

The Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology Strategic Plan 2021-2026

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology (SPA) at Western Illinois University (WIU) aims to develop their students' professional and academic skills to a level which will ensure well-rounded speech language pathologists, capable of quality service provision to diverse populations across the lifespan.

In accordance with the core values of the University, social responsibility and personal growth will be nurtured for the purpose of achieving academic excellence. The SPA Department recognizes the strength in developing lifelong learning skills among faculty, supervisors, staff, and students alike and the contribution that this allows each individual to make in support of the ongoing development of both the program and the profession.

● ***Bachelor of Science:***

The goal of the undergraduate program is to provide students with a basic foundation of knowledge of human communication development and disorders across the lifespan. It also promotes student awareness of the knowledge and skills required to interact with typical and atypical populations. Students will be successfully prepared to enter graduate or professional study in speech and hearing or related fields.

● ***Master of Science:***

The goal of the MS program is to further develop and expand on foundational knowledge and skills gained at the undergraduate level. Students will be prepared to enter the profession as critical thinking and problem solving practitioners who are prepared for advanced clinical practice.

The Speech Pathology and Audiology Department (SPA) of Western Illinois University devised an updated strategic plan during the 2020-2021 academic year to address the changing needs of the students, the department, and the University. These include the advances in technology that are directly linked to education and changing clinical practice, meeting the professional standards that continue to develop thus requiring progressive educational models. Additionally, the financial constraints that continually impact resources available to educators and practitioners are addressed. Therefore, the goals set by the SPA Department for the next five years intend to develop optimal conditions which will effectively support the recruitment, retention, and high-quality education of our students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Effective stewardship of our resources, and strong links with the local community, our professional organization, and clinical practitioners regionally and nationally will ensure that we continue to expand upon the diverse academic and clinical education we are proud to deliver to our students.

The following statements identify the most relevant values of the department and how we intend on meeting the needs of faculty, staff, students, clients, families, and community:

PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH THE EDUCATION AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES THAT PREPARE THEM FOR BECOMING OUTSTANDING SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ADVOCATES FOR CLIENTS AND FAMILIES

- Hire faculty to teach and supervise in the undergraduate and graduate program who have real-world clinical experiences.
 - Search and hire a tenure track faculty position (PhD or EdD with CCC/SLP)
 - Obtain presidential and provost approval to organize a search committee for filling the position by the 2021-2022 academic year
 - Search and hire a non-tenure clinical faculty position
 - Obtain presidential and provost approval to organize a search committee for filling the position by the 2021-2022 academic year
- Increase the number of off-campus clinic contracts for providing graduate students with diverse experiences.
 - Partnerships with local school districts, skilled nursing facilities, and cooperatives
 - Rural area schools lacking resources and/or professionals to provide services to the children in their district
 - Facilitates in increasing revenue for the department
 - Graduate clinicians assigned to WIU supervisors provide services

INCREASE SPEECH PATHOLOGY & AUDIOLOGY (SPA) MAJORS AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) MINORS AND IMPROVE INTERDISCIPLINARY OPPORTUNITIES

- The ASL minor began Fall 2020 with much success and we aim to focus on these individuals as potential majors
 - Many of these students are early childhood majors, psychology majors, kinesiology majors, and nursing majors, etc. We see this as an ability to increase awareness across fields and allow for interdisciplinary opportunities

ENHANCE RECRUITMENT EFFORTS FOR DIVERSIFYING OUR STUDENT BODY IN OUR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE CLASSES

- Offer opportunities for prospective students to visit or have virtual meetings with advisor and/or faculty
 - Provide students with contact information of undergraduate and/or graduate students who can provide answers to questions about WIU and the SPA Department
 - Tours and open-house events that showcase student participation

- Increase marketing and messaging to target a more culturally diverse and/or international student population
 - Work with international contacts to increase recruitment (i.e., Canada)
- Increase involvement of our minority students in the recruitment process
 - Meet with our minority students to determine what we are doing right and what we could be improving on to help them succeed

MONITOR NECESSARY UPDATES TO CURRICULUM AT BOTH THE UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE LEVELS

- Use assessment data from University annual assessments to monitor student progress and their level of foundational knowledge
 - Make changes to curriculum as needed- we continue to update and co-teach courses to best serve the educational needs of the students
 - Use of Simucase and Master Clinician for bridging the gap between coursework and the application to clinic
- Use of PRAXIS exam to assess areas of strengths and weaknesses in our graduate program
 - Implementation of learning checks into the graduate program in courses to ensure that we are assessing knowledge and skills holistically and not only through the use of exams
 - Use of Simucase in every graduate course to facilitate the application of course work to clinical practice
 - Evaluate the changes to SPA 587 (i.e., mandatory observations, increased number of diagnostics, and Simucase assignments) to determine if students are improving their PRAXIS scores in that area

MAXIMIZE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOMS AND CLINIC

- Advance use of Electronic Medical Records System (EMRs)- ClinicNote to improve clinic efficiency
 - Continue partnership with ClinicNote to improve EMR for educational purposes
 - Begin implementing billing module to produce invoices, check insurance coverage, document payments
 - Continue working with ClinicNote to engage Simucase with CN for student learning
 - Use of the system for sending reminders, updates, clinic schedules, and results
- Increase number of Zoom accounts to ensure we have the number necessary to continue teletherapy to meet the needs of students and clients (COVID necessity)
 - We currently have purchased three accounts and have three temporary accounts through the University
 - Increase number of accounts for each supervisor to have one designated to their supervision and then a separate one for classes for a total of nine-ten accounts
- Fully outfit Memorial Hall 208 to function as a distance learning classroom (COVID necessity)
 - Approval for duplicating set up of MH 204 in MH 208 was given and that should be completed before beginning classes Fall 2021
 - Currently has touchscreen 96" screen with OpenBoard but does not have zoom camera and microphones that are specific to the room specs

- Due to the COVID capacities and need to provide zoom links for each class, we have decided to have two fully equipped electronic classrooms with zoom capabilities
- Organize options for obtaining observations for graduate students and undergraduate students (COVID necessity)
 - Use of our recording system-AXIS allows for us to record and safely store diagnostics/evaluations, treatment in the speech and language clinic as well as the adult and pediatric hearing evaluations in the audiology clinic.
 - Develop a system for verifying and documenting observations
 - Implement procedures for students to ask questions and get feedback regarding the observations
 - Involve graduate assistants in the process

INCREASE INVOLVEMENT IN STUDENT ORGANIZED GROUP FOCUSED ON DIVERSITY AND ANTI-RACISM

- This student organization was developed to focus on diversity and inclusion
 - Led by graduate students and attended by graduate and undergraduate students
- Students aim to increase diversity in the department, at the university, and in the field of communication, sciences, and disorders
 - Add information to the website to increase exposure and provide education

DISSEMINATE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND CRITERIA SET FORTH BY THE DEPARTMENT TO COMPLY WITH MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION AND COMPLIANCE FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND CONFERRAL OF MS DEGREE

- Maintain our website with events, clinic updates, Risk-Management Policies & Procedures (i.e., COVID-19)
- Improve client access of website
 - Increase educational support for parents and caregivers that will help them navigate through early-intervention, schools, long-term care options, and other needs of our families we serve
 - Improve online registration for clients and caregivers
- Continuous update of clinic manual and faculty handbook to communicate changes across the university and department