The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is pleased to welcome our four new faculty and staff members this semester!

Mrs. Saneta Thurmon, M.A., CCC-SLP/A is an Instructor and the new Director of the Undergraduate Program. Ms. Thurmon is dually certified in both speech-language pathology and audiology and received her master’s degrees from the University of Tennessee. She has worked as a clinical supervisor at three other universities including Fontbonne University and the University of Tennessee. She has worked at the Central Institute for the Deaf and the Center for Hearing and Speech. Her area of expertise is working with aural rehabilitation. She has been on numerous cochlear implant teams, in which she helps decide who is a good candidate for cochlear implants and provides support throughout the entire process. She has presented at professional conferences on training speech-language pathologists on how to effectively do aural rehabilitation therapy. When asked what she is excited for within the department, she said she is enthusiastic that her role here includes a mix of her three favorite things: mentoring students, teaching classes, and teaching in the clinic. She also stated that she is happy to be a part of a university with a mission statement like SLU’s, including considering the whole person.

Dr. Yi-Fang Chiu, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is a new assistant professor and research faculty member. Dr. Chiu received her Masters and Ph.D. in Speech-Language Pathology from Indiana University. She has worked as a Speech-Language Pathologist
in several long-term care facilities. She also was an instructor at Indiana University. Her areas of interest and expertise include: speech physiology in motor speech disorders, neural motor control in speech production and swallowing, adult neurogenic communication and swallowing. She will be continuing her research on motor speech production in persons with Parkinson’s Disorder. When asked what she is excited for, she said she is excited to build research here with the many resources and scholars across disciplines available at SLU. She is also looking forward to incorporating students in her research and helping them develop their own research interests. She is also excited to be a part of the SLU environment as a whole. She feels that this department offers good interdisciplinary research and she is excited to incorporate that into her research.

Dr. Mitizi Brammer, Ph.D., CCC-SLP received her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Speech-Language Pathology at Arkansas State University and then went on to obtain her Ph.D. Education, specializing in Curriculum and Instruction from University of Missouri-Saint Louis. She began working as an SLP in Cape Girardeau, MO. Later, she moved to Saint Louis to work for the Saint Louis Special School District for 27 years under various titles. Starting as an SLP for the Saint Louis Special School district, Dr. Brammer then worked her way up to become the Area Coordinator in Planning and Development in charge of the professional development and planning for the different professionals. Now, Dr. Brammer is an Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Programs in the Communication Sciences and Disorder department. Her responsibilities include recruitment, retention for the graduate program. Her favorite part of her position, however, is working with the different students, especially through teaching students in having a passion to help the students to succeed. In terms of the growth of the department, she would like the program to grow to make sure the coursework fully prepares the undergraduate students for graduate school and graduate students for being successful professionals. She is also interested in doing research concerning adolescent language disorders and literacy in the context of the school setting, as well as adult learning theory applied to students in communication sciences and disorders.

Mrs. Cheryl Follmer is the new Administrative Assistant for the department. For the past three years, Mrs. Follmer worked in the Saint Louis University Medical School’s Department of Otolaryngology an administrative secretary. Her role in this department includes handling the financial aspects of the department, acting as a liaison with the students and faculty, and assisting the graduate and undergraduate program directors, as well as the chairman, Dr. Threats, with their position. When asked what she is excited for, she said she is excited to learn more about the financial side of the university and to meet all of the students.
Lynda Campbell Memorial Lecture Series: Topics in Diversity

This semester’s Lynda Campbell Memorial Lecture Series, Topics in Diversity was held on October 24, 2014. Dr. Nidhi Mahenda was this year’s speaker, presenting on *Culture, Dementia & Ethnicity: The intersection and its implication for speech-language pathologists*. Dr. Mahenda is an Associate Professor and Department Chair in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at California State University East Bay. She is a certified bilingual speech-language, and she directs the Aging and Cognition Research Clinic at California State University East Bay. Her research interests include adult neurogenic language disorders and the multicultural issues influencing service delivery. She delivered a wonderful lecture discussing cultural perspectives and multicultural issues with dementia.

CSD Research Exchange

In September, the Communication Sciences and Disorders department hosted a special guest lecture, Dr. Anne Hill of the University of Queensland, Australia, as part of the CSD Research Exchange. During the lecture, Dr. Hill discussed models and tools for placement quality for their students to ensure a quality within a range of clinical education. With a limited amount of placements, Dr. Hill wants to assure that students are prepared for their clinical placements. One of these methods including the use of simulated or standardized patients for the learning of some clinical skills. Dr. Hill also discussed University of Queensland’s placements in indigenous clinics and international placements in Hue, Vietnam. Students and faculty had a wonderful experience learning about their innovative programs and learning about an educational program in a different country.
"Making a Difference in North St. Louis" symposium

CSD was represented at the second "Making a Difference in North St. Louis" symposium at the William J. Harrison Education Center. This initiative of Saint Louis University was designed to bring together people and ideas to have a positive impact on North St. Louis. Faculty, staff and students come together to demonstrate research and projects done in this region. Jean Evans, Director of Clinical Education, and two graduate students, Elizabeth Ladue and Dana Mc Nicholas, presented a poster concerning the Department’s work with St. Louis Catholic Academy and two Head Start schools, which includes providing evaluations, intervention, and teacher and parent education.

2014 ASHA Convention

The 2014 ASHA Convention was held at the Orange County Convention Center November 19th-22nd in Orlando, Florida. Several graduate students from SLU attended the convention, including second year students Natalie Miller and Amanda Pressley, and first year student Alicea Mahnken. Amanda presented her thesis, “School-Based Speech Language Pathologists Vocabulary Intervention Practices”, mentored by Dr. Sara Steele. Natalie and Alicia represented our graduate program at the ASHA Graduate School Fair and spoke to many prospective students.

Did you know?
Speech-language pathology was ranked in CareerBuilder’s 10 Best Jobs for 2015!

Department Homecoming

Several members of the Communication Sciences and Disorders undergraduate class of 1964 returned for Saint Louis University’s Homecoming, which includes special programs for individuals who graduated from SLU 50 years ago. Seven of the twelve total students from the graduating class came to visit the department. They met with Dr. Threats where they received a tour of the department and were given a look at the technologies used in the department today. It was great to have these alumnae return! Pictured left to right:

Carroll Boyer, Carolyn Hollingsworth, Mary Mohart, Mary Sommers, Mary Lee Shasserre, Mary Jo Margetis, Joan Basola.

NSSLHHA Highlights

November 10th-14th was NSSLHA Advocacy Week: a week of events to bring awareness about speech and hearing disorders to the community. A bake sale was held outside of McGannon Hall on November 11th to raise money for Operation Smile, a nonprofit organization that provides free surgeries to repair cleft lips and cleft palates for children. Another event that week was NSSLHA’s free Annual Hearing Screening for the SLU community was held. SLU NSSLHA Academic Vice President Laura Bonfig said, “We had a great turnout this year and appreciated the involvement of the undergraduate and graduate students and faculty.”
First year graduate student Caroline Marino has always loved doing service projects. While in her undergraduate program, Marino went through a service learning program which involved studying abroad in South Africa for 5 months. Besides studying, a portion of her program involved days of service each week. She worked with a speech language pathologist at a school in Cape Town, South Africa with persons with various cognitive and physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and muscular dystrophy. While volunteering at the school, she had various responsibilities. Marino assisted in developing literacy programs for 3rd and 5th grade boys and assisted in teaching English to some of the teachers. Marino helped to create resources for the classrooms such as an alphabet board. She also assisted in helping the children learn to use augmentative/alternative boards and devices. During snack time, a responsibility was to assist in swallowing as many of the children had difficulty with motor control. According to Marino, it was an experience that she learned so much from and would love to visit South Africa again. She learned how to think on her feet and work with the tools that she has been given, both of which is important for her future profession. Working with those of other backgrounds in South Africa has helped her better understand the complexities that can be involved in serving diverse populations in the United States. Overall, she has been grateful for the experiences that she had while abroad and hopes to one day return.
Alumni Spotlight

Laura Rinella (pictured left) received her Masters degree from Saint Louis University in 2008. Laura recently started a private speech therapy practice, ARCH Speech Therapy, LLC. Located in Waterloo, Illinois. ARCH Speech Therapy serves pediatric clients in the St. Louis Metro East. ARCH Speech Therapy, LLC employs a collaborative, team-based approach that empowers families, teachers and other service providers to play vital roles in a child’s communication.

Deepa Ravi (pictured right) graduated from Saint Louis University in 2002 and moved to India to work with some of the leading hospital chains as a Consultant Speech Therapist, focusing on adults with language disorders. For the past 12 years, she has also had a private practice working with children with language disorders. Currently, she works exclusively in her private practice. She is also active in delivering lectures to special educator trainees in Bangalore and works closely with pediatricians to emphasize the need for early intervention and the importance of speech therapy.

Lynne Brady Wagner (pictured left) graduated from Saint Louis University with her Masters in 1991. She now works at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Boston, MA as the Director of the Stroke Rehabilitation Program and of the Clinical Scholars Program. She is also a chair on the Ethics Advisory Committee. In addition, Lynne works as a Faculty Associate at Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics and as an Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor and Ethics Core Curriculum Instructor at MGH Institute of Health Professions. Lynne has published and presented many works concerning ethics and rehabilitation.