



Widener University

College of Health and Human Services

Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Mission:

The mission of the Institute for Speech-Language Pathology at Widener University is to prepare clinically competent, ethical, community focused, and culturally respectful speech-language pathologists, committed to preventing, diagnosing, and treating communication and swallowing disorders across the lifespan.

Strategic Goal 1: Recruit high-quality full-time and adjunct faculty in order to provide students with a well-rounded curriculum that reflects the depth and breadth of speech, language, and swallowing disorders. (*Aligns with Program Goals: Evidence-Based Critical Thinking, Cultural-Linguistic Competency, Innovative Scholarship. Aligns with University Goals: A dynamic campus environment that immerses students in meaningful curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences; Scholarship by faculty and students that enriches learning and advances knowledge within and across disciplines.*)

Principals: Program Director, Associate Dean, Dean

Action Steps:

- Actively market the program and positions available on the CAPCSD website, at local, state and national conferences, and via e-mail blasts.
- Develop search committees to review candidates and organize on-campus interviews.

Outcome Measures:

- Hire one non-tenure track faculty who has an in-depth knowledge of at least one area of SLP clinical practice and who also has an administrative role as Director of Clinical Education.
- Hire two tenure-track faculty that have an in-depth knowledge of at least one area of SLP practice and an established research agenda.
- Hire three non-tenure track faculty who have an in-depth knowledge of at least one area of SLP practice who are capable of teaching and providing clinical supervision.

Strategic Goal 2: Develop the clinical education program in order to provide students with culturally-linguistically diverse, interprofessional, clinical experiences across a variety of settings. (*Aligns with Program Goals: Evidence-Based Critical Thinking, Interprofessional Collaboration, Cultural-Linguistic Competency, Leadership and Service to the Community. Aligns with University Goals: A culture of leadership that inspires students, faculty, and staff to have a positive influence on their workplaces, professions, communities, and the*

world; Civic engagement that furthers the university's national and global leadership in educating engaged citizens and in contributing to the vitality and well-being of the communities we serve.)

Principal: Director of Clinical Education

Action Steps:

- Identify and develop partnerships with education and health care settings within the Philadelphia metropolitan area, Chester County, Delaware County, and beyond for high-quality clinical training externships.
- Market the SLP services offered by the on-campus SLP Clinic via participation in university and community events.
- Establish a sufficient patient population to accommodate the on-campus SLP clinical internships such that each student experiences the appropriate depth and breadth of our scope of practice.

Outcome Measures:

- Establish clinical externship contracts sufficient for at least one and one-half the number of students in the program.
- Increase the clinical externship contracts annually to accommodate the growth of student cohorts.
- Increase the on-campus patient population annually to accommodate and match the growth of student cohorts.
- Establish annual service events for clinical education that also meet the needs of the community and clinical partners (e.g., hearing screenings, speech-language screenings).
- Register the program with ASHA as a continuing education provider.
- Develop annual continuing education events that meet the needs of on-campus and externship clinical supervisors.

Strategic Goal 3: Recruit outstanding students who meet or exceed all admissions requirements and who represent a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. *(Aligns with University Goals: Rigorous academic expectations and high-impact educational practices that support intended learning outcomes; A dynamic campus environment that immerses students in meaningful curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences; A diverse university community that champions a culture of respect, civility, and inclusivity.)*

Principals: Program Director, Director of Clinical Education

Action Steps:

- Participate in student admissions and recruitment events locally, state-wide, and nationally.
- Establish on-campus activities that provide high-school students and undergraduate students opportunities to visit the program and learn more about speech-language pathology (e.g., SLP for a day program).
- Participate in the National Black Association for Speech-Language Pathology (NBASLH) Conventions, including an admissions booth.
- Participate in the Graduate School Fair during ASHA's Annual Conventions.

Outcome Measures:

- Admit students who meet or exceed all admissions requirements.

- Admit students who represent a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

Strategic Goal 4: Utilize student outcomes and feedback from stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, externship supervisors, advisory board) to review and modify the program and the program’s strategic plan as needed. *(Aligns with Program Goals: Evidence-Based Critical Thinking, Interprofessional Collaboration, Cultural-Linguistic Competency, Leadership and Service to the Community, Innovative Scholarship. Aligns with University Goals: Rigorous academic expectations and high-impact educational practices that support intended learning outcomes; A dynamic campus environment that immerses students in meaningful curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences; Institutional agility and innovation that make the university attractive, accessible, and sustainable.)*

Principals: Program Director, Director of Clinical Education

Action Steps:

- Complete student course evaluations each semester and provide feedback to all instructors.
- Complete program evaluations at the end of each academic year for summative program assessment by each cohort of students.
- Provide clinical externship sites with an opportunity to evaluate program support and student knowledge and skills each semester.
- Discuss aggregate results of evaluations and student outcome data at faculty meetings, bi-annual faculty retreats, and annual advisory board meetings.

Outcome Measures:

- Identify areas that need modification based on student outcomes and evaluation data.
- Develop action plans for program modification and modification of the program’s strategic plan where needed based on student outcomes and evaluation data.

Strategic Goal 5: Achieve Initial Full-Accreditation through the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) by year five of the program (2025-2026). *(Aligns with University Goals: Rigorous academic expectations and high-impact educational practices that support intended learning outcomes; A dynamic campus environment that immerses students in meaningful curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences; Institutional agility and innovation that make the university attractive, accessible, and sustainable.)*

Principals: Program Director, Director of Clinical Education

Action Steps:

- Submit all CAA annual reports in a timely manner.
- Develop a self-study plan for the CAA Initial Full Accreditation Application that involves participation from all faculty and staff.
- Submit the CAA Initial Full Accreditation application within the five-year time frame designated by the CAA (e.g., no later than February 1, 2026).
- Develop an evidence file for the CAA site visit utilizing the CAA Initial Full Accreditation Application and involving participation from all faculty and staff.
- Prepare faculty, staff, students, and administration for the CAA site visit through workshops, meetings, and presentations.

Outcome Measures:

- Achieve Initial Full accreditation within the five-year time frame designated by the CAA (e.g., no later than February 1, 2026).