
Department of

COMMUNICATION SCIENCES and DISORDERS



News from the Chair

Kimberly Peters, Ph.D., CCC-SLP/A

Happy **Better Speech and Hearing Month!** from your friends in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Western Washington University! We are a few weeks from the end of the academic year—one of the most surreal in recent history. On March 13th, 2020, along with many other schools across the United States, we left our building and clinics on our Governor's orders and started teaching, learning, and seeing clients from home, uncertain about when we would see each other in-person again and what the future would hold. Within weeks we transitioned our clients and classes completely to a remote format; we learned how to use Zoom; and we converted our living rooms, porches, kitchens, and hallways into offices, homeschools, and virtual therapy rooms. In the midst of all of this, our country saw (again) the senseless deaths of black men and women at the hands of law enforcement and rose up in anger, frustration, and protest. Needless to say, this has been an unprecedented year of challenge. Despite this, we have reasons to celebrate.

At the end of this spring quarter, the first five Doctoral students ever to attend Western Washington University will graduate; we could not be prouder of our program and the many achievements of our inaugural class: two fourth year AuD students have published original research in peer reviewed journals; most of them already have jobs; and one is getting married! We are honored that they, and others, have chosen Western's AuD program. We look forward to their contributions to the profession and to their communities. Ten new AuD students will begin the doctoral program in the fall, and 17 are in various stages of their training (some of whom have yet to see each other or their professors in person!). We are awed by the students' resilience, by everything they have accomplished already, and by everything they have taught us, even under these stressful circumstances. In addition to a full cohort of AuD students, we are expecting twenty new speech language pathology graduate students in the fall of 2021. We are excited to welcome them to our program; we anticipate that these students (along with the 2022 SLP cohort) will begin classes and

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clinic in person in the fall. We also realize that remote clinical services are likely here to stay; we have plans to upgrade our telemedicine platforms and coursework to best prepare our clinicians for whatever their futures hold.

At the beginning of 2019, we welcomed Dr. Heather Moore to join the CSD team. Dr. Moore has been busy these past two years writing grants and setting up her research lab. During the pandemic, Dr. Moore stepped up to serve as chair of our first Diversity, Equity, and Justice Committee in the CSD Department. This committee, comprised of students, faculty, and staff has worked tirelessly this year to establish a scholarship for black, indigenous, and people of color entering our graduate training program; to develop undergraduate and graduate courses in cultural competence and anti-racism; and to schedule listening sessions to address the decades-long systemic inequities in the fields of speech language pathology and audiology, and in our department specifically. We are committed to making sustainable changes in our program to end racism and increase diversity, equity, and justice in our professions and on Western's campus.

Maggie Savage, a CSD graduate in Speech Language Pathology, joined us in April, 2020—quite literally days before the pandemic shut down our program to in-person services and classes. Maggie brings with her a background in child language as well as a passion for assessment and treatment of English language learners, children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and children with complex developmental needs. She also dove right into the deep end—starting a new job without being able to see her colleagues in person! Despite her unusual start, Maggie always shows up (in Zoom meetings) with a smile and her infectious enthusiasm, work ethic, and energy.

In 2020 Karen Peila moved on to accept a position in the Office of the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Karen Smith took on the role of Department Administrative Services Manager for CSD. Karen Smith is a perfect fit for our intense bunch of personalities and has been a calm voice of reason at the most chaotic of times. She also has served as the queen of ordering personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes so that we can safely open our clinics for in-person services. Hopefully she will put up with us for many years to come! If nothing else, we are lots of fun.

We are coming to the end of our fourth year as a donations-based Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic. This year more than ever families have needed extra support. With schools closed for several months, and few children returning to full-time in person school all year, speech-language and hearing services have been a critical need. Adults, children, and families have received hundreds of hours of high-quality, intensive, evidence-based, speech-language-hearing services at no cost—mostly remotely, but also in-person—thanks to the generous donations of community members, clients, faculty, and staff. We remain dedicated to eliminating barriers to access for these clients and their families and to serving them expertly during this time. We are also dedicated to giving

back to our community through supporting individuals and families, and through training graduate student clinicians to be highly skilled Speech-Language Pathologist and Audiologists. Consider supporting our mission through a tax-deductible donation to the CSD Clinic. **Give the gift of communication!** It is truly life changing.



Want to make your promise early? Join us on May 19 & 20 for early giving at <https://wwugiveday.wvu.edu/giving-day/35532/departments/35552>. Challenge funds still apply!

New BIPOC Scholarship

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is proud to announce a new Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) scholarship initiative. The CSD Department acknowledges that systemic racism exists and limits access to higher education for BIPOC students. Furthermore, the Department affirms these obstacles exist within our own program. The faculty and staff are committed to de-constructing these obstacles. This scholarship represents one initiative by the CSD Department to address this issue.

The funds for this inaugural scholarship were provided by the department. We respectfully request donations to ensure future awards.

Applicants for this inaugural award must be incoming or current graduate students (M.A. or Au.D.) of the CSD program. The successful applicant of the CSD BIPOC Student Scholarship will receive up to a \$2,000 award, based on financial need.

CSD Research Corner

Jennifer Thistle, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Dr. Jennifer Thistle's research examines aspects of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) display design with a goal of identifying practices that reduce the cognitive demands of using AAC. Most recently, she has investigated the growth of motor learning when symbols remain in consistent locations on a display. Motor learning occurs when a motor skill is repeated to the point of automaticity and no longer requires conscious thought to complete. The results of studies with preschoolers without disabilities showed that children more quickly located targets when searching an array of symbols that did not change locations than when the location of symbols changed each time the child saw the array. Dr. Thistle has extended this research to include populations of children with disabilities.

Dr. Thistle enjoys working with students on research and continues to encourage student involvement in either her or their own research. In the past year, two students have completed Honor's thesis projects. One student interviewed first responders

to identify the knowledge, training, and resources available to them when interacting with individuals with communication disabilities. The other student surveyed CSD and Special Education majors to identify their knowledge of AAC.

A second area of focus is related to provision of adequate pre-service and professional development training for SLPs. Dr. Thistle taught the first undergraduate course in AAC during the spring quarter, providing an introduction to AAC that she hopes will increase the knowledge base as these students pursue their careers. Further, she is currently analyzing responses from interviews with certified SLPs to identify areas to focus on both during pre-service and continuing education. Dr. Thistle is exploring options for building the capacity for AAC consultations and assessments at Western.

Anna Diedesch, Au.D., Ph.D., CCC-A

Dr. Anna Diedesch's research interests include binaural hearing, amplification, and evaluation of basic auditory ability using psychoacoustic measurements. She is currently performing research to identify additional tests and expand auditory assessment in clinical populations, beyond the pure tone audiogram or clinical speech-in-noise tests, that could be used clinically to describe an individual's functional hearing ability. Traditionally, psychoacoustic testing has been accomplished using sound treated rooms that utilize large amounts of hardware to present complex auditory stimuli to listeners. These systems are expensive and difficult to quickly make changes to the test stimuli or the experimental protocol. iPads have been presented as viable alternatives to these complex testing environments, with very positive outcomes. These psychoacoustic tests are administered on normal-hearing and hearing-impaired adults using the [Portable Automated Rapid Testing \(PART\) application](#) on a calibrated iPad.

In Fall 2019, Dr. Diedesch and WWU graduate ShengJie Adelaide Bock (class of 2020) extended the findings of a large normative study by recruiting participants from WWU to determine the consistency of results across multiple study sites and for patients with mild-to-moderate hearing loss. Results from this study conducted by Dr. Diedesch and Adelaide Bock were accepted for publication by the American Journal of Audiology in April 2021.

Tests of basic auditory ability included in this experiment are not currently evaluated in the clinic, and results may have implications for addressing patients' auditory complaints beyond the audiogram. Dr. Diedesch's goal is to identify select binaural psychoacoustic measurements which may be added to the current clinical test battery to aid clinicians in improving hearing aid fittings beyond standard audibility fitting methods. Though testing time in clinics is limited, the implementation of administering two to three additional auditory tests from the PART test battery in the waiting rooms of clinics could provide robust information on a patient's auditory processing ability while adding minimal additional time to the clinician.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Diedesch's research has expanded to remote testing where participants are delivered an iPad to complete the PART test battery in the comfort of their own homes, which would reduce the contact risk and comply with the University and CDC recommendations. Second year AuD student, Kaitlin Rink, is working in Dr. Diedesch's lab to conduct this timely research project as part of her AuD capstone project. For more information on remote testing, refer to the Acoustical Society of America's Psychological and Physiological Acoustics [Task Force on Remote Testing](#).

Au.D. Internship Program— Megan Bennett, Au.D., CCC-A, Internship Coordinator

The first graduating Au.D. cohort is completing their 4th year externships at the Seattle VA Hospital, Seattle Children's Hospital, OHSU, Randal Children's Hospital and The Texas Hearing Institute. 2020-2021 3rd year internship rotations included placements at Edmonds School District, Seattle Children's Hospital, Puget Sound Hearing Aid and Audiology, Puget Sound Ear Nose and Throat, Spencer Audiology, Evergreen Speech and Hearing, and Mayo Clinic. These sites allow students to expand their knowledge and skills with a greater variety of populations, new technology, and varying testing techniques.

SLP Internship Program— Dawn Burgess M.S., CCC-SLP, Internship Coordinator

In Spring 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic disrupted many aspects of life including off-campus internship placements for the speech-language pathology graduate students. The full-time internship is the culmination of our program, and one quarter away from graduating, the second-year students' full-time internships canceled or postponed as schools, hospitals, early intervention programs, and private practices navigated the delivery of speech-language services to virtual options. However, during that uncertain and understandably difficult time, many new and established off-site partnerships quickly formed to provide teletherapy and telesupervision internship opportunities for the students. Thank you to our new host sites created last spring: Tubes 2 Table (Pensacola, Florida), Madison School District (Madison, New Hampshire), Clear Speech, Inc (Everett, WA), and Brittany Olsen-Boblitt, LLC (Clinton, WA). Thank you to our local community host sites Whatcom Center for Early Learning, Lynden School District, Anacortes School District, Burlington-Edison School District, and Sedro Woolley School District for continued dedication and support of our programs. All of these host sites and off-campus supervisors deserve a tremendous show of gratitude for supporting the next generation of speech-language pathology professionals during tumultuous times. We would be remised to not give a special thank you to WWU's CSD faculty and clinical educators who, through ingenuity and increased workload, provided additional clinical opportunities ensuring all students completed the program. Thank you. Literally, overnight the COVID-19 Pandemic brought teletherapy and telesupervision to the forefront of service delivery options, and SLPs regionally and across the nation demonstrated their devotion to the CSD field by continuing to do what they do best-move forward .

SLP Clinic Update — Lesley Stephens Director Speech Language Clinic

We have been holding steady with almost 20 new graduate students in both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 cohorts. When the pandemic hit, clinical educators and faculty scanned the internet and completed as many online trainings as possible in telehealth and remote service provision that they could get their hands on. During Fall 2020, we pivoted to online orientation and prepared for the year to be mostly telehealth.

To say the least, COVID-19 has stretched the staff, faculty, and students in ways no one imagined possible. Everyone has risen to the challenge! While most treatment services shifted to telehealth, our diagnostic experiences shifted to clinical simulations. We adopted Simucase, a simulation-based learning tool with a comprehensive patient video library. Simulation technology allows users to observe, assess, diagnose, and provide intervention for virtual patients. This helps users develop specific clinical skills, evaluate clinical competencies, and practice interprofessional collaboration. Students also earn clock hours for mastered clinical simulations.

In March 2021, we started to gradually re-open by providing a few diagnostic evaluations in-person. Our goal is to gradually add more in-person appointments while maintaining safety for everyone.

In addition to our campus clinic, graduate students in speech-language pathology rotate through offsite clinic experiences. We are deeply grateful to the community speech-language pathologists who have provided extra opportunities for offsite experiences and reached out to us saying "I'll take another student". We could not have done this without you, many of whom are alumnae of our program. Our relationship with Head Start is on hold due to a limitation of no visitors to the preschool classrooms. We look forward to revisiting this in the Fall of 2021.

Every day I come to work, whether on campus or from my "home office", I am touched by the dedication and excellence of our graduate students and the expertise of the clinical educators and faculty in our department.

Handshake Hub

Did you know you have free access to online job postings for WWU students and alumni? Handshake has taken the place of Viking Career Link. Check it out at www.edu/careers/handshake_employers.shtml.

Handshake provides organizations with an integrated network where you can post jobs and internships, schedule interviews with students and alumni, and promote events to the Western Campus Community!

Alumni Spotlight

Heather Maillet, MA, CCC-SLP

Heather received her master's degree from WWU in 2006 and took a clinical fellowship placement in a behavioral TBI rehab program in Southern California. After her CFY she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and pieced together per diem gigs in skilled nursing facilities, acute rehab programs, and several local hospitals. This gave her a lay of the land and when a full-time position opened at her favorite level II trauma hospital, she jumped at it. She worked there full time for 6 years before returning to Washington and joining the acute care team at Evergreen Hospital in Kirkland. She has worked primarily with adult and geriatric populations and thrives in the fast paced, dynamic environment of acute care.

She loves working with TBI, neurosurgery and stroke patients as well as complex medical diagnoses affecting swallowing and participating in the palliative care team for degenerative dysphagia patients. She particularly enjoys working with dysphagia in complex respiratory patients (such as tracheostomy and high flow oxygen requirements) and this past year has brought quite an increase in these patients. The pandemic brought specific challenges to her professional life- working with some of the first Covid-19 patients in the US, navigating pandemic restrictions to her patient care and all the way these restrictions change as we learn more and move into new phases of the pandemic. She has integrated video conferencing with patients' families into her daily therapies so families can share in the education and triumphs of recovery. She loves being part of a large team collaborating to provide whole person wellness and recovery for people.

SAA Update

This year, students Malia Henderson (President), Samia Quidwai (Vice President), Kaitlin Rink (Treasurer), Lilly McCaffrey (Secretary), and Sarah Davies and Hunter Stuehm (Public Relations) became the new officers for the Student Academy of Audiology (SAA) WWU chapter. The SAA is a national organization branching from the American Academy of Audiology as a "collective voice for students and advances the rights, interests, and welfare of students pursuing careers in audiology." The SAA "introduces students to lifelong involvement in activities that promote and advance the profession of audiology, and provides services, information, education, representation, and advocacy for the profession and the public we serve." This year the SAA officers hosted virtual events highlighting guest speakers who are researchers and clinical audiologists in Washington and Oregon. The guest speakers discussed their expertise in a variety of clinical and research-based applications. The goals of our SAA chapter include; spreading awareness about hearing loss and preventative measures, raising money for the WWU donation-based hearing aid bank, and becoming more involved within the community. If you know of any volunteer opportunities or would like more information about our chapter and organization, please contact Malia Henderson at hen-der21@wwu.edu or Hunter Stuehm at stuehmh@wwu.edu. Additionally, you can check us out on Instagram @wwusaachapter or Facebook @wwusaa to get updates about our club and various events within the greater Bellingham area!

2021 Fundraisers

Hello, WWU Alumni and our supportive community members:

My name is Marilu Morgan Boyd and I am 2020 WWU NSSLHA Chapter Co-President. On behalf of this year's Council, I invite you to our Better Hearing and Speech Month awareness events and fundraisers. This year WWU Chapter of National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) plans to celebrate with a Virtual Walk, Social Media Scavenger Hunt, and "My Beautiful Stutter" movie screening.

Friday, May 21st at 5:00PM, virtual event: Our headlining event this May will be a digital screening of the recently released documentary "My Beautiful Stutter" followed by an exclusive Q & A with director Ryan Geilen. The proceeds from our ticket sales will directly benefit the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic at WWU, which is fully funded by donations. The WWU campus Speech-Language-Hearing clinic provides assessment and therapy to those with communication disorders, including hearing impairment or language, speech, voice, and fluency disorders. Ticket purchase also enters your name in our giveaway, announced at the Q&A following the movie. (Ticket sales to open in May via link:

<https://tinyurl.com/WWUNSSLHATicket>)

Please make sure to email your receipt of purchase to Kayla at BeardK3@wwu.edu to receive your invitation link to the screening.

- Tickets are \$5.00 each and can be purchased on WWU's eMarket website [here](#). *** Please know tickets are limited, so get yours today!! **
- To learn more about My Beautiful Stutter, here is a [link](#) for the website.

Virtual Walk: This is a month-long event where you can pledge a donation with the trail / distance of your preference. Donations made through our Virtual Walk will benefit the Whatcom Opportunity Council to support programs that address immediate and crisis-oriented needs that serve homeless and low-income families. Donation tickets are available for purchase through Western's eMarket: <https://tinyurl.com/WWUNSSLHATicket>

Social Media Scavenger Hunt: Another month-long event to interact with our chapter, its members, and friends to raise awareness of BHSM by engaging in daily fun! Your participation facilitates awareness and puts you in the running for a grand prize! Follow our Instagram @NSSLHAWWU for this event and community posts!

For more information, please check out our website: <https://wp.wwu.edu/nsslhachapter/sample-page/may-is-bhsm/> or email me with any questions or concerns.

We hope you will be able to join in virtually or participate via Instagram or Facebook throughout May. We look forward to seeing you ~virtually~ in May!

Philanthropy News

Scholarship Awards 2020-21

CSD Department Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 were awarded to Cristina Arehart, Sarah Davies, Catherine Dawson, Lilly McCaffrey and Hunter Stuehm.

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders Waivers in the amount of \$900 were awarded to Ashely Kolbeck & Jenna Porter.

Diana Pechthalt Scholarship in the amount of \$1,400 was awarded to Dallas Lorio.

Dr. Barbara Mathers-Schmidt Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 was awarded to Heather Ludwig.

Dr. Lina Zeine and Family Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 were awarded to Adrien Harrison & Meredith Walsh.

Eva Baharav Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 was awarded to Cory Herman.

John D. Blankenship Fellowships in the amount of \$6,000 were awarded to Coco Breen & Olivia Quigley.

Sam Polen Memorial Scholarship for Audiology Students in the amount of \$1,300 was awarded to Emily Hammond.

Sene and Louella Carlile CSD Graduate Fellowships in the amount of \$1,400 were awarded to Abbey Stratton & Kristin Paschall.

Sene and Louella Carlile CSD Scholarships in the amount of \$1,150 were awarded to Joey Hawkinson, Alexa Kazen & Debbie Wilcox.

Thank You for your Support!

CSD Donors

Anna Chamberlin, Cary R. Ford, Charles H. Waters, Christine Engelhardt, Cindy and Tim Lopez, Dalsie Meister, Dan Baharav, David Evans, Diana Wheeler, Diane Marie Kindle, Douglas, Vandegraff & JoAnn Waszkiewicz, Erica Welder Batjer, Ethelyn Bishop, George Werkema, Helene Noyer, Jacqui MacConnell, James Seiber, JDub's Filling Station, LLC, Joan Beek, Joy Tribe LLC, Julee M. Neuhart, June and Lew Hensley, Karen-Margrethe Bruun & Larry Jelsing, LaDawn and Chad Ramsey, Larry and Elizabeth Wonnacott, Larry Olson, Mary Evitt, Michele Adrian, Milton Ross, Ms. Ann L. Bugni, Nancy Jane Young, Network For Good, Pamela & Robert McCauley, Patricia Pike, Randy and Carol Cate, Rebecca and Barry Gerhardt, Rebecca Rae Hendrickson, Riley and Bryna Sweeney, Rita Adamski, Scott Carter, Scottish Rite Foundation of Washington, Stephen and Kathleen Barrett, Suzanne and Michael Podberesky, Thrivent Financial For Lutherans, Vaughn and Corinna Wine, Vicki Hammond, Ziva Retter

-Thank You!-

Donations Always Welcome

Gifts can be made:

Online at <https://foundation.wwu.edu/csd>

By phone at **(360) 650-3027**.

By checks, made payable to the WWU Foundation
(Please write CSD or scholarship name on the memo line)
mailed to:

**WWU Foundation
516 High Street, MS 9034
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*Your educational support for our students is
greatly appreciated.*

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