Strategic Framework  
Academic Period 2014-2019  
Department of Communication Disorders  
University of Nebraska at Kearney

The purpose of our 2014-2019 Strategic Framework is to plan and execute demonstrably effective strategies over time that pragmatically bring to fruition the ongoing mission of the UNK Department of Communication Disorders.

Strategic Domain 1: Speech-Language Pathologist Personnel Shortages in Nebraska  
Goal: As one of the University of Nebraska’s three master’s degree SLP programs (UNK: Kearney, UN-L: Lincoln; UNO: Omaha), we will develop and implement strategies over time to alleviate the shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists in Nebraska generally, and more particularly in rural Nebraska communities.

Strategies:
- Continue to provide an ASHA/CAA accredited university Program that graduates 15 to18 well educated MSE/SLP entry-level professionals into the workforce each year.
- Strategically formalize internship placement agreements and networking relationships with qualified providers and their employers in rural Nebraska schools, clinics and agencies who might seek to offer employment to future program graduates.
- Use program networking and information dissemination resources that inform graduating students of employment opportunities in Nebraska statewide, introduce them to potential employers, and make them aware of various hiring incentives.
- Obtain and/or create and strategically distribute (social media, printed materials, etc.) program specific public relations materials and methods to advertise and educate about our CDIS/SLP majors and careers.
- Use recruiting strategies that encourage a high census of Nebraska citizens to major in our BSE Communication Disorders undergraduate degree program.
- Strategically identify and recruit high achieving students from rural Nebraska high schools to apply for admission to our MSE Speech-Language Pathology graduate degree program.
- Recruit quality ‘undecided’ students into the undergraduate BSE Communication Disorders degree program from within the UNK student body.
- Use recruiting and public information strategies that attract future students into our major at UNK from rural Nebraska communities outside the usual commuter range of our campus in Kearney, including the RiteCare Telepractice Clinic Mobile Speech, Language and Hearing Clinic to provide better community service and public information dissemination to rural families and school children in West Central Nebraska.
- Use our RiteCare Telepractice and Mobile Clinics to advertise and provide information about our major and careers at public venues such as Community Health Fairs, high school career fairs, and parades throughout West Central Nebraska.

Strategic Domain 2: Resources  
Goal: The Department of Communication Disorders will effectively petition the university administration to maintain adequate budgetary funding and other resources to assure that ongoing essential needs of the Program are met over time, including adequate faculty, staff, graduate assistantships, physical facilities, operating funds, library resources, capital equipment, and technology. The Department will also seek supplemental funding both from within the University (e.g. Priority Program funding; intramural research grants) and from outside sources as appropriate.

Strategies:
- The Program will emphasize to the administration the continuing importance of the contribution UNK’s ASHA/CAA accredited Master’s degree program is making to alleviate the severe shortage of speech-language pathologists in Nebraska by maintaining our high annual rates of graduation (15 to 18 per year).
- The Department Chair, Clinic Coordinator, faculty, students and staff will proactively identify and discuss both needs and resources on a regular and ongoing basis.
-The Department Chair will meet at least monthly with the College of Education Dean to plan and discuss current and future funding and resource allocation, develop strategies for quality improvements and problem resolution, as well as identify issues that may impact this area.
-Individual faculty will be encouraged to seek intramural and extramural grants in support of their research and scholarly pursuits.

**Strategic Domain 3: Quality Improvement Through Effective Assessment**

**Goal:** The Department of Communication Disorders will maintain compliance over time with the University’s Annual Assessment Plan and Report mandate. Quality enhancement efforts will be data based and collaborative.

**Desired Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete the Master of Science in Education Speech-Language Pathology degree program (MSE/SLP) in the Department of Communication Disorders will be responsive, reflective, and collaborative decision makers who have acquired the requisite professional knowledge, skills, and technological expertise to practice ethically and successfully.

Upon completion of the graduate program, the student in speech/language pathology will be able to:

**A. Knowledge of Assessment**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the critical elements to analyze and differentiate various communication and swallowing disorders.

- Analyze ideas and make critical evaluations.
- Understand research literature to selected disciplines.
- Understand fundamental information in anatomy, physiology, neurology, and the psychology of communication.

**B. Knowledge of Intervention**

Students will demonstrate knowledge of theory and evidence-based strategies to address various communication and swallowing disorders.

- Understand research literature to selected disciplines
- Understand fundamental information in anatomy, physiology, neurology, and the psychology of communication.

**C. Skills of Assessment**

Students will assess speech, language, and hearing performance of clients across the life span to make critical evaluations based on sound theoretical and research constructs.

- Assess speech, language, swallowing, and hearing performance and appropriately interpret and apply information.
- Appreciate, understand and apply multicultural information in assessment and interpersonal actions with both colleagues and clients served.
- Analyze ideas and make critical evaluations.

**D. Skills of Intervention**

Students will apply evidence-based practices to plan, implement, and modify treatment for clients with various communication and swallowing disorders.

- Plan, implement, evaluate and modify educational or clinical interventions across a wide range of patients.
- Appreciate, understand and apply multicultural information in intervention, and interpersonal actions with both colleagues and clients served.

**E. Writing in the Discipline**

Students will be able to write as professionals in their discipline through the most appropriate form, e.g., essays, position papers, term papers, abstracts of articles, book reviews, reports from journals as well as clinical reports concerning specific clients.

- Demonstrate professional oral and written communication skills.

**F. Professional Interprofessional Skills**

- Develop effective and ethical professional relationships with patients, caregivers and other invested professionals.
- Recognize the need for and participate in professional activities that promote lifelong learning.
- Earn and maintain appropriate professional practice credentials, i.e., licenses and/or certifications.
Strategies:
Using both direct and indirect measures, the Program will collect, analyze and respond appropriately to student outcomes assessment data collected annually from the following:

Direct Measures
- Diagnostic Teams
- Written Comprehensive Examination
- Clinic, Field Placement, and Student Teaching evaluations
- National Praxis II Specialist Examination
- Writing in the Discipline

Indirect Measures
- Alumni Survey
- Employer Survey


Strategic Domain 4: Accreditation and professional standards compliance.

Goals and strategic plan: The Program will devise and implement appropriate strategies and practices to maintain compliance with all of the following administrative, accreditation, credentialing, and other professional standards and policies over time:
- ASHA/CAA accreditation: Department of Communication Disorders Master of Science in Education Speech-Language Pathology graduate degree Program
- College of Education CAEP accreditation
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Licensure Law statutes
- Nebraska Department of Education Public Schools Endorsement/Rule 24 standards
- University of Nebraska at Kearney; Mission; Academic and Administrative Policies; NCA
- University of Nebraska/Board of Regents: Mission; Strategic Framework; Academic and Administrative Policies.

Strategic Domain 5: Program Faculty

Goals: Program faculty will demonstrate maintained competency and achievement in Teaching, Scholarship, Professional service and/or other assigned duties; all will hold current Nebraska Licensure and Certificate(s) of Clinical Competence (ASHA/CCC) and comply with the standards required to obtain and retain them; the Program will remain committed to hire and retain qualified doctoral level faculty; faculty will be provided with institutional and administrative support, information and resources to facilitate their ongoing success including eventual attainment of tenure and/or advancement in rank as appropriate to the individual’s assignments.

Strategies:
- Sustain coordinated efforts with the Dean of the College of Education and the UNK central administration to support and provide facilitative funding and other scaffolding for our ongoing efforts for the hiring and retention of qualified doctoral faculty.
- Design our Program’s mission and strategic framework to harmonize with our institutional charge to prioritize excellence in teaching as articulated in the University of Nebraska at Kearney Mission Statement and in the University of Nebraska Board of Regents Strategic Framework while also effectively enabling and encouraging faculty in their scholarly productivity and service.
- Shepherd resources to maintain our CDIS Program’s top-priority commitment to teaching excellence and holistic, progressive involvement of all faculty members in student knowledge and skills acquisition through assigned clinical supervision and clinical teaching, advising, mentoring, classroom and laboratory instruction, and comprehensive competency assessments.
- Manage resources to provide .25 FTE release time in support of research and scholarly works in both Fall and Spring semesters to all full-time tenure-track graduate faculty.
- Use departmental resources to encourage and enable faculty to continuously progress towards tenure and rank advancement; encourage collaborative research initiatives, intramural and extramural grant writing, research mentoring and collaboration with students, peer reviewed publication, and juried scholarly presentations.
- Encourage and facilitate faculty to garner available resources in support of research, which includes research mentoring of program students.
- Encourage faculty Continuing Education over time by paying annual ASHA and NSLHA membership dues and State Licensure fees, CEU Registry fees, and registration fees to attend regional and national meetings.
- Assure quality accountability of each faculty member through 1) annual faculty departmental peer review and 2) annual administrative review by the department chair.