

Executive Summary – Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders Strategic Plan 2025–2030

Our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan outlines three interconnected pillars—Student Training, Community Engagement & Outreach, and Research & Innovative Scholarship—with focused strategies and phased milestones. The plan emphasizes building on departmental strengths while advancing curriculum innovation, community partnerships, and research excellence.

Pillar 1: Student Training

Goal: Prepare students to become confident, innovative, and compassionate professionals.

- Curriculum: Streamline and enrich SLP/AuD curricula; expand simulation-based learning; embed emerging topics.
 - Pathways: Develop innovative academic models, including accelerated degrees, flexible formats, and specialty certificates.
 - Interprofessional Education (IPE/IPP): Embed IPE objectives into coursework; expand shared learning, grand rounds, and case-based simulations.
 - Assessment & Outcomes: Implement competency-based clinical grading, revise comprehensive exams, and track graduate outcomes.
 - Clinical Preparation: Broaden experiences with clients representing a wide range of cultural, linguistic, and clinical needs; strengthen peer mentoring, supervisory training, and reflective learning
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Pillar 2: Community Engagement & Outreach

Goal: Expand public impact by partnering with communities, addressing inequities, and increasing access.

- Outreach & Access: Build partnerships, reduce access barriers (transportation, scheduling, satellite sites), and sustain targeted programs.
 - Experiential Learning: Expand service-learning, community placements, and incentives for student participation.
 - Partnerships: Collaborate with schools, organizations, and multilingual/underserved groups; establish community-based “mini-externships.”
 - Professional Development: Offer CEU events with community input; collaborate with partners on educational and appreciation events.
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Pillar 3: Research & Innovative Scholarship

Goal: Advance knowledge generation and clinical translation.

- Faculty Support: Strengthen research pipelines, visibility, mentoring, workload alignment, and funding; leverage SU infrastructure for collaborations.
 - Collaborations: Foster partnerships within CSD (SLP/AuD, clinicians/researchers), across SU, and with external partners (e.g., Upstate, VA).
 - Dissemination & Translation: Integrate research into journal clubs and grand rounds; host symposia; establish an annual Research Day.
 - Student Research: Increase opportunities, strengthen the Master’s–PhD pipeline, expand EBP/research training across all levels, and sustain faculty capacity for mentoring.
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Implementation Framework

- Years 1–3: Assess, pilot, and build capacity (curriculum mapping, initial simulations, piloting and proposal of programming).
- Years 4–5: Expand, formalize, and sustain (full curricular integration, institutionalized CEU series, recurring research programming, stable pipelines for graduate students and faculty research).

Syracuse University
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Pillar Area	Objectives	Implementation Strategies/Timeline Suggestions
Pillar 1: Student Training <i>Goal: Prepare students to become confident, innovative, and compassionate professionals through rigorous, responsive, and interprofessional education.</i>	1. Streamline and enrich SLP and AuD curricula by reducing redundancy, improving course flow, embedding emerging topics, and expanding simulation-based learning across core courses to enhance clinical readiness	Year 1-3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-study to identify redundancies, gaps, and integration points for emerging topics. • Survey faculty on current use of simulation; share results in faculty meeting. • Propose revisions of select course sequences • Pilot expansion of simulations • Provide faculty development for simulation pedagogy and ASHA supervision standards. • Incorporate ≥2 emerging topics into core courses. Year 4-5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulations embedded in all core courses, ensuring students accrue experiences in all Big 9 areas. • Curriculum changes formally evaluated (student/alumni feedback, accreditation alignment). • Review of outcomes (student clinical readiness, program flow, recruitment impact). • Adjust curriculum and simulation framework as needed based on data and establish ongoing review cycle for curriculum refinement every 3–5 years.
	2. Develop and promote innovative academic pathways and credentials to strengthen the undergraduate pipeline and expand access to graduate study, including accelerated degrees, flexible program formats, and specialty certificates in high-demand areas.	Year 1-3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark other programs and survey current students, alumni, and employers for interest in flexible formats and specialty tracks. • Convene faculty working group to outline priorities (e.g., BS/AuD pathway, bilingual certification). • Draft proposal for BS/AuD accelerated pathway and begin approval process. • Explore and possibly pilot flexible course delivery options (e.g., hybrid elective, summer online module). • Begin recruitment marketing for new accelerated/4+1 opportunities. • Expand undergraduate preparation courses in audiology and related areas. Years 4-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement BS/AuD accelerated pathway (pending approvals). • Add at least one new flexible program model (part-time or hybrid).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate certificate pilot(s) and scale to additional specialty areas (e.g., cochlear implant mapping, pediatric swallowing). • Assess impact on enrollment, diversity of applicants, and student outcomes. • Formalize sustainable funding and staffing, adjust/expand flexible program offerings based on demand and success of pilots.
	3. Integrate interprofessional education and practice (IPE/IPP) across academic and clinical training by embedding IPE learning objectives into courses, expanding shared learning experiences.	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form an IPE/IPP committee to coordinate initiatives. • Map current IPE content in courses and clinic; identify gaps. • Embed IPE learning objectives into at least 50% of academic and clinical courses. • Pilot annual interprofessional case-based simulation with at least one partner program (e.g., Psychology, SOE, Counseling). • Initiate regular grand rounds/seminar series that includes both CSD and cross-disciplinary presenters. • Provide faculty with IPE-focused professional development/CEU opportunities. <p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed IPE learning objectives into all academic and clinical courses. • Host at least one established interprofessional grand rounds or symposium annually with sustained cross-program participation. • Institutionalize the annual case-based simulation as a recurring component of training. • Evaluate student outcomes in IPE competencies and revise activities accordingly. • Formalize external and community partnerships to expand IPE clinical experiences.
	4. Strengthen assessment systems by implementing competency-based clinical grading, revising comprehensive exam processes, and establishing ongoing review of graduate outcomes to ensure alignment with professional standards and student success.	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft framework for competency-based clinical grading; pilot with limited cohorts or specific competencies. • Revise comprehensive exam format to better reflect program goals and clinical readiness. • Revisit and revise (as needed) baseline processes for tracking graduate outcomes (employment, certification, licensure, further study). • Provide faculty development/CEU opportunities on competency-based assessment.

		<p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement competency-based grading framework across all clinical courses. • Fully implement revised comprehensive exam process; gather student/faculty feedback for refinement. • Conduct annual graduate outcomes review, with data shared at faculty meetings and used for program improvement. • Use outcomes data to inform accreditation reports, recruitment materials, and continuous quality improvement.
	<p>5. Expand student preparation for varied clinical careers by increasing opportunities to work with clients across ages, cultures, and communication needs, while enhancing peer mentoring, supervisory skills, and reflective learning practices</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map current student clinical experiences to identify gaps in client populations served. • Establish partnerships or placements to expand opportunities with multilingual, multicultural, and age-diverse clients. • Pilot structured peer mentoring and supervisory skill training modules for graduate students. • Integrate reflective video-based learning into at least two core clinical courses. <p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all students complete experiences with a range of client populations across the lifespan and cultural contexts. • Implement peer mentoring and supervisory training as standard elements in the clinical curriculum. • Expand reflective video-based learning to all clinical practica. • Collect and review outcome data to refine the approach.
<p>Pillar 2: Community Service & Outreach</p> <p><i>Goal: Expand the department's public impact by partnering with diverse communities, addressing health inequities, and increasing access to services.</i></p>	<p>1. Strengthen community outreach and access to care by building partnerships with organizations, addressing barriers such as transportation and scheduling, expanding awareness of services, and sustaining targeted programs with culturally responsive approaches and long-term funding models.</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and formalize partnerships with priority community organizations (schools, refugee programs, health agencies). • Conduct needs assessment on barriers to access (transportation, scheduling, satellite sites). • Launch targeted awareness campaigns (website, social media, campus/community events). • Pilot or expand targeted programs (refugee clinics, AAC groups, dementia screenings). • Provide faculty and student training on culturally responsive service delivery. <p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish sustainable satellite or flexible scheduling models in at least one community site.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale targeted programs shown to have community impact; ensure ongoing student engagement in each. • Maintain at least one annual community awareness/education initiative. • Secure sustainable funding streams (grants, philanthropy, partnerships) to support long-term outreach. • Integrate outcomes tracking (number of clients served, community satisfaction, student learning impact).
	2. Expand experiential learning by developing interdisciplinary service-learning projects, increasing community-based placements, and encouraging student participation in outreach through organizations and incentives.	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map current service-learning and community placement opportunities across programs. • Develop at least one interdisciplinary service-learning project with another SU department (e.g., Psychology, SOE). • Propose integration of service components into undergraduate/graduate coursework. • Increase number of community-based placements • Pilot incentive structures for student participation in outreach (e.g., recognition, small stipends, awards). <p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand interdisciplinary service-learning projects to 1-2 additional departments. • Grow community-based placements by another 10–15%, ensuring broad coverage across settings. • Institutionalize outreach participation incentives through student orgs (e.g., NSSLHA, AuD student groups). • Track student outcomes and community impact annually; use data to refine placements and service-learning projects.
	3. Build and leverage community partnerships by collaborating with schools, colleges, and organizations for recruitment and research, establishing mini externships in community settings, and engaging multilingual and underserved populations as clients, students, and research participants.	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing partnerships with schools, colleges, and community organizations; identify gaps and opportunities. • Pilot at least one “mini-externship” experience in a community-based setting. • Establish collaborations with at least one organization serving multilingual or underserved populations. • Engage community partners in identifying opportunities for joint recruitment (students, clients, research participants). • Begin tracking outcomes (student participation, client reach, recruitment impact).

		<p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand mini-externship opportunities to multiple community sites with recurring placements. • Formalize agreements with schools and organizations to support ongoing recruitment pipelines. • Increase engagement of multilingual and underserved populations in clinical services and research projects. • Incorporate community partners into research dissemination activities (e.g., co-presentation, advisory roles). • Evaluate long-term impact of partnerships on recruitment, service access, and research participation; adjust strategies as needed.
	<p>4. Expand professional development opportunities by offering training for SLPs, AuDs, and educators, hosting CEU events shaped by community input, and collaborating with partners on educational and appreciation events.</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify high-demand CEU/professional topics. • Host at least one CEU event annually with input from community partners. • Pilot collaborative educational or appreciation event with a local partner organization. • Develop a feedback mechanism for participants to guide future offerings. <p>Years 4–5: Expansion & Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rotating focus areas for annual CEU/professional development series. • Formalize collaborations with professional associations, schools, or health agencies for co-hosted events. • Incorporate community leaders and alumni as presenters or co-organizers. • Evaluate impact (attendance, participant satisfaction, revenue generation, community benefit) and refine offerings. • Explore sustainability through sponsorships, registration fees, or grant support. • Explore hosting regional meeting.
<p>Pillar 3: Research & Innovative Scholarship</p> <p><i>Goal: Advance knowledge generation through faculty research productivity, student research mentoring, and dissemination of</i></p>	<p>1. Support and sustain faculty research by strengthening participant recruitment pipelines, enhancing visibility and centralized promotion, expanding mentoring and resource support, aligning workload and faculty capacity with research goals, pursuing diverse funding sources, and leveraging SU infrastructure and support to build collaborations and sustainability</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a regular research faculty meeting schedule to coordinate departmental initiatives. • Develop a centralized system to promote faculty and student research. • Provide targeted mentoring and professional development for early- and mid-career faculty. • Explore and advocate for workload models and additional faculty lines to better support research-active faculty in collaboration with the College • Pursue seed funding opportunities and begin building partnerships with SU centers and institutes.

<i>evidence-based practices and clinical translation.</i>		<p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize participant recruitment pipelines with feeder programs, partner schools, and internal and external collaborations. • Scale visibility efforts with a consistent brand for departmental research (e.g., annual report, research day, media features). • Institutionalize workload alignment policies to support research-active faculty. • Secure external funding streams (NIH, NSF, foundations, state agencies) to sustain and grow research. • Expand collaborations through SU infrastructure (centers, institutes, core facilities, interdisciplinary initiatives). • Pursue additional faculty lines to balance teaching loads and maintain strong research productivity.
	<p>2. Strengthen research collaborations by fostering partnerships within the department (across Audiology, SLP, and clinical–research teams), and by expanding interdisciplinary collaborations with SU programs and external institutions.</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing collaborations within CSD (across AuD and SLP, clinical-research partnerships) and identify gaps. • Launch at least one new joint project that pairs clinicians and researchers within the department. • Initiate exploratory conversations with SU programs (e.g., Psychology, Education, Neuroscience) and external partners (e.g. Upstate, VA) to identify areas of mutual interest. • Explore pathways for seed funding/internal support for pilot interdisciplinary projects. <p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize ongoing collaborative projects across Audiology, SLP, and clinical faculty. • Establish at least two sustained interdisciplinary collaborations with SU or external partners. • Pursue joint grant submissions with cross-departmental or external teams. • Track outcomes (publications, funding, student involvement) to demonstrate impact.
	<p>3. Promote dissemination and translation of research by integrating research into grand rounds and journal clubs, hosting symposium-style events, and establishing an annual CSD Research Day to connect students, clinicians, and faculty</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot integration of research discussions into grand rounds/ journal club formats • Host at least one small-scale symposium or themed research event each year. • Explore and potentially launch CSD Research Day

		<p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Research Day (combined interdisciplinary event). • Expand symposium events to include external speakers and community partners. • Formalize ongoing integration of research into clinical education forums (grand rounds, journal clubs). • Collect and review outcome data (attendance, collaborations formed, student/clinician involvement) to refine programming.
	<p>4. Expand student research engagement and training by increasing graduate opportunities, strengthening the Master's-to-PhD pipeline, enhancing evidence-based practice and research training across all programs, and sustaining faculty capacity to support undergraduate participation, master's theses, and PhD enrollment</p>	<p>Years 1–3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map current student research engagement across undergrad, master's, AuD, and PhD programs. • Expand structured training (seminars, writing workshops, applied coursework in research/EBP). • Pilot regular PhD student seminar-style meetings with rotating faculty participation. • Support at least 2–3 new graduate student research projects culminating in conference/meeting presentations annually. • Re-establish expectations and support for master's theses and begin targeted recruitment to strengthen Master's–PhD pipeline. • Recruit additional faculty mentors where feasible; advocate for alignment of faculty load with mentoring capacity. <p>Years 4–5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize expanded seminars and workshops as recurring program features. • Increase graduate student participation in conferences, publications, and collaborative projects. • Formalize Master's–PhD pipeline initiatives (e.g., early PhD advising, research assistantships). • Maintain or grow undergraduate research opportunities (labs, summer projects, honors theses). • Ensure stable PhD enrollment through consistent recruitment and mentoring capacity. • Evaluate long-term outcomes (student publications, presentations, alumni placement in doctoral or research roles).