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Masters of Speech-Language Pathology Program Receives Accreditation News

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/rhea_paul/67/
The speech-language pathology (SLP) Program at SHU was awarded candidacy, the first stage of accreditation conferred by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association (ASHA). This status is awarded for an initial period of five years to new programs that demonstrate compliance with the Standards for Accreditation as outlined in CAA’s Standards Compliance Continuum. It allows the program to matriculate and graduate students who, upon successful completion of the program, will meet all requirements for national certification and state licensure as speech-language pathologists. The program is also fully licensed by the State of Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

The SHU SLP program, offered through the University’s College of Health Professions, is the only SLP program in the state that is housed with allied health professions, including OT, PT and nursing. It is uniquely capable of providing inter-professional training opportunities to help students prepare to function in health care and educational teams required in current best practices.

Rhea Paul, chair and founding director of the speech-language pathology program, stresses the need for this kind of program. “Health care and educational practice are changing. No longer will each professional work alone and independently; all services related to client care will need to function in an integrated way to treat the whole person. Our students will be especially well-prepared to practice in these inter-professional environments,” she says.

“This program prepares students to work in various settings, including schools, clinics and rehabilitation facilities,” Ariana Balayan, assistant director of Graduate Admissions, emphasizes. Faculty in SHU’s SLP program represent a wide range of areas of expertise, ensuring the ability to prepare students for all these practice settings. Swallowing disorders, autism, bilingualism, neurogenic speech/language disorders, hearing impairment, dysfluency, learning disabilities and birth-to-three services are examples of the span of knowledge within our current faculty, which is projected to grow over the next five years.
SHU’s SLP program is also distinctive in providing opportunities for students who wish to enhance their knowledge of particular issues within the field to earn a specialty certification in one of three areas: autism, bilingual language and literacy and medical speech pathology. This can be achieved by adding one additional term to their master’s degree program.

Speech-language pathology programs are currently experiencing a surge of popularity among students across the country and are highly competitive. One reason for this surge is current labor statistics, which show increases in demand for SLPs in the coming decade, increasing salaries for fully trained professionals and shortages of SLPs in many areas of the country, including Connecticut.

Twenty-five students will be selected from a pool of over 250 completed applications for our inaugural graduate class at SHU. Students who enter the SHU SLP graduate program with undergraduate pre-professional preparation in the field will be able to complete a master’s degree in five terms (fall, spring, summer, fall, spring). Sacred Heart also offers a three-year path to the master’s degree for students who do not already have pre-professional SLP coursework. For more information on all of the speech-language pathology program options, please visit http://www.sacredheart.edu/academics/collegeofhealthprofessions/academicprograms/speech-languagepathology/ or contact Balayan at 203-365-4731.