

## **Strategic Plan 2022-2025 for M.Ed. Speech-Language Pathology Program at NSC**

We recognize that our plan should be mindful of the mission and vision of Nevada State College, and the School of Education, and align with those larger aims when possible. Thus we begin with providing those statements:

### **Nevada State College Mission Statement**

Mission of Nevada State College: At Nevada State College, excellence fosters opportunity. Excellence in teaching leads to innovative, technology-rich learning opportunities that promote the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Quality, affordable four-year degree programs open the door to career success and enhanced quality of life for a diverse population of students. Our graduates, in turn, foster the greatest opportunity - the promise of a stronger community and a better future for all of Nevada.

NSC Vision: Nevada State College will deliver on its promise to Nevada by becoming a model of teaching excellence, a pioneer in innovative student support, and an agent of economic growth and social justice.

Furthermore, NSC has adopted several Core Values to guide our college-wide development.

- 1.) Core Value: Embrace the Journey: We foster a culture of high-achieving teams and empower individuals to be the difference.
- 2.) Core Value: Climb Mountains: We aspire to be experts in transforming the lives of our students and their families. We strive towards excellence in our jobs and advancement in our careers.
- 3.) Core Value: Blaze Trails-If we think there is a better way, we look at the research, trust our instincts and try it

### **NSC's School of Education Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Nevada State College School of Education is to prepare educators and speech language pathologists to support children, youth, and adults by utilizing evidence-based approaches and providing high quality field and clinical experiences. We are committed to promoting: ● Creative, critical, reflective, responsive, and collaborative professionals ● High quality research and evidence-based practices ● Cultural, linguistic, physical, and cognitive diversity ● Justice, equity, and inclusivity ● Partnerships with families, PK-12, higher education, and the community ● Civic engagement and advocacy

Vision Nevada State College School of Education prepares professionals to advance justice and equity through improving the education and well-being of young children, adolescents, and adults towards supporting a diverse and inclusive society.

### **NSC's MEd in Speech-Language Pathology Mission Statement (updated Nov 2021)**

Mission Statement: To prepare and train our students to become effective Speech-Language Pathologists, who will serve as practitioners and researchers meeting the needs of individuals and families with communication and swallowing disorders across the lifespan.

The MEd in Speech-Language Pathology will increase the number of highly-skilled, master's prepared speech-language pathologists in Nevada at a reasonable cost to our students.

We aspire to provide a Master's degree program that:

- Meets the needs of Nevada
- Prepares all graduates to work in the school environment and other relevant settings
- Allows those currently working in the school environment to obtain their degree while maintaining their current employment
- Maintains the undergraduate pathway for licensure by the Nevada Department of Education until sufficient capacity is reached and that entry level can be changed

### **Program Goals**

- To provide student-centered learning experiences culminating in an MEd in Speech-Language Pathology.
- To prepare students for successful completion (100%) and pass program rates above 85% by graduation on the Praxis 5331 examination (administered by ETS). A passing score is required for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC).

In addition, content specific goals include the development of the following in all MEd students:

- knowledge of human communication disorders (speech, language and hearing) across the lifespan
- an understanding of different linguistic and cultural communication norms and disorders
- the ability to assimilate academic material into evidence-based practice
- the ability to think critically and evaluate research relevant to the field of speech-language pathology
- knowledge of current standards of practice in the speech-language pathology profession including policies and standards of ASHA and state licensing procedures
- behavior in accordance with ethical standards of the profession in academic research and clinical environments
- the ability to work with other professionals to benefit the care of individuals with communication disorders
- knowledge of regulations and record keeping in a variety of clinical settings

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Students graduating with a MEd in Speech Language Pathology from Nevada State College will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of prevention, identification, evaluation, treatment, and patient interaction with individuals of a variety of ages that have speech-sound, fluency, voice, language, social communication, cognitive communication and swallowing disorders.
2. Develop and implement evidence-based diagnostic and intervention plans in a variety of settings and for individuals with a variety of communication and swallowing disorders, across the lifespan, at a level appropriate for entry into professional practice.
3. Communicate effectively, recognizing the needs, values and referred model of communication, and cultural/linguistic background of the client/patient/student, family, caregivers, and relevant others.
4. Collaborate effectively with others in a variety of settings to maximize outcomes for client/patient/student.
5. Adhere to the ASHA Code of Ethics and behave in a professional manner across settings, disorders, and cultures.

## **Where we are now:**

### **Accreditation Status:**

It is 2022, the MEd program has been in existence since Fall of 2019, under CAA candidacy status:

The master's degree program- (M.Ed. in Speech-Language Pathology)- at Nevada State College, School of Education is a Candidate for Accreditation by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2200 Research Boulevard, #310, Rockville, MD 20850, 800-498-2071 or 301-296-5700.

Candidacy is a "pre-accreditation" status with the CAA, awarded to developing or emerging programs for a maximum period of 5 years.

The CAA has determined that the program demonstrates sufficient compliance with the Standards for Accreditation as outlined in the Standards Compliance Continuum. As a result, the CAA has awarded candidacy for a period of five years beginning July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2024. Award of candidacy allows the program to matriculate students into the program as it continues to document compliance with accreditation standards for the duration of the candidacy accreditation cycle.

- Awarded Candidacy July 20, 2019
- Candidacy Accreditation Cycle: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2024

We have had successful reviews of our annual reports, and the CAA gave us the option to apply early. Decision on option to be made 2022.

### **Recommended Goal:**

- Apply for and obtain full ASHA accreditation 2022 for Fall 2023 (1 year ahead of schedule).

### **Students:**

We have enrolled full-time students Fall 2019, Fall 2020, and Fall 2021, and one part-time cohort Fall 2019, who expect to graduate in August of 2022. Full-time cohorts take 5 terms, with May graduation of year 2, and Part-time cohorts take 9 terms with August graduation of year 3. Students are actively involved in academic coursework, as well as in clinical placements on the NSC campus, at the NSC RiteCare clinic, at public school sites and in medical and clinical settings across the Las Vegas Valley.

We created the Masters Preparatory Plan (Catalog year 2020) to preselect potential quality student who have an undergraduate degree in another field. These students can thus complete prerequisite coursework, and then apply for the graduate program. We averaged 10 students enrolled per year.

Diversity of students has been at 30% each year since our inception, which is above the national average. The annual assessment however, has shown that our Black students are a very small group, and we strive to increase those numbers. Male students are also very low, yet representative of the

national average. Research has shown that our clients are diverse, and they need more professionals that are also diverse.

Recommended Goal:

1. We aim to improve recruitment and retention of students across diverse races and cultures, with increased emphasis on Black students.

### **Graduate Application process:**

We worked with admissions to build our own internal graduate application process. We also have managed a transcript review process in-house, and have a committee for applicant review. We have had less than expected applicants with this process – Fall 2019 FT applicants = 46, enrolled 25; Fall 2019 PT applicants=54, enrolled =31; Fall 2020 FT applicants=40, enrolled 17; Fall 2021 FT applicants =38, enrolled 15. We believe the pandemic affected Fall 2021 numbers, but the downward trend is a concern. We began investigation in 2021 on the CSDCAS system to a) decrease the administrative work with the process and transcript review; b) increase exposure to gain more out of state applicants; c) streamline the process and thus widen the time period for student to apply. We also lack a rigorous or well-planned recruitment process. To date, recruitment efforts have been limited to announcements, web based meetings, and open house events. The program lacks the resources to cover these events.

Recommended Goals:

- Increase number of applicants for each cohort to a minimum of 60 students and acceptance to 20 students.
- Recommend initiation of CSDCAS by Fall of 2023 cohort.
- Strategize on a systematized recruitment effort and utilize NSC resources. This also ties with “Graduate Support” (see below), in that the NSC wide current recruitment efforts are to recruit high schoolers to undergraduate programs.

### **Clinical training:**

We offer on-campus training via NSC Scottish Rite Care clinic for children, and on Henderson campus for children and adults. Our clinic has not yet initiated fee for service or grant/foundation support. We have been offering adult services for no- cost since Spring of 2020. We have continued serving children via Scottish Rite Care for no cost to the client or compensation to NSC. We hired a half-time business manager to help with planning future build of business plan.

We adapted our service delivery during the pandemic 2020-2021 and became skilled in Telehealth clinical service. We built contracts with the community, and currently have 46 Externship contracts (44 Nevada and 2 California), and we started the program with none.

Recommended Goals:

- Initiate a fee schedule for the on-campus clinic and acquire foundation or grant sources to support session fees.
- Develop advertising, logo, and signage, to expand our services to the community, both within NSC and within the Henderson/Boulder City/Las Vegas areas.

- Develop a regular satisfaction survey for all Externships at end of each semester
- Include the Externship survey information in our annual Assessment Process for further program development.
- Maintain at least 50 active contract opportunities for our students, to provide quality and variety of learning settings, and re-assess annually for program need.
- Manage training of both Undergraduate and Graduate students using a peer mentoring approach. The program will be hands-on and interactive program.
- Maintain sufficient number of clinical supervisors per semesters to coordinate the ongoing clinical services for our community.

### **Curriculum topics and Student Learning Needs**

We have been successful in creating a program that covers many of the accreditation requirements. However, faculty have found issues with students lacking foundational skills. Therefore, time is spent teaching basics, which the students should already have. The faculty have expressed a need for improvements in the areas of good study skills (i.e. reading, note taking, and pre-graduate knowledge). They identified the following educational areas as lacking-

- Interpersonal skills
- Building up some of the anatomy and neuroanatomy skills in the UG
- Grammar knowledge – at UG level
- Clinical writing skills at UG and grad levels
- How to help the critical thinking of transferring the book knowledge into practice

Recommendation of goals:

- Develop stronger undergraduate inclusion of study skills, critical thinking, collaborative opportunities, and clinical writing, while in the undergraduate program.
- Improve anatomy components of undergraduate classes.
- Explore development of a bridge program for seniors interested in the graduate program.

### **Faculty and Staff:**

We have built out the program to now have a program director (professor level), clinic director, 3 assistant professors, in addition to PTI faculty. We met our prior goal of having highly qualified, doctoral-level faculty committed to teaching in the field of Speech Language Pathology. We have been given permission to hire two full-time clinical supervisors (for start of July 1, 2022), and open an additional Assistant/Associate Professor line for Fall of 2023. Area of concern is the coverage of undergraduate director and advising duties. This will be addressed in undergrad program and at the SOE/NSC level. Faculty voted during creation of plan that goals should address the ability to obtain adequate number of faculty that are competent in teaching and clinical supervision, and a desire to increase the PTIs (particularly the undergraduate PTIS) who can teach in person. We currently have 7 undergraduate PTIs who are out of state and teach online only, and only 3 who are local and can teach in-person (70%/30%). Addressing the undergraduate PTI situation directly affects the above “Student Learning Needs” at graduate level, as it provides a stronger foundation with more hands-on training.

### Recommended Goals:

- Hire two full-time clinical supervisors 2022, and one additional assistant/associate professor for Fall of 2023.
- Work with SOE to move to a department level with sub-categories of undergraduate and graduate program directors.
- Increase undergraduate PTIs who are local and can teach in-person classes to at least 50%/50%.

### Research:

Faculty research is in its infancy, as the development of our labs were limited by lack of a building for research until Fall of 2021, and the pandemic impact on our conferences and ability for participant engagement. Currently, students do not have a research goal in our program. Engagement with research is currently on an interest level only, and as of the end of 2021, only 4 students were working with faculty on projects.

### Recommendation for Goals:

- Faculty will be involved in research activities that support their field of expertise and interests.
- The program will develop more formalize research opportunities for students.

### Graduate support:

As of this report, we continue to be the only graduate program on this campus. As there are efforts to add additional program- Mental health counseling, Nursing, etc.- we have hopes that graduate school programming will start to develop. At this time though, we are hindered by a lack of services targeted to graduate students. There is no graduate research program, while there is an undergraduate symposium. There is no tutoring service. There are no writing center trainers who are at or above the student's level of skill. There is no system for graduate T.A.ships. These are some examples of concerns. We've asked for administrative support for graduate program issues, such as policies, NSC inclusion, and engagement. The current program director has been in essence, acting as a graduate dean, and often calling attention to our non-inclusion in NSC wide items.

### Recommendation for Goals:

- Support for and creation of graduate T.A. opportunities.
- Creation of student success areas targeted to graduate students, who are generally older students.
- Increasing upper administration involvement in graduate policies and procedures.

### In summary, the goals for the next 3 years are:

#### Accreditation:

1. Apply for and obtain full ASHA accreditation 2022 for Fall 2023 (1 year ahead of schedule).

## Students

2. We aim to improve recruitment and retention of students across diverse races and cultures, with increased emphasis on Black students.

## Graduate application process

3. Increase number of applicants for each cohort to a minimum of 60 students and acceptance to 20 students.
4. Recommend initiation of CSDCAS by Fall of 2023 cohort.
5. Strategize on a systematized recruitment effort and utilize NSC resources. This also ties with “Graduate Support” (see below), in that the NSC wide recruitment efforts are to recruit high schoolers to undergraduate programs.

## Clinic:

6. Initiate a fee schedule for the on-campus clinic and acquire foundation or grant sources to support session fees.
7. Develop advertising, logo, and signage, to expand our services to the community, both within NSC and within the Henderson/Boulder City/Las Vegas areas.
8. Develop a regular satisfaction survey for all Externships at end of each semester
9. Include the Externship survey information in our annual Assessment Process for further program development.
10. Maintain at least 50 active contract opportunities for our students, to provide quality and variety of learning settings.
11. Manage training of both Undergraduate and Graduate students in a peer mentoring and step-wise program.
12. Maintain sufficient number of clinical supervisors per semesters to coordinate the ongoing clinical services for our community.

## Student Learning Needs

13. Develop stronger undergraduate inclusion of study skills, critical thinking, collaborative opportunities, and clinical writing, while in the undergraduate program.
14. Improve anatomy components of undergraduate classes.
15. Explore development of a bridge program for seniors interested in the graduate program.

## Faculty

16. Hire two full-time clinical supervisors 2022, and one additional assistant/associate professor for Fall of 2023.
17. Work with SOE to move to a department level with sub-categories of undergraduate and graduate program directors.
18. Increase undergraduate PTIs who are local and can teach in-person classes to at least 50%/50%.

## Research

19. Faculty will be involved in research activities that support their field of expertise and interests.
20. The program will develop more formalize research opportunities for students.

## Graduate Support

21. Support for and creation of graduate T.A. opportunities.
22. Creation of student success areas targeted to graduate students, who are generally older students.
23. Increasing upper administration involvement in graduate policies and procedures.