The Strategic Plan for Harding University Communication Sciences and Disorders is consistent with the overall University Strategic Plan in terms of organization and purpose. Both plans are supported by five overarching pillars which define both the departmental and university initiatives for the 5-year planning cycle. A broad overview of those pillars and the department-level initiatives are as follows:

A Christ-Centered Community of Mission
The department will continue to seek ways to engage our students in service learning opportunities both domestically and abroad. Our HIZ-Path program in Zambia is successful and well-established. We are seeking to develop additional practicum experiences in Nicaragua and other countries in Latin America through Health Talents International. We plan to continue offering our Spring Break trip to the Navajo nation. These opportunities give our students opportunity to experience their careers as vehicles for service to others. Locally, we are exploring partnerships with El Puente which serves Spanish speaking individuals and families in our area. We have developed a Spiritual Life committee within our department which will seek to engage our graduate students more meaningfully within the spiritual community at Harding.

An Affordable Community of Mission
We continue to explore ways to make college education most affordable to both graduate and undergraduate students, including expanding scholarship offerings. We inform students of relevant scholarship opportunities in order to assist them in reducing student loan debt. We offer several small departmental scholarships each year.

A Successful Community of Mission
Our department is actively engaged in transitioning our current assessment model to a competency-based system for documenting skill acquisition in clinical settings at both graduate and undergraduate levels. We have developed a new competency-based rubric for grading clinical skill development and are utilizing the ExamSoft platform to assist in tracking mastery of academic knowledge. A more granular approach to evaluating student knowledge and skill development assists the department in more supportive and focused remediation of deficits. We are striving to increase our applicant pool by 50% in this planning cycle using a variety of improved marketing methods. Platforms such as Higher Yield and EMP from Liaison are assisting us in contacting potential applicants. Our incoming graduate class (2019) represents a 25% increase in enrollment over 2018.

A Diverse Community of Mission
We aim to increase the number of graduate students from under-represented populations by 10% over this planning cycle. We are strategically applying scholarship dollars toward this initiative. We are aggressively seeking to enroll clients in the clinic with a wide variety of disorders, severity ranges and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Improved marketing of our services to local physicians and providers is ongoing.

A Collaborative Community of Mission
Our departmental goal is to implement three new interprofessional education experiences during this assessment cycle. Along with other departments in the College of Allied Health, we are participating in development of interprofessional didactic courses with other CAH disciplines where feasible in our curriculums. We continue to explore opportunities for interprofessional practicum/missions’ experiences with our colleagues in other health related fields. We actively seek ways to involve student learners from other disciplines (PT, child life, social work, professional counseling, dietetics) in our therapy clinic as appropriate.