

**Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences Strategic Plan Executive Summary  
AY 2019/2020 – AY 2023/2024**

Updated and approved by the SHLS Department faculty on 5/10/2022

**Department Vision**

To be an international leader in the field of speech, language, and hearing sciences through conducting cutting-edge scientific research, transforming practice through science, providing an excellent education for clinicians and scholars, and preparing all students to be successful in an evolving, diverse, global world.

**Department Mission**

The mission of the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at Boston University is to provide high quality pre-professional education in the field of communication sciences and disorders, to provide state of the art preparation for professional practice in speech-language pathology, and to offer rigorous doctoral level preparation for those who wish to assume leadership positions in the realms of teaching, research, or clinical practice. It is also intended that the Department will not only focus on dissemination of knowledge, but also on the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge relevant to the discipline.

**Alignment with the University Strategic Plan**

Boston University's strategic plan includes the following five strategic priorities that will guide the university from 2020-2030: Vibrant academic experience; Research that matters; Diversity, equity, and inclusion; Community, big yet small; and Global engagement. The broad strategic initiatives included in the strategic plan of the College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences: Sargent College are: Push the boundaries of education; Integrate and collaborate in research, education, and practice; Build stakeholder relationships; Propel Sargent to the world stage; Create a sustainable future; and Reimagine the Sargent Landscape. The vision, mission, and strategic priorities of the SLHS department are fully aligned with the priorities, values, and objectives identified in the university's strategic mission statement and the college's strategic plan.

**Strategic Priority 1: Educational Practice: Pursue ongoing improvement of curricula and pedagogical approaches to continue offering cutting-edge degree programs**

Goals:

1.1: Expand undergraduate curricula and course offerings

1.1a. Review undergraduate curriculum for HUB (University-wide general education program) compatibility

- Modify existing course (SH531) to meet HUB requirements
  - *Modified and approved (2021)*
- Develop new course to meet HUB requirements
  - *Developed, approved and offered Fall 2022*

1.1.b. Review curriculum for the Joint Bachelor of Science in Linguistics and Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences

- *In progress*

- 1.1.c. Review curriculum for minor in Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences
  - *In progress*
- 1.2: Continue to expand and develop graduate clinical opportunities and innovative teaching approaches
  - 1.2a. Develop the use of simulations as an educational technique to replace or amplify real experiences with guided experiences
    - Participate in college planning and implementation of a simulation lab
      - *Faculty participated on college SimLab development committee. Construction to commence summer 2022, projected completion November 2022*
    - Participate in simulation trainings
      - *Ongoing*
    - Develop case studies
      - *Ongoing: Dysphagia, adult neurogenic, pediatric case studies developed for standardized patients (summer and fall 2022)*
    - Integrate simulations into curriculum
      - *Ongoing: Integration of standardized patient simulations into three MS-SLP courses in spring 2023*
  - 1.2b. Develop telepractice as a model of service delivery
    - Review best practice, key issues, logistics and pilot a telepractice clinic
      - *Review and faculty training completed, telepractice clinic established in spring 2020*
    - Develop innovative evidence-based telepractice assessments and interventions, capitalizing on research and clinical collaboration
      - *Ongoing*
    - Provide services to clients who face barriers to accessing services, providing a richer and more diverse clinical education experience
      - *Ongoing*
  - 1.2c. Explore development of on-line modules to augment curricular courses
    - Review curriculum to determine courses in which on-line modules can be used as complementary instructional tools and develop modules
      - *Speech Science modules developed for SH733 Voice and Resonance Disorders. Provide explanations of the science concepts behind the speech science covered in the course (Completed for implementation in fall 2020). Their use is voluntary, and they can be completed prior to taking the course or simultaneously. Student feedback on usefulness of modules is positive.*
      - *Clinical writing modules (SH740 Introduction to Clinical Practicum) are being developed*
      - *Topics in healthcare modules for SH650 Healthcare Seminar are being developed*
- 1.3: Engage in ongoing assessment of the MS-SLP curriculum and modify as needed
  - 1.3a. Integrate Professional Development Skills and Strategies workshops into the curriculum
    - *Workshops developed in conjunction with Sargent College Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation and integrated into first and second-year MS-SLP curriculum in spring 2022*
  - 1.3b. Add a new elective to MS-SLP curriculum: Bilingual Considerations in Language Assessment and Intervention
    - *Course to be first offered in spring 2023*
  - 1.3c. Modify curriculum in accordance with our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion objectives (See Strategic Priority 3)

1.3d. Conduct regular reviews of the MS-SLP curriculum

- *Ongoing*

1.4: Provide interdisciplinary training opportunities for students with respect to data science

1.4a. Resubmit T32 grant

- *T32 resubmitted (2020) and funded (2021)*

1.4b. Integrate data science into all programs in the department

- Facilitate training in data sciences for SLHS doctoral students by identifying key recommended coursework across the university
  - *Ongoing*
- Facilitate training in data sciences for the BS in SLHS program by identifying key recommended coursework across the university
  - *Ongoing*

## **Strategic Priority 2: Research and Scholarship: Increase high impact, innovative research and scholarship**

Goals:

2.1: Hire new tenure-track and clinical faculty to expand research/scholarship/funding objectives

2.1a. Conduct a search for an Assistant Professor with specialization in child language (replacement)

- *Search successful (start date fall 2020)*

2.1b. Conduct a search for an Assistant Professor with specialization in pediatrics (replacement)

- *Search successful (start date fall 2022)*

2.1c. Conduct a search for a Clinical Assistant Professor (replacement)

- *Search successful (start date fall 2022)*

2.1d. Advocate for lecturer (replacement)

- *Search approved for fall 2022*

2.1e. Advocate for a new tenure-track line at the Assistant Professor level

- *Ongoing*

2.1f. Advocate for new clinical faculty lines

- *Ongoing*

2.2. Further develop collaborative and translational research

2.2a. Continue development of new and existing research centers that include basic and applied research, translational research, and community engagement

- Develop new centers with a focus on translational research and community engagement
  - *New Center for Brain Recovery established with Prof Swathi Kiran as director in spring 2022*
  - *Ongoing*
- Participate in basic and translational research in the Hearing Research Center, the Hariri Center, the BU Institute for Early Childhood Wellbeing, and P50 projects
  - *Ongoing*
- Encourage and enable research collaborations among faculty
  - *Collaborations established; new collaborations to be explored*

2.3. Increase resources available to support scholarship of clinical faculty

2.3a. Identify funding sources for clinical scholarship and collaborators to support this

- *Sargent Clinical Faculty Scholarship grants established (2020)*
- *Clinical Professor awarded an HIH/NIDCD RO1 grant (2021-2026)*

- *Ongoing*
- 2.3b. Increase institutional support for grant proposal development and submissions
  - *Ongoing*
- 2.3c. Collaborate with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations to identify potential donors
  - *Ongoing*
- 2.4. Continue to provide opportunities for presentation and discussion of cutting-edge research
  - 2.4a. Continue to bring high-quality, diverse speakers to our colloquium series
    - *Colloquium series well-established and ongoing*
  - 2.4b. Continue to lead NIH and other-funded conferences in the areas of aphasia, child language, and speech motor control
    - *Conferences successfully hosted and ongoing*
- 2.5. Integrate clinical education with clinical research efforts
  - 2.5a. Develop collaborative protocols to evaluate the efficacy of teletherapy for voice disorders and aphasia
    - *Protocols developed for voice disorders and aphasia (2020-2021)*
  - 2.5b. Develop process for periodic review of clinical protocols to ensure timely adoption of cutting-edge research findings
    - *Ongoing*
- 2.6. Continue to enable student research participation in associated laboratories
  - 2.6a. Encourage qualified undergraduate students to complete a senior thesis for distinction
    - *Ongoing*
  - 2.6b. Encourage undergraduate students to apply for a faculty-mentored UROP (Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program) award
    - *Ongoing*
  - 2.6c. Encourage interested MS-SLP students to complete a thesis
    - *Ongoing*
  - 2.6d. Increase support for MS-SLP students to attend conferences
    - *Ongoing*

### **Strategic Priority 3: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

#### Goals

- 3.1. Elevate awareness of cultural humility and need for anti-bias training within the department
  - 3.1a. Establish Committee on Cultural Humility and Inclusion (CCHI)
    - *Committee established in fall 2019*
  - 3.1b. Pursue educational experiences to inform our objectives and instruction (e.g., shared reading, talks)
    - *Educational experiences have been completed and are ongoing*
  - 3.1c. Work with Sargent College Director of Diversity and Inclusion to coordinate college and department initiatives
    - *Work has been established and is ongoing*
  - 3.1d. Attend workshops/trainings offering expert training for faculty in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion
    - *Faculty have attended workshops/trainings and is ongoing*

- 3.2. Examine educational and clinical spaces, policies, and practices that uphold biases and systemic racism
- 3.2a. Eliminate the GRE for graduate admissions for both MS-SLP and PhD programs
    - *GRE has been eliminated (spring 2020)*
  - 3.2b. Review syllabi to identify opportunities to increase work from authors from under-represented groups and related topics (e.g., bilingual assessment & intervention)
    - *Syllabi reviewed across MS-SLP and undergraduate programs*
  - 3.2c. Review course materials for ableist, racist, sexist, or otherwise biased language
    - *Review of course material is ongoing*
- 3.3. Collaborate with students and faculty to develop anti-bias and anti-racist curricula across all programs
- 3.3a. Conduct a cross-review of infused course content and clinical practica to ensure multiple opportunities to address the intersection of racial and social inequities and determinants of health as it relates to communication disorders and our professional practices
    - *Cross-review completed for MS-SLP and undergraduate programs (2019-2020)*
  - 3.3b. Following review, revise and develop content as needed on gender expression, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, religion, spirituality and client care in the curriculum where applicable (e.g., Aging and Dementia, Voice Disorders, Autism)
    - *Content development is ongoing*
  - 3.3c. Explore the addition of electives from the School of Public Health and/or Wheelock College of Education for the MS-SLP program
    - *Exploration of electives is ongoing*
  - 3.3d. Provide explicit training within clinical practicum opportunities in the MS-SLP program
    - *Content development and training is ongoing*
- 3.4. Collaborate with students and faculty to develop separate and distinct trainings for MS-SLP program to promote more inclusive, anti-racist, and anti-bias practices for the next generation of clinicians
- 3.4a. Develop three separate and distinct training modules for SH740 with emphasis on identity, implicit bias, privilege, and anti-racist practices as it relates to SLP
    - *Training modules developed (2019-2021)*
  - 3.4b. Co-develop an additional introduction training for orientation for the MS-SLP program
    - *Training developed for orientation in collaboration with students (2021)*
  - 3.4c. Develop an anti-racist/anti-bias student workbook for the MS-SLP program
    - *Workbook developed (2021)*
- 3.5. Create outreach opportunities to recruit and retain students, faculty and staff from under-represented groups
- 3.5a. Increase financial support for applicants with diverse backgrounds
    - *New scholarship structure for all applicants of professional programs in the college established, including applicants from diverse backgrounds (2019-2020)*
    - *Efforts to increase financial support ongoing*
  - 3.5b. Connect with local schools and youth organizations to raise awareness of the field of speech, language, and hearing sciences
    - *Ongoing*
  - 3.5c. Encourage undergraduate and graduate students from under-represented backgrounds to participate in the SLHS Peer Mentoring Program
    - *Ongoing*

- 3.5d. Explore the creation of Sargent-wide affinity groups for students from underrepresented backgrounds
  - *Ongoing*

**Strategic Priority 4: Establish, maintain, and expand collaborative partnerships with providers in healthcare, schools, and private practice to support clinical education and research**

Goals:

- 4.1. Maintain and strengthen existing clinical collaborations/partnerships within the community
  - 4.1a. Provide continuing education opportunities, access to BU library facilities, and tuition vouchers to clinical site supervisors
    - *Ongoing*
  - 4.1b. Solicit feedback regarding student preparation and programmatic objectives from our clinical collaborators
    - *Ongoing*
- 4.2. Expand established collaborations/partnerships and explore new collaborations within the community
  - *New collaborations established and efforts ongoing*

**Strategic Priority 5: Expand our educational offerings to enhance our stature as a leading department in the field of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences**

Goals:

- 5.1. Explore feasibility of SLPD and certificate modules
  - *Based on feedback of proposal, re-evaluate feasibility in 2023/2024 and if indicated, generate new proposal for online program*
- 5.2. Explore novel opportunities for programs and certifications that reflect the changing demands of education in the field
  - *Ongoing*

**Strategic Priority 6: Community**

Goals:

- 6.1. Ensure a positive environment that supports students' engagement, success and well-being
  - 6.1a. Develop professional development skills and strategies training modules for students
    - *Training modules developed and integrated into curriculum (spring 2022); Modification of modules based on feedback is ongoing*
  - 6.1b. Support the MS-SLP Student Initiative Team and student social events
    - *Ongoing*
  - 6.1c. Host informal "check-in" meetings with students
    - *Ongoing*
- 6.2. Provide students in all programs with resources at BU that support students' health and wellness
  - 6.2a. Provide students with information about resources at orientation
    - *Ongoing*
  - 6.2b. Ensure that students know where to find information about resources (program manual, BU website, faculty)
    - *Ongoing*
  - 6.2c. Discuss available resources with students at student/advisor meetings
    - *Ongoing*