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Department of Speech and Hearing

Fall 2014

Message from the Chair, James Mahshie

I am very pleased to be introducing the Fall 2014 edition of the George Washington University Speech and Hearing Science Department's Newsletter. Included in this issue is information about our alumni, students, faculty and supervisors. As an alumni publication, your contributions are very important. I hope you will enjoy learning about how your classmates and friends are doing as well as how the department is changing and has grown during the past year.

The department was highlighted in a recent article in the September 2014 edition of the CCAS e-newsmagazine. We have reprinted that article for you here; it reflects well on our clinic and the students and supervisors that provide services. Among the academic changes in store is a revision to our undergraduate program that will be put in place in September 2015. We will let you know more about this in the months to come, but we are very excited to have this update to our already strong undergraduate program.

The research labs have been very busy this past year. With nearly \$1 million in externally funded research, the department's reputation as a highly productive research department continues. A number of the labs are described in this newsletter along with a list of publications and presentations during the past year. As always, there are a large number of current and recent students who have co-authored and co-presented with our faculty.

An important aspect of the university's strategic plan introduced in 2013 involves responding to the increasingly interconnected world we live in. A number of global initiatives are described here, including work in Australia and China. These are but a few of the global connections within SPHR that makes this such a vibrant and active department.

Also listed in the newsletter are a number of papers and presentations by faculty and students at the upcoming American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) meeting in Orlando. If you are in attendance, please try to check out those talks and posters that might be of interest, and if you are in the vicinity of the graduate fair on Friday, November 21, please stop by the GW booth and say hello.

Among Ourselves

Congratulations to **Linda Siegfriedt** who renewed her wedding vows on September 18, 2014 with her husband Klyde Siegfriedt after 10 years of marriage! Also, after 11 months of study, Linda is pleased to have earned her certification in positive psychology. This is a supportive interface to the treatment of voice disorders, vocal feminization and a powerful influence on the clinical practice education and training of new graduate clinicians. *(Photo: Linda Siegfriedt and her husband Klyde Siegfriedt.)*



On July 29, 2013, Dr. **Linda Jacobs-Condit's** daughter Lindsay Alexandra Condit married Neil Marshall in Glasgow, Scotland, U.D, where they both reside. Dr. Jacobs-Condit's other daughter Stephanie Clare Condit is a senior at the Savannah College of Art and Design, majoring in photography.

Rachel Neuman got married on graduation weekend 2014 and changed her name to Rachel Pittmann. She also accepted the position of adjunct instructor in the department. She is now full-time with us at GW! *(Photo: Rachel Pittman with her wife Nora Pittman.)*

Dr. **Melanie Moriarty Birck** gave birth to a beautiful baby Archer on September 19, 2014. Both baby and mom are doing well and we look forward to enrolling the newest member of the Birck family in upcoming research projects as soon as he is eligible!

New Faces



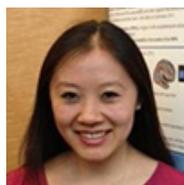
Andrew Parker
Department Operations Supervisor

Andrew joined the department in April 2014 as the department operations supervisor. In this role, he is responsible for managing the administrative functions of the department. Prior to joining the department, Andrew worked as a program assistant at Sigur Center for Asian Studies in the Elliott School of International Affairs. He holds a BA in International Affairs from the American University and is currently pursuing a graduate studies in the Asian Studies program here at GW with a sub-regional focus on China.



Sangsook Choi
Post-Doctoral Scientist, Cochlear Implant Communication Lab

Sangsook received a PhD in hearing science from University of Nebraska. Her research interests are: perception and learning of externally and internally degraded speech, effects of limited capacity on speech perception and effects of auditory training on perceptual change.



Cynthia Peng
Lab Manager, Autism and Developmental Neuroscience Lab

Cynthia graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in 2011. She pursued graduate studies at Vanderbilt University in cognitive neuroscience before working as a post-baccalaureate fellow in the Lab of Brain and Cognition at NIH. She is excited to work with Dr. **Greg Wallace** in SPHR as manager of the Lab of Autism and Developmental Neuroscience. Her broader research interests include visual perception, music cognition and mindfulness meditation, using a combination of neuroimaging and behavioral techniques. Outside of the lab, Cynthia enjoys playing music, exploring D.C., and maintaining her science outreach blog, *Photons and Neurons*.



Diego Martinez
Lab Manager, Bilingual Language Development Lab

Diego is currently working for Dr. Brundage and Dr. Core's Labs, managing their bilingual infant language development project. Prior to that, he received his BS in neuroscience from Muhlenberg College in 2013, and went on to research language processing in persons with aphasia at the University of Maryland. His academic interests range from artificial intelligence to philosophy, including all things related to language. When not in the lab he enjoys playing and watching soccer, as well as cooking and teaching robotics to elementary school children.

Department Dish

Dr. **Shelley Brundage** was part of a research and design team (with Dr. Janet Beilby at Curtin University, Perth, Australia, and Dr. Josh Spitalnick of Citrine Technologies, Inc.) that designed, developed, and tested The Empathy Simulator™, a virtual patient for use in clinical education in SLP, psychology and other health professions. This project won Curtin University's 2014 Innovation in Education Prize. [A brief video](#) about the project is available. (Photo: *Patient Avatar from The Empathy Simulator™*)



Kari Comer collaborated with Connective Links Among Special Needs Programs (CLASP) International, a nonprofit organization that is starting a graduate program in Zambia. She had the opportunity to teach the students online in the spring and supervise them during their first clinical rotation in May! It was a great experience for her and it relates to her



interest in international relations within the field of speech-language pathology. (Photo: Kari Comer working with Zambian Students)

Linda Siegfriedt and the Clinical Voice Track is working with Dr. **Robert Baker**, acting chair in the Department of Music in Columbian College, to treat singing students with voice issues. The goal of course is to educate, rehabilitate and balance the speaking voice and to support the function of the performing voice.

Dr. **Malathi Thothathiri** has been working with colleagues at the University of Maryland this year on a project that examines the relation between executive function and language. Her research will significantly contribute to our knowledge of how language works in the brain and help promote new treatments for aphasia.

Dr. **Greg Wallace** has been working with colleagues at Children's National Medical Center this year on projects that both characterize and treat executive functioning impairments in children with autism spectrum disorder (e.g., difficulties with flexible problem-solving and transitions between activities). This work will help to guide future school-based interventions targeting this pivotal cognitive domain for children with autism spectrum disorder. Dr. Wallace has also been collaborating with researchers at the National Institutes of Health in examining atypicalities of brain structure and function in adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder. This groundbreaking research will further our understanding of trajectories of brain development in autism spectrum disorder beyond the early years and into the understudied, but dynamic and important periods of adolescence and adulthood.

Dr. James Mahshie Visited China

In late May and early June, Dr. **James Mahshie** visited China where he learned about the profession of speech language pathology in that country and explored opportunities for research collaborations. The trip was sponsored by the GW Confucius Institute.

The visit was motivated by the department's wish to increase its global connections, a goal that is consistent with the university's mission to have a more global presence. Speech language pathology is in its infancy in China, with fewer than 1,500 clinicians for a population of 1.3 billion people. This compares to nearly 115,000 speech language pathologists serving 300 million people in the U.S. The services that are typically provided by SLPs in the US are often provided by a range of service providers in China, although there are needs that are not currently being met by any professional group.

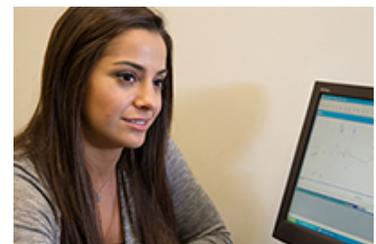
» [Continue reading "Dr. James Mahshie Visited China"](#)

At Speech & Hearing, Students are Clinic Caretakers

Featured in the September 2014 edition of the Columbian College E-Magazine

By John DiConsiglio

On a typical day at the George Washington Speech and Hearing Center, **Jordan Sender**, a second-year graduate student, might spend her afternoon leading a stroke patient in vocal exercises as he struggles to regain communication skills. Or she might guide a client with Parkinson's Disease through a software program that allows him to monitor his voice's volume and tone. Or she may end up corralling a feisty four-year-old with apraxia—a disorder that prevents the brain from organizing intelligible sounds—and persuading him that it's more fun to play with her colorful flashcards than race around the brightly painted treatment room.



But patient treatment isn't the only job for Sender and each of the 64 students in the Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Program, which requires the completion of a series of rotations at the clinic. Sender is just as likely to fill her hours puzzling over insurance forms, solving scheduling snafus and making sure the clinic rooms and equipment are infection-free.

"I thought I was prepared for anything," Sender said. "The clients, the research, the classes—I knew what I was getting into. But there's a lot more going on here."

» Continue reading "At Speech & Hearing, Students are Clinic Caretakers"

National Student Speech Language Association

The GW chapter of the National Student Speech Language Association (NSSLHA) has a busy year planned! They plan to host a grad school information session, speech and hearing related movie nights, a career panel, and a new initiative called Literacy Hour. Literacy Hour involves NSSLHA members going to a local public library and reading with young children for a few hours each month to promote literacy and get hands on experience working with kids. We are excited to have the opportunity to bring together students interested in speech and hearing to build a community and learn more about speech-language pathology and audiology as careers.

Clinical Notes

- Voice intensive workshops for vocal feminization have taken place through the Clinical Voice Track the past three spring semesters in the GW Speech and Hearing Center. This program was created for clients interested in participating in several hours of direct voice therapy in one day, versus the traditional voice therapy format of one-hour sessions per week. This past spring, Dr. **Adrienne Hancock**, **Natalie Goldstein** and **Linda Siegfriedt** worked together to collect data on this program, and are currently analyzing the results of the effectiveness of this treatment format in preparation for publication. In addition, this process allowed Natalie the opportunity to participate in an independent study around this process. Stay tuned for the research outcomes of this new treatment approach!
- Aphasia group keeps getting bigger and better! This semester we have expanded the number of clients we see in the group by also expanding the number of clinicians involved. This has turned out to be very successful and each participant has taken on a leadership role within group. Whether it is asking questions about a story to the other group members, repeating an answer to help another person out or writing down their responses and helping the person sitting next to them answer, the group dynamics and collaboration are really wonderful!

Gab from the Lab

- Some normal healthy adults have exceptional difficulty understanding speech in noisy environments, and audiological testing indicates that they do not have a hearing loss. The Communication Neuroscience Laboratory (**Lynne E. Bernstein**, professor; **Edward T. Auer, Jr.** and **Silvio P. Eberhardt**, research associate professors) received funding from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders to study these normal healthy adults. The researchers are investigating whether their listening difficulties are caused by reduced ability to suppress the interfering noise or to remember speech in a background noise. The researchers will be recruiting adults with hearing-in-noise difficulties, age 18-40 years, with normal hearing under quiet conditions as determined by a clinician; American English as a first and primary language; and no history of a brain injury or disease or a learning disability. Participants will be tested with a variety of audiological and perceptual tests. They will have EEG recordings made of their brain activity while listening to speech. Dr. **Linda Jacobs-Conditt**, audiologist in the GW Speech and Hearing Clinic, has been an important collaborator on this project.



» Read more "Gab from the Lab"

Books, Publications, and Presentations

Bernstein Ratner, N. & Brundage, S. (2013). "A clinician's complete guide to CLAN and PRAAT." Available: <http://chilides.psy.cmu.edu/clan/Clinician-CLAN.pdf>

Brundage, S., Woodyatt, J., Bernstein Ratner, N., & Newman, R. (2014, July). "Disfluencies in the input: correlations with child language outcomes." Presented at the IASCL, Amsterdam.

Hancock, A.B. & *Gross, H.E. (available online, June 2014). "Acoustic and aerodynamic measures of the voice in pregnancy." *Journal of Voice*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jvoice.2014.04.005

Hancock, A.B. & *Rubin, B.A. (available online, May 2014). "Influence of communication partner's gender on language." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*. DOI: 10.1177/0261927X14533197



» [View more "Books, Publications, and Presentations"](#)

Student Scholarship

Class of 2014 Thesis Students

The following students completed theses in Spring 2014 (supervising faculty in parenthesis):

- **Hilary Gray (Malathi Thothathiri)**: "The Role of Left Inferior Frontal Cortex in Resolving Syntactic-Semantic Conflict: A Neurophysiological Study"
- **Joanna Pfister (Cynthia Core)**: "Assessing Language Abilities in Young Bilinguals: Parent Report Versus Examiner Administered Measures"
- **Charlotte Sturgill (Shelley Brundage)**: "Cross-Linguistic Comparisons of Disfluency in Native English Speakers and Native Spanish Speakers"

Other Student Scholarship

Mandy Kulaga, MA '15, received a scholarship to attend the Critical Care Conference at The Johns Hopkins University this academic year.

Bhairvi Trivedi, BA '17, received a Luther Rice fellowship to continue her research in Dr. **Malathi Thothathiri's** lab. She is pursuing an honors program thesis this academic year.

Come See Us at ASHA 2014

GW will be participating in the Graduate School Fair during the **annual ASHA convention**. If you will be attending the convention, feel free to drop by to say hello!

When: Friday, November 21, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Where: Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, Florida

A number of our faculty will be presenting during the convention. [To view the details of their presentations, click here.](#) We would love for you to attend!

Recent Events



Fall 2014 Guest Lecture Series

On October 14, 2014, Lynne Bernstein, PhD, spoke on "Multi-sensory training can promote or impede auditory speech perceptual learning" at Duques Hall.

On November 4, 2014, Patricia Zebrowski, PhD, discussed "The role of resilience in stuttering intervention in children" at Duques Hall.

Alumni Alley

Anna Adamovich, BA '13, currently works as a research data associate at New York University's Langone Medical Center. Her team is implementing a new software for managing tissue and blood samples in the hospital. Hopefully this new system will allow for easier collaboration among investigators working in cancer research.

Jessica Blasko, MA '14, has been working as a school SLP at Fairfax County Public Schools since May 2014. Though at times her case load can be overwhelming, her students are amazing. Jessica is enjoying applying what she has learned at GW at her new job.

Byrna Bornstein, BA '78, runs a small pediatric private practice in Westwood, Mass. After 34 years, she is still quite happy with her career choice and has fond memories of GW!



Anna Branch, MA '14, is in Washington, D.C., and completing a CF year in Montgomery County Public Schools, working in an elementary school and a high school. She is enjoying the lack of homework!

Alexina Bratton, MA '14, is still living in Washington, D.C., and is about two months into her CF at a rehab center in Hyattsville.

» [Read more from "Alumni Alley"](#)

Donations

The Speech and Hearing Department would like to gratefully acknowledge the following generous donors who made a gift to the school from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014.

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