

Department of Speech Language Pathology

Strategic Plan 2020-2030

Prologue

The vision and mission strategic plan of the Department of Speech Language Pathology (SLP) is an extension of the strategic plan set forth by Saint Mary's College, Revere and Revise: Saint Mary's College 2030. The SLP strategic plan implemented for the years 2017-2020 focused on enhancing and increasing departmental programming, recruiting and retaining students, addressing infrastructure needs as needed, and developing sources of revenue. Many of these goals were accomplished with substantial effort and dedication of SLP department faculty/staff and the support of the College community. The SLP department supports the fundamental principles as outlined in the strategic plan of Saint Mary's College. Specifically, as a department which includes both undergraduate and graduate programs, we are very supportive of the College Fundamental Principles to further develop a serious graduate culture and provide opportunities for graduate housing on campus. We move forward and support the College commitment plan with our new department strategic plan for 2020-2030 outlined below.

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Mission of the Department of Speech Language Pathology

The mission of the Department of Speech Language Pathology is to prepare and educate students who are dedicated to the service of persons from infancy to maturity with communication, cognitive and swallowing disabilities. Students will be capable of interacting effectively in a variety of service and employment settings. This goal is achieved through a curriculum that integrates academic rigor, research methods and evidence based clinical practice all built upon a strong foundation of social responsibility.

Vision

The Department of Speech Language Pathology prepares students with a wide theoretical base for understanding normal development of basic human communication and swallowing processes as well as the nature, causes, evaluation and treatment of disorders of swallowing and communication, including issues pertaining to culturally diverse populations. It provides a variety of opportunities for supervised student clinical education with persons across the life cycle who are delayed or disordered in the development or use of communication, cognitive and/or swallowing. The academic, clinical faculty and students work together to develop competence in clinical diagnosis and intervention, interactions with families of individuals with communicative impairments, and collaboration with other professionals for effective and efficient team management of persons with complex disabilities. We strive always to value diversity of persons, both in culture and opinion, and encourage an attitude of openness and discovery among students, faculty and staff. Our intent is to always challenge faculty, staff and students to actively involve themselves in meeting the needs of their communities, as highly skilled professionals and good citizens. We strongly promote and instill in the students and each other to value scientific rigor, a spirit of inquiry and use of evidence-based practice among future professionals. Our graduates are empowered to function independently as life-long learners, pursuers of social responsibility and ambassadors for the profession.

Commitments and Recommendations

Commitment 1 (aligned with College Section IV, Commitment 1)

Achieve a Culture of Human Dignity and Solidarity

- Complete targeted recruitment and continue holistic admissions review to increase student of color enrollment in both undergraduate and graduate programs for SLP.
- Review, revise, and expand the curriculum in both the undergraduate and graduate programs to meet the needs of an ever-changing society, sustaining multicultural courses offered at both undergraduate and graduate level.

- Provide workshops and CEUs that directly address diversity and cultural differences in communication.
- Provide and expand voice therapy services through our clinic to the transgender community as both service to the community and provide educational experiences for students.
- Continue to provide a free clinic in which marginalized populations can receive assessment and treatment.
- Provide faculty and staff compensation to ensure dignity through work.

Commitment 2 (aligned with College Section IV, Commitment 2)

Empower Women at all Levels and Stages of Life

- Expedite pathways to graduate programs through implementing a 4 + 1 model for a bachelor's and master's degree in Speech Language Pathology.
- Increase opportunities for students to enter graduate programs without having an undergraduate in speech language pathology by offering a pre-professional program, a bundle of pre-requisite courses needed for admission.
- Provide CEU opportunities to faculty, staff, and the community to support professional development at all stages of career.
- Expand Graduate Assistantship opportunities in the Department and College.

Commitment 3 (aligned with College Section IV, Commitment 3)

Elevate Research Focus

- Review, revise, and expand the curriculum in the undergraduate program to offer and maintain research opportunities through Research Practicum courses.
- Encourage faculty, staff, and students to present research at college-wide events to foster and share a research community.
- Hire highly qualified clinical and academic faculty with the needed expertise and research lines to further extend and develop the program.
- Reduce the number of course preparations per year to afford faculty additional time to explore collaborative research projects within the department and across other departments, especially in the development of IPE (Integrated Professional Education) as described by CAA and ASHA and with students while pursuing research and scholarship.
- Encourage faculty, staff, and students to value their research work and seek external financial support to allow this work to meet its full potential.
- Acquire physical space that promotes and allows research, such as lab space and research offices.

Commitment 4 (aligned with College Section IV, Commitment 4)

Stabilize and Enhance Financial Performance

- Recruit and retain enrollment of 30 graduate students while maintaining high academic standards.
- Faculty and staff participate in college-wide recruitment efforts for undergraduate admissions.
- Continue to monitor and enhance multiple pathways, including: 4 +1, BA, MS, Dual Degree, and Pre-Professional program.

CONCLUSION

Saint Mary's Department of Speech Language Pathology continues to provide the high quality of education that has been its hallmark since the inception of the undergraduate program in 2007 and graduate program in 2015.

This education combines rigorous academic study with character formation and a sense of responsibility for communal well-being. This strategic plan for the department will continue to foster the growth and vitality of our students, faculty and staff for years to come.