University of Kentucky College of Health Sciences 

Communication Sciences & Disorders

**STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY**

**2017 – 2021**

*Introduction*

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In alignment with the mission of the University of Kentucky (UK), the mission of the College of Health Sciences (CHS) is to “help the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and beyond to gain and retain the highest level of health through creative leadership and productivity in education, research, and service.” The College is dedicated to educating frontline entry-level practitioners for the allied health disciplines housed in the CHS as well as educating the clinical, educational, and research leaders of tomorrow ([http://www.uky.edu/chs/about-us)](http://www.uky.edu/healthsciences/about-us/college-history)). We are the Gateway to the Health Sciences.

The 2017-2021 CSD Strategic Plan is integrated with both the University and College Strategic plans and reflects five strategic objectives described below. Thus, the goals of our CSD program are consistent with the college and the university therefore the CSD program has used the strategic planning process to strengthen the core mission of the program and simultaneously move in new directions. This 2017-2021 Strategic Plan will further refine and focus our goals on the tenets of education, research and outreach ensuring continued growth and success of our students, faculty and staff. Furthermore, this planning will help identify objectives and strategies for future implementation.

*Mission*

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The mission of the Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to serve the citizens of Kentucky and beyond by preparing graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to provide quality clinical services and assume leadership roles; by serving the community and the professions through provision of evidence-based clinical services, continuing education, and exchange of information among practitioners in communication disorders; and by promoting, conducting, and supporting research that contributes to the understanding and management of persons with communication disorders. (SOURCE: <https://www.uky.edu/chs/academic-programs/communication-sciences-and-disorders/graduate-program>)

*Strategic Planning Process*

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The purpose of this effort is to develop a plan that will guide our collective efforts over the next 5 years which will allow us to become leaders in the areas of teaching research and service. Historically our strategic plans align with university and college strategic plans. Our previous strategic plan had been in place from 2009-2015. The University of Kentucky’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan was approved in October 2015. Shortly thereafter, the College of Health Sciences 2016-2021 was developed and approved. To bridge the gap between the previous strategic plan and the current plan, the CSD faculty completed a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), guided by documents from the American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA). Once both the University and College’s Strategic Plans were in place, the CSD faculty began our own strategic planning with the following specific steps;

* September 2017: The CSD Division Director met with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for pre-planning purposed and to organize materials.
* October 2017: An overview about the Strategic Planning process was discussed at a CSD faculty meeting. This provided opportunity for input from the faculty before our scheduled faculty retreat.
* November 2017: A full CSD faculty retreat took place that was facilitated by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Detailed discussion about each strategic initiative occurred so that every faculty member contributed to the conversation. Objectives identified were determined to be relevant to both the college and university initiatives as well as specific, measurable, attainable and timely.
* January 2018: The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs compiled a working draft document of the CSD Strategic Plan for further vetting, clarification and specification.
* January – March 2018: Division Director and CSD faculty worked to further clarify action steps during ongoing faculty meetings to include target dates, metrics to be obtained and person to be responsible for attaining/reporting on the objective.
* April 2018: A finalized draft was prepared for final vetting by faculty, students and alumni. Following any edits, the plan was reviewed and voted on for approval.

*Contextual Issues Considered in Strategic Planning Process*

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This strategic plan was developed using a variety of sources such as faculty agenda meeting notes, reports, survey results, emails and research on current trends in our profession, CAA and ASHA documents and guidelines. (See Contextual Issues below).

*Current job predictions*: Nationally the anticipated job growth of speech language pathology and audiology occupations is predicted to grow 20-25% faster than average growth of other occupations according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. In Kentucky, there is also a significant need for both audiology and speech pathology.

*Student exit surveys:*  We have systematically evaluated our graduate students and employers of our students to identify gaps and trends. Two primary themes emerge. First, students consistently request the need for more training in dysphagia. Second, they ask for more flexibility in course selection.

*Changing ASHA standards:* Our professional organization, ASHA updated standards that have become effective in August 2017 which will require curriculum revision to address those gaps.

*Quality Improvement Plan:* highlighted the needs for1) better integration of didactic coursework with clinical activity to improve clinical reasoning, 2) improved information sharing/collaboration of research activity across areas of interest, 3) increased purposeful recruitment efforts of persons from diverse backgrounds.

*Student, Alumni and Employer input*: The current plan was shared with our current students, recent alumni and current employers for feedback about proposed strategic plan through email and small group discussion.

*Faculty retreat and meetings.* An all-day retreat took place in November 3, 2017 with follow up discussions at weekly faculty meetings to identify specific steps that would occur for each objective.

*CAA Accreditation Standards:* The CAA requires that accredited programs develop a strategic plan. Furthermore:

* The plan must be congruent with the mission and goals of the program and the sponsoring institution, have the support of the administration and reflect the role of the program within its community.
* The plan identifies long-term goals, specific measurable objectives, strategies for attainment of the goals and objectives, and a schedule for analysis of the plan.
* The plan must include a mechanism for regular evaluation of the plan itself and of progress in meeting the plan’s objectives.
* An executive summary of the strategic plan must be shared with faculty, students, staff alumni and other interested parties

*Evaluation of Plan*

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The strategic plan will be evaluated in an ongoing manner as it will be listed as a standing item of business on the CSD faculty agenda for its weekly meeting. The CSD Division Director and the Administrative Assistant will be charged with monitoring progress.

*Challenges to proposed Strategic Plan*

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* The need to maintain national accreditation of the graduate program through the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) which has become more specific about the review process and by the American Speech and Hearing Association which has revised standards related to training needs of future clinicians.
* The need to respond to current college issues that involve restructuring of divisions and departments along with increased enrollment of “exploratory” undergraduate students and other undergraduate initiatives
* The need to continue to fulfill the teaching mission to provide innovative pedagogical experiences for our students across multiple levels that include; undergraduate exploratory, undergraduate Pre-CSD, undergraduate CSD admitted, graduate admitted and doctoral students.
* The need to continue the pursuit of external funding for research and produce scholarly work in the context of shrinking national and foundation resources to support both faculty scholarly interests as well as secure funding for students.
* The need to continue to meet our community needs within the context of university policy, student skills, faculty and staff resources.

# CSD GOAL 1: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

To be the Communication Sciences and Disorders Undergraduate program of choice for aspiring undergraduate students within the Commonwealth and beyond, seeking a transformational education that promotes self-discovery, experiential learning, and life-long achievement.

The CSD UG faculty and staff are dedicated to enhancing student success and career exploration across multiple groups of students; a) exploratory students with interest in CSD, b) pre-CSD students and c) admitted CSD UG students. Our mission is to recruit, admit, support, and matriculate a pre-professional community of learners prepared for the next level of education whether in speech pathology, audiology or other related profession. We strive to create and nurture an environment inspired by professionalism, rigor, diversity, and inclusion. To provide transformative student centered education that includes opportunities for exploration of the CSD major, we will focus on targeted strategic investments in faculty, staff, and co-curricular resources dedicated to student success.

# CSD GOAL 2: GRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Strengthen the quality and distinctiveness of our graduate program to transform our students into accomplished scholars and professionals who contribute to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world through their research and discovery, creative and clinical endeavors, teaching, and service.

The College of Health Sciences recognizes that the scope of professional opportunities for our graduate and professional students is changing in fundamental ways. So, too, is our approach to graduate education, as seen by our close examination of course offerings, as well as students’ clinical, teaching, and research responsibilities throughout their degree programs. Additionally, we are targeting financial support for graduate and professional education in ways that will increase student selectivity, enhance interprofessional education, expand and enhance programs that prepare future health care professionals for the rapidly changing delivery and research needs.

# CSD Goal 3: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Enhance the diversity and inclusivity of our University community through recruitment and retention of an increasingly diverse population of faculty, staff, and students and by implementing initiatives that provide a welcoming educational environment and provide rich diversity-related experiences for all to help ensure their success in an interconnected world.

We will achieve this objective by working collaboratively to create an environment where all of our students, faculty, and staff live or work in an environment of openness and acceptance and in which people of all backgrounds, identities, and perspectives can feel secure and welcome. We are committed to providing an enriching UK experience for *all* students, faculty, and staff by actively exploring and adopting new initiatives that will expand both the diversity and inclusivity of our campus community.

**Diversity defined**.

One of CSD’s core values is the understanding that each individual is unique. Through personal interactions with persons from different backgrounds, we all benefit from continued cultural growth. These differences can be along the dimensions of gender, sex, ethnicity, race, ability, communication, age, religion, sexual orientation, intersecting identities, socio-economic status, education, political beliefs or other ideologies.

**CSD Goal 4: RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**

Expand our scholarship, creative endeavors, and research across the full range of CSD topics to address important research questions impacting the lives of persons with communication deficits and their families.

CSD is committed to cultivating an environment that embraces the need for extramural support and strategic investment to continue addressing CSD related gaps in research related to communication disorders that negatively impacting quality of life. Furthermore, student involvement in ongoing research projects creates additional opportunities for individual growth and development.

**CSD Goal 5: OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**Engage in community outreach at local, national and international levels to advance the public good, create opportunities for interprofessional activity and engage with communities from diverse backgrounds.**

CSD has a number of outstanding outreach and community engagement initiatives. Examples include: Shoulder to Shoulder Global in Ecuador, the reduced-cost CSD Academic Clinic, speech/language and hearing screenings, Bluegrass Laryngectomee conference and telepractice speech/language services to name a few. These initiatives engage our outstanding clinical faculty, staff and, students with the community to foster effective communication and enhance quality of life often bringing services to those most in need. Furthermore, by engaging in outreach, our students encounter diverse clinical populations as well as interact with persons on interprofessional teams.