NIU School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders logo


January 2024 Update

Strategic Plan (2023-2028)

School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders

The AHCD strategic plan will be reviewed and updated at least once a year.

The mission of the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders, with its programs in audiology, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology is to contribute to the health and well-being of society. This mission is accomplished through:

* education of future health professionals and the provision of continuing professional development opportunities
* research that enhances knowledge and clinical skills that serve as the foundation for quality health care and education
* service to health professionals, organizations and communities concerned with the promotion of optimal health and the prevention, early detection, treatment and rehabilitation of conditions that negatively affect health or quality of life

# Goal 1: Offer a Vibrant Learning Community

Objective 1: Increase students’ ethical awareness and decision-making skills in leadership roles and situations Action: Provide interdisciplinary opportunities for students

Target: Offer event for students to interact with other disciplines

* 2023 NIU Interdisciplinary Discussion of a Complex Case – April 7, 2023

Action: Provide funding for students presenting at professional conferences

Target: Partially support 5 students presenting research at professional conferences

* Dinello, A. (2023). Intervention techniques targeting echolalia, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention, Boston, MA.

Objective 2: Increase advocacy (professional, patient, family) opportunities for students and faculty

Action: Support student group involvement in advocacy activities

Target: Schedule one event that explains advocacy and how to do it

Objective 3: Maintain Healthy Enrollments

Action: Engage in personal contact with admitted students

Target: by 2025

* 150 B.S. in Communicative Disorders
* 35 Doctor of Audiology
* 96 Doctor of Physical Therapy
* 60 M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology

Fall 2023 Enrollment:

* + 87 B.S. in Communicative Disorders
  + 18 Doctor of Audiology
  + 75 Doctor of Physical Therapy
  + 44 M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology

Objective 4: Support Student Success

Action: Inform students of and provide support services to all students

Target: 90% retention for undergraduate program; 95% retention for graduate programs

Action: Create an environment of belonging for all students

Target: Review annual graduate student belongingness surveys (collected July) and determine improvement areas

Areas identified

* Increase interdisciplinary opportunities and interactions
  + Response – developing AHCD Interprofessional Education Plan
* Offer social events
  + Response – added number of faculty/student social events
* Provide study and networking spaces in WL
  + Response – reorganizing rooms so they facilitate student interaction

Action: Offer students opportunities to engage with students in other disciplines.

Target: Develop AHCD Interprofessional Education Plan

* Determined courses in which students can work with students from other programs
  + Students from all programs participated in screenings, where upper level students conducted professional screenings on new students; discussing scope of practice and ways disciplines can collaborate

Action: Schedule events for informal networking and mentoring.

Target: Offer a minimum of five events for students to meet with faculty outside of academics.

* Sycamore Health Fair (Greenhagen) February 4, 2023
* Third Thursday Game Night (Morris) February 16, 2023
* Third Thursday Game Night (Morris) April 20, 2023
* Corn Fest (Morris) Aug 25-27, 2023
* Welcome Picnic (Cannone) Sep 8, 2023
* Third Thursday Field Day (Morris) Sept 21, 2023
* End of term Potluck (Cannone) Dec 2, 2023

Fits with College Goal 3: Assure CHHS program excellence and accreditation Fits with NIU

Fits with Presidential Theme 2: Student Recruitment, Student Success and Student Experience

Fits with Presidential Theme 4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Goal Three: Support equitable access

# Goal 2: Expand Community and Alumni Engagement Opportunities

Objective 1: Increase Community Awareness of offerings

Action: Support faculty/student participation in Community Health Fairs

Target: AHCD will participate in two events

* Sycamore Health Fair– February 4, 2023
* Corn Fest – August 23-27, 2023
* NIU HRS Resource Fair –
  + September 11, 2023, October 16, 2023, November 13, 2023, December 11, 2023

Objective 2: Increase communication and engagement with alumni

Action: Collect contact information from all graduating students.

Target: Enter non NIU contact information from 100% of graduate students and 80% of undergraduates in

Database

Contact information collected from 100% of May 2023 undergraduates

Contact information collected from 100% of May 2023 graduate students

Contact information collected from 2/5 40% of December 2023 undergraduates

Objective 3: Provide opportunities for alumni to connect with current students

Action: Offer a DEI Alumni Speaker Series, where alumni with varied lived experiences share aspects of career trajectory.

Target: Host 5 alumni each year

* January 2023 Ilce Deitloff (B.S. in COMD 2007; M.A. in SLP 2010)
  + My Path to Becoming a School Speech-Language Pathologist
* February 2023 - Anomis Dula (AuD in 2010)
  + Heart-work: Living and Practicing with Compassion
* March 2023 - Chonita Stewart-Day (B.S. in COMD 2003; M.A. in SLP 2011)
  + Workplace Competencies – Things I Didn’t Have Time to Learn in School
* April 2023 - Jacinto Fragoso (AuD in 2020)
  + The Highs and Lows (Mostly Lows) of Working While in College
* September 2023 - Ken Barnett (B.S. in Pre-PT 2016; DPT in 2020)
  + Maximizing your Success as a Professional
* October 2023 – Panel discussion on overcoming obstacles and succeeding as a professional
  + Richard Bicbic (M.A. in AuD 1996)
* November 2023 – Molly Farrell (M.A. in SLP 2014)
  + Tragedy to Passion

Objective 4: Obtain feedback from community and area practitioners

Action: Institute an AHCD Advisory Board

Target: Invite individuals to serve on advisory board

* Advisory Board meeting occurred on January 19, 2024

Participants included (Six of the board members are NIU alumni)

* + - 1 graduate student from each of the three programs
    - 1 Assistant Director of Student Services at a local school district
    - 3 Audiologists
    - 4 Physical Therapists
    - 3 Speech-Language Pathologists

Objective 5: Inform community and alumni of current activities

Action: Ensure AHCD website and blog features students, alumni, and faculty opportunities and outcomes

Target: Have at least 3 new posts for each discipline every year

**Interdisciplinary**

[Interprofessional education benefits NIU students](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/09/26/interprofessional-education-benefits-niu-students/)

[Interprofessional field day creates camaraderie among students](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/11/01/interprofessional-field-day-creates-camaraderie-among-students/)

**Audiology:**

[King Chung leads team on hearing health mission to Poland](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/01/19/king-chung-leads-team-on-hearing-health-mission-to-poland/)

**Physical Therapy:**

[Physical therapy students engage with the community at local fair](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/02/21/physical-therapy-students-engage-with-the-community-at-local-fair/)

[Huskies participate in National Institutes of Health science education conference](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/07/13/huskies-participate-in-national-institutes-of-health-science-education-conference/)

**Speech-Language Pathology**:

[Mother-daughter Huskie success story proves NIU’s incredible influence](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/02/13/mother-daughter-huskie-success-story-proves-nius-incredible-influence/)

[Food and friends camp at NIU Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/09/15/food-and-friends-camp-at-niu-speech-language-hearing-clinic/)

[The Sound of Music](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/12/21/the-sound-of-music/)

[Evidence based practice event for speech-language pathology students](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/12/15/evidence-based-practice-event-for-speech-language-pathology-students/)

[Communicative Disorders students present their research in Boston](https://chhs.news.niu.edu/2023/11/21/communicative-disorders-students-present-their-research-in-boston/)

Action: Ensure AuD, DPT, SLP Facebook pages are updated

Target: New postings every month

2023 AuD: posts in January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December

2023 DPT: posts in February, April, May, August, September, November

2023 SLP: posts in January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December

Fits with College Goal 3: Assure CHHS program excellence and accreditation

Fits with NIU Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Theme One: Brand Identity

**Goal 3: Create an environment that supports faculty research**

Objective 1: Highlight faculty research activity

Action: Increase awareness of faculty research areas

Target: Have 100% of faculty listed on the CHHS Academics/research webpage

18/24 = 75%

Action: Faculty outline research via Huskie Spotlights

Target: Three Huskie Spotlights outlining research

* Anna Cannone https://www.niu.edu/spotlight/faculty/cannone.shtml
* Christy Muasher-Kerwin https://www.niu.edu/spotlight/faculty/muasher-kerwin.shtml
* Hamid Bateni https://www.niu.edu/spotlight/faculty/bateni.shtml

Objective 2: Increase student and community awareness of research opportunities

Action: Class announcements/website postings regarding opportunities for students to be research

participants

Target: Forward research opportunities faculty send to office support out to students

* Shared five active research projects with students

Action: Post active research projects on bulletin board in Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic

Target: Post 5 research projects seeking participants

* Five active research projects posted

Fits with College Goal 2: Increase CHHS extramural funding and research productivity

Fits with Presidential Theme 5: Research, Scholarship, Artistry and Engagement

# Goal 4: Increase revenue streams

Objective 1: Support faculty in obtaining grants that provides funds for indirect costs

Action: Increase faculty awareness of grant workshops and supports

Target: Offer one group session related to grant development annually.

* NIU Available Research Supports - Rachel Gordon – September 15, 2023

Objective 2: Increase donations

Action: Serve as ambassador for university fund raising efforts

* Served as ambassador for Huskie United Day of Giving March 22, 2023
* Matched funds for alumni donations to named scholarship

Action: Send personal thank you notes to all individuals who donate

Target: 100% of donors thanked by Chair; 80% of donors thanked by student in the same calendar year

* Chair sent thank you to all non-crowd sourced donors; Students sent thank yous to 16/32 donors (50%)
* Four specific calls resulted in 143 donations
  + Crowd Source
    - 15 DPT DEI Alliance
    - 62 Heart of Hearing
  + 65 Howie Schwartz Memorial Scholarship
  + 15 Huskies United Day of Giving
  + 01 Autism Caregiver Group

Other donations = 16

Action: Create a culture of giving back among faculty, staff, students, and alumni

Target: Ten new AHCD donors

* + 107 new donors: 3 students, 6 faculty/staff, 30 alumni, 68 friends

Objective 3: Increase number of professional development offerings that generate revenue

Action: Support programs to offer continuing education experiences that have participant fees

Target: Offer two CEU events to generate funds

Fits with College Goal 1: Diversity revenue sources to enhance revenue and increase revenue stability

Fits with NIU Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Theme 1: Brand Identity

Fits with NIU Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Theme 2: Student enrollment

Fits with NIU Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Theme 3: Student success, persistence, graduation

P:\\AHCD Shared Files>Strategic Plan