



**Communication Sciences and Disorders
Strategic Plan Executive Summary
2021**

The **vision** of the Nazareth College Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) is to serve as a model of excellence for interprofessional education, clinical outreach, and specialized practice initiatives in an increasingly diverse society.

The **mission** of the Nazareth College Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to provide comprehensive academic and clinical opportunities emphasizing innovative inter-professional and ethical practices to foster the development of professionals prepared for work and life in a complex and diverse society. Our department mission is in concert with the mission of the Nazareth College School of Health and Human Services, which is to educate culturally responsive professionals able to work interprofessionally to promote and sustain health and wellness and improve the quality of life in the global community.

The CSD department has identified specific focus areas to address during the upcoming strategic plan cycle. These include: *Program Structure and Curricular Initiatives, Specializations, Writing Across the Curriculum, Diversity and Inclusion, Interprofessional Initiatives, Research and Scholarship, and Clinical Initiatives and Efficiencies*. The department has identified outcomes, indicators, and strategies within each focus area.

Looking forward, the Nazareth CSD program aspires to continue to be regionally and nationally recognized for clinical and academic excellence preparing speech-language pathologists to contribute to our increasingly global community using innovative evidence-based practices. The Nazareth CSD department offers a multitude of programs and inter-professional opportunities for our students. Our graduate program recruits the best and brightest undergraduate students reflecting the diversity seen in the clients and communities we serve.

The program strives to foster students' development of the following **core values**:

- Knowledge and skills to provide high quality service delivery across the lifespan
- Cultural competence and humility
- Respectful and caring attitudes
- Concern for and commitment to under-served individuals
- Ethical personal and professional responsibilities
- Interprofessional understanding and collaboration
- Effective written and oral communication
- Leadership and advocacy skills
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Integration of liberal arts and professional knowledge
- Research skills to promote effective practice and accountability
- Intellectual inquiry for life-long learning
- Civic responsibility and awareness of one's role within the community

This executive summary provides an overview of each focus of the [CSD Strategic Plan 2018-2022](#) area by summarizing annual updates and highlights related to the outcomes, indicators, and strategies related to each focus area.

Program Structure and Curricular Initiatives

The CSD department strives to ensure that our degree programs meet the evolving needs of the profession, community, and students through ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of our current program structure model. The program continues to maintain on-time completion rates for traditional, extended, and direct-admit students. An annual graduate student survey allows the program to gather data from current students related to the frequency of course offerings to meet student needs and complete the program on-time. Additionally, the Graduate Program Director and Graduate Practicum Coordinator engage in ongoing evaluation of program completion by individually advising each student and carefully considering options for students who are not on track for on-time completion. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, we had some disruption in student clinical experiences for the Spring 20 and Summer 20 graduates, however we were able to maintain on-time completion rates for most students. We have been actively supporting students who are choosing to slow down their program by moving to a temporary part-time status or taking a leave of absence based on their individual needs and life circumstances during the pandemic.

In the Spring of 2018, the graduate program started a direct-admit option for graduate entrance for high-achieving Nazareth undergraduate students who met GPA and professional skill requirements. The intent of this program was to allow high-achieving undergraduates to move directly into the master's program in what would be the spring of

their senior year and complete the program in 5 semesters instead of 6. At the implementation time of the direct-admit program, a committee was identified to monitor outcomes and determine its success. After moving two cohorts of students through the direct-admit program (Spring 2018 and Spring 2019), the decision was made to modify the Direct-Admit BS/MS Program by adding one semester to the graduate program and having students take fewer graduate credits during the first graduate semester. These changes were made based on recommendation from the committee that considered student feedback and faculty analysis of the program. Some benefits to the changes include the ability for students to continue to play a spring sport, complete a graduate specialization (autism, deafness, medical SLP), and complete a Master's thesis. This coming Spring (2022), we will onboard our first group of students into the program who will have the option to complete in 5 or 6 semesters due to being students during the transition period. Interestingly more than half of them have elected to complete the program in 6 semesters, taking more time and also taking advantage of the opportunity to complete a specialization or a thesis.

This year, we continued to explore opportunities to increase alternative learning models such as hybrid, online, site-based, web-enhanced, clinical-embedded, and simulation experiences across all areas of our program to enhance learning opportunities. As a result of COVID-19, our ability to test run many of these modalities was accelerated. We continue to utilize Simucase to supplement clinical hours and expose students to highly scaffolded clinical experiences within the simulation environment. Additionally, we will continue to trial run some of our courses in a hybrid model. The College and department are engaged in the development of guiding principles to make decisions about course delivery modalities and overarching guidelines on how to select modalities for courses.

In the area of undergraduate curriculum, there are two notable updates. First, the departmental faculty voted to change the required grammar lab to a Language Analysis Lab linked to the undergraduate Methods of Evaluation course. This will allow students to learn grammar and apply it to language sample analysis. Secondly, this year marks the first cohort of Developing Child and Families minor students to complete their coursework. This is an interprofessional minor that is directed by Dr. Lisa Hiley, one of our tenure track faculty. A total of 80 students declared with the Developing Child and Families minor from across the College, including the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Health and Human Services, and the School of Education. The DCF minor students are starting an Early Childhood Club as a service opportunity.

Specializations

This past fall (2020) we fully implemented a medical specialization in addition to our already strong deafness and autism specialization programs. The Medical Specialization Program prepares speech-language pathology graduate students to work with patients, clients, and families in medical settings across the continuum of care and across the lifespan. The medical specialization will consist of a four-course sequence exposing students to evidence-based best practice in person-centered care, preparing them for entry-level work in a range of healthcare settings. Coursework is paired with relevant experiential learning and clinical opportunities, both on campus and off-site at medical settings in the greater Rochester area. A variety of topics are explored including, but not limited to aphasia, right hemisphere brain damage, motor speech disorders, dysphagia, and cognitive-communication disorders associated with acquired brain injury, dementia, and other neurodegenerative diseases. The specialization will culminate in a capstone course during which students will explore complex cases with multiple diagnoses and comorbidities to prepare them for the real-world nature of speech-language pathology practice in medical settings. They will also follow a hypothetical case throughout their coursework, creating a portfolio of assignments related to the case, and presenting their case at the end of their program in a simulated “grand rounds” type of setting.

In addition to the three program-specific specializations, we also allow students the opportunity to complete the New York State Bilingual Extension that is required by New York State Education in order to work as a bilingual SLP within the schools. This year, we have met with the directors of the Bilingual program in the School of Education and also met with the currently enrolled students in order to ensure that the curriculum and experiences align with the needs of our students completing the program. We also have ongoing development of bilingual clinical outreach placements, including clinical experiences related to a recent HHS grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation. The Cabrini grant has connected Nazareth faculty and graduate students across Health and Human Services programs with children and adults from the immigrant/migrant farmworker communities in two nearby counties. Our Communication Sciences and Disorders students have gained meaningful clinical experiences through working collaboratively with students from Social Work and Creative Arts Therapy to support language, literacy, and social-emotional needs of English language learners in a variety of locations (e.g., Our Lady of Guadalupe Church - Marion, NY; the Tepeyac Migrant Welcoming Center - Leicester, NY; Migrant Ed Summer Program - Sodus, NY). These clinical outreach opportunities promise to offer continued clinical growth opportunities for students who are specifically interested in working with bilingual children and families, as well as for English speaking Nazareth students who have a strong interest in social justice and working with historically marginalized communities.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Proficiency in academic and clinical writing is an essential skill for speech-language pathologists. This year we continued to refine and develop our department-specific developmental and sequential writing goals for undergraduate and graduate students. Although we had previously created a curriculum map, as we reviewed it this year, we realized that we had different ideas across faculty members as to what the terms used to populate the map meant, as well as different expectations of students at various points in their program. This led to a rework of the curriculum map to include an input (teaching) and output (written product) aspect. We will now be able to use the document for a variety of purposes to support our full-time and adjunct faculty and students. The committee also developed a folder with rubric templates that is available to all faculty to use when developing, revising, or refining their rubrics related to student writing. Some initiatives were delayed due to priorities related to the pandemic. In the upcoming year, we will renew our focus on addressing various aspects of clinical writing expectations, assessment, and teaching. In addition, we will consider additional ways of supporting students from diverse backgrounds in the development of their academic and clinical writing skills.

Diversity and Inclusion

Last year, for the first time, we included community and belonging questions and program climate questions in the annual graduate student and alumni surveys. The responses to these questions were discussed with the faculty and the Student Advisory Board to shape our work moving forward.

In the Fall of 2019, department faculty, in collaboration with two graduate students, formed the first ever affinity group for CSD students at Nazareth College who identify as racial and/or ethnic minorities. The main purpose of the Speech-language Therapy and Audiology Minority Program (STAMP) is to provide minority students in our department with a sense of belonging in a predominantly white field. In this vein, STAMP students have the opportunity to form solidarity and support each other in this shared affinity; have meaningful discussions about the various challenges of being a minority in a predominantly white field; receive validation; and relieve stress related to their identity as they navigate their CSD program. Another purpose of STAMP is to create layers of mentorship among current students, Nazareth CSD alumni, and other SLPs and Audiologists of color in the Rochester area. In the two years of STAMP's existence, we have hosted many fun, social activities for these students on-campus, off-campus, and even virtually during the pandemic. Last year, we formally launched our mentorship program in which interested STAMP members were paired with alumni who worked in settings and with populations that the current students were interested in pursuing in their post-graduation careers. A

qualtrics survey was used to obtain feedback from students about the impact of STAMP and this feedback was all positive. On this survey, students reported that STAMP has contributed to their:

- Academic and clinical success (e.g., one student mentioned that “Members of STAMP are always willing to help by offering [clinical] observation opportunities, advice, or just emotional support.”),
- Sense of belonging (e.g., another student wrote, “When I started at Nazareth, it was a great change and cultural transition. STAMP helped me feel proud of my roots and understand the value of cultural diversity at Nazareth.”)
- Career Empowerment (e.g., students reported that they appreciate learning about clinical fellowship opportunities and professional development workshops in CSD that were passed along to them by recent alumni in email communications)
- and Reduction in stress (e.g., “One of my favorite events was board game night because after a long day of classes and studying, I was able to relax and enjoy a family-like game night with friends.”).

One of our departmental strategic plan goals in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) was to “increase the representation of cultural and linguistic diversity across the curriculum.” In an effort to achieve this goal, we first had to create a curriculum map to determine the percentage of our courses that intentionally addressed DEI topics in various academic instruction and assessment modalities, including: direct instruction, assigned readings, major assignments, on a quiz/test, or in case studies. The DEI topics that we assessed in the curriculum map included:

- Consequences of Systemic Racism (ex. health disparities, disproportionality, etc.)
- Issues of Inequality and Racial Discrimination (ex. power and privilege, biases and prejudice, etc.)
- Cultural Humility/Competency (ex. perspective taking, self-awareness, respect, etc.)
- Religion/Religious Differences (ex. religious beliefs about etiology of disease/disability, religiously-based diets, etc.)
- Sexual and Gender Diversity (ex. sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, transgender voice, etc.)
- Ableism and Dis/ability (ex. disability studies, Deaf culture, neurodiversity, social and medical models of disability, etc.)
- Language Differences (ex. bilingualism, language variation, code switching, accent vs. dialect, etc.)
- Socioeconomic Diversity (ex. class, rural versus urban poverty, housing discrimination, gentrification, etc.)
- Ageism (ex. hearing aid stigma, age discrimination, elder abuse, etc.)

- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Assessment (ex. least-bias assessment, ethnographic interviewing techniques, multicultural parent education, etc.)
- Professional Issues Related to Diversity and Inclusion (ex. Code of Ethics, bias in research, special education laws and policies, ASHA demographics, etc.)

By the end of Fall 2019, we created a curriculum map in the form of a qualtrics survey that not only collected data on the aforementioned DEI topics and how they were infused in CSD courses, but also collected qualitative data from faculty members to determine their level of comfort with infusing DEI topics in their courses and what additional supports they may need. This survey was reviewed and approved by the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion at Nazareth College prior to distribution among full-time and adjunct faculty in CSD. Distribution of the curriculum map was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but nonetheless occurred over the winter break of 2020. The results of this curriculum map survey indicated that all DEI topics were addressed by at least two courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Similarly, qualitative data from the survey reported that generally, all of the CSD faculty think that these DEI topics are important to cover. Nevertheless, there were some areas for improvement that were highlighted by the survey data. For example, the survey showed that these DEI topics were overwhelmingly addressed through direct instruction, but not addressed as frequently in assigned readings, major assignments, on a quiz/test, or in case studies. Furthermore, across all academic modalities, DEI topics of Sexual and Gender Diversity (addressed 6.09% of times), Religion/Religious Differences (4.87%), and Ageism (2.19%) were addressed the least. Faculty also indicated that time was a barrier towards continued progress. These results were presented to all full-time faculty at a department meeting in Spring 2021. Some next steps were discussed, including figuring out how we can facilitate the inclusion of these DEI topics in other instruction/assessment modalities, as well as how to ensure that there is more equal representation of the various DEI topics across the curriculum. Moving forward as a department, we are considering the development of a stand-alone course on DEI in CSD, as well as clinical education and interprofessional opportunities in this area.

Related to increasing the diversity of recruitment of students, we are pleased to have reactivated an already established 2+2 program/relationship with Monroe Community College. This year, faculty from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion working group collaborated with the transfer admissions department at Naz and have identified a team in our department that is available to speak with any Monroe Community College students interested in Speech-Language Pathology. Materials have been prepared for in-person or virtual outreaches.

Interprofessional Initiatives

The department continues to have many strong interprofessional initiatives clinically and academically. Some highlights of our interprofessional work include:

- The Interdisciplinary Specialty Program in Autism at Nazareth is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Professional Preparation grant mechanism and is entering its 6th and final year. To date, we have prepared over 65 master's level students across 5 disciplines including SLP, OT, PT, Social Work, and Education.
- GROW-Rochester is a multi-sector and community-based initiative integrating comprehensive developmental screenings for young children (12 months-5 years) in educational, community, social service settings, and health care settings for the purposes of identifying needs in hearing, vision, dental health, language and speech, cognitive, and social-emotional development. Children's BMI, as well as child/family social-determinants of health and protective factors, are also screened.
- Our on-campus Neurogenic Communication and Cognition clinic provides interprofessional wellness and therapy to a variety of adult clients.
- During the Summer 2021 semester, a 1-credit Infant Mental Health (IMH) Seminar was offered as part of the Infant Mental Health NY state endorsement. 10 interprofessional students (including 3 SLP grads) completed this course. With support from the Florence M. Muller foundation we were able to support 6 of the students to take the class and join New York State Association of Infant Mental Health (NYSAIMH) and start the IMH endorsement program
- In the spring of 2021, a children's literature course was co-taught with speech-language and education faculty.
- Two CSD faculty members collaborated with three music therapy faculty to conduct a feasibility study related to the delivery of co-delivered music and language therapy (CIMaLT) for individuals with chronic aphasia. In addition, this research team applied for an ASHFoundation collaborative research grant to conduct a pilot study of CIMaLT; a funding decision is expected in September.

Research and Scholarship

We continue to recruit students to complete a thesis project as part of their graduate program. This past year, we initiated the use of a comprehensive revision of the thesis guidelines to clearly reflect current practices and policies. The new materials were reviewed by a student group and presented to faculty.

Highlights of our departmental publications and presentations include:

- Alicea, C.C.M., & Doherty, K.A. (2021). Targeted re-instruction for hearing aid use and care skills. American Journal of Audiology.

- Alicea, C.C.M., & Johnson, R.E. (In Press). Creating community through affinity groups for minority students in CSD. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*.
- Genesee Valley Speech-Language Hearing Association, Rochester, NY. (2021) Introduction to Supervision in Speech-Language Pathology: What Do I Need to Know? (Co presenters: Janine DiCarlo, Susan Mack)
- Nazareth College, Rochester, NY (2021) Mobilizing Our Minds, Department Vignettes. (Co-presenters: Susan Mack, Dawn Vogler-Elias, Rupert Johnson, Carly Alicea)
- Garcia, N, Redondo-Polo, S., Reinoso-Traverso, D., Giorgis, T. (2021, April). Speech-Language Teletherapy in Honduras: A Collaboration with Amigos De Jesus Bilingual School. Poster presented at Creative Activity and Research Showcase (CARS), Nazareth College, Rochester, NY.
- Minga, J., Johnson, M. A., Blake, M. L., Fromm, D., & MacWhinney, B. (2021) Making sense of right hemisphere discourse using RHDbank. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 41(1), 99-122. DOI: 10.1097/TLD.0000000000000244
- Hopkins, M. & Johnson, M. A. (2021) 'You Just Have to be in My Class: Open Classroom and Teaching Partners at Nazareth' in Hopkins, M. & Bailey-Jones, R. (Eds.). *Innovations in conversations about teaching: Beyond the workshop*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Juersivich, N. Brooks, L., Johnson, M., Leigh, J. (April, 2021). Assessment Network of New York conference. Assessment with refreshments: Engaging faculty in experiential learning of assessment.
- GROW-Rochester's Interprofessional Developmental Screening Program: Digital Responsiveness to COVID-19, Nexus Conference Talk, Virtual (7/2020)
- Tobin, M., Drager, K., & Battaglia, M. (2020, November). 11410: Daily experiences of parents who support their adult children with autism spectrum disorder. Proposal accepted at the Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, San Diego, CA (Convention canceled).

Clinical Initiatives and Efficiencies

In the area of clinical initiatives and efficiencies, we targeted several projects related to our on and off campus clinical experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. We continue to work toward a revision of our essential skills document. We have met with the director from Student Accessibility Services, attended CAPCSD Conferences, and read literature on current trends and best practices in this area. We will continue to refine this document in the coming year by discussing it at a full faculty meeting and also bringing it to the Community and Student Advisory Groups.

A significant portion of our work this year was spent focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion within our clinical initiatives working group. We held a Community Advisory Board meeting that focused on cultural humility within supervision with an invited guest speaker who is an SLP and Vice President of Community and Belonging at Nazareth College, Dr. Lisa Durant-Jones. We also reviewed and revised our Calipso system prompts to reflect the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion learning objectives of our program. We were successful in advocating a change in the wording for all Calipso users that clarifies the reasoning and need to identify cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences seen within our clinics during assessment and interventions. In the coming year, a continuing education event will be held for supervisors targeting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion conversations during clinical education.

In response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the clinics in the CSD program quickly pivoted to provide online teletherapy sessions. Clinical managers and faculty attended numerous webinars, conference calls and workshops specifically regarding clinical delivery in university clinics through teletherapy. The clinic managers assembled together multiple resources for students and housed them in a new Moodle learning management course specific to teletherapy. In addition the faculty in the department made short videos illustrating a variety of concepts to support the teletherapy rollout. More than 35 students and over 80 clients per semester, participated in teletherapy across the Speech and Language, Neurogenic Communication and Cognition, and Hearing clinics.

In the coming year, we will work on refining our process for collecting and delivering supervisor feedback. Now that we are using the Calipso Clinical Tracking System, we must revisit the process so that the feedback is timely, anonymous, and useful.

In the fall, we will be piloting an electronic medical record system for our on-campus clinics. The adult Neurogenic Communication and Cognition Clinic has been identified as a target for the pilot of this program due to its large client base and active engagement in on-campus clinical activities.

Summary

In summary, we made some meaningful strides across all areas of our strategic plan even in the midst of a pandemic! We continue to feel the impact of COVID-19 disruptions in our everyday routines but there is a sense of hope and energy as we emerge. We are collectively hopeful that we will be able to maintain some of the newly found ways of operating even

post pandemic, but also comforted by some return to normalcy such as teaching within a classroom and spending time meeting with faculty and students in person.

Our College welcomed a new president in July 2020 and this has also created new opportunities for reflection and growth as we work toward our new institutional strategic plan. Our department is currently engaged in a self-study process to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students, faculty, and the broader community. The self-study will inform our next departmental strategic plan and inform the future priorities of our departmental work.