# INCREASING STUDENT DIVERSITY WEBINAR
## Transcript

**Carol Koch**

Welcome to the Next Steps 2022 Summer Webinar Series, my name is Carol Koch, and I am a member of the ASHA Ad Hoc Committee to Plan Next Steps to Redesign Entry-Level Education for SLPs, which hosting this webinar series. I represent SIG 10 on this committee.

We will be recording the first part of this webinar which consists of a presentation about tonight's presentation on Increasing Student Diversity, so that others can view it asynchronously. The Next Steps website where you registered for this webinar will host all of the Next Step webinar recordings within a couple days after the live webinar event has taken place. The QR code on this slide will take you to the Next Steps website at [www.asha.org](www.asha.org).

We will not be enabling the chat function during this presentation, but because the primary reason for this webinar series is to gather widespread input from stakeholders, we are of course very interested in your perspective. So, we have reserved more than half of each of our webinars to convene breakout groups which will be recorded. We also have prepared survey, so those attending the live webinar events and also those who access the webinars at a later point in time asynchronously can share their perspectives with the committee.

During the breakouts, you will be joined by a few other attendees to discuss questions related to this webinar's topic. Each breakout group discussion will be recorded in Zoom and transcribed. Committee members will then have access to the transcript and qualitative analyses will be conducted. The breakout group recordings will not be made public and committee members will not have access to the recordings or any personally identifying information. Only group data will be reported.

There is also an email address for each webinar topic to which you can send comments and questions at any time. Those email addresses can be found on the "Next Steps" webpage on [www.asha.org](www.asha.org). Again, the QR code shown here will take you to the Next Steps webpage where you can find all of that.

Along with those listed on this slide, I was appointed to the Ad Hoc Committee on Next Steps to Redesign Entry-Level Education for SLPs in the summer of 2021. We have worked together during this past year to identify the most important topics related to SLP education for which widespread stakeholder input is needed.

Members of this ad hoc committee were chosen to represent different employment settings and functions as well as to ensure bi-directional communication between the ad hoc committee and the Council for Academic Accreditation, as well as the Council for Clinical Certification, the National Students Speech Language Hearing Association, the Council for Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, ASHA's Specialty Certification Boards in SLP, and from SIG 10 which is our Issues in Higher Education as well as SIG 11, which is our Administration and Supervision SIG. We were very fortunate to have Ann Tyler serve as our Committee Chair.

The ad hoc committee's charge from the ASHA Board of Directors was to advance discussion and planning to redesign entry-level education for speech-language pathologists and formulate recommendations for the ASHA Board of Directors about how comprehensive input might be obtained from a large group of stakeholders to advance entry-level education for SLPs.

We were also charged with gathering perspectives and synthesizing information about Number One, what data dissemination efforts and actions are needed to make recommendations and propose a plan for advancing SLP education, Number two, what alternative models of education and changes to the current educational model should be considered and Number Three, how should stakeholders be engaged to obtain comprehensive input from their larger communities.

The ad hoc committee has given a great deal of attention to the questions of what is needed to adequately prepare us SLPs to enter the profession. What competencies are needed for entry-level practice, how should they be acquired and measured. Which aspects of the current model are serving the profession and public adequately and which are not and lastly, are there changes to the current model that would address any gaps for unmet needs that have been identified?

The ad hoc committee was not charged with considering what the entry-level degree designator should be. This committee is not examining or even discussing the degree designator for the entry-level degree in speech language pathology, for example, Master's Degree versus Clinical Doctorate. It is not on the agenda and it's not in the charge.

Instead, the ad hoc committee on Next Steps has been highly focused on determining what is needed to adequately prepare SLPs to enter the profession and how to address some of our longstanding problems such as insufficient faculty growth and capacity, the need to increase student diversity, and how we can continue to prepare students across the full scope of practice and across a wide variety of practice settings to provide services to individuals across the lifespan with an educational model that was developed more than 60 years ago.

There was a previous Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Education and Speech Language Pathology that convened in 2018 and they focused on the question of *"Which aspects of our current entry-level educational model are serving the profession and the public well, versus falling short, to adequately prepare SLPs across practice settings?"*

In addition to identifying areas that are serving the profession and the public well and not so well, the previous ad hoc committee also gathered stakeholder input on the question of whether there *are changes to the current model of entry level education that would address gaps or unmet needs*? Their report can be found at the URL shown here or from the QR code on this slide.

Based on the results obtained from many surveys and focus groups, the previous ad hoc committee concluded that there are aspects of the current educational model that most respondents identified as challenging. These included that students are not consistently prepared, even across the Big 9, nor sufficiently prepared to enter practice across common work settings for SLPs, that there is insufficient students and faculty diversity, that most undergraduate majors cannot go into the field yet there are clinical shortages that are severe, that there is a significant scarcity of outplacements and supervisors and lastly, that there's a scarcity of SLPs specializing in important clinical areas.

Additional concerns reported by the previous ad hoc committee included, trying to fit the full scope of practice across the lifespan into a 2-year Master's Program, that the current model lacks a competency-based education framework to guide preparation and self-evaluation of one's readiness for specific areas of practice, that access to graduate education is limited due to the predominance of our full time residency model, that there is an over-reliance on volunteers for supervision, that there is unequal training across SLP programs and finally, that there is a lack of sufficient faculty to teach all of the topic areas.

Here are some reflections from Ad Hoc Committee Next Step Members when asked, "What dissatisfies You About the Way Things Are Now?" One response was, I am concerned about the difficulty that both academic and clinical faculty have in achieving graduate student competency across our ever-expanding scope of practice. While I believe we are successful at teaching foundational clinical skills that apply to all populations across the lifespan and across our scope of practice, we are not successful at achieving competency across the Big 9, particularly in the area of implementing evidence-based practice." Another responded by saying, "I am dissatisfied with the wide-but-shallow preparation that sends clinicians out into the field without a clearly charted path for how to deepen the areas in which that clinician actually ends up working in."

Another respondent offered that many graduate classes, provide an overview of several methodologies and viewpoints in different areas that often results in limited knowledge of each methodology and a lack of expertise to apply and daily practice.

One additional respondent said, our ever-expanding scope of practice is making graduate education and pre-professional preparation in 5-6 semesters very challenging. I often pondered this thought: has our perception of "entry-level" changed due to this expansion of scope of practice? If so, has the role of the Clinical Fellowship changed in response? Could it? Should it?

There are many critical needs that are not being met, gaps, and significant challenges. These include that there's a dire need to increase the number of SLPs, increase students and faculty diversity, increase student readiness for work in diverse practice settings and with diverse populations and to increase pathways to deepen knowledge across the full Scope of Practice.

There is also a need for expanded opportunities to offer a wide variety of clinical experiences, to further develop critical and analytical thinking, to improve oral and written communication, to grow research literacy and the adoption of evidence-based practices and lastly to instill cultural humility, professionalism, empathy and more of the 21st century skills covered during the first Next Steps webinar on the Future of Learning Work and Teaching.

We also need to develop a competency-based educational framework with pathways to learn, assess and recognize or signal specific competencies as well as new pedagogies and curricular goals to prepare students for the future of work. These are just some of the goals in which the Ad Hoc Committee on Next Steps have been focusing. With your help, we hope to advance consideration about how these goals can be met.

Because the scope of these issues is vast and complicated, we decided to divide the problem space into six areas and formed a "working group" on each topic. These six (6) topics can be seen here.

The goal of the Next Steps webinar series is to communicate what ASHA is working on; to solicit input from stakeholders about their perceptions and to gather ideas about how entry-level education for SLPs can be improved and lifelong learning advanced. Webinar attendees and asynchronous viewers of the webinar presentations are invited to share their ideas and opinions via a survey. Webinar attendees are also invited to participate in small breakout groups and group discussions after the presentation. Lastly, all survey responses and breakout discussions on the following seven topics will be considered analyzed and incorporated into the final report.

There are many aspects of the current educational model and speech language pathology that could be improved. The Ad Hoc Committee on Next Steps to Redesign Entry-Level Education for SLPs has taken a deep dive into the topics listed here and prepared a presentation for each webinar that summarizes the challenges and opportunities in each of these areas.

Each webinar starts with the portion of the presentation you just heard, and then transitions into the areas listed here so that stakeholder input can be gathered in a focused manner. Stakeholder input is being collected in three ways for each webinar. First, for those attending the live webinar events, the **breakout group discussions will be recorded,** transcribed, and analyzed qualitatively, with no personally identifying information shared. Second, a **survey** has been prepared for each webinar. If you attend a live webinar event, the QR code will be provided to access the survey immediately following the event. If you watch the webinar asynchronously, the survey link will be made available on the Next Steps webpage on www.asha.org where all of the "Next Steps" information can be found. You can see a QR code for the Next Steps webpage displayed here. Lastly, there's an **email address** listed under each webinar topic on this slide, and they can also be found on the Next Steps webpage. You are invited to email your ideas, concerns, or ask questions at any time.

We hope that you will participate in a webinar breakout group or watch more of these webinars asynchronously. More importantly, please share your perspectives and ideas on these topics with the committee. Thank you and now I'm turning it over to Kyomi Martin.

**Kyomi Gregory-Martin**

Thanks Carol, I'm Kyomi Gregory-Martin and now we will be focusing on Increasing Student Diversity. The Members of this working group are listed on the slide. It was a pleasure to work with each of them. Melanie, Shubha, Carol, Lemmie and Sharon.

In recent years the following discussions have taken place. It is important to understand a little bit of the history to understand where we are in this conversation. In 2018, that was the beginning of the conversation, and at that time we explored some current educational models for preparing SLPs to enter practice. Some data was collected and contained in the 2020 report. In 2021, we continue the conversation at that time significant challenges and critical needs were identified with respect to what is serving the profession and public adequately and what is not. In 2022, we advanced that engagement. We did data sharing on six (6) focus areas. Identification of problems driving need for change, listening sessions and surveys to solicit feedback.

We need to consider the question. What is needed to adequately prepare SLPs to enter the profession? So, specific considerations surrounding that question include what competencies are needed and how should they be acquired and measured, which aspects of the current educational model are serving the profession and public adequately and which are not and are there changes to the current model that would address gaps or unmet needs that have been identified.

Let's provide you with some background information regarding this topic and next steps. The Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Education in SLP was convened in 2018 to gather data and synthesize information to address questions regarding current educational model in SLP. The question was posed, *"Which aspects of our current entry level educational model are serving the profession and the public well, versus falling short, to adequately prepare SLPs across practice settings."*

Participants of this committee offered the following observations, students are <u>not consistently</u> prepared even across the Big 9 nor sufficiently prepared to enter practice across common work settings for SLPs, there is insufficient students and faculty diversity, most undergraduate majors cannot go on into field, yet clinical shortages are severe, there is a scarcity of outplacement and supervisors and lastly, there is a scarcity of SLPs specializing in clinical areas.

Let's continue to discuss some of these observations, they also noticed that trying to fit the full scope of practice across the lifespan into a two-year Master's Program.  It is counterproductive to achieving educational outcomes and overly stressful for students.  The current educational model lacks a competency framework to guide educational preparation and self-evaluation of readiness for specific areas of practice.  Access to graduate education is limited due to the predominance of our "full time residency" model and lastly, there is an over reliance on volunteers for supervision.

So, let's discuss key issues for recruiting diverse students.  Why recruit diverse students?  Well, for one, the current ASHA Membership is 92% Caucasian and primarily females.  The populations we serve are very diverse and our service providers should also reflect that diversity, and individuals are more comfortable working with professionals who share similar cultural experiences.

Some of the key Issues and Barriers to diverse student recruitment (We will expand on each of these points) are:  Gatekeeping, Lack of flexibility in programs, Inconsistent use of holistic admissions criteria, Knowledge of and access to available financial resources, Lack of understanding/resources/mentoring to get into graduate school and lastly, Faculty's limited knowledge about individual students' needs.  (For example, factors that impact non-traditional student success).

Let's talk a little bit about Gatekeeping.  This is defined as controlling or limited access to moving forward in the profession.  So, an example of this might be a student meeting with an advisor to talk about advancing in the field and the supervisor, or better yet, the Admissions representative or Counselor telling them that they don't think the career is for them, but maybe not having a necessarily valid reason.  And these types of situations impact recruitment, retention, and graduation of students, it also may be a reflection of intentional or unintentional bias. An example of that, is a student who doesn't have straight A's, but has shown potential in the field through research participation and other faculty are unsure of the student's preparedness for Graduate School, even though the student has experiences.

Lack of flexibility in programs.  Some of this pertains to full time vs. part time enrollment; there is lack of flexibility with respect to clinical education, (one example of this would be simulated experiences), and recognizing that some graduate students are juggling multiple responsibilities.  An example of this is a parent who is struggling by juggling childcare and going to school full time, which could be challenging within our program.

Financial resources is another reason.  Student's ability to receive funding may serve as a barrier to the willingness to enter the program, students might need to work during the program and that requires certain hours to work.  Also, the department's need to have a certain amount of full time equivalent (FTE) of the students and faculty FTEs, and lastly, financial aid rules that impact student's ability to receive multiple sources of institutional financial aid or federal financial aid.

Lack of mentoring and resources—students could benefit from having more than one mentor, for example, it could be a clinical mentor, researcher mentor or someone who's going to help them with career progression.  Another reason is that more students could benefit from mentoring, then there are actually mentors available; students don't know or have access to the appropriate resources to enter the profession; peer mentorship is also a beneficial resource.  (For example, this happens at Pace University, where we connect 2nd Year Master's students with 1st Year Master's students to transition them and be able to talk to someone during the process).  And then lastly, program resources may be limited to sustain mentorship.

Limited knowledge of student needs.  Faculty need knowledge of student experiences, especially non-traditional student needs; faculty need knowledge and resources that support students; faculty should also engage in nurturing relationships with students (for example, the Ron McNair Fellowships) and then a lack of pedagogical and institutional resources about topics; some examples are trauma informed responses and cultural responsiveness and humility.

We also need to increase awareness of the profession and target specific audiences.  Some of these audiences are faculty members in related disciplines, department chairs in related professions (some examples of this are linguistics and psychology), admissions counselors, high school counselors, settings that employee SLPs (such as school districts, healthcare centers and private practice) and STEM leaders at middle school, high school, as well as 2-year and 4-year college levels.

Some strategies to increase Community awareness of the profession include developing multimedia promotional materials for different age groups and target audiences, providing outreach and exposure for high school students to participate in professional activities.  An example of this would be funding a high school student to attend a conference so they are able to have an experience of understanding the profession and the wide scope of practice that we have.  Also partnering with STEM outreach programs and attending school career fairs, as well as partnering with multi-cultural groups and related professional organizations.  An example of some of these groups are NBASLH and the Hispanic Caucus.

Target audiences for recruitment and retention. So, let's kind of think about this. We have faculty in Speech Language and Hearing Sciences (SLHS), we have University Administrators, Clinical Educators, Community and Offsite Supervisors, University Advisors as well as High School Guidance Counselors.

Some recruitment strategies include: Educating elementary to high school students about the profession by bringing awareness to what we do; helping prospective students understand our wide scope of practice, providing outreach activities to high schools and community colleges by targeting specific regions of the country; increasing awareness of the profession among underrepresented groups, and lastly connecting with ASHA's Minority Student Leadership Program to promote recruitment.

Retention strategies include enhancing the advising process at the undergraduate level. So, really thinking about training these advisors around the scope of what we do so they can better prepare students who are matriculating in the undergraduate programs. Expanding faculty resources and programs for student advising; Increasing faculty knowledge to meet needs of diverse students; networking and building relationships with faculty; utilizing high impact teaching and learning practices to promote student engagement and lastly, maximizing program flexibility that supports successful matriculation of students.

So, we've discussed a lot of things so far, we have discussed Issues and Barriers, Recruitment Strategies, Retention Strategies and Target Audiences. Now let's discuss the desired outcomes for increasing student diversity across the next two slides. We want to develop outreach programs to increase awareness of the profession. We want to maximize diversity in student cohorts; emphasize recruitment and retention strategies to support all students; increase diversity in faculty; and finally, increase the availability of diverse mentors, and this is inclusive of clinical educators, researchers, and externship supervisors.

We want to increase student graduation rates to create a more diverse SLP workforce. We want to maximize collaboration and connection with related professions and universities.

And lastly, promote innovative opportunities for graduates to engage professionally after degree completion. Some examples of this, we want the students to become the future mentors and serve on these committees.