

MERCY UNIVERSITY
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fall 2026

The Speech-Language Pathology Strategic Plan is comprised of three Focus Areas with goals that align with the mission of the University and the program.

Program Vision

The Mercy University Department of Speech-Language Pathology envisions our role as a leading department in research and teaching within the university and across the field and related disciplines. Our location in New York City provides a wealth of opportunities to educate our students and to treat individuals with communication and swallowing disorders in our on-campus clinic and diverse externship placements. We have established valuable relationships across the university that have resulted in exciting interdisciplinary teaching and collaborative research.

Our goal is to have a substantial presence in the field, nationally and globally.

Program Mission

The mission of the program is to prepare professionals to provide quality speech and language services to clients of all ages, cultures, and disabilities in a variety of settings. The program instills the interconnection among the theoretical, clinical, and research components of speech-language pathology through evidence-based research and current/relevant clinical practices and infuses the latest technology into the curriculum. The program strives to promote a culture of scholarship, critical thinking, and respect, and provide a foundation of knowledge and skills that foster competent, ethical clinical practice for the professional lifetime.

Envisioned Future

In accordance with the program and University mission, the program will continue to support diverse learners and non-traditional students by offering students individualized educational planning. The latest technology will be purchased to outfit new laboratory faculty spaces and support student learning. The program and all faculty will serve as members of the Interprofessional Education (IPE) working group that offers educational and clinical opportunities for students from the School of Health and Natural Sciences. As part of these enhanced IPE offerings, the Speech and Hearing Center will partner with the on campus Physical Therapy Clinic to provide collaborative individual and group services. This will support the Mercy University Speech and Hearing Center in the effort to grow clinical offerings. The Speech and Hearing Center will partner with a significant number of community partners to provide students with an opportunity to serve the public. The program will engage in regular outreach to

high schools to advocate for the growth of the profession and recruit students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Institutional goals for alignment

(<https://www.mercy.edu/about/assessment-strategic-plan>)

Focus Area: Teaching & Learning

1. Mercy University will provide students with a transformative education that promotes life-long learning and civic and ethical global responsibility and ensures being well-equipped for their career choices.

Focus Area: Student Success

2. Mercy University will earn a national and international reputation for student success.

Focus Area: Affordability & Health

3. Mercy University will maintain affordability for students while preserving the college's solid financial position.

Focus Area: College Community

4. Mercy University will foster a community spirit that engages student, faculty, staff and alumni and contributes to the value of a Mercy University education to our greater community.

Program Strategic Goals

Focus Areas

Area 1: Student success

Issue: The program adopted holistic admission practices in an effort to admit and support non-traditional applicants/students.

1. **Student success:** The program will implement student support practices to promote successful completion of the master's program within a maximum of 5 years.

2. **Baseline data for holistic admissions:** In 2022-2023, 95% of students successfully completed the program (38 completed, 2 not completed).

3. **Outcome:** Increase the number of students who successfully complete the program.

4. **Indicator of Success:** Increase percentage of students successfully completing the program to 97%.

- **95% (35 of 37) of students in the 2026 graduating cohort successfully completed all academic and clinical requirements in time for the May 2026 degree conferral. The**

remaining two students are expected to complete program requirements for an August 2026 conferral, reflecting the program's continued strong on-time completion rate.

- To support student success and timely program completion, the department continued its peer study support initiatives while expanding faculty-led academic enrichment opportunities. Specialized workshops and boot camps were offered in high-impact content areas, including neurology, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and clinical and academic writing. These targeted support initiatives were designed to reinforce course content, strengthen clinical reasoning and writing skills, and provide additional preparation for clinical practice and graduate-level academic expectations.

5. Strategy: By 2029, the program will establish a clear method for identifying at-risk students and intervene through meetings with faculty advisor, providing academic support through peer tutoring or the Center for Academic Excellence and Innovation, and follow-up periodically each semester to promote success.

Area 2: Scholarship

Issue: The program has hired several new core faculty members in recent years; these faculty will continue to build their research portfolio through individual and student supported projects.

1. The program will promote a supportive environment for conducting and publishing applied research to increase the current level of faculty research and publications, promoting evidence-based clinical practice.
2. **Baseline Data:** For 2022-2023, 50% of the faculty conducted research activities related to communication sciences and disorders. There were 5 number of presentations related to research conducted by faculty and 1 article published related to faculty research in communication sciences and disorders.
3. **Outcome:** Increase faculty scholarship annually through individual and student supported projects.
4. **Indicator of Success:** 10% increase in presentations and publications of faculty/student research.
 - Faculty scholarship and professional development continued to expand throughout the academic year. Two faculty members submitted manuscripts for publication, while two additional faculty members were awarded internal faculty development grants to support scholarly and professional initiatives. Additionally, one faculty member successfully completed the ASHA Interprofessional Education (IPE) Academy, further strengthening the program's capacity to integrate evidence-based interprofessional education and collaborative practice into the curriculum. To further enhance students' research experiences, the department also established a formal research poster symposium as the culminating format for the graduate Capstone course, providing students with an opportunity to disseminate their scholarly work in a professional conference-style setting while strengthening their research communication skills.
5. **Strategy:** By 2029, faculty will participate in the University research salon once a semester to share their ongoing and proposed research, manuscripts, and grant

applications.

Area 3: Expanded clinical opportunities

Issue: Clients served and group offerings have decreased since the Covid-19 global pandemic.

1. The program will engage community partners to expand the type and number of clinical opportunities in-house to allow students to experience a variety of diagnostic and treatment methods prior to graduation.
2. **Baseline Data:** For 2022-2023 the University clinic provided services for 31-35 in-house clients each semester.
3. **Outcome:** Increase number of clients and groups in the clinic.
4. **Indicator of Success:** As of Summer 2026, the clinic noted a 10-15% increase in number of clients and group services offered in the Mercy University Speech and Hearing Clinic across this academic year.
 - Several new clinical educators were hired in the on-campus Speech and Hearing Center to expand the program's clinical expertise and provide graduate students with more specialized, high-quality clinical training across a range of practice areas. These additions strengthen students' opportunities to learn from clinicians with diverse areas of expertise while enhancing the breadth and depth of supervised clinical experiences.
 - Additionally, the Clinic Director strategically expanded in-house clinical opportunities to ensure that graduate students gain diverse hands-on experiences. Students now participate in community-based services, provide assessment and intervention across the lifespan, and engage in both interprofessional partner-based and individual treatment models, resulting in a more comprehensive and well-rounded clinical education model.
 - An exciting partnership was established with Access Belize following the program's inaugural global service-learning mission trip to Belize in Nov of 2025. Through this collaboration, the on-campus Speech and Hearing Center will provide telehealth speech-language services to select clients, helping to ensure continuity of care after the in-country mission while addressing gaps in access to services within an underserved community. This initiative not only expands access to speech-language pathology services for individuals in Belize but also provides graduate students with valuable experience in telepractice, culturally responsive care, and global service delivery under the supervision of licensed speech-language pathologists.
5. **Strategy:** By 2029, the program will increase outreach to community partners to promote referrals for the in-house clinic.

