Murray State University Graduate Program in Speech-Language Pathology (MS)

Strategic Plan 2021/2022 Progress Update
Fall 2022 Semester

Focus Area: Recruitment and retention of program faculty

Baseline Data:

When the strategic plan for 2021/2022 academic year was established, the faculty was composed of two tenure-track faculty, six masters-level instructors, and one empty line. Additionally, there are three consistent, doctoral-level adjunct faculty who teach graduate courses and one adjunct with a Doctorate of Audiology who teaches two undergraduate courses. The program was notified that one tenure-track line was eliminated by University administration due to budget concerns.

Outcome:

Fill all lines, recapture lost line(s), retain faculty, and increase the percentage of tenure-track faculty with terminal degrees.

Indicators of success:
- The program will fill 100% of lines, retain 100% of faculty and demonstrate at least 33% of lines held by tenure-track faculty with an academic doctorate.

Strategies:
- By 2025, a strategy for recruiting applicants will be underway that includes an advertisement with CAPCSD, social media, reaching out to regional doctoral programs, and a presence at the ASHA convention. The Academic Director will coordinate these efforts.
- By 2024, will increase support of current faculty seeking doctoral degrees that includes tuition assistance, course release, research collaborations, and mentorship

Progress:

The program had the only vacant line taken away and so there are zero open lines in the program as of fall 2022. Currently, we have 100% of lines available filled and we also had two full time faculty complete their terminal degrees (EdD) over the 2022 year. As a result of completing their EdD, one faculty member transitioned to instructing academic courses in the graduate program whereas they had previously been instructing at the undergraduate level and supervising within the graduate program.The other faculty member held a clinical doctorate initially and was already instructing at the graduate level but now she has completed the terminal degree which will assist in ensuring we have well over the

required percentage of course being taught by faculty holding the appropriate terminal degrees. Additionally, we continue working with highly qualified PhD adjunct faculty that have been working with the program for many years. We had one instructor who left her position after being with MSU for four years to take another job with higher pay and flexibility. We were able to successfully post the instructor position and hire an individual who started full time in the fall 2022. As of the fall 2022 semester we have met the 33% of lines being held by tenure track faculty with an academic doctorate. In discussing the progress made towards this goal with faculty, the faculty determined that it was still essential to focus on retention of faculty members. Therefore, the goal was revised to reflect retention efforts moving forward as well as supporting any additional faculty members that want to complete their terminal degrees. There is one current faculty member who started working on her EdD last year and hopes to have her degree within the next three years.

The previous goal for recruitment to fill open lines will be removed from the plan as there are no longer open lines available. A new strategy was developed to focus on retaining faculty and keeping all lines filled. The strategy will be: By 2024, the program will have retained full time faculty, with 100% of lines filled.

Focus Area: Recruitment of Highly Qualified Students

Issue:

In previous years, the program was losing its top candidates from the undergraduate program to other universities. Factors impacting retention and recruitment of the most highly qualified students included tuition costs, university location, faculty relationships and culture and innovative clinical placement opportunities.

Baseline data:

Admitted student data from 2020 indicate that admitted/accepted students have lower undergraduate grade point averages and GRE scores than student declining offers. However, in 2021 that was not the case, students accepted had higher GPA and the gap in the GRE performance was lessened. Based on the 2022 applicant details, we have a very slight increase in overall GPA for the applicants that accepted, a slight decrease in the quantitative GRE scores but equivalent scores for writing and verbal, when compared to the applicants who were offered admission and declined.

Exit surveys completed by students upon graduation indicated an overall satisfaction rating of 4.61 out of 5, and that is a .97 gain since 2017. Each year has shown increased satisfaction rates. Praxis pass rates fluctuate with enrollment growth ranging from 84% to 100%. Student costs for Kentucky residents have increased from $468/credit hours to $600/credit hour over the past 5 years.

2020	# Students	Overall GPA	CDI GPA	GRE V	GRE Q	GRE W
Declines	31	3.65	3.67	149.03	144.68	3.88
Accepts	31	3.55	3.67	146.39	143.16	3.74
difference		-.10	=	-2.64	-1.52	-.14

2021	# Students	Overall GPA	CDI GPA	GRE V	GRE Q	GRE W
Declines	16	3.74	3.77	148.31	145.25	4.31
Accepts	24	3.77	3.68	147.17	144.65	3.85
difference		+.03	-.09	-1.14	-.06	-.46
2022	# Students	Overall GPA	CDI GPA	GRE V	GRE Q	GRE W
Declines	15	3.76	3.84	148	147	3.80
Accepts	24	3.80	3.79	148	145	3.80
Difference		+0.04	-0.05	=	-2.0	=

Outcomes:

The program will present itself as highly attractive to the most qualified students and ensure a positive relationship between academic courses, clinical experiences, and program outcomes.

Indicators of Success:

- By Fall 2023, GPA and GRE data for accepted/admitted students will be the same or higher than for declining students. Exit surveys will continue to reflect that students perceive courses and clinical experiences positively. Praxis pass rates will increase and be maintained at 90% or higher.

Strategies:

- By the end of the fall 2022 semester, the CDI faculty will further market recent innovations to potential students, thus attracting highly-qualified applicants.
- By the end of fall 2022 semester, the undergraduate faculty and coordinator will create an undergraduate exit survey and identify outcome data to ensure that the department continues to progress highly-qualified students to the MSU graduate program.
- By December 2023, the CDI faculty will complete a review of the updated graduate curriculum to ensure it is better aligned with clinical resources, is highly innovative thus improving student learning, attracting more qualified students, and improving PRAXIS outcomes.

Progress:

There has been significant progress in this area and the faculty correlated the improved climate and culture of the department with increased success. Faculty are instrumental in student retention and our current faculty and leadership foster a culture of community within the program which has assisted in being able to retain high quality students as well as attract high caliber students from other institutions. The admitted cohorts starting in 2022 had a significant increase in retaining top

undergraduate students. Efforts such as improved advising within the department, faculty relationships to provide support for students, the faculty to student ratio in class is smaller, community building events involving students and faculty outside of the classroom. Additionally, after reviewing the data and trends within programs across the US, the faculty voted to remove the GRE requirement for admission to the graduate program starting in 2023. There are many applicants who might still submit GRE scores if they have to take the exam for another university. There were no longer any universities in KY that required the GRE and so we will be commensurate with our peer institutions.

The graduate exit surveys have demonstrated positive outcomes for students and the students are indicating that they are overall very satisfied with the program in their feedback. The only slightly negative reports were associated with one course and as a result of the student feedback, the design and implementation of that specific course was modified and we will continue to monitor feedback and outcomes associated with the new changes to see if that makes a difference.

Faculty continue to market recent innovations to potential students to assist in attracting highly qualified applicants. Some innovations that are marketed to current undergraduate students as well as prospective student tours include our parkinson's grant to offer certification for students in SPEAK OUT! & LOUD, expanding opportunities for placement, increased presence on social media and updated marketing, recent changing policy to allow students to complete final placements away from MSU/region. This strategy seems to be working and was initially set to be completed by the fall of 2022, however, the faculty are seeing results and would like to continue this strategy into the fall of 2023. This will be especially important as students resume in person perspective tours after COVID.

Knowing how important it is to retain the top students from our undergraduate program, the faculty have developed an exit survey so that students can provide feedback about the program but also give them the option to provide insights into their decision making process for selecting a graduate program. The survey will be optional and will be implemented in the spring of 2023. Over the fall 2022 semester, the survey was created and accepted by the faculty. The program has always provided an exit survey for graduate students at the end of the two year program but until now, there has not been something such as this implemented in the undergraduate program.

The faculty are continuously monitoring the outcomes from the graduate program and will keep the strategy goal for completion of a more formal review of the curriculum and outcomes by the end of 2023. It has been several years since the new curriculum has been implemented but there have been ongoing changes of faculty and COVID impacts since that time and the hope is by the end of 2023 there will be sufficient data to best reflect the outcomes. There was specific discussion of possibly looking at the number of credit hours total and per course to see if adjustments were necessary.

Will continue working towards this outcome and the dates for indicators of success and strategies were updated as necessary and a new strategy was added to continue efforts to retain top students in the undergraduate program: By 2024, 70% of first round offers for MSU undergraduate applicants will accept

Focus Area: Diversity and Supports for Diverse Populations

Issue:
The homogeneity of the field of speech-language pathology complicates attracting and retaining diverse students, including gender, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial differences. Furthermore, our region is culturally homogenous, which can create a lack of diversity in our student body, faculty, and clinical populations.

Baseline Data:

Admitted students:

Race (accepted)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	#N	Gender Male	Gender Female
2017-2019	1	1	0	0	0	0	29	31	0	31
2018-2020	0	0	0	1	0	0	32	33	1	32
2019-2021	0	0	0	2	0	0	30	32	0	32
2020-2022	0	0	0	1	1	0	29	31	1	30
2021-2023	0	2	1	1	1	0	19	24	1	23

#N = number of students admitted

Applicants received in CSDCAS:

Race (overall)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	#N	Gender Male	Gender Female
2017-2019	3	6	2	6	0	0	129	147	3	144
2018-2020	0	8	0	2	4	0	130	144	2	142
2019-2021	0	2	0	3	1	1	137	144	2	142
2020-2022	0	2	0	2	1	1	108	114	3	111
2021-2023	0	6	2	6	3	0	98	103	1	102

#N = number of students who applied

**Students selected in the spring matriculate in fall of the same year and graduate two years later in spring.

Key:
2 — Unknown or Unreported
3 — Hispanic
4 — American Indian or Alaskan Native
5 — Asian
6 — Black or African American
7 — Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
8 — White

Based on ASHA membership statistics provided in the Highlight of ASHA 2021 member and affiliate profile report, 4.4% of members identify as male, 18.2% of members identify as racially ethnically minority group.

Outcomes:
The program will maintain and work to increase diversity of student bodies and student experiences with diverse populations. Further, we will increase cultural competence and

resources for current students both in academic and clinical settings.

Indicators of Success:
- By fall 2023, the program will maintain or increase diversity in graduate cohorts with a minimum of 10% of the graduate students identifying as diverse, and having a mentorship program available to support diverse professionals.

Strategies:
- By the Fall of 2023, mentorships will be available to diverse populations in our community, experiential learning opportunities will be investigated, and diverse faculty speakers will be engaged to educate our CDI community.
- By the fall of 2022, Faculty will collaborate with the student affairs department on campus to promote clinical services for diverse populations as well as increase CDI relationships and participation in events offered.

Progress:

This outcome is a common outcome with the university as their focus continues to be on increasing diverse student populations. The university did not meet their projected goal as an institution this last year so the efforts to recruit, retain and support diverse student populations is a primary focus. The university has increased their support for first generation college students as well. In our program, we are fortunate to say that we actually did show an increase in diversity and met our objective, however, the faculty feel that this objective needs to be continued and hope this is not a singular event. Current cohort numbers indicate that 22% of the cohort identify as diverse. The faculty also believe that with the removal of the GRE as an admission requirement, the program might be able to increase diversity as the literature shows biases for underrepresented populations.

In the fall of 2022, the program established its first student-led diversity council. The faculty member taking the lead with that initiative has already applied and received a grant to support some of the group initiatives. This is just one effort in trying to build support for underrepresented student populations. We hope to continue these efforts and establish a mentorship program where we can pair students with practicing professionals. On campus, the efforts in this area have been focused on making connections and collaborating with LBGTQIA+ organizations to increase awareness of our services for those populations as well as hopes to establish a transgender voice support group. This focus area continues to be an area of need and we will continue our efforts to increase diversity and cultural competence in our program and hopefully assist with increasing diversity in the field as well.