Message from the Chair, Dr. Kristine Swain

This has been a very productive semester as we work on a new department strategic plan that identifies new priorities and continued areas of focus. As you read through the newsletter, take time to learn about Dr. Miriam Kuhn who joined the department in August. She brings expertise to the department in the area of early childhood special education. We are fortunate to have her at UNO as we work with faculty in Teacher Education to develop an early childhood inclusive major.

We continue to have a busy speech-language-hearing clinic and are currently serving a large number of clients from our community. We are thankful for the generous donation that was made this fall by the Southwest Omaha Sertoma Club. We will include more about this donation in our spring newsletter. In this newsletter you can read about the AAC devices that were donated to the clinic. This academic year we have 28 Speech-Language Pathology graduate candidates who will complete degrees and these donations are very beneficial to our clinic clients and graduate candidates.

International experiences continue in the department with the two-year project with UNAN-Leon, Nicaragua completed in July and travel to the research conference at Siauliu University in Lithuania in April. These experiences enrich our courses at UNO as we engage with our international colleagues.

It is an exciting time to be a Maverick!
UNO NSSLHA has participated in many events this fall semester. Beginning in August, the officers of UNO NSSLHA had the wonderful opportunity of helping the city of Pilger, NE after the recent tornados. During the month of September, members participated in Virtual Advocacy day to join together to petition Congress online on behalf of audiology and speech-language pathology. In addition, UNO NSSLHA members attended the annual Nebraska Speech Language Hearing Association (NSLHA) 2014 Fall Convention where valuable information was gained. In honor of the RiteCare speech and language clinic located at the Monroe Meyer institute, UNO NSSLHA served as wait staff at the annual Scottish Rite Dinner in October. This event raised money for a clinic which provides services to families free of charge. During the month of November members served at Omaha’s open door mission by assisting with Project Santa, which provides gifts to families. Throughout the fall semester, members of UNO NSSLHA have also been busy with our monthly events such as, Pump It Up and Reach For It. Pump It Up is in collaboration with the Autism Society of Nebraska (ASN). UNO NSSLHA looks forward to continuing to benefit its members by continually improving its support, promotion, and advocacy of the highest quality preparation of professionals in audiology, speech-language pathology and hearing science.

Throughout this semester we have participated in many events. In the weeks of September and October, our members took part in the Millard TOPSoccer. This event is all about creating an enjoyable and comfortable environment for children who have disabilities to play soccer. Each of our SCEC volunteers was paired with a soccer buddy to help with soccer skills and making a fun experience for the children. We had a very busy October! In October, our organization participated in Down Syndrome Alliance for Nebraska’s biggest fundraiser, the Buddy Walk. In mid-October, SCEC went to the Ollie Webb Halloween Dance. The Ollie Webb Halloween Dance is one of the most exciting and fun volunteer events. This event is all about socializing and interacting with the guests of the party. We also volunteered with Special Olympics of Nebraska for a couple of their events this fall semester. There was Special Olympics Flag Football in October, and we also volunteered for Special Olympics Bowling in the first week of November. During these events we help to make sure everything is running smoothly and cheer on the contestants. We have had a wonderful and successful semester of events for our members to stay involved and gain helpful experience.
Professors travel to Lithuania for International Conference
By Dr. Philip Nordness

Drs. Philip Nordness, David Conway, and Kris Swain were invited to Siauliai, Lithuania to participate in the research conference, *Social Welfare: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, hosted by Siauliai University. In addition to Lithuania, the international research conference included presenters from England, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States.

Dr. Nordness presented on his collaborative work with Dr. Renata Geleziniene from Siauliai University on Strengths-Based Assessment and Dr. Swain presented on the Teacher Training project in Nicaragua. As guests of Siauliai University they received tremendous hospitality, which included visits to the capital city of Vilnius and the towns of Palanga and Klaipeda along the Baltic Sea.

Welcome Dr. Miriam Kuhn

Dr. Kuhn is a newly appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She completed her B.A. in Psychology and Sociology at Grace College in Winona Lake, IN. Dr. Kuhn holds an M.A. in Guidance and Counseling, as well as an Educational Specialist degree in School Psychology from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. She graduated with her Ph.D. in August from the University of Nebraska- Lincoln. Her primary area of interest is early childhood special education, and she has been involved in research regarding promoting family-teacher partnerships to address developmental, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of young children. Dr. Kuhn is a nationally certified school psychologist, and worked for Kearney Public Schools for a number of years. She has also had experience as a Head Start family educator and a primary grade teacher. Dr. Kuhn lives with her husband, Dan, on an acreage west of Ashland, Nebraska. They have three grown children. We are very happy to welcome Dr. Kuhn to UNO as we focus on developing an undergraduate Early Childhood Inclusive program.
New AAC Devices in the Speech-Language Clinic
By Jill Kumke
The UNO Speech-Language Hearing Clinic has expanded their Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices with the help of an undisclosed donor. A Wego, by Talk to Me Technologies, with eye gaze to the UNO Speech-Language pathology program was donated in September 2014. Talk to Me Technologies, LLC generously updated the device and the software prior to UNO receiving the donation. Crystal Heath, an alumnus of the UNO SLP program, who currently works as a consultant for Talk to Me Technologies, LLC, completed an orientation and training on the device for graduate student completing clinical practicum on campus at the UNO Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic on September 22, 2014. This device will be a resource for the student clinicians to use with appropriate clients, support AAC evaluations, and provide communication opportunities during Reach Out Group, a support group for adults with neurogenic communication disorders. In addition, AAC devices are used in class for hand-on learning experience for graduate and undergraduate speech-language pathology students. We are grateful for the donation and on-going support from Talk to Me Technologies.

Nebraska Miss Amazing Pageant
Drs. Mitzi Ritzman and Julie Delkamiller served as volunteer judges for the Nebraska Miss Amazing Pageant on August 8th and 9th, 2014. State Miss Amazing Pageant queens from all over the nation came to Omaha to celebrate the abilities of girls and women with disabilities.

Congratulations 2014 Scholarship Recipients
Amber Hestwood, an undergraduate special education major, was awarded the Val Kessinger Memorial Scholarship

Maria Moragues, an undergraduate speech-language pathology major, was awarded the Leo and Joanne Thietje’s Scholarship

Anastasia Most, a graduate speech-language pathology major, was awarded the Dr. Joseph Caniglia Fellowship Scholarship

Recognitions
Dr. Shari DeVeney was nominated as the 2015 President Elect for the Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association

In 2015, Jill Kumke will serve as President for the Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association