Message from the Chair, Dr. Kristine Swain

The 2016-2017 year is off to a great start with new programs such as the Early Childhood Inclusive program that is featured on page 4 and the Inclusion/Collaboration Specialist graduate endorsement. These programs are excellent additions to the current undergraduate and graduate programs currently available in the department of Special Education and Communication Disorders.

Our programs are made stronger by a number of incredibly important partnerships such as Southwest Omaha Sertoma who continue to generously support our Speech-Language Pathology program, all of the schools and agencies that support programs through service-learning partnerships, clinical experiences, internships, and coming to UNO to share their expertise.

I like numbers so I thought I would share a couple of my favorite numbers from this past year. The UNO Speech-Language Hearing Clinic provided 2,062 hours of clinical services during 2015. This shows the impact that the graduate SLP students are having through their clinical experiences. During the Fall 2016 semester, 116 students were enrolled in three sections of the undergraduate course, Introduction to Special Education. Through this course, students are volunteering in the community in order to learn more about the services and opportunities that are available. As you read through the newsletter, you will find examples of students making an impact through student organizations and research.
National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA)
By JoVanna Balquier, UNO NSSLHA President

The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s National Student Speech Language Hearing Association and Collegiate Sertoma (UNO NSSLHA/Collegiate Sertoma) chapter has been busy advocating and volunteering in the greater metro Omaha area community. The chapter has 60+ graduate and undergraduate members who are studying speech-language pathology. UNO NSSLHA/Collegiate Sertoma was selected as a National 2016 Gold Chapter recipient for its networking, advocacy, career awareness, philanthropy, and community service. Advocacy is one of the most important things to UNO NSSLHA/Collegiate Sertoma members. Members advocate often, whether it be through attending various walks in the community or sending in advocacy emails to their state and national legislative representatives. Members attended the Omaha Power to end Stroke Walk, WalkRite for RiteCare, and the Nebraska Walk for Apraxia. UNO NSSLHA also continues to participate in a variety of events which allow members to apply their coursework to real-world experiences, including: Quality Living Inc.’s event Little Spooks, the Hope Center’s Carnival, Omaha Children’s Museum Autism Night, a variety of events with the Autism Society of Nebraska including a bowling league for teenagers with autism, and Red for It, a program of dance for adults with Parkinson’s disease. As you can see, there are so many fun opportunities to advocate in the community, and UNO NSSLHA/Collegiate Sertoma enjoys partaking in as many of them as possible!

Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC)
By Jena Burns, UNO SCEC President

The Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC) has had an exciting start to the year! This semester we have continued to grow strong partnerships among the community. One of the many partnerships we hold is with the Down Syndrome Alliance. This semester we worked with them at their annual Buddy Walk. SCEC had a wonderful time helping with set up and put on the event, and can’t wait to see what the Spring semester will bring us. This semester we have also worked with Top Soccer. Our members were excited to announce all the positive relationships they developed while volunteering. As the spring semester approaches, we are excited to continue these partnerships as well as welcome members!
STUDENT RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Second year speech-language pathology graduate student Jordan Gearheart and her faculty advisor, Dr. Shari DeVeney, are pictured at the 2016 Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Association Fall Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jordan presented her research project titled “Short-term test-retest reliability of informal phonological analyses for 2-year-old late talkers”.

First year speech-language pathology graduate student Sara Damm (right) presented her research project “How identifiable are voice emotions produced by children with cochlear implants?” at the 2016 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Annual Convention. Sara is pictured with Monita Chatterjee, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Director, Boys Town National Research Hospital.

FACULTY RESEARCH

Recently Published Research


UNO Professors Collaborate
By Dr. Phillip Nordness

Drs. Philip Nordness, Elizabeth Leader-Janssen, and Jessica Hagaman visited Siauliai University in Lithuania in April 2016. The purpose of the visit was to expand ongoing departmental collaborations and to present at the International Conference on Social Welfare and Disability Studies, which is hosted annually by Siauliai University.

AWARDS

Dr. Shari DeVeney, assistant professor in speech-language pathology, was one of 11 national recipients of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s 2016 Advancing Academic-Research Award.

Early Childhood Inclusive Education Program | By Dr. Miriam Kuhn

The new Early Childhood Inclusive Education major program is now enrolling bright and committed students desiring a future as professionals focused on the education and well-being of young children (birth to Grade 3). You will be prepared to meet the challenges of teaching and/or caring for a diverse group of young children who are experiencing a phenomenal period of brain development that impacts their overall physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive skills. Collaboration with children’s family members and other caregivers is key-- together you will aim to provide nurturing, developmentally-appropriate, and enriched learning environments that benefit all children. You will be equipped to support young children with disabilities, and diverse cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Some of the exciting new courses offered in conjunction with this undergraduate program focus on play, family- and community-centered practices, culturally responsive and reflective teaching for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and K-3 students, and inclusive early childhood education policies and advocacy. These new offerings build on a solid core of coursework in curriculum, assessment, and inclusive practices to prepare the graduate for a wide variety of career opportunities. Graduates would, for example, be eligible to be certified teachers or special educators in preschool or early elementary classrooms, Early Intervention home visitors, parent educators for agencies serving families, or childcare providers.

Many of the courses in this program are taught by one of five professors who specialize in early childhood education: Drs. Debora Wisneski, Susan McWilliams, Kerry-Ann Escayg, Anne Karabon, and Miriam Kuhn. If you are up for the challenge of Early Childhood Inclusive Education, contact an advisor in the Office of Student Services for more information at unocoeadvising@unomaha.edu or 402-554-2717.