



CDI Strategic Plan 2024- 2026

Vision:

The MSU Center for Communication Disorders will prepare professional SLPs representing diverse communities and backgrounds with the dispositions and skills to advocate and provide services for individuals with communication disorders and to shape the field to respond to societal and technological changes.

Mission:

The mission of the Graduate Program in Speech-Language Pathology is to develop caring and highly competent speech-language pathologists by providing quality academic and clinical education.

Envisioned Future:

By 2029, the Murray State University Center for Communication Disorders will provide an innovative clinical program to highly qualified SLP students representing diverse communities and backgrounds. An experienced core of program faculty with broad clinical and academic experiences will model interprofessional and clinical skills for students who will demonstrate high levels of professionalism and clinical skills as practitioners.

Goals to Achieve our Mission and Envisioned Future:

- Effectively deliver graduate coursework with an experienced core of program faculty
- Recruit and retain highly qualified students
- Provide high-quality, innovative academic and clinical experiences on-site in the university clinic as well as through off-site clinical placements with university partners
- Support diversity in our program, community, and the profession

Goal: Effectively deliver graduate coursework with an experienced core of program faculty

Baseline Data:

Currently, the full time faculty is composed of three tenure-track faculty and five masters-level instructors. Additionally, there are consistent, doctoral-level adjunct faculty if needed. As of fall 2024, there were not any adjuncts teaching graduate courses and one adjunct with a

Doctorate of Audiology who teaches two undergraduate courses. The focus at this time is to retain faculty and keep all available lines filled.

Outcome:

Recruitment and Retention of Program Faculty. Fill all lines, retain faculty, and increase the percentage of tenure-track faculty with terminal degrees.

Indicators of success:

- The program will retain 100% of faculty and related lines, and demonstrate at least 33% of lines held by tenure-track faculty with a terminal doctorate.

Strategies:

- By 2026, the program will have retained full time faculty, with 100% of lines filled.
- By 2026, will increase support of current faculty seeking doctoral degrees that includes tuition assistance, course release, research collaborations, and mentorship.

Goal: Recruitment and retention of highly qualified students

Baseline data:

In previous years, the program was losing its top candidates from the undergraduate program to other universities. Factors impacting retention and recruitment of the most highly qualified students included tuition costs, university location, scholarship and financial support opportunities. Data from CSDCAS allows us to gain valuable insights and recognize trends in applicants for our program as well as other programs. Majority of our admitted students as well as applicants are coming from Kentucky or regional states (TN, IN, IL, MO).

GRE scores are no longer required for program admission therefore other application requirements such as GPA are valued heavily and the admitted students starting the program in 2024, had an average GPA of 3.64 for the last 60 credits. In the 2024 fall cohort, 25 of the 28 students admitted were undergraduate students at Murray state.

Outcomes:

The program will present itself as highly attractive to the most qualified students and ensure a positive relationship between academic courses, clinical experiences, and program outcomes.

Indicators of Success:

- By Fall 2026, GPA data for accepted/admitted students will be commensurate to (+/- .50) those who declined an offer.

Strategies:

- CDI faculty will further market recent innovations to potential students through press releases, social media, student meetings/open houses and campus visits, thus attracting

highly-qualified applicants. Every faculty member will report at least two instances of their participation in recruitment/retention efforts each semester.

- Continue gathering data from the newly implemented undergraduate exit survey in the spring 2025 and spring 2026 semesters to gain insights from highly-qualified students to the MSU graduate program.
- By December 2023, the CDI faculty will complete a review of the updated graduate curriculum to ensure it is better aligned with clinical resources, is highly innovative thus improving student learning, attracting more qualified students, and improving PRAXIS outcomes.
- By 2024, 70% of first round offers for MSU undergraduate applicants will accept.

Goal: Provide high-quality, innovative academic and clinical experiences on-site in the university clinic as well as through off-site clinical placements with university partners

Issue:

We must continue to focus on the importance of providing strong clinical opportunities that cover the expected breadth and depth. However, in the current climate we must note issues in the profession with supervision and having highly qualified supervisors that hold their ASHA CCCs and meet the requirements. Discussions in the profession are taking place related to holding the ASHA CCCs and there are some practitioners that have made the decision to drop their certification. Students need to have a variety of clinical experiences and must be supervised by highly qualified and experienced SLPs. Trends in the profession such as these directly impact clinical education and must be an area of focus.

Baseline Data:

There are some professional groups in our field that are strongly opposed to continuing the requirement of CCC certification for SLPs. There are discussions among practitioners about dropping their ASHA-CCC's and just keeping their state licensure. Additionally, supervision requirements must be met by all supervisors in order to have a student placed with them. Most often, those requirements are not a barrier for supervision and as long as a free CEU is provided they are willing to complete the required training. In general, as the demands on practitioners increase and burnout increases, experienced SLPs are becoming less likely to take students full time. Each year, we receive a number of declines to supervise secondary to workload already being too high.

Outcomes:

The program will work to educate students and practitioners on the importance of supervision and clinical experiences for beginning practitioners and impacts of licensing and professional organizations. Furthermore, the program will work to continue to offer a multitude of experiences and opportunities on-site so that when students go off-site they are incredibly well prepared and are an asset to their patients and university partners. Positive experiences will enhance the student's learning as well as strengthen relationships with university partners and supervisors.

Indicators of Success:

- The program will continue to ensure that 100% of students graduate having completed a diverse range of high-quality clinical experiences—both on-site and off-site—supervised by qualified professionals, while also demonstrating professional readiness, adaptability, and an understanding of the value of certification and ethical supervision in the field of speech-language pathology.

Strategies:

- By the Fall of 2026, faculty will actively recruit, support, and retain highly qualified off-site supervisors who hold ASHA CCCs and meet supervision requirements by offering incentives such as free CEUs, recognition, and streamlined communication and support for site supervisors.
- By the Fall of 2026, faculty will educate students on the impacts of certification and its implications for clinical preparation and professional excellence through informational resources and discussions into clinical seminars.

Goal: Support diversity in our program, community, and the profession

Issue:

The homogeneity of the field of speech-language pathology complicates attracting and retaining diverse students, including students of varying gender, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial differences. Furthermore, our region is culturally homogenous, which can create a lack of diversity in our student body, faculty, and clinical populations.

Baseline Data:

Numbers for the profession based on ASHA membership statistics continue to demonstrate homogeneity in the field. As of fall 2024, our program has several initiatives completed and in place. A continued education event was completed, the department supported student participation and attendance in the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing conference. Throughout advising times, advisors will discuss mentorship opportunities and seeking MSU Alumni for opportunities. Study Abroad continues to be a success and a strong part of our program. The clinic offers multiple opportunities for our students to engage in experiential learning for diverse populations. The CDI Student Diversity Council is now well established and very active. We had a table at the Faculty Health Fair to provide information related to services (age related, diverse backgrounds from MSU).

Outcomes:

The program will maintain and work to increase diversity in the student population, as well as increasing student exposure to diverse populations. Further, it will increase cultural competence and resources for current students both in academic and clinical settings.

Indicators of Success:

- By Fall 2026, the program will maintain or increase diversity in graduate cohorts with a

minimum of 10% of the graduate students identifying as diverse, and will have a mentorship program available to support diverse professionals.

Strategies:

- By the Fall of 2025, mentorships will be available to diverse populations in our community, experiential learning opportunities will be investigated, and diverse faculty speakers will be engaged to educate our CDI community.
- By the Fall of 2026, Faculty will collaborate with the Student Affairs department on campus to promote clinical services for diverse populations as well as increase CDI relationships and participation in events offered.