STRATEGIC PLAN – 2012-2015

Mission

The mission of the Graduate Program in Communication Disorders at SUNY New Paltz is to:

- Provide outstanding, affordable graduate preparation in SLP for students of all backgrounds who demonstrate academic and clinical promise.
- Engage students intellectually through innovative teaching, mentoring, and collaboration with faculty in coursework, clinical practica, and research experiences.
- Immense graduate students in an enriching environment that encourages participation in professional development activities and service.
- Serve individuals and organizations in the Hudson Valley region through the activities of graduate students in educational and outreach programs as well as the provision of clinical services through the SUNY New Paltz Speech-Language and Hearing Center and at off-campus sites.

Priorities

We aim to integrate clinic, classroom, and research experiences to allow students to become compassionate, knowledgeable professionals. To accomplish this, we will continue to expand our pedagogical focus on both “how” and “why” in both classroom and clinic to integrate the two. The foundation of our pedagogy is research and evidence-based practice. We intend to expand our research culture, increasing the involvement of both faculty and students. We aim to strengthen the connection between the Speech-Language and Hearing Center and the campus and regional communities. Our curriculum, facilities, resources, and information technology must be commensurate with these objectives.

Goals

1. Graduates will have acquired the best possible clinical skill set through provision of outstanding clinical training that integrates classroom and clinic; emphasizes evidence-based practice, clinical application of theory, and problem-based learning; and provides diverse experiences.

   A. Graduate students will master clinical skills and develop independence in applying theoretical knowledge in clinical contexts, using multiple resources (research literature, coursework, consultation with supervisors and faculty consultants, etc.)

   Strategies:
   - Increase participation in grand rounds (held each semester).
• Utilize academic consultants (academic faculty who have specific areas of clinically applicable expertise (e.g., child and adult language, speech perception, bilingualism, craniofacial issues). Students and/or clinical supervisors may consult for specific expertise.

• Continue to require a case-study-based oral comprehensive exam as the summative assessment.

B. **Graduate students will develop and apply theoretical and practical clinical knowledge in academic contexts.**

Strategies:

• Expand the use of case-based activities and problem-based teaching in multiple courses.

• Include Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) projects in multiple courses that reflect the evolving nature of EBP and the kinds of evidence that may be used in clinical decision-making.

• Continue to require a written comprehensive exam as the formative assessment.

C. **The Department will increase the diversity of student experiences through our network of external placement sites, and within our on-campus Speech-Language and Hearing Center.**

Strategies:

• Maintain or continue to increase the diversity of patients (varied ages, diagnoses, cultural and linguistic differences, etc.) in the Speech-Language and Hearing Center.

• Increase student participation in specialty clinics. Starting with the fall, 2014 cohort, all students will participate in at least two specialty clinics prior to graduation.

• Develop additional specialty clinics to support this increased participation.

• Continue to expand our network of external clinical placement sites.

2. **Build an ingrained and self-sustaining research culture with widespread involvement of faculty and students. Increase the emphasis on the research bases of the profession, both in coursework and through student involvement in faculty research.**

Strategies:

• Require research-based rationales on all clinical lesson plans.

• Involve more students in research activities, leading to presentations at student research symposia and professional conferences.
• Increase research activity among current faculty where feasible, and continue to seek additional lines for faculty who will develop student-centered research programs.

3. **Strengthen the connection between the Speech-Language and Hearing Center and the campus and regional communities.**

   Strategies:
   • Assess the current specialty clinics and groups
   • Identify community and regional needs for additional specialty clinics and groups as these relate to the clinic mission
   • Establish a community advisory board consisting of patients, professionals, and community leaders.
   • Increase public awareness of the Center’s offerings and activities using a variety of strategies and media
   • Propose a renovation of the Center that will improve accessibility and access for the community and increase the number of therapy rooms, including the addition of a larger room for groups.

4. **Our curriculum, facilities, resources, and data must be commensurate with the above objectives.**

   Strategies:
   • Undertake systematic assessment of adequacy of current resources and anticipated needs (facilities, personnel, and equipment/supplies) at the summer and winter curriculum retreats. This information will be used as input to the various budget cycles on campus.
   • Develop/implement a comprehensive digital portfolio system for collecting and tracking student work and assessment data including KASA, comprehensive exams, diagnostic reports, and clinical assessments.