This year, three faculty members of the department are retiring: Dr. Dennis Fuller, Ms. Marty Brennan, and Ms. Patricia Miller.

Dr. Dennis Fuller has been working a split position at SLU for 17 years. His time was shared between the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders as a professor and the Department of Otolaryngology where he saw patients with voice and swallowing disorders. Before starting at SLU, Dr. Fuller served in the Army, worked in the public schools, at the VA and Rehab Hospital and worked at Washington University where he was in charge of the speech-language pathologists at Barnes Jewish and Children’s Hospital. As a professor at SLU he has taught many courses including Voice Disorders, Cleft Palate/Maxofacial, Dysphagia, Speech Science, Anatomy and Physiology, and Survey of Speech Disorders. Some of his favorite memories from his time at SLU include watching undergraduate students emerge years later as confidently out of graduate school and seeing past students at conventions. When asked what he will miss most about SLU, Dr. Fuller said, “The camaraderie of the graduate students. They keep us current and continue to challenge us to stay current.” Dr. Fuller plans to get back into golfing, fly fishing and more traveling during his retirement. He also hopes to get back to working for the Habitat House, where he was once a house captain. Dr. Fuller added that he is pleased to say that he has taught and worked for SLU; he is impressed by all of the institutions and facilities recruiting our graduates. He says that he is happy he was a part of it all.

Ms. Marty Brennan has worked for Saint Louis University for 37 years. The positions she has held include, part-time
and full-time Clinical Supervisor, Clinical Instructor, Lecturer, and Assistant Professor, Director of Undergraduate Programs and Coordinator of the Leveling Program. As a professor she has taught several courses at the graduate and undergraduate level including Introduction to Communication Sciences and Disorders, Foundations of Language, Language Development and Disorders, Clinical Methods, Clinical Observation, Language Disorders, Language Assessment, Language Intervention, Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and Critical Readings in Speech-Language Pathology. Ms. Brennan stated that she has many favorite memories during her time at SLU. Many of them include working with her husband Don, working next door to her best friend Pat Miller, and working with the CSD faculty and students as a team. When asked what she will miss most about SLU, Ms. Brennan said she will miss the daily interactions with students. “Teaching talented freshmen who are so enthusiastic about their newly discovered careers and watching as they become seniors who are still enthusiastic, a bit more purposeful, and a lot more knowledgeable has been one of the most consistently rewarding things in my professional career.” Ms. Brennan plans to travel and spend time with family, friends and her grandchildren during her retirement.

Ms. Patricia Miller has worked at Saint Louis University for 34 years, having held a variety of department and teaching positions. These positions include, Clinical Supervisor, Coordinator of the Student Teaching Practicum, the Early Childhood Language and Literacy Center (ECLC) Director, Clinic Director, Coordinator of Adult Practicum, Director of the Graduate Program and Coordinator of External Practicum. She has taught undergraduate and graduate level courses in Normal Speech and Language Development, Speech and Language Development of the Exceptional Child, Articulation Development and Disorders, Motor Speech Disorders, Neuropathologies in Children, Survey of Speech Disorders, Speech Development, and Counseling. Ms. Miller has also served as the ASHA Continuing Education Coordinator to allow the department to offer ASHA CEU’s for Continuing Education activities. She has served as the Coordinator for the Lynda R. Campbell Memorial Lecture Series since it began in 2001. When asked what her favorite memories during her time at SLU were, Ms. Miller said, “The wonderful students I have had the opportunity to get to know over the years!” She said she will miss the daily contact and interaction with her colleagues and students. Ms. Miller looks forward to not having such a long “to do” list that never seemed able to be completed. She plans to spend more time with friends, family, exercise, golf, gardening, reading and travel with the extra time from the retirement.

We will miss all three of our retiring faculty members and are so very thankful for everything they have done. We wish them the best of luck!
Lynda Campbell Memorial Lecture Series: Topics in Diversity

This seminar series honors the contributions of former Chair and Associate Professor, Lynda R. Campbell, Ph.D. The series is held each spring and fall, and features nationally known scholars who present day-long seminars on issues in diversity. The Fall 2013 Lecture Series featured Rosario Roman (pictured above) on Developing Culturally Relevant Assessment and Intervention.

Strategies. Ms. Roman is a recent ASHA Diversity Champion recipient. Her work involves providing services and consulting for children and school districts with an increasingly diverse student population. The Spring 2014 Lecture Series featured Brooke Hallowell, PhD, (pictured below) from Ohio University on Global Perspective on Aging, Disability, and Access to Care in the Developing World. She was this past year’s ASHA recipient for the Certificate of Recognition for Outstanding Contributions in International Achievement.

Department Expansion

Changes are being made to the Communication Sciences and Disorders department. The department’s space will be physically doubling in size after taking over the second floor of McGannon, in addition to keeping the lower level. The expansion of the department allows for several positive changes. This increase in space will allow for increased faculty, research lab space, classrooms, and expansion of the clinic. The university has targeted the department as one with potential growth and we are working to increase the number of faculty in order to increase the number of master’s students accepted as well as eventual development of a Ph.D. program in speech-language pathology. Compared to 10 years ago, the number of applicants for the master’s program has increased threefold. As a result, the Department had to turn down many qualified students. The renovations will start in Fall of 2014 and are planned to be completed by Fall 2015!
Students Volunteer with Soccer Program for Children with Special Needs

Graduate students, Alli Reimer and Katie Walsh, have been volunteering with the organization SPENSA for five years. SPENSA (Special Needs Soccer Association) is a non-profit St. Louis based organization for children ages 5-21 with special needs designed as an alternate to other youth soccer programs in which these kids have not had a place. These children get the opportunity to learn soccer-based knowledge as well as interact with peers while getting exercise. Alli and Katie said, “We have seen players begin the program as shy, inactive, and dependent on their parents. Through our years of volunteering, those same players have formed friendships with peers, lead drills and conversations independently, and learned how to play the game by following rules and using good sportsmanship.”

Summer Institute with Beate Peter, Ph.D.

Dr. Beate Peter was our 2014 Communication Sciences and Disorders Summer Institute faculty. Dr. Peter is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington. The course was entitled “Genetic Causes of Communication Disorder: Basic Science to Clinical Management”. The course serves as an introduction to molecular genetics and to the role of genetics in communication disorders. The weeklong course was held from July 28-August 1.
Students Win Award for Best Research Poster

Undergraduate students, Christina Gabany and Meera Shah, were awarded the Student Research Award at the Clinical Augmentative and Alternative (CAAC) Research Conference at Indiana University on September 28th for their research “Patterns of gesture use in adolescents with ASD referred for social skills treatment”. They completed their work from a database of Barbara Braddock, Ph.D., and Kimberly Twyman, M.D. There was only one student award given and the competition included both undergraduate and graduate (including doctoral students) presentations. The award was presented by Dr. Katya Hill, internationally noted expert in Augmentative and Alternative evaluation and treatment from the University of Pittsburgh.

NSSLHA Highlights

Members of Saint Louis University’s National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) participated in numerous events this year. Academic sessions were held to encourage others to learn more about the Communication Sciences and Disorders program and to answer specific questions current undergraduate and graduate students may have. The students participated in several fundraising events to benefit local charities. For example, pictured below, the students signed up for gifts to give to a specific family to help out with Christmas.

Did you know?

Speech-language pathology and Audiology ranked in the top 10 best jobs of 2014 on the Jobs Rated report!

4 Students, 4 Directions
Graduating seniors taking different routes after graduation

Rebecca Wallace (pictured left) will be working towards her master’s degree in Higher Education Student Affairs at Miami University in Ohio next year. During her time at Miami, she will have assistantship as a graduate hall director. She plans to work in The Division of Student Affairs at a university. She would like to be a Dean of Students some day!

Mary Holt (pictured right) will be getting her master’s in speech-language pathology at Marquette University next year. She selected this program because it has a Bilingual English-Spanish specialization in speech-language pathology (BIES). This specialization program prepares speech-language pathologists who are proficient in Spanish to evaluate and treat communication disorders in Spanish and bilingual (Spanish-English) speakers.

Zoe Myers will be working as a missionary for the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) somewhere in the country starting next year. Through FOCUS, Zoe will be doing relational ministry with college students, challenging them to be the best version of themselves while providing a platform for authentic friendships.

Lana Mehanovic (pictured right) will be working towards her master’s in public health at Saint Louis University with a concentration in epidemiology and behavioral science. She hopes to get involved in chronic disease research. After graduation she would like to work in either a hospital or do further research on chronic diseases.
Chair of the Department at the University of Hong Kong

Dr. Travis Threats, Chair of the Department, traveled to the University of Hong Kong as a visiting professor in 2012. He stayed there for the week, meeting with professors and doctoral students regarding an original research project required by the students. Dr. Threats gave one of the keynote talks that started the day of presentations by the students. Pictured below is Dr. Threats with the students on the day of the presentations.

2013 ASHA Convention

The American Speech Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention was held in Chicago on November 14th-16th. Several faculty members and students attended the weekend-long convention. A few graduate students presented their master’s theses. Pictured below, Megan Diestelmeier with her research poster entitled, “Orthographic neighborhood density and written word learning in children with and without language impairment.”
Vicki Scott Retiring

The department’s Administrative Assistant, Ms. Vicki Scott, is also retiring after working here for over 18 years. Ms. Scott was responsible for the business of the department, including the purchasing of needs, tracking budgets and just about everything in between. Ms. Scott expressed that she “feels very attached to the place, lots of good memories with lots of challenges.” After the retirement, she is excited to spend more time with her grandkids and for more gardening. When asked what she will miss most about working at Saint Louis University, Ms. Scott said she will miss being around all of the students and all of the energy they bring. But most of all, Ms. Scott said she will miss working under Dr. Threats because he was the best boss she has had the pleasure of working for. She noted, “I feel very fortunate that I am ending my career under his leadership.”

Graduate Class Gets Visitors

Four speakers visited Dr. Fuller’s Voice Disorders graduate class to discuss the communication changes after laryngectomies. Each of the speakers was a previous smoker who had undergone a laryngectomy and communicated either with an electrolarynx or through a tracheoesophageal puncture (TEP). The graduate students were given the chance to ask any questions they may have and to even try out speaking with an electrolarynx.
Alumni Spotlight

Sarah Cutshall (pictured left) graduated with her master’s degree in 2011. Her first job was with Life Care Centers of America in the St. Louis area, and soon after became the Assistant Rehab Services Manager as well as continuing as a speech-language pathologist. In April 2013, she took a position as Director of Rehabilitation (DOR) for Senior Rehabilitation Solutions at the 140 bed Rowlett Health and Rehabilitation facility in Texas. There, she is responsible for four physical therapists, three occupational therapists, and two speech-language pathologists. She has recently been asked by Senior Rehabilitation Solutions to mentor three new DOR’s to support them in the management of their buildings and reaching their financial goals.

Danielle Dietz (pictured right), master’s class of 2011, works in Chicago for Pathways.org, an organization that sees many children from diverse language backgrounds. She was one of the co-authors of an article about bilingualism: *Focus on Bilingualism: Language Screening and Assessment in Bilingual Children.*

http://pathways.org/top-navigation/who-is-pathways/pathways-staff#.U0IOgM1Qono

Danai Fanin (pictured left), master’s class of 2003, received her Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Sciences from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 2008. She then did a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles, researching autism treatment for infants and toddlers. She accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at Northern Illinois University in 2011. Currently she is writing a grant to assess 2-year-olds in Early Head Start centers to determine if we can distinguish children who have receptive/expressive language delays from those who will eventually be diagnosed with autism.
Retirement Party for Marty Brennan, Pat Miller, Dennis Fuller, and Vicki Scott

The department faculty and staff held a retirement dinner party for the retirees: Marty Brennan, Pat Miller, Dennis Fuller and Vicki Scott. The dinner party took place at Favazza’s on the Hill on their patio on July 9th. Each retiree received a certificate (pictured below) that says, “In appreciation and gratitude for your many years of dedication, service, and friendship. You will be missed but never forgotten.” It was a great night to celebrate four wonderful people.
The 2014 MSHA Convention was held at the Lake of the Ozarks on the weekend of April 4th-6th. Several undergraduate and graduate students attended and represented Saint Louis University. A team of students (pictured above) participated in Quest for the Cup, in which they competed in a trivia against the other Missouri schools. Saint Louis University placed second in Quest for the Cup, only one point behind first place!

Pictured right, Erin Klosterman presenting her research entitled “Predictors of Stress & Grief in Adult Children Caretakers of Parents with Dementia”

We are very proud of our department for these honors!

OTHER AWARD WINNERS

- Megan Diestelmeier was awarded the Donald G. Brennan Graduate Student Award and Kara Kinney was awarded the Donald G. Brennan Undergraduate Student Award
- Jacqui Farrington and Carissa Ten Hoeve were awarded the Robbie R. Haynes Award
- Megan Diestelmeier was a nominee for MSHA Outstanding Graduate Student
- Erin Klosterman was awarded the College of Arts and Sciences James D. Collins Award for Outstanding Senior Excellence in Student Academic Achievement
- Becky Hrad was named “Outstanding Undergraduate Student Poster” at the MSHA Convention

We are very proud of our department for these honors!
A Letter From Our Chair

Change often includes equal parts of mourning and optimism. We will miss the four members of our team, Marty Brennan, Pat Miller, Dennis Fuller, and Vicki Scott. They have all retired from full-time work but I suspect that the four people with so much to offer the world will find other ways to use their talents. They have provided broad and strong shoulders upon which we will build an even better department.

Our other change for the coming year is the doubling of our space. This is part of the overall plan for the university to give additional resources to its highly successful departments. We have experienced significant growth over the last 10 years in terms of numbers and quality of our undergraduate and graduate students, as well as increases in scholarship and grants. Our selectivity of our masters program is one of the many reasons that the university is considering to allow us to develop a Ph.D. program in speech-language pathology. Our new space provides us the room to grow to reach that goal.

With these extra resources comes responsibility, the responsibility to use our resources wisely and productively. We need to do so because we have an important mission- to improve the quality of life of those with communication and swallowing disabilities. We do that at the university level by working to insure that our students have the knowledge and skills to be effective and compassionate evidence based clinicians. We also demonstrate this mission by the service we provide at our own Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic as well as the services we provide in other settings.

With new faculty and staff and a growing physical facility, this year will challenge us. But we are up to the challenge. In fact, we relish the opportunity to not only meet our challenges, but to strive and soar.

T. Threats