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Master's Degrees with a Mission

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Master's Degrees with a Mission

Three new health graduate programs are designed to meet society's changing needs

Cultural and societal shifts constantly cause the world's health-related needs to evolve. CSH is launching three new graduate programs in community psychology, speech language pathology and occupational therapy that will increase the university's health care education footprint to meet these expanding needs.

Community Psychology MS Programs

CSH began a new Master of Science program and a related combined BA/MS program in community psychology this fall.

Leonard Jason, professor of clinical and community psychology and director of CSH's Center for Community Research, codirects the program with Olya Belyaev-Glantsman (CSH MA '05, PhD '13). Jason says community psychology focuses on preventive health care. Instead of treating patients after their disorders are entrenched, community psychologists concentrate on the larger ecosystem in which individuals operate and the multiple levels of intervention needed. The field also has a social justice facet that advocates for providing equal access to treatment and resources.

Both degree programs require 48 quarter hours of coursework in such topics as advanced statistics,

quantitative research design, consultation, and principles of human diversity and end with fieldwork or, in the combined program, a culminating experience.

"Graduates will be trained on the most current skills and knowledge to assume leadership roles across a range of community-based organizations and government agencies," Jason says. The program also can "enhance the skills of individuals with other experience in areas such as the criminal justice system, trauma and public safety," he adds.

For more information, visit go.depaul.edu/psychology.

Speech-Language Pathology MS

Enthusiastic about what she calls "the dynamic and growing field of speech-language pathology," Jayne Jaskolski is program director and associate professor of a new Master of Science program currently undergoing accreditation review by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. CSH expects to launch the program in fall 2021.

The goal is to train students to be speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who diagnose, evaluate and treat patients with communication, language, cognition, fluency, hearing, voice, articulation and swallowing

disorders. SLPs work with children and adults one-on-one or in groups. They may see clients in a variety of settings, such as schools, hospitals, assisted living facilities, clinics and private practices.

"We work with clients from birth through end of life," Jaskolski says.

Students will complete 102 credit hours, or 106 if adding a thesis, in courses such as core science, research, child/adolescent disorders, adult disorders and clinical education courses, and complete at least 400 hours of supervised clinical experience in community externships and at the new DePaul Speech and Language Clinic, breaking ground in early 2021 on the Lincoln Park Campus. Students will use iPads for articulation and language therapy and as augmentative communication devices.

The program also will provide a Bilingual English-Spanish Specialization Certificate (BESSC) so SLPs can equitably serve the needs of primarily Spanish-speaking individuals with communicative disabilities. The certificate will include specialized coursework, clinical experiences and service learning projects developed, instructed and supervised by Elia Olivares, the SLP program's director of culturally and linguistically diverse programs.

The SLP program requires applications to be sent online through the Communication Science Disorders Centralized Application Service organization at csdcas.liaisoncas.com. For more information about DePaul's new program, email Jayne Jaskolski at j.jaskolski@depaul.edu.

Occupational Therapy MS

CSH plans to launch a new occupational therapy MS in the fall of 2022, pending accreditation.

Program Director Kate Barrett says graduates will be qualified to work in a variety of settings, such as "school systems, hospitals, outpatient clinics, community organizations and residential care facilities," serving individuals with "diagnoses and conditions such as traumatic head injury, cerebrovascular accident, spinal cord injury, Down syndrome, autism, dementia, schizophrenia, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, sensory processing disorder and hand injuries."

The program will require 24 months to complete, with the first six quarters on campus and the final two quarters spent doing fieldwork in hospitals, clinics, communities and schools. Students "will have coursework that addresses how motor, process and social interaction skills support participation in occupations throughout the lifespan," Barrett explains.

"The OT space is being designed to facilitate active learning," she says. "It will include a space set up like a small apartment with a kitchen, laundry, living room, bedroom and bathroom where students can practice



therapy interventions with adults and families through activities of daily living," from brushing one's teeth to caring for a household. There will also be a lab space to support the occupations of play and learning for children.

"It's important for occupational therapists to treat the whole person," Barrett says. "This requires a strong understanding and appreciation for how culture, beliefs, values and spirituality influence what we do and how we do it. It's also important for OTs to understand how the environment impacts people, including natural and built environments.

"Occupational therapists work with people who are vulnerable and who often have experienced marginalization because of disabling physical, cognitive or emotional conditions," Barrett adds. "Students will learn to advocate for improved systems and conditions for people living with disabilities. This is a great career for students who want meaningful work, flexibility and direct work with people."

To learn more about the program, email Kate Barrett at kate.barrett@depaul.edu.