Mission Statement: The Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) Department of Western Illinois University (WIU) aims to develop their students’ professional and academic skills to a level which will ensure well-rounded speech language pathologists, capable of quality service provision to diverse populations across the lifespan. In accordance with the core values of the University, social responsibility and personal growth will be nurtured for the purpose of achieving academic excellence. The CSD Department recognizes the strength in developing lifelong learning skills among faculty, supervisors, staff, and students alike and the contribution that this allows each individual to make in support of the ongoing development of both the program and the profession.

- **Bachelor of Science:** The goal of the undergraduate program is to provide students with a basic foundation of knowledge of human communication development and disorders across the lifespan. It also promotes student awareness of the knowledge and skills required to interact with typical and atypical populations. Students will be successfully prepared to enter graduate or professional study in speech and hearing or related fields.

- **Master of Science:** The goal of the MS program is to further develop and expand on foundational knowledge and skills gained at the undergraduate level. Students will be prepared to enter the profession as critical thinking and problem solving practitioners who are prepared for advanced clinical practice.

Preamble: The Communication Sciences and Disorders Department (CSD) of Western Illinois University devised an updated strategic plan during the 2015-16 academic year to address the changing needs of the students, the department, and the University. These include the advances in technology that are directly linked to education and
changing clinical practice, meeting the professional standards that continue to develop thus requiring progressive educational models. Additionally, the financial constraints that continually impact resources available to educators and practitioners are addressed. Therefore, the goals set by the CSD Department for the next four years intend to develop optimal conditions which will effectively support the recruitment, retention, and high-quality education of our students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Effective stewardship of our resources, and strong links with the local community, our professional organization, and clinical practitioners regionally and nationally will ensure that we continue to expand upon the diverse academic and clinical education we are proud to deliver to our students. The following goals identify the steps the department intends to take to fulfil these needs:

**Goal #1. Replace administration, faculty, supervision, and staff open positions**

- **1.1:** Search for and hire a Department Chair/Program Director
  - Obtain presidential and provost approval to organize a search committee for filling the position by the 2017-2018 academic year (hired Director for 2017-2018 who will become Chair 2018-2019 after attaining tenure)

- **1.2:** Search for and hire a Unit A tenure track faculty position
  - Obtain presidential and provost approval to organize a search committee for filling the position by the 2017-2018 academic year (failed search spring 2017)

- **1.3:** Search for and hire a Unit B non tenured clinical faculty position for immediate start
  - Obtain presidential and provost approval to organize a search committee for
filling the position as soon as possible (hired Unit B who started summer 2016)

- **1.4:** Search for and hire a second Unit B non tenured clinical faculty member to provide supervision for telepractice clinicians (See 6.3)

(During the search for this second position, we had another Unit B resign and we were able to hire two positions for the single search)

- **1.5:** Request a change in university requirements for graduate advisor
  - Clinical or academic faculty who are Unit A or Unit B
  - Allow a wider variety of people to serve as academic advisor for graduate students (our graduate advisor is unit B faculty as approved by graduate school temporarily on a year to year basis)

**Goal #2 Maximize technology for clinic and academic needs**

- **2.1:** Implementation of an electronic medical records system by 2020
  - Determine system that meets the needs of our clinic (partnering with ClinicNote out of Des Moine, Iowa)
  - Request fiscal approval to purchase a system (received permission from administration to use clinic funds to purchase EMRs- signed one year contract)

- **2.2:** Increase use of Master Clinician Network (MCN) and SimuCase for undergraduate observations.
  - Provide structured observations in the undergraduate curriculum to expose students to profession’s scope of practice
  - Provide structured observation in undergraduate curriculum to expose students to diagnoses not readily seen in our clinic (e.g., cleft
palate, Deaf)

○ Use of technology such as MCN and SimuCase to assess undergraduate clinic readiness in the undergraduate Clinical Methods

● 2.3: Increase use of Master Clinician Network (MCN) and SimuCase in the graduate curriculum.

○ Structured observations for clinic experiences in the graduate program curriculum

○ Increase exposure to less frequent diagnoses not readily seen in clinical experiences

○ Prior to beginning clinical rotation during orientation / ‘clinic boot camp’, the supervisors will assign additional videos to facilitate clinical transition from academics (Boot camp was very successful. We used the time to prepare students for beginning clinic and to brush up on scoring tests, hearing screenings, transcription, neuro, professionalism, day to day operations, etc. We are scheduled for our second annual Boot Camp that we renamed Jump Start).

○ Assign diagnostic experiences across the lifespan with a variety of diagnoses using SimuCase

● 2.4: Integration of Primal Pictures across courses in the undergraduate curriculum

○ Allows for a cohesive approach to basic knowledge (e.g., anatomy and physiology, neurology) (we were contacted by company because we were not getting enough students each year and the price was going to significantly increase for students and faculty were going to lose access so we decided to find a different program to use and we will not continue with PP fall 2017)

● 2.5: Integration of Primal Pictures across courses in the graduate curriculum

○ Utilize resources for review of basic core knowledge (e.g.,
anatomy and physiology, neurology) across courses.

- Use as a resource for remediation and assessment of basic knowledge.

2.6: Utilize SimuCase, MCN, and Primal Pictures in weekly clinic meetings as a resource for bridging the gap between academics, university clinic, and real world situations (MCN was used to increase fluency experiences that are not readily available in our clinic).

- Clinic meetings will continue to be important for providing experiences specific to clinic populations and situations that are not readily available in our clinic.

Goal #3. Enhance recruiting efforts for a diverse body of top quality undergraduate and graduate students in speech language pathology

3.1: Facilitate preparation of undergraduate students for future graduate coursework in CSD to align with the recruitment and retention goals of the University.

- Minimum grade point average to continue in upper division courses.

- Minimum grade point average and satisfactory performance in Clinical Methods course.

3.2: Approach the graduate admissions process with transparency to recruit students while addressing the state of Illinois budgetary issues.

- Include statement from administration ensuring the future of Western Illinois University.

3.3: Recruit students to the undergraduate program.

- Coordinate with similar disciplines across campus to hold a
health care and/or educational open house, campus visit day

○ Coordinate efforts with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to have admissions counselors available for general questions, campus tours, and the onsite application process offered by WIU

● **3.4:** Continue hosting undergraduate and graduate open houses for prospective students

○ Prospective undergraduates open house in spring semester

○ Prospective graduate student open house in the fall semester (students applying for graduate school) and one in the spring semester for students who have been accepted or on the waitlist (Our spring open house was very successful. Including the students on the waitlist was very helpful for decision making because it was an opportunity to meet some of the students and answer their questions. We did not have a fall open house 2016 because of the accreditation site visit was scheduled for November and we were preparing).

● **3.5:** Reevaluate graduate admissions process

○ Implement rotation of faculty on graduate admissions committee to serve 2-3 year terms while maintaining at least one past member and including at least one new member for each cycle

○ Increase use of CSDCAS features to individualize the system for WIU (The graduate advisor made significant changes to streamline the process and make site more accessible to committee members. The advisor also made any updates to the site that were necessary for student access as well).

○ Decide on requirements if they differ from what Graduate School currently requires (The graduate committee performed correlations across the criteria used in accepting students over the previous four years and found no changes have been made in the actual students who we admit. Basically no matter the process used to determine our admists, we are getting the same type of student and because our completion rate,
PRAXIS pass rate continue to stay steady we have decided to continue following the data but not change our process)

Goal #4. Monitor undergraduate and graduate curriculum and update as needed

● 4.1: Implement standard rubrics and writing assessments formulated by the Writing Committee in undergraduate coursework

● 4.2: Implement standard rubrics and writing assessments formulated by the Writing Committee in graduate coursework and clinical documentation

● 4.3: Increase use of case studies in the graduate curriculum (See 5.3)

● 4.4: Update curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as needed

  o Graduate curriculum was thoroughly reviewed and changes were implemented beginning with the cohort entering fall 2013.

  o Reassessment of graduate curriculum changes should occur in 2017-2018 academic year. (Significant changes were made to the UG and graduate curriculums that will be implemented fall 2017. GRADUATE: the assessment and treatment courses had been split into two courses and it was determined this needed to be one course. Analysis of the Praxis exam scores indicated that students were not making crucial connections that are typically made during this course, fluency and voice were increased to 3 hour courses because the amount of information was too much for justifying them to remain at two hours, requirement for taking the praxis exam for graduation was added to 604. UG: Course sequences were updated, a speech/sound disorder course was added back and the language course was more specific to language and and not speech/sound disorders, Speech Science was changed to Speech and HEARING Science, and Basic Anatomy of Speech and Hearing Mechanisms was changed to Anatomy and PHYSIOLOGY of Speech and Hearing Mechanisms.)
Goal #5. Increase interprofessional education

● 5.1: Contact programs across campus (e.g., nursing, psychology, social work, dietetics, special education) to align with the University’s goal of supporting interdisciplinary course, program, institute, and center development.

● 5.2: Contact offsite professionals as speakers in courses or to present challenging case studies that involved SLPs

● 5.3: Increase use of case studies in the graduate curriculum (See 4.3)

● 5.4: Continue current interprofessional education opportunities (APE, Autism support group, Stroke support group, Best Buddies).
  ○ Determine eligibility for clinical hours based upon level of skill needed and documentation

● 5.5: Collaborate with occupational therapists to establish a sensory room/area to accommodate sensory needs of our clients

Goal #6. Increase diversity of clinical experiences

● 6.1: Continue contract with Macomb school district

● 6.2: Add additional contracts with local sites, as available (New contract with West Prairie School Northside Building for 2017-2018 academic year)

● 6.3: Add telepractice conducted by student clinicians and supervised by faculty as an option to cover staffing shortages in outside organizations

● 6.4: Provide speech language and hearing screening opportunities

Goal #7. Disseminate policies, procedures, and criteria set forth by the CSD department to comply
with maintaining accreditation and compliance for successful completion of program requirements and conferral of MS degree in CSD

- **7.1**: Build and maintain up to date CSD website with COFAC technology representative  

- **7.2**: Update Department informational materials (Clinic Manual, HIPAA manual, Department Handbook, etc.) (updated website, course sequences, course offerings, faculty/staff, forms, pics, accreditation dates, etc).

1 updated July 10, 2017: highlight/text