


Harding University Department of
Communication Sciences and Disorders

STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2019-2025



The Strategic Plan for Harding University Communication Sciences and Disorders is consistent with the overall University Strategic Plan in terms of organization and purpose. Both plans are supported by five overarching pillars which define both the departmental and university initiatives for the 5-year planning cycle. A broad overview of those pillars and the department-level initiatives are as follows:

A Christ-Centered Community of Mission

The department will continue to seek ways to engage our students in service-learning opportunities both domestically and abroad. Our HIZ-Path program in Zambia is successful, well-established, and student participation increased by 50% in Summer 2024. We are seeking to develop additional practicum experiences in Nicaragua and other countries in Latin America through Health Talents International. We plan to resume offering our Spring Break trip to the Navajo nation in Spring 2025. These opportunities give our students to opportunity to experience their careers as vehicles for service to others. Locally, we have developed a partnership with El Puente which serves Spanish speaking individuals and families in our area. We have hired a new faculty member who is a native speaker of Spanish and, through her expertise, have been able to provide services to our Spanish-speaking neighbors in our campus clinic.

An Affordable Community of Mission

We continue to explore ways to make college education most affordable to both graduate and undergraduate students, including expanding scholarship offerings. We inform students of relevant scholarship opportunities in order to assist them in reducing student loan debt and have expanded the information on our website this year. We have created an accelerated dual degree track which allows well-qualified students to complete their BA and MS degrees in five years, making education more affordable. We increased the financial award to our graduate assistants by 42% in 2023 and awarded approximately \$50,000 in additional scholarships to incoming students. Through fundraising efforts on the University's Day of Giving, the Keuhn-Weaver-Tullos scholarship is now fully endowed.

A Successful Community of Mission

Our department is actively engaged in transitioning our current assessment model to a competency-based system for documenting skill acquisition in clinical settings at both graduate and undergraduate levels. We have developed a new competency-based rubric for grading clinical skill development and are utilizing the ExamSoft platform to assist in tracking mastery of academic knowledge. A more granular approach to evaluating student knowledge and skill development assists the department in more supportive and focused remediation of deficits. One hundred percent of our 2024 MS graduates passed their Praxis examination on the first attempt and 100% of our 2023-24 undergraduates who applied to graduate programs were accepted for advanced degrees. We re-structured the summer semester to more efficiently utilize time and resources for continuing competency development.

A Diverse Community of Mission

We have met our goal of increasing the number of graduate students from under-represented populations by 10% during this recruiting cycle. We are strategically applying scholarship dollars toward this initiative. We are aggressively seeking to enroll clients in the clinic with a wide variety of disorders, severity ranges and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Improved marketing of our services to local physicians and providers is ongoing.

A Collaborative Community of Mission

We continue to develop opportunities for interdisciplinary and inter-institution collaboration. Along with other departments in the College of Allied Health and Center for Health Sciences, we intentionally seek ways to collaborate in order to develop professional practice competencies as well as technical skills in our students. We expanded our work in Zambia to include College of Nursing and look forward to their continued involvement. We will launch a revised curriculum for Interprofessional Education requirements in Fall 2024.