This issue of Wavelength follows a global health crisis that has caused much pain and suffering for so many. Fortunately, millions of our fellow citizens have now been vaccinated, many children are back in school face-to-face (at least part-time), and signs of economic recovery are visible on the horizon. Still, we must remain focused on the challenges before us, as individuals and as a society, to build on our democratic ideals for justice, liberty, and opportunity for all. That said, we should remain hopeful, if not inspired, by our resilience and reaffirmation of our commitment to each other and to our communities during this most difficult, and for many, tragic year that we have endured.

Over the course of the pandemic, with campus closed and face-to-face didactic instruction suspended, our dedicated faculty innovated, transforming their face-to-face courses to a digital environment, while maintaining quality, standards, and student engagement. Our clinical faculty ensured that our first-year graduate students were able to continue their training and deliver patient services face-to-face in our campus speech and hearing clinic, adapting and migrating to telepractice to reach patients and families as needed. As noted below, our community colleagues ensured that our second-year graduate students were able to complete their clinical rotations. Our students stepped up as well, determined to adapt their community building and outreach activities, as described in their reports in this issue of Wavelength. It has been a steep but rewarding learning curve for all!

Our students’ and faculty’s accomplishments are particularly impressive given the circumstances of the past year. As showcased in our Leading The Way feature, members of our faculty competed successfully for internal and external grants and fellowships, and literally went beyond the call of duty in many ways! The outstanding and innovative work of our three student organizations impacted our communities in real and enduring ways. Our Health Sciences Educational Outreach group participated in a number of virtual events, including their visit to the Na-ha-shnee Health Science camp, serving Native high school students throughout Washington, Idaho, and Montana. The Multicultural Club participated in the Native American Pre-Health Bridge workshop on health science careers, including speech-language pathology and audiology, and they presented their annual talent show virtually! The National Student Speech, Language, and Hearing Association (NSSLHA) participated in a virtual auction—HOE Down for HOPE—to raise funds for the Spokane Hearing Oral Program for Excellence (HOPE) School. NSSLHA also raised funds for the Corbin Senior Activity Center, a privately funded non-profit center in Spokane dedicated to helping older adults through various programs that focus on wellness, recreational activities, and education. All three clubs make WSU Spokane and the greater Spokane community places of respect and value for all. We invite you to browse through our
website at medicine.wsu.edu/speech-hearing-sciences-degree-program to learn more about our faculty’s and students’ ongoing work.

We also take great pride in and inspiration from the achievements of our alumni. In their featured pieces in this issue, both Judy McCulloch (BA’83, MA’96) and Brian Shute (BA’84, MA’86) remind us to embrace opportunities, those unexpected as well as those by design. The course you travel might not be a straight line, but it will definitely allow you to experience satisfaction, contributing in the variety of professional settings and capacities for which your training prepares you.

Of course, we do not succeed in our educational and patient care missions alone. We work closely with our dedicated off-site practicum and internship supervisors to prepare our students to deliver evidence-based care to individuals over the life span and across diverse communities. Despite facing challenges to serve their own caseloads during the pandemic, our community colleagues maintained their commitment to our students. Their efforts and contributions during the past 15 months have enabled out students to graduate on time and with the skills necessary to begin their clinical fellowships. There is no doubt this would not have been possible without our community colleagues’ unwavering dedication to our students.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our donors who have given so generously to the department during the 2021 fiscal year. Your gifts have a profound impact on our students, bringing them closer to achieving their goals and empowering them to contribute to their communities. With your support we provide scholarships, equip teaching and research labs, and engage students in formative learning experiences. As we grow in the years ahead, our fundamental commitment will continue to be to our students—to provide them an exceptional educational experience and support their transformation from students to professionals. If you would like to help us continue our forward motion, visit medicine.wsu.edu/give and select the Speech & Hearing Sciences Excellence Fund.

Before closing, I must share that I am stepping down as chair of Speech and Hearing Sciences this summer. Clinical Professor Amy Meredith will serve as interim chair. It has been my honor and privilege to serve the department in this capacity for many years. I am fortunate, however, to be able to continue serving our faculty and all faculty in the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine next year as associate dean for faculty affairs. I know Amy Meredith will employ her knowledge, skills, and passion to move the department forward during her term as interim chair, and I know that you – our alumni and friends—will support her as she does so.

As always, I thank you for your confidence in us and for being a part of our culture of excellence. Our alumni and donors remain our best friends, strongest advocates, and our ultimate legacy. As we look forward, I send my best wishes to you and your family for health, joy and peace in the years ahead.

All the very best-

Gail D. Chermak, PhD
Professor and Chair, Speech and Hearing Sciences

LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR LIFE AFTER WSU

We so enjoy hearing from our alumni and friends. Please continue to let us know about your life after WSU. With your permission, we will include news of your professional and personal journeys in the News of Our Friends feature in our next issue of Wavelength. Please stay in touch by e-mailing Amy Meredith at mereditha@wsu.edu.
THE WINDING JOURNEY OF A LIFE’S PASSION FOR SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

Judith (Judy) McCulloch, MA, CCC-SLP (BA’83, MA’96)

WSU has been good to me. My initial chosen path after earning my BA was to stay home and hone my sign language and speech-language pathology skills by facilitating the emerging communication of our four children. Signing ‘bird’ as my toddler and I gazed out our window was great fun. Silent discipline in the grocery store by signing ‘stop,’ ‘wait now’ or ‘all hands on the shopping cart’ was a great way to make other shoppers think our kids were so well behaved as, in all honesty, they were.

Interacting with my children, even watching insects crawl along a blade of grass, was inspiring. In fact, when our second son, John, was four years-old, he proclaimed that he was going to be an entomologist. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in entomology after attaining his BS and MS at WSU and working in various science fields for a while. All four children graduated from high school with honors and various scholarships. All four have completed higher education at various colleges and universities. Two have served proudly in the military, enabling continued employment in aerospace, welding and related engineering. One is gifted in various areas of art and assisting people with needs. We are a family with diverse talents and places of residence; our daughter resides in Washington and our three sons live in other states.

In 1990, a phone call placed with the innocent intent of inquiring about businesses and reasons to donate to United Way landed me a job at United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Birth-to-Three Center in Wenatchee, Wash. I had not planned to re-enter the workforce for another couple of years and was active volunteering in our children’s school classrooms. However, UCP assured me that I was qualified for the job as long as I committed to enrolling in graduate school. This speech-language pathology (SLP) position was a perfect fit. UCP offered daycare, allowing our daughter to accompany me and enroll as a preschool student. Additionally, several Spanish-speaking children allowed me to remove some rust and polish the three years of Spanish I had taken in high school.

I began graduate school in Spokane almost a decade after completing my undergraduate degree. I did so while continuing to raise our family. My husband (WSU ’83) worked as an underground gold mine geologist for Asamera Minerals Cannon Mine in Wenatchee, which closed in 1994. Fortunately, we were all able to move to Nevada where my husband began working with Barrick Meikle Mine in 1995. I pursued an SLP internship in Elko County Schools, which ultimately led to a K-12 position for three years in the rural town of Carlin in the Elko County School District. The one-hour commute to work was refreshing as I traveled through basin and mountain ranges from our home in Spring Creek.

Our home was situated at 5,700 feet elevation on just over an acre of land with a two-mile, birds eye view over a working livestock ranch to the Ruby Mountains. It was gorgeous, from sunrise to sunset! In the winter while eating breakfast, we often watched from our dining room window while a line of cattle chased the rancher’s tractor carrying hay, then converged upon the tractor as it stopped with their breakfast. We had permission from the rancher to traverse the sagebrush and quaking aspen along a creek to hunt for great horned owl pellets. John, our future entomologist, supplied these pellets for his grade school class dissection project.

Nevada offered a good cultural experience, revealing phonetic and semantic variances (e.g., spring /krik/ vs. spring /krik/ [crick v. creek]) and referential descriptions. Chaps (not a pal or friend) are a reality of practical use, even worn into town at times (along with spurs). Our eldest son took viola lessons from a real fiddler who had performed on some of the Nevada stages. A local cliché often professed ‘everything is a gamble.’ This was Nevada, of course. The entertainment and meals at casinos were great and relatively inexpensive. The four Basque restaurants in town were favorites. The Cowboy Poetry Festival that we attended yearly was pure entertainment—a good reason to put on your real cowboy attire and silver. If you ever get the chance, I recommend that you attend. Our children had winning art entries and a poetry reading on the Cowboy Poetry kids stage as well.

I committed some time to self-study continuing education in business and videofluoroscopy. This proved timely. During our last year in Nevada, I contracted with home health services and served a few private contract patients who did not qualify for home health services.

In contrast to the local cliché, my philosophy is that life is not just a gamble. Multiple opportunities, blessings and lifelong learning helped to shape and mold my family’s and my life. Although I had begun a journey in initiating SLP services...
at Elko County Hospital, signing on with a medical provider sponsor took longer than anticipated. Thus, services at the hospital were not in place when our family calling was to return to Washington.

In 1998, we returned to Washington where we could be closer to grandparents, extended family, water and trees. Our family had been vacationing at my parents’ getway lot at “Washaway Beach” on the Pacific Ocean when I interviewed for my new position at Grays Harbor Community Hospital (GHCH) in Aberdeen, Wash.

Another perfect fit because I prefer multifaceted utilization of SLP skills. I began treating pediatric and adult populations in outpatient, skilled nursing facilities, home health, and inpatient services as schedules dictated. I added an occasional one day per week school contact into the mix. In 2000, I suggested the hospital contract with the local state prison for rehab services and it came to fruition. In 2001, GHCH outsourced therapy services to RehabVisions.

After 22 years, I am still in Grays Harbor treating birth through the lifespan. I have grown the outpatient clinic and developed a newborn intensive care unit (NICU) swallow protocol for our SLP staff to use in the family birthing center and for follow-up in the clinic. I have mentored a good number of clinical fellows. Myofascial release has greatly aided throat cancer treatment, as well as other dysphagia and voice issues. Knowing that our eyes are the windows to the world, we work on vision tracking issues as a component of treatment in many attention and cognition areas. Grays Harbor is a great setting to serve patients with diverse diagnoses and therapy needs.

A good education provides the tools needed to analyze situations and make sound decisions. WSU provided me an excellent foundation through classroom, research, and clinical training to become a successful professional capable of improving individuals’ communication and personal outcomes. Life sharpens the skills and knowledge gained through higher education, reminding us to remain diligent and focused on essential and important components of our lives. With integrated awareness, we embrace less expected opportunities, removing side blinders that may cause us to overlook a better choice or treatment approach. I recommend to always keep looking for ‘Ah-ha!’ moments to ensure you keep your skills sharp and our patients progressing.

Michelle Bombardier (MA’83) worked in hospitals, clinics and private practice for many years before returning to graduate school to earn her master’s degree in fine arts. She has since published in dozens of literary journals and teaches poetry. Michelle notes that as a speech-language pathologist, she was a mechanic for language; as a poet, she is an artist and language is the medium.

Amira Jessie (BA’19) published three articles in the winter 2020 issue of the Journal of the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing: “Coupling degrees, breaking the silence, and seeing what I can be;” “The burden of the imposter syndrome: A student perspective;” and “Addressing the effects of racism in SLP graduate students: The impact of a dynamic response approach.”

Cory Richards (MA’12) owns a private practice with offices in Bend and Eugene, Oregon, and Boise, Idaho, and is a partner in an ENT practice in central Oregon. Cory commented that he doesn’t have much free time on his hands.

Rachel Tapper Zijlstra (MA’98), a proud alumna, recently hired Rachel Lopez (MS’20) for her company, Sound Therapies, Inc., based in San Diego. As Rachel Zijlstra noted, “What a beautiful small world.”
If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is to be flexible in our service delivery. During the summer of 2020, we supervised our graduate students offering Camp Candoo, an intensive summer program for children with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS), through telepractice. Several skills were acquired along the way.

We learned to implement both dynamic temporal tactile cueing (DTTC) (Strand, 2000) and integration of phonemic and phonologic awareness over Zoom. One can use these evidence-based practice (EBP) techniques to treat children with CAS with some creativity and an attentive e-helper (typically a parent).

DTTC is a method often used with children with CAS to increase speech intelligibility by adding and fading cues as necessary for the child to achieve the correct sequence of articulatory movements. For example, if the child is unable to say the target utterance in direct imitation, the speech-language pathologist (SLP) provides a simultaneous model and decreases the rate of production so that the child can watch the clinician to see the movements necessary for speech. The SLP adds tactile cues, such as tapping the child’s alveolar ridge for the /t/ or /d/ sound, if needed.

The benefit of telepractice is that SLPs can provide up-close views of their own articulators, making it easier for the child to attend to the SLP’s face than when in person. The downside is that it is difficult to do simultaneous verbal productions because you can only hear one voice at a time when using most platforms in teletherapy. You also cannot physically help the child with articulatory placement. Hence, coaching parents to provide simultaneous production and tactile cuing is crucial.

During Camp Candoo, we trained parents using video models to show how the different stages of cuing work. The “dance” of cuing between the parent and clinician can take some time to figure out, but parents gained confidence and competence over the course of a few sessions. Given the importance of home practice, this was an excellent skill for parents to learn. Another advantage of teletherapy was that it forced the clinician to use miming during simultaneous productions after the verbal simultaneous production, which also is an important step in the cuing hierarchy.

As we know from principles of motor learning, it is imperative to elicit multiple repetitions of target phrases to improve intelligibility. We achieved this in several ways. Incorporating the client’s target phrases in social stories presented via PowerPoint allowed for a natural way to elicit the phrases with different sentential stress patterns. It was a motivating activity because the children loved being stars of their own stories. To elicit more repetitions, we staged loud events in the background of the narrative (e.g., a plane flying overhead or a jackhammer), creating a situation where the children had to produce their phrase multiple times to be heard.

We also adapted a simple sorter that Dr. Nancy Potter shared with us to provide general feedback and easy data collection. The simple sorter uses one picture to represent ‘needs work’ (e.g., Olaf in pieces) and one to represent “you got it!” (e.g., Olaf all put together and smiling) with a token to place on the pictures after each production. The 10 tokens ensured at least 10 productions. This material was adapted to an online format by placing the images on a PowerPoint slide with movable circle shapes to represent 10 tokens. After the 10 tokens are placed, the child can continue working to acquire all the tokens on the “you got it” picture. One student clinician embedded the simple sorter on each page of her social story, so it worked seamlessly. When not using social stories, we obtained multiple repetitions by creating games with quick reinforcers that could be played online with Lesson Pix (https://lessonpix.com). Wow, what an affordable and useful tool that is!

Mirroring iPad apps on Zoom also came in handy. One client used a high pitch, which

DOCTOR’S CORNER

Dear Dr. Meredith,

Can a speech-language pathologist effectively work with a child with childhood apraxia of speech via telepractice?

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Mirroring iPad apps on Zoom also came in handy. One client used a high pitch, which
would get in the way of his intelligibility. We used the Voice Analyst app (https://speechtools.co/voice-analyyst) to show him his target pitch range. Once he saw where his pitch needed to be with real time feedback, he was able to adjust it appropriately rather quickly. We also used the Speech Tutor app to provide a clearer model of the location of some harder to see articulatory contacts. Lastly, free software that provided waveforms, spectrograms, and pitch contour, like WASP (https://www.speechandhearing.net/laboratory/wasp), worked well to show children their intonation contour and segmentation errors. In addition, it makes a good recording so the child can monitor and self-correct errors. This is a web-based tool that the family can pull up on their computer, which allows for better recording and playback for the child.

Printed cues with letters represented by traditional graphemes or Phonic Faces (https://www.elementory.com/phonicfaces.html) were also used to provide specific feedback for children’s speech sound errors, while simultaneously integrating phonemic and phonological awareness and early literacy skills. Phonic Faces show the letter-to sound relationship for English speech sounds (also available in Spanish). Each letter has a corresponding character that illustrates how the sound is made. For example, the “L” is produced by Elton, who shows the tongue tip raised. Since they are only provided in print form, they were scanned to make a digital copy to use on the computer. Another option would be to use the printed version with a document camera (i.e., doc cam).

I like Phonic Faces because I can blame the Phonic Face characters for the child’s speech errors, which helps those who would normally shut down when corrected. For example, if the child has a pre-vocalic voicing error and says ‘do’ for ‘two,’ we can call out Phonic Face Dedra’s D for being too bossy and not allowing Tina’s T to say her sound. We can tell the child to whisper the ‘t’, as to not wake up the bossy ‘d’. The child simultaneously learns the sound (phoneme) that pairs with the letter (grapheme) and how different sounds make different words.

In addition to individual therapy, we learned to run online groups addressing language and literacy. There are many great children’s book resources online, making it easy to share a book during teletherapy (e.g., Get Epic, FlyLeaf Publishing, Book Nook, Nora Gaydos books, etc.). Using the books, we worked on narratives, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness. We made it interactive by ensuring each child had print-outs of the story grammar icons from Story Champs (https://www.languagedynamicsgroup.com/story-champs). This allowed the child to hold up the appropriate icon at the appropriate point in the story (e.g., character, setting, problem, solution, emotion). Children were also engaged in retelling the story and answering questions that reinforced Tier 2 vocabulary from the context of the story.

To target phonemic and phonological awareness in both group and individual therapy, we set up interactive letter tiles on PowerPoint through which the child could be given remote control of the mouse to manipulate the letters. One set was made with traditional letters for children who had good letter-sound awareness, and another set was made with the Phonic Faces for children still working on this skill. For traditional letters one can use the web-based tool from Really Great Reading (https://www.reallygreatreading.com/lettertiles).

To bring literacy and the children’s phrases into the online group, the student clinicians wrote social stories that included all the children’s targeted functional phrases, and each child was given multiple turns to read their phrases. They loved this! In addition, the student clinicians were very creative, embedding funny, brief animations into the stories, which kept everyone engaged.

Lastly, we cannot expect to keep a child engaged online for too long without a movement break. For movement breaks, we found silly songs to sing together from Go Noodle (https://app.gonoodle.com) and other resources. We also found some great yoga activities to align with the theme of the week (e.g., Rocket yoga for space week- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cU82gM7_M4). Movement breaks helped modulate the energy level and were used to either calm or to excite.

So, “Can an SLP effectively work with a child with childhood apraxia of speech via telepractice?” The answer is an enthusiastic, “Yes!” All children made excellent progress and the parents were pleased with the changes they saw at home.


Amy Meredith, PhD
Clinical Professor, Director of Graduate Studies, and incoming Interim Department Chair
Health Sciences Educational Outreach (HSEO) is an interprofessional organization on the WSU Health Sciences Spokane campus that strives to educate culturally diverse and rural communities on the multiplicity of careers within healthcare. Through collaborative online presentations, HSEO gives members the opportunity to represent their professions while developing leadership skills and promoting a new generation of culturally diverse healthcare professionals. The 2020-2021 school year was very different due to the pandemic, requiring us to innovate the way we both learn and reach out to potential healthcare students. In spite of the challenges, we found new ways to safely continue our outreach to communities.

This year, members committed their time to educate multiple groups of students about the professions of speech-language pathology (SLP) and audiology. Via Zoom, we created visual platforms for students to learn about augmentative and alternative communication devices, examined thickened liquids used for patients with feeding and swallowing problems, and explored the path patients with traumatic brain injuries must undergo for recovery. Creating an online platform of recorded presentations for learning was one of the club’s significant accomplishments this year.

We participated in a number of virtual events, visited the Na-ha-shnee Health Science camp that serves native high school students throughout the region, presented to Moscow High School and at the Washington HOSA leadership conference, and offered a Medical Mystery Night for 150 high school students in the Spokane area.

Our focus this year has been on educating our members to understand the importance of cultural humility. A panel of SLP graduate students representing cultural minority groups from across the country spoke to WSU-EWU University Programs in Communication Disorders (UPCD) undergraduate students about how their cultural backgrounds affected their education. The panel shared their personal stories as cultural minorities in the field of SLP, described how they first became aware of the professions of SLP and audiology, and shared their ideas as to how to make all healthcare fields more culturally diverse. We were also able to welcome the Social Justice Peer Educators from WSU Pullman to educate us on microaggressions and how they could affect our productivity as future clinicians.

COVID-19 brought many new challenges to our club. Nonetheless, we continued to educate and promote healthcare careers to rural and culturally diverse communities. We are thankful that, even through a pandemic, we were still able to reach students and communities through virtual meetings. Thank you to our members, club officers, advisors, and community members for working hard to overcome the obstacles and make this year successful for HSEO.

Health Sciences Educational Outreach Officers:
Madeline Schmidt, President (WSU)
Gabrielle Tibbitts, Vice President (WSU)
Emily Jernigan, Secretary/WSU Treasurer (WSU)
Heidi Lague, EWU Treasurer (EWU)
Jennifer Biedebach, Public Relations (WSU)
Sarah Roylance, EWU Representative (EWU)

Faculty Advisors:
Clinical Professor Amy Meredith (WSU)
Associate Professor Lesli Cleveland (EWU)
The coronavirus posed significant challenges for everyone over the past year, especially for those 65 and older who were at high risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19 and experienced increased isolation and loneliness due to social distancing. It is for these reasons that NSSLHA focused its fundraising efforts in 2020-21 on the 65 and older population.

Fundraising

Every year, our members participate in NSSLHA Loves, a community outreach event to provide funding and increase awareness of an organization of our choice. This year we selected the Corbin Senior Activity Center, a privately funded non-profit center in Spokane dedicated to helping older adults empower their lives through wellness, recreational activities, and education. Our chapter raised more than $250 through the sale of NSSLHA/UPCD branded t-shirts and sweatshirts during the spring term to support these important programs. Thank you to our fellow students, faculty and staff for helping us raise these funds.

Philanthropy

NSSLHA looks forward to reengaging in philanthropic events on campus and in the community when it is safe to do so. Even though event participation has been difficult during COVID-19, our members continued the NSSLHA tradition of hosting these events by creating a virtual auction—HOE Down for HOPE—to raise funds for the Spokane Hearing Oral Program for Excellence (HOPE) School.

Education

A lack of connection and peer engagement challenged students during these unprecedented times. Although we were unable to interact in person, we used Zoom and social media to stay connected with our members. In the fall, NSSLHA held an education night to provide students with the opportunity to gain information about swallowing treatments and working in acute care. Speech-language pathologists Jan Young and Megan O’Brien shared their knowledge and experience in these areas. In spring, NSSLHA hosted a guest speaker night where EWU alumna Alyssa Gonzalez shared her experience as a speech-language pathology assistant working with clients with ADHD and dyslexia. We also held a successful virtual trivia event where our members enjoyed answering trivia questions drawn from the field of communication sciences and disorders.

We are especially proud of this year’s accomplishments given the current state of the world and are thankful to our NSSLHA members and faculty advisors for their hard work and dedication to make this year productive and memorable.

2020–2021

NSSLHA Officers:
Danielle Nelson, President (EWU)
Carina Zavala, Vice President (EWU)
Viivi Fellin, Secretary (WSU)
Logan Dempsey, EWU Treasurer
Shaelyn Moracco, WSU Treasurer
Taylor Westphal, Public Relations (WSU)

Faculty Advisors:
Lecturer Lindsay Williams (EWU)
Clinical Assistant Professor Dana Algeo-Nichols (WSU)
Each year, the Speech and Hearing Sciences faculty strives to lead the field with exceptional research, clinical innovation, service, and outreach. In the 2020-2021 academic year, faculty published six peer-reviewed articles and one book chapter, secured one internal and two external grants, submitted one patent application, and had 26 oral presentations, posters, seminars, and workshops accepted. Unfortunately, most presentations were cancelled due to COVID-19. Outreach to local, state, national, and international communities was modified to virtual platforms where possible.

Clinical Assistant Professor Dana Algeo was selected to participate in WSU’s LIFT Fellowship that engages faculty fellows in an intensive learning environment as they explore and integrate evidence-based active learning in their teaching.

Assistant Professor Georgina Lynch was awarded a Washington Research Foundation grant to study pupillary light reflex biometrics and hand-held technology for non-invasive screening for autism spectrum disorder.

Department Chair and Professor Gail Chermak was appointed associate dean for faculty affairs for the College of Medicine.

Clinical Associate Professor and Clinic Coordinator Christiane Dechert ensured that every student scheduled to graduate in spring 2020 obtained every clinical simulation hour allowed for ASHA certification following the closure of our campus clinic in March 2020 due to the pandemic.

Clinical Professor Amy Meredith collaborated with a medical student to design a prototype shield that prevents spread of COVID-19 aerosols while maintaining good visibility of the therapist’s face.

Professor Nancy Potter and Associate Professor Mark VanDam published results of a pilot trial of their NIH-funded Babble Boot Camp in infants with classic galactosemia.

Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Off-Campus Clinical Programs Karen Simpson went beyond the call of duty following closure of our clinic and many community sites in March 2020 as the pandemic raged to ensure all second-year graduate students acquired the remaining clinic clock hours needed prior to graduation to meet requirements for ASHA CCC-SLP.

Assistant Professor Lauren (Swineford) Thompson received the 2021 Chancellor’s Faculty Leadership Award and a competitive travel award from the Simons Foundation for Autism Research to present her work at the inaugural Meeting on Language in Autism.

Assistant Professor David Jenson was awarded a WSU Seed Grant to study the McGurk Effect in clinical populations.

Teaching Assistant Professor Melissa Ratsch interpreted in the Spokane community and exposed parents to ASL, offering infant and toddler sign language community classes.

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Assistant Professor Mark VanDam was awarded a NIH-NIDCD grant examining literacy development for preschoolers with hearing loss.
Gail Chermak
Department Chair
Gail Chermak will step down as department chair effective July 1, 2021. Dr. Chermak will continue to serve as associate dean for faculty affairs for the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine in 2021-2022. Thank you, Dr. Chermak, for your many years of leadership and service to the department!

Amy Meredith
Clinical Professor
Amy Meredith will serve as the department’s interim chair beginning July 1.

Kelsey Meyer
Undergraduate Academic Coordinator
Kelsey Meyer transitioned from her role as graduate program coordinator (since 2018) to undergraduate academic coordinator.

Courtney Fricano
Graduate Program Coordinator
Courtney Fricano joined the department in August 2020 as graduate program coordinator.

Carrie Balazs
Instructor and Clinical Educator
Carrie Balazs, instructor and clinical educator, is leaving us as her family relocates in service to our country.

Michelle Johnson
Michelle Johnson will join the team in fall 2021 to teach our Introduction to SLP and Audiology course. Michelle is a speech-language pathologist with Gritman Medical Center in Moscow, Idaho.
Here’s one of those daunting questions: **If I had to do it all over again would I change anything?** When looking backwards, which gurus warn against, I still have to chuckle at my journey in speech-language pathology. Here are some glimpses.

When I arrived at WSU in 1981, my early pursuits included a degree in broadcasting/advertising. I started down that road only to discover that it wasn’t for me. Waking up in the wee morning hours, hiking across town through snow, sleet and cold to the Compton (student) Union Building the “CUB,” and doing my pre-dawn radio program at the KZUU radio station was fun but tiring. I was poor and remember feeling both impoverished and depressed.

Working at an eatery catty-corner from campus, I started asking coworkers and patrons what they were studying. As coworker Karen Sponseller (MA’82) and I made sandwiches and poured carbonated beverages, I inquired about her major. Karen enthusiastically told me about speech-language pathology (SLP) and her master’s thesis. She encouraged me to take the introductory class with Kathy Kennedy and it ultimately changed my trajectory. I recall looking up employment statistics and finding that speech-language pathologists and audiologists ranked high amongst the needed future professionals. That need hasn’t changed much over the decades.

The SLP program at WSU was rigorous and I remain thankful for that early training. Instructors like Robert (Bob) Potter, J. Richard (Dick) Franks, Joan Dengerink, Charles (Chuck) Madison, Gail Chermak, Lynn Larrigan, and others in Daggy Hall instilled knowledge and put wind in my sails. Helpful classmates and hours (err, years) of studying in the CUB were part of that mix too. Thinking I wanted to take a break after my bachelor’s degree, Bob Potter rattled off statistics and urged me to continue my education and do whatever it might take (including taking out loans or even selling my coin collection)!

The summer before my school SLP internship in Purdy, Washington, I started graduate coursework at Western Washington University in Bellingham, studying with Frank Wilson, a visiting professor in voice disorders. He trained students in flexible nasoendoscopic evaluation of the voice and his Wilson Voice Profile. With heavy logistical and financial considerations, I gratefully returned to Pullman to complete my master’s degree.

Following a hospital internship, Karen Sponseller re-emerged as a colleague, offering me a position at a neighboring hospital. I was there for six years before my wife Michelle (Severud) (MS’91) and I started a company in Spokane offering artificial larynx devices, laryngectomy/tracheostomy supplies, as well as a clinical practice. Artificial larynx repairs were made in our lab and scores of artificial larynx devices were repaired allowing laryngectomees to speak again. Tracheo-Esophageal Prostheses were becoming
more common and we sold those supplies too.

The company grew, providing equipment to patients, hospitals, and clinics in Washington, the U.S. and abroad. We developed and manufactured several interesting devices, including a pneumatic artificial larynx used in developing areas around the world where electricity, batteries, and resources were slim. The device used exhaled air from the tracheostoma to vibrate a rubber diaphragm that delivered voicing directly into the mouth via a small tube. An earlier version used a metal reed but didn’t have the reflective qualities of the rubber diaphragm. We also developed a line of FDA-approved tracheostoma filters and two voice enhancement devices for people with decreased vocal intensity and weakened articulation.

We also developed a whistle so people with tracheostomas could learn to control stoma noise, summon pets, or signal for help. When using the whistle to guide control of noisy stoma blasts, patients were lightheartedly instructed, “don’t blow the whistle on yourself!” My dear dad, being a retired NASA engineer/instrument-maker, enjoyed these projects too and was a tremendous help. I miss his ingenuity and Far Side sense of humor!

As a total aside, did you know that the Far Side’s comic creator, Gary Larson, was also a WSU alumnus?

In 1997 I returned to school at Gonzaga University to work on my doctorate and study the reliability of artificial larynx devices. Those were exceedingly busy years and, to make things even busier, I started part-time work in the public schools. The Educational Staff Associate (ESA) Preparatory Document obtained years earlier at WSU as an undergraduate helped me obtain Initial ESA Certification and that job.

We eventually sold the company, and I devoted my time as a speech-language pathologist in the public schools. A combination of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and the desire for a new challenge led me to obtain National Board Teachers Certification in Exceptional Needs.

Ten years ago, that independent, clinical bug struck again, and I started Inland Speech Pathology, LLC. I retired from the schools nearly four years ago and operate Inland Speech Pathology full-time, working largely with people suffering from traumatic brain injury, post-concussive syndrome, stroke, and voice disorders. Six years ago, I embarked on a program of massage/myotherapy and was re-introduced to the WSU Pullman Morrill Hall lab on the Pullman campus. (I know that some of you have indelible memories of that lab and Carl Schneiderman’s anatomy/physiology lectures.) With this additional training, I received a Washington state endorsement in intraoral massage for the treatment of temporomandibular joint disorder, tension headache, and other problems occurring in the mouth and head. The business name expanded to Inland Speech Pathology & Therapeutics.

As part of my practice, I now provide forensic SLP work, which is challenging and rewarding. As therapists, sometimes we are the only advocates our patients and clients have. The general public, legal profession, employers and others have only a limited idea of the problems our patients face on a daily basis. Often, their troubles are minimized because they appear fine on the outside, but the impact on communication and thinking is gargantuan. Problems in memory, concentration, attention, word finding, communicative anxiety, and linguistic processing speed are just a few examples of their challenges, especially after serious accidents or injuries. Having the opportunity to both quantify and qualify these problems for legal settlements and other benefits is rewarding. Not having my plate sufficiently full, I also currently serve on the Washington State Board of Hearing and Speech.

Our son is grown and Michelle and I live on a farm where we have a fruit orchard, a summer garden with veggies and sunflowers, and some named chickens. Michelle works in the public schools providing assessments and I operate the practice. This last year has brought some unprecedented changes that have required many “work-arounds.” COVID screenings, telepractice sessions, masking, and a heightened level of disinfection/ awareness/cautions are all part of the new mix. The good news is that a vaccine is here and more people are getting it.

So back to that daunting question: No, there’s nothing I would change. The SLP journey has been gratifying. I have helped literally thousands of people with unique problems, have learned countless lessons from my patients/students, and even met Michelle through the profession more than 30 years ago.

Don’t get me wrong. While there have been patient successes, there’s also been plenty of patient challenges, trying circumstances, and dreary outcomes. The successes, however, far exceed anything else because most communication problems can be improved. My plan is to continue serving as a speech-language pathologist and making positive differences.
Academic and Clinical Excellence

Arianna Back and Jordan Sonneborn were each awarded a John D. Blankinship Scottish Rite Fellowship and Randi Pedersen was awarded a Miller Early Life Internship. These fellowships and internship are supported by the Scottish Rite Foundation of Washington.

Kyndra Hans was named the Edward Gwin Scholar in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

Melissa Lyness received the Lynn Larrigan Clinical Excellence Award.

Alyssa Peterson received the Outstanding Speech and Hearing Sciences Graduate Student Commencement Award.

Rising junior Tanya Rivera received the Crimson Award at the 2021 Showcase for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (SURCA).

Chadelle Smith was named the Outstanding Senior in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

Madeline Schmidt received the Meritorious Academic and Community Project Award.

Claire Schrock was awarded the Maynard Lee Daggy Scholarship in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

Emma Stewart was named the J. Richard Franks Scholar in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

Delaney Williams received the WSU Health Sciences Spokane Chancellor’s Leadership Award and the Legacy Award.

Graduating With Honors

Summa cum laude: Shaelyn Moracco, Emalee Stephens, and Delaney Williams;

Magna cum laude: Nicole Coppersmith, Emily Jernigan, Maya Ladner, and Chadelle Smith;

Cum laude: Viivi Fellin, Hayli Johnson, Alissa Ludeman, Danielle Lund, and Gabrielle Tibbitts
The Multicultural Club brings health sciences students and faculty together to celebrate culture, advocate for diversity and inclusion, and spread cultural awareness through education. We value the importance of cultural competence, not only in the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology, but in all healthcare professions. Cultural competency is a dynamic, ongoing process that the Multicultural Club seeks to strengthen.

In November 2020, the club collaborated with Evanlene Melting Tarrow, WSU Native American outreach health sciences coordinator, to develop a week of events that celebrated and culturally informed the campus about tribal communities. Events focused on tribal sovereignty, understanding powwows, and the need for a culturally informed and skilled healthcare workforce in tribal communities. To reinforce the latter, the club participated in the Native American Pre-Health Bridge workshop that educated tribal high school students on the many health science careers, including speech-language pathology and audiology.

Later in the academic year, the club partnered with Health Science and Education Outreach (HSEO) in hosting a panel of two first-generation speech-language pathology graduate students: Lelac Badakian, who is Armenian American, and Tammy Le, who is Vietnamese American. They shared their journeys through higher education with tips on how to be culturally sensitive/competent and how to work towards increasing diversity in this profession.

Members attended our annual Talent Show, held virtually this year, which showcased our many talented speech and hearing sciences students. We also enjoyed an online presentation by Teaching Assistant Professor Melissa Ratsch and her sister Terri on deaf culture and community.

Unfortunately, distance learning precluded our club from holding cultural lunches and our annual Parade of Nations. However, we created an opportunity for health sciences students and faculty to share their favorite cultural recipes and traditions in an international cookbook that will be available online.

The Multicultural Club believes that by gaining knowledge about cultural practices and traditions, we can build positive attitudes across cultural differences. We thank our members, faculty advisors and student leaders for their commitment to learning, advocating, and celebrating diversity!

2020–2021

**Multicultural Club Officers:**
Chadelle Smith, President (WSU)
Jordan Gravatt, Vice President (WSU)
Nicole Coppensmith, Secretary (WSU)
Viivi Felin, WSU Treasurer
Carley Nelson, EWU Treasurer
Lindsey McBride, Public Relations (WSU)
Madison Winfrey, Junior Liaison (WSU)

**Faculty Advisors:**
Clinical Professor Amy Meredith (WSU)
Assistant Director for Student Engagement Christina Sosa (EWU)

Online presentation by Teaching Assistant Professor Melissa Ratsch, her sister Terri, and nephew James on deaf culture and community.
SPEECH AND HEARING SCIENCES

Preparing speech-language pathologists to provide compassionate, patient-centered care