

San Francisco State University
Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences
Strategic Plan, Spring 2024

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) at San Francisco State University is based on our commitment to antiracism and other forms of anti-discrimination as fundamental to our professions, and essential to our preparation of professionals to:

- Identify, challenge and dismantle institutional, environmental, sociocultural, informational, attitudinal and linguistic barriers to accessible, equitable and transformative communication for individuals with communication disabilities and those whose right of expression are diminished or silenced;
- Develop, model, disseminate and adopt best practices in the provision of equitable, competent, compassionate and culturally/linguistically responsive services to individuals with communication disabilities across the lifespan; and
- To promote linguistic diversity and recognize the use of different languages and “Englishes” among our students and professionals as an asset to our academic and professional community.

Vision

The vision of the SLHS department at SF State is to be a leader in the field of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences for advancing critical thinking, equity and scientific rigor. We aspire to meet the challenges of creating pathways for recruiting, supporting, retaining and nurturing high qualified students and professionals that represent diverse histories, identities, life experiences, and perspectives. The SLHS administration, faculty, student body and professional partners represent a community of practice that respects and supports individuals with communication disabilities; that integrates research with clinical practice; that embodies equity; and that fosters an inclusive student/professional community in service of accessible communication for all.

Strategic Initiatives

- Strategic initiative 1: Acquire, incorporate and develop university resources and address systemic inequities to support a growing department.
- Strategic initiative 2: Refine curriculum to reflect social justice, equity and anti-racism through evidence-based practice and cutting-edge clinical research.
- Strategic initiative 3: Meet urgent need for diverse racial/ethnic, cultural, disability, and socioeconomic representation in our student body and in the field at large, especially traditionally underrepresented and marginalized groups.
- Strategic initiative 4: Deepen the integration of technology into teaching, clinical work and research to support diversifying student body and access equity.

The department will work on these strategic goals guided by department leadership with input from all department stakeholders as it relates to their specific role and responsibilities in the department.

Strategic Initiatives	Issues	Indicators of Success	Current Progress
<p>1. Acquire, incorporate and develop university resources to support a growing and diversifying department as a means of addressing systemic inequities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before 2017, SLHS was the <i>Communicative Disorders</i> was 1 of 7 programs embedded within the Special Education Department, so did not have the status and visibility associated with a department. • Department Chair course release is at 40%, less than other departments in the GCOE • GCOE 4:4 teaching load • Need for more faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become our own department • Chair release time in the SLHS department on parity with or closer to that of Chairs of other departments in the GCOE, which are at 60-80%. • GCOE teaching load on parity with or closer to that of other colleges within SFSU, which are at 3:3 • Faculty-to- student ratio of <10 at the graduate level and <12 at the undergraduate level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Fall 2017, the <i>Department of Communicative Disorders</i> was established. In Fall of 2018, the name of the department was changed to <i>Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences</i> to better align with the values of the department to move away from pathologization of communicators. • Although the faculty in SLHS and other departments in the GCOE continue to carry a 4:4 teaching load, the SLHS department has created faculty teaching workloads that more accurately capture the faculty’s teaching efforts in addition to seminars (e.g., internship supervision, overseeing student research). • SLHS has met the target faculty-student ratio with the hiring of 3 new full-time tenure/tenure track faculty since the last accreditation visit: Anusha Sundarrajan, Michael Clarke, Victor Lugo.

Strategic Initiatives	Issues	Indicators of Success	Current Progress
<p>2. Refine curriculum and program to reflect social justice, equity, anti-racism, and anti-ableism through evidence-based practice and cutting-edge clinical research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to support learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff who are at different points in their learning trajectory • Need for ongoing review and revision of undergraduate and undergraduate curricula to align with goals • Need for additional social, affective, material, and academic support for under-represented and traditionally marginalized students • Need for diversification and strengthening pathways to careers both in and outside of SLHS fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture change of the department reflected in our official program and course names and course content • Comprehensive exam questions fully updated to reflect curriculum refinements in social justice, equity, anti-racism, and anti-ableism. • Increased student and faculty research productivity in areas that reflect social justice, equity, anti-racism, and anti-ableism. • Student surveys to show that 90% of students are on a career path upon graduation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed ableist language use and naming conventions across the department and continuing this effort in an ongoing way. Changed the department name from <i>Communicative Disorders to Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences</i>. New degree names (formerly B.S./M.S. in Communicative Disorders; now B.S./M.S. in Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences). New course names • Redesign of several courses to address issues of systemic racism, ableism, and linguistic discrimination. For example, in 2019, SLHS 701 was renamed to <i>Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices in the Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences</i> (previously <i>Language Difference & Language Disorders</i>) and redesigned to address systemic concerns. Other courses including SLHS 300 <i>Introduction to Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences</i> was redesigned to incorporate a Disability Studies perspective rather than a purely medical one.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have begun the process of revising Comprehensive Exam questions. Will continue. • All the faculty over the last two years have conducted, published, and presented projects related to social justice, equity, anti-racism, and anti-ableism. • There is also evidence of increased student research in this area, for example, 56% of student presentations at ASHA 2022 had a focus on equity, inclusion & diversity. • The SF State University Exit Survey of undergraduates show SLHS majors' report of satisfaction with their major were among the highest in the university.
<p>3. Meet urgent need for diverse racial/ethnic, cultural, disability, and socioeconomic representation in our student body and in the field at large, especially students from traditionally underrepresented and marginalized groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for updating admissions process to further decrease barriers for traditionally under-represented and marginalized students • Diversifying and strengthening comprehensive pathways for students to enter the major, graduate training, and professional fields and to successfully meet their goals at each stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the numbers of traditionally under-represented and marginalized students who apply to the graduate program • Graduate student ethnic proportions match undergraduate student ethnic proportions • Establish a SLPA program • Establish a post-bacc program • More than half of student body receives some sort of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the admission process to be more holistic and to be actively anti-racist, including: a) removing all department requirements for standardized testing (e.g., GRE); changing writing proficiency assessment rubric to welcome literacy diversity reflective of multilingual, vernacular, and non-mainstream English users; removing GPA ranking;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify SLHS student body, especially in the graduate program 	departmental, college or university financial support	<p>personal statement prompt focused on social justice and equity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the SF Scholar’s program to allow for early, afforded, supported path from the B.S. to the M.S. program Successful grant awards of several graduate-level training programs for M.S. students that offer financial support of between \$15,000-\$20,000 in stipends for each participating student. <i>Project Building Bridges</i> provided funding to 10 students annually from 2015-2020. <i>Project ALLIES</i> provided funding to upwards of 16 students annually from 2018-2023. <i>Project AAC for ALL</i> will provide funding for 12-13 students annually from 2021-2026. <i>Project ASCEND</i> will provide funding for 10 students annually from 2023-2028. Creation of several student-initiated and student-directed affinity groups, including a BIPOC Affinity Group, Disabled Students Affinity Group, and LGBTQ+ Affinity Group that meet throughout the year.

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<p>4. Deepen the integration of technology into teaching, advising, clinical work and research to support diversifying student body and access equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic happened when basic departmental functions were still being established, resulting in a future-oriented and socially impacted program • Incorporate technology into all aspects of both the academic and clinical curricula • Leverage new technologies to make program more inclusive and supportive of faculty, students and clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SLHS students who graduate from the program will be in possession of a technology tool kit of skills that they can use in a future career path. • All SLHS students integrate technology into aspects of their learning, community service, and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, instructors formed online teaching learning groups with support from the <i>SFSU Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CEETL)</i>. With all of the instructors in SLHS now familiar with best practices in online teaching and advising, there is now much more flexibility to meet students' needs through technology, e.g., providing alternatives for students experiencing illness and other emergencies to fully participate.