FOR ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENT OF GOALS?

Benchmark for achievement of various goals:

- Success in hiring senior faculty into open position
- Increase in number of faculty line beyond current faculty lines by at least 1
- 30% increase in number of peer-reviewed publications by faculty over next 2-3 years
- 20% increase in number of PhD students
- 25% increase in number of undergraduate majors and/or in undergraduate credit hours generated
- 40% of faculty supported (as PI or co-investigator) on extramural grants
- Receipt of at least 1 more training grant in support of MA-SLP, AuD or PhD students
- Improvement in development efforts, in particular, documented increase in amount of significant donations to Department