

**Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders
Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology
Strategic Plan Executive Summary**

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) at Pennsylvania Western “PennWest” University houses the undergraduate CSD program and the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MSSLP) programs. The mission of the MSSLP program is to provide a high quality, academic and clinical education which enables program graduates to become competent, fully credentialed speech-language pathologists serving the needs of the region, Commonwealth, and beyond.

Our vision is to:

- Provide progressive, innovative education in communication and swallowing disorders and differences to prepare the next generation of professionals to serve a culturally diverse, global society
- Provide the community access to high-quality clinical services that integrate theory, research, and interprofessional clinical practice
- Prepare students to become life-long learners
- Prepare students to contribute to both their profession and their community
- Prepare students to be critical appraisers and producers of research and integrate research principles into evidence-based clinical practice
- Prepare students to adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

Our strategic plan was first approved and implemented in 2022 and is updated annually at the beginning of the academic year.

Students: We are a student-focused program. Our goal is to provide curricular and clinical experiences for our MSSLP students to ensure that they are meeting the knowledge and skills requirements to enter the profession. We also aim to offer students at all levels in the CSD program opportunities to engage in research and/or creative projects, to engage in community activities, to be advocates for the profession, and to become global learners with an understating of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. By allowing students to participate in the growth and development of the department, we aim to recruit and retain motivated students at all levels of the undergraduate and graduate programs. Recent development of a post baccalaureate certificate program (face-to-face and remote options) and a fully online MSSLP program provide educational opportunities for students in national and global settings.

Budget and Finance: Through support from our institution and outside funding sources, we aim to maintain the financial support needed to regularly update and expand our university-based clinics, provide the necessary academic and clinical materials available to students and faculty, and maintain a safe learning environment for our students and

clinical environment for the community. We aim to develop regional partnerships to continue to develop state-of-the art clinical and academic experiences for our students.

On-campus Speech and Hearing Centers: Each campus location maintains high quality clinical services for members of the community. The on-campus clinics allow our faculty to train students through direct clinical service provision (with appropriate supervision) and observations in face-to-face and teletherapy modalities. Students research and engage in evidence-based assessment and treatment sessions to promote critical thinking skills that are instrumental to developing their clinical skills. We aim to build new partnerships with the community (within and outside of the university) to enhance service delivery and to expand the assessment/treatment/consultation options available to clients and the community.

Faculty: Recruitment and retention of expert faculty is essential to student learning. Our faculty engage with the community (within and outside of the university) and promote their achievements. We also aim to maintain a faculty who serve their profession through volunteer positions, engage in interprofessional collaborative efforts, and participate in research/creative/grant writing experiences. Ongoing faculty development is promoted by regular attendance at and participation in professional trainings and workshops. Recent development of a post baccalaureate certificate program (face-to-face and remote options) and a fully online MSSLP program permit qualified faculty to share their expertise in an online teaching environment at the undergraduate and graduate levels.