



Strategic Plan

The University of New Mexico, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Since 2020, the Speech and Hearing Sciences (SHS) department has completed several major initiatives: 1) launching a PhD program (first student began in Fall 2022), 2) enhancing our graduate admissions process to attract more diverse students, 3) integrating electronic medical records into our clinic, 4) incorporating insurance billing into our clinic, 5) updating the Master's curriculum to reflect current practice needs, and 6) adding a bilingual concentration for Master's students. Periods of significant change and growth are often followed by a period of evaluation and refinement. With this in mind, the SHS department decided in 2023 to initiate a two-pronged strategic plan aimed at 1) evaluating and refining current processes and procedures, and 2) continued growth of departmental excellence. Effective and efficient operations along with a clear vision of excellence in focused areas will allow UNM SHS the ability to best serve students and the community at large.

Evaluation and refinement

1. Evaluate admissions processes

Beginning in 2021 the SHS department made significant changes to their admissions process aimed at increasing the diversity of students applying and being accepted to the master's program. The focus has now shifted to evaluate how effective those changes have been in diversifying our students.

2. Evaluate recent graduate curriculum changes

In 2023, we updated our graduate curriculum to align more effectively with the expanding field of speech-language pathology. Over the next three years, we aim to assess the impact of these curriculum changes on preparing master's students for the diverse demands of clinical practice by comparing student exit surveys and external supervisor feedback from before the curriculum adjustments (prior to 2023) with similar metrics after the start of the new curriculum.

3. Refine internal administrative processes

Over the last several years the number of grants have increased significantly within the department, along with increased complexities within the clinic given the addition of electronic medical records and insurance billing. Research activity and clinical opportunities are incredibly important for student experiences and are required for our continued accreditation. Our

department's actions have a direct impact on our community. To support continued growth in the future, it is important that administrative processes are documented and streamlined.

Focused growth in departmental areas of excellence

4. Grow the PhD program in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

The department of Speech and Hearing Sciences received approval for a PhD program in 2021. In Fall 2022 we enrolled our first PhD student. The department needs to continue to develop the support materials for this degree-granting program and develop a marketing and recruitment plan to attract strong and diverse PhD students. Once we have adequate tenure track faculty, these plans will support growth of the PhD program.

5. Develop and implement a bilingual certification

We recently implemented a bilingual concentration that aligns with our Master's in Speech Language Pathology, with the first student receiving this recognition in the fall of 2023. To grow our bilingual focus within the program, we plan to develop and implement a bilingual certificate by 2027. A bilingual certificate will allow both UNM students and graduated clinicians from across the country to take UNM courses geared toward better preparing them for effective therapy with bilingual clients.

6. Develop support structures to address the needs of a diverse student body

Given the recent transition to a holistic admissions process, we need to better understand the needs to enhance learning and support clinical skill development for students from diverse backgrounds. Our goal is that all students feel welcome and have the support needed to be successful.

The SHS Strategic Plan is ongoing, and progress towards goals is monitored at least yearly at the annual faculty retreat at which time indicators of success are reviewed and updated.

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