ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
AND
STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE
Year: 2008

VIRGINIA MURRAY SOWELL CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

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Section 1. Goals and Accomplishments

Goal 1: Preparation of exemplary specialists in visual impairment, orientation and mobility, deafness and hard-of-hearing and deafblindness.
- Graduated 50 students in the 4 programs.
- Received external funding of $1,059,282 from federal, state, college grant funding sources.
- Updated Sowell Center website.
- Participated in advisory boards concerning personnel preparation on the international, national, statewide, and local level.
- Revised curriculum in all 4 programs to remain current.
- Submission of grants proposals.
- Participated in research activities with graduate students resulting in publications and conferences presentations.
- Maintain professional development school relationship with Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- Established and maintain collaborative partnerships with: State of Mississippi Deaf Blind Project, Stephen F. Austin State University Texas Educational Service Centers Regions 1, 4, 12, 13, 17, 19 University of Utah State departments of Education for Wyoming, New Mexico, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Mississippi.

Goal 2: Promotion of the highest quality of research addressing the academic and social needs of school-age children and adults with sensory impairments.
- Sowell Center faculty and staff submitted research proposals.
- Research findings were disseminated through publications and conference presentations.

Goal 3: Provision of public service to assist local, national, and international constituencies.
- The Center faculty and staff serve on advisory boards; are members of professional organizations and assume leadership roles in these organizations; and provide service to community organizations (Lubbock State School, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired).
- The Center held its 10th annual lecture on Cochlear Implants: Educational and Rehabilitation Perspectives.
Section 2. Universal Quantitative Data

There are no Universal Quantitative Data for this area/unit.
### Section 3a. Quantitative Information

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<th>Calendar Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
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<td>Number of advisory boards and community organizations' committees faculty serve on</td>
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<td>Number of distinguished lectures held</td>
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<td>Student scholarships/stipends</td>
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There is No Area Specific Data in Fall Section.
Section 3b. Qualitative Information.

- Project Co-investigator: Personnel Preparation Programs in Sensory Impairments for rural and Remote Areas: Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Teacher of Students with Deafblindness, teacher of Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing & Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments. Texas Tech University Graduate School. $18,000.
- Project Co-investigator: Growing Graduate Programs/ Sensory Impairments/University of Southern Mississippi. $12,652.
- Project Investigator: Proposal for a Cooperative Internship Program with DARS/DBS and the Virginia Murray Sowell Center. $1,200.
- Project Investigator: Reach Across Texas. Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. $320,000.
- Texas Educational Agency. The nontraditional deaf education certification program for teachers. $292,000.
- United States Department of Education & the University of Southern Mississippi. Personnel preparation for learners who are deafblind. $40,000.
- Project Co-Principal Investigator with Steve Crooks Mary Frances Agnello, Nora Griffin-Shirley, & David White, *Reopening Doors to the Accessibility of Web-Based Instructional Resources for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments: Increasing Utilization through

- Enhancing Special Education Distance Programming Project. College of Outreach and Distance Education, Texas Tech University. $25,000.


- Principal Investigator. United States Department of Education Personnel Preparation for Children with Sensory Impairments. $200,000


- Summer & Fall 2008 - Blackboard Pilot group

- July 2008 & Sept 2008 - WebCT

- July 1 & July 8 - Banner Training

- Sept 2008 Raiderlink

- Sept 28, 2008 Banner Student – Banner Fundamentals

- Oct 28, 2008 Banner Student – Academic History

- Spring 2008 Financial Management 101 – Introduction to the FOAP Codes

- Nov 10, 2008 Banner Training

- Oct 2008 Respondus

- March, 2008 – Cognos

- April, 2008 – TechBuy

- September, 2008 – Raiderlink

- Seeing Eye Dog Guide Training, April, 2008

- Blackboard Training, TLTC. Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, October, 2008.
Commentary:

The Sowell Center has had a productive year. Listed below are the responses to the three areas to be addressed by this report: 1. The level of attainment of expected learner outcomes for all degree programs is 80% passage rate on the Master's Comprehensive Examination and the professional state and/or national examinations as required by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.
and the Association for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals and standards from the Council for Exceptional Children and organizations concerning with the preparation of teachers for students with deafblindness, deafness and hard-of-hearing. 2. The Center goals were changed for 2008 to include sensory disabilities. We are going to change our name to the Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education in Sensory Impairments at the advisement of our Advisory Board. Faculty continued to write grant proposals and sub-contracts and to receive funding for growing our programs, student support and research activities. Fifty students have successfully completed certification and degree programs with 82-100 (deaf and hard of hearing program) percent passage on national and state examinations depending on the program. Finally, service by faculty, staff and students has been provided on the local, state and national level through a variety of ways. 3. The Center’s Advisory Board, faculty and staff engaged in planning and assessment on a regular basis throughout 2008. New grants monies have increased the staff. Retreats were held at the beginning of each semester for the faculty and staff. For the second time, a Center Advisory Board met with Center faculty and staff in fall 2008 to review the Center’s mission and goals. The Board decided to maintain the current mission and goals but add sensory impairments to the mission. Discussion concerning the local and statewide impact of the Center was held. The annual lecture was viewed by the Board as a major contribution to the field as well as the personnel preparation programs. Two facilitators assisted the Advisory Council in strategic planning. There is a continual need to market the Center’s activities to raise public awareness. In regards to assistive technology, students were provided with an AT weekend in one of their courses.

**Implementation Plan:**

The changes and needed resources to make progress on the Sowell Center's objectives and benchmarks toward achieving its strategic goals include: • Seeking continued funding for our personnel preparation programs through new funding sources such as educational service centers and public school districts • Engaging more graduate students in research activities directed by Center faculty • Seek 5% more funding for research activities through internal and external sources • Develop more collaborative partnerships with new TTU or other university faculty members to conduct cross discipline research • Explore the idea of a continuing education unit program on assistive technology for teachers and orientation and mobility specialists with the Sowell Center Advisory Board. It is anticipated that if we receive more funding for student support and research projects then our enrollments will grow; new collaborative efforts between faculty and students will emerge; and assistive technology will be addressed in some manner initially on a small scale. Needed resources include maintaining our current faculty and staff and funding levels and adding a faculty member and more adjunct instructors to offer more distance education course offerings, especially in the summers.