

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2025-2027

XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH PATHOLOGY

UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT: *Xavier University of Louisiana, founded by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, is Catholic and historically Black. The ultimate purpose of the University is to contribute to the promotion of a more just and humane society by preparing its students to assume roles of leadership and service in a global society. This preparation takes place in a diverse learning and teaching environment that incorporates all relevant educational means, including research and community service.*

VISION: The master's program in Speech-Language Pathology at Xavier University of Louisiana aspires to stand among the state's premier graduate programs by attracting exceptional candidates who share our dedication to excellence in scholarship, research, and service in a global society. We are committed to preparing compassionate professionals who use evidence-based practice to meet the unique needs of individuals and families in underserved, multicultural, and bilingual communities, while fostering a culture of lifelong learning, community engagement, and professional excellence.

MISSION: The mission of the master's program in Speech-Language Pathology at Xavier University of Louisiana is to educate and prepare professionals who demonstrate clinical competence, as defined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The program is committed to developing practitioners who apply evidence-based practices to the prevention, identification, and treatment of communicative disorders and differences, as well as to the support of individuals at risk for such conditions, across the lifespan and within diverse communities, settings, and contexts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS:

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Issue: For the Program to achieve its aspiration of becoming a premier graduate program, it must demonstrate sustained success in attracting and retaining a diverse pool of high-achieving postbaccalaureate students from both within and beyond the region each academic year. Strategic emphasis will be placed on measurable outcomes in the recruitment and retention of candidates from underrepresented communities, thereby advancing the Program's commitment to equity, excellence, and long-term sustainability.

Outcomes: Each year the Program will have an ample pool of highly qualified postbaccalaureate candidates eligible for admission.

Indicators of Success:

1. Cohort groups of 15-20 high achieving master's degree candidates will be admitted to the Program each Fall;

2. At least 50% of each cohort group will be comprised of candidates from underrepresented groups; and
3. 85% of students will have completed the program within the program's published time frame (5 semesters).

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUTCOMES:

The following strategies are proposed to achieve the target outcome of student recruitment and retention:

1. The Program will develop a marketing plan to recruit highly qualified postbaccalaureate students.

Person responsible: The Vice President of Enrollment Management and Graduate Programs Manager (Dean's Office). They will work in conjunction with program faculty and Xavier University Marketing staff.

Timeline: Ongoing

2. The Program will continuously update its application and selection process.

Person Responsible: The Departments Admission Committee will work in conjunction with the Graduate Program Director and all the Speech Pathology Department Faculty.

Timeline: Ongoing

3. The program will hold an open house each fall to showcase the program's innovations to prospective students applying in early spring.

Person Responsible: The Departments Admission Committee will work in conjunction with the Graduate Program Director and all the Speech Pathology Department Faculty.

Timeline: Ongoing

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC SENSITIVITY

Issue(s): Exposure to individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities during training is essential for professionals to become competent in recognizing and addressing the unique needs of underserved populations.

Outcomes: All master candidates will be trained to provide evidence-based services to culturally and linguistically diverse clients through coursework and clinical experience on campus or off-campus settings.

Indicators of Success: By the end of each academic year, 100% of the master's candidates will have been exposed to current research about cultural and linguistic diversity in their coursework and will have completed at least one clinical experience serving individuals from underserved communities.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUTCOMES:

1. Utilize CALIPSO records to identify sites which provide exposure to underrepresented clients and students who do clinical training at these sites.

Person responsible: Director of Clinical Education

Timeline: Ongoing; at mid semester each semester.

2. Ensure that topics related to the speech and language needs of underserved communities are infused in-depth throughout the department's graduate curriculum.

Person Responsible: Program Director will be responsible for examining all course syllabi to ensure this is infused throughout the curriculum.

Timeline: Ongoing-each semester.

ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE:

Issue(s): ASHA requires that Communicative Disorders professionals be proficient in mainstream spoken and written English to be able to perform professionally and serve as models for clients and their families. Students unable to consistently communicate professionally (i.e., use a variation of English acceptable for professional purposes) will be required to pursue educative work as directed by the Program.

Outcomes: All master's candidates in the Program will be competent speakers and writers of the mainstream English language as expected of speech and language professionals.

Indicators of Success: Upon graduation, 100% of candidates will be competent oral and written language users.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUTCOMES:

1. Utilize a syllabi assessment tool that evaluates how instructors are infusing competency in oral and written language in their courses.

Person Responsible: Program Director

Timeline: Annually; per semester.

2. Students will complete a narrative writing assessment in which they respond to a writing prompt relative to the mission of Xavier in view of current events.

Person Responsible: Program Director in conjunction with Xavier's Writing Center

Timeline: Semester One first week of class and semester Five last week of class

RESEARCH

Issue: Evidence-based practice (EBP) denotes a systematic approach to clinical decision-making in which current, high-quality research evidence is rigorously integrated with clinician expertise and the values and preferences of clients. Consistent with the position of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2005), speech-language pathologists are required to incorporate the principles of

EBP in all aspects of clinical practice to ensure the provision of care that meets established professional standards of quality and efficacy.

Outcomes: Upon completion of the program, students will be able to: (a) systematically evaluate the quality, validity, and relevance of evidence from any source or format—including refereed journal articles, textbooks, newsletters, and advertising—prior to its integration into clinical decision-making, demonstrating measurable proficiency in critical appraisal; and (b) obtain, interpret, and apply new, high-quality research evidence in clinical practice, ensuring accountable, evidence-based interventions that meet established professional standards.

Indicators of Success: By the end of the first academic year, 100% of the master's candidates will have been exposed to EBP as part of their didactic coursework and will have completed at least one clinical experience that required the candidate to make clinical decisions that are evidence based.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUTCOMES:

1. Infuse an EBP approach throughout the curriculum as evidenced in each course's learning outcomes and the activities, assignments, exams and/or projects aligned with those learning outcomes.

Persons Responsible: Course Instructors, Program Director

Timeline: Ongoing at the end of each fall and spring semester

2. Incorporate EBP into clinical decision making in clinical practicum experiences.

Persons Responsible: Clinical Educators, Director of Clinical Education

Timeline: Ongoing at the end of each fall and spring semester