

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

Vision Statement

The Speech-Language Pathology Program at the University of West Georgia will be a leading program in the preparation of undergraduate and graduate students through innovative teaching, clinical training, and research. We provide the knowledge, skills, and tools to help make effective communication accessible and achievable for people with communication, cognitive, and swallowing disorders; their families; and communities through our teaching, research, and community outreach. In addition, we align our vision with the College of Education, which is to be recognized for *leading Innovation in Teaching, Leadership, and Wellness, with programs designed to transform lives and contribute to the betterment of society.*

Mission of the Speech-Language Pathology Program

The mission of the Speech-Language Pathology Program is to prepare speech-language pathology professionals to deliver and promote culturally responsive, ethical, and evidence-based practice in a variety of clinical and educational settings. Our mission will be accomplished through the integration of traditional and innovative pedagogy, state-of-the-art technologies, and a focus on excellence across a broad spectrum of communication, cognitive, and swallowing disorders across the lifespan.

The aims of the Speech-Language Pathology Program are to:

1. Establish and promote a high-quality, interdisciplinary clinical and research program to enable all individuals to attain functional communication skills across the lifespan;
2. Prepare undergraduate and graduate students to become consumers of research and practice at the “top of the license” (i.e., highest quality of professional standards);
3. Promote and sustain a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity among clients, staff, students, and faculty;
4. Promote and enhance community outreach

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority 1 Relevance: The program will continue to evolve to be responsive and relevant to students' needs (both inside and outside the classroom) and adapt to a changing world and economy.

Goal 1: Establish a post-baccalaureate program to allow prospective students without a Bachelor's degree in speech-language the opportunity to gain the academic background necessary to matriculate into an SLP graduate program.

Strategies

- Propose the post-baccalaureate program in Fall 2022 to begin in Summer 2024
- Creating new online courses for graduate-level instruction and learning
- Market the program via the website, social media, and other means

Goal 2: Increase opportunities for Interprofessional Education and Practice (IPE/IPP) in the curriculum.

Strategies

- Collaborate with other clinical programs (e.g., Counseling and Nursing)
- Collaborate with other related programs in the COE (e.g., Special Education, Sports Management, Health, and Community Wellness)
- Implement a project for second-year students in clinical externships

Strategic Priority 2 Competitiveness: The program will work toward emerging as a first-choice (preferred) university for prospective students, employees, employers, alumni, and supporters.

Goal 3: Connect students to funding opportunities to support their academic and clinical training.

Strategies

- Connect students to opportunities for graduate assistantships
- Connect students to internal and external scholarships

Goal 4: Enhance student learning through innovative technology

Strategies

- The program will utilize standardized simulation in the graduate dysphagia course.
- The program will utilize the Innovations Lab to improve skills in Neuroanatomy and Voice Disorders courses.
- The program will utilize the Simulations Lab to develop counseling and interpersonal skills in Clinical Practicum courses.
- The program will use Simucase and Master Clinician during clinical practicums to facilitate the development of clinical competence.
- The program faculty will apply for a grant to fund a medical mannequin to enhance student learning and skill development.

Goal 5: Maintain and expand diverse clinical experiences.

Strategies

- The program will expand the use of telepractice during clinical practicum
- The program will lead speech, language, and hearing screenings by offering them to Head Start and Pre-K settings in the community
- The program will participate in cognitive stimulation groups in an assisted living community

Goal 6: Increase marketing efforts to attract students and grow the program via

- Social media channels
- Website
- Participation in recruitment fairs
- Reducing admissions “time to decision”

Strategic Priority 3 Placemaking: The program will provide a holistic ‘sense of place’ for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and communities.

Goal 7: Facilitate a welcoming environment to orient students to our programs.

Strategies

- Offer orientation and mentoring to first-year students in graduate and undergraduate programs.
- Collaboration with graduate school for student life information
- Facilitation of connections between current students and alumni

Goal 8: Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in our program.

Strategies

- Increase efforts to recruit culturally, linguistically, and geographically diverse students.
- Foster an inclusive environment via training and instruction
- Multiple reporting systems for expressing concerns