

Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education in Visual Impairment

Strategic Plan for 2005 – 2008

Mission Statement:

It is the *mission* of the Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education in Visual Impairment to enhance the quality of life including education and socialization for students with visual impairments through personnel preparation, research and public service.

Vision Statement:

It is the *vision* of the Virginia Murray Sowell Center for Research and Education in Visual Impairment to be visionaries and catalysts for positive growth for the education and socialization of students with visual impairments.

Goal 1: Preparation of exemplary specialists in visual impairment, orientation and mobility, and deafblindness.

Benchmarks for success:

- Recruitment and preparation of teachers for children with visual impairments, and children with deafblindness as well as orientation and mobility specialists.
- Students' successful completion of the graduate programs and acquisition of employment in the field of education of children with visual impairments and/or deafblindness.

Objectives with strategies:

The Center faculty and staff will recruit prospective graduate students and provide the courses necessary for them to complete a master's degree and/or certification program through:

- Maintenance and updating of The Sowell Center website
- E-mailing all education service center vision consultants as well as other professionals concerning course offerings each semester
- Participation in the statewide, regional, national and international advisory boards concerned with the training of vision professionals
- Submission of grant proposals to the U.S. Department of Education and other funding agencies in order to obtain funding to assist with the preparation of exemplary specialists for children with visual impairments, children with deafblindness and in the field of orientation and mobility
- Offering distance education courses every semester in all three program areas
- Provision of scholarships to students

Goal 2: Promotion of the highest quality of research addressing the academic and social needs of school-age children and adults with visual impairments.

Benchmark for success:

- Development of and engagement in research projects that address the academic and social needs of school-age children and adults with visual impairments.

Objectives with strategies:

The Center faculty and staff will seek funding to conduct the research projects that address the academic and social needs of school-age students and adults with visual impairments through:

- Submission of grant proposals to the U.S. Department of Education, American Printing House and other appropriate agencies
- Implementation of funded research projects
- Distribution of results of research projects through journal articles, conference presentations or poster sessions

Goal 3: Provision of public service to assist local, national, and international constituencies.

Benchmarks for success:

- Plan and conduct the Distinguished Lecture as part of the Annual Distinguished Lecture Series during the fall semester of each year
- Engage in various service activities to benefit organizations who share similar mission, vision and goals

Objectives with strategies:

The Center faculty and staff will identify and engage in service activities to assist professional or community organizations by:

- Serving on advisory boards and professional or community organizations' committees
- Planning and facilitating the "Distinguish Lecturer" annually during the fall semester
- Provision of materials in Braille on a limited basis
- Provision information concerning assistive technology and adaptive techniques used by persons with visual impairments when requested