As the torch is continuously handed to students, we do our best to apply what we have learned today for a better tomorrow. Change is an inevitable part of life, and as students exploring the fields of SLP and audiology, we embrace moments of change as opportunities for growth.

As President and Vice President we are thrilled to work with the Executive Council to encourage our members to seek out moments to embrace change. Members’ involvement in their local and state organizations, as well as participation on the national level, are avenues to share innovative ideas and fresh perspectives.

Our students gain experiences that prepare them to lead the way by building upon the foundation within our field, in order to improve services for those we will serve as professionals.

Our NSSLHA Experience also embraces change through its new structure to ensure our members get the most from their conference experience.

We enthusiastically extend the invitation to you to expand your knowledge, deepen your passion for the profession, and create a better tomorrow.

As President and Vice President we are thrilled to work with the Executive Council to encourage our members to seek out moments to embrace change. Members’ involvement in their local and state organizations, as well as participation on the national level, are avenues to share innovative ideas and fresh perspectives.

Our students gain experiences that prepare them to lead the way by building upon the foundation within our field, in order to improve services for those we will serve as professionals.

The NSSLHA Executive Council has reflected on this Convention theme all year as a way to prepare for this year’s convention. With the implementation of a new strategic plan and overarching mission statement, we embrace the changes that accompany a new council, new students, and a new time for NSSLHA.

We have responded to the need for more audiological representation on our council. We look forward to the new ideas and experiences those council members provide, so we can coordinate programs that highlight collaboration between students studying audiology and SLP.
THE MILE-HIGH EXPERIENCE

Why you belong at the 2015 NSSSLHA Experience

It’s important that we students expand upon our classroom knowledge and educate ourselves in other venues to help lead the way in the evolving fields of audiology and SLP. By attending the NSSSLHA Experience at the ASHA Convention, we do just that.

This year will provide all students with a “mile-high” experience. We’ll enjoy not only the crisp air of Denver, but also a variety of informative sessions to help us advance.

Great expectations

The NSSSLHA Experience begins with an opportunity for NSSSLHA chapter officers and advisors to network with other chapters and spend time with regional representatives. Chapters can share fundraising ideas, tips for community awareness events, advocacy outreach, and so on.

The day then moves along to the Rapid Roundtables, where you take the trail toward educational growth by meeting with professionals in the field. You can:

■ Talk with representatives from the ASHA Special Interest Groups
■ Learn about opportunities for career growth in the field
■ Explore how to negotiate salary and professionally discuss contracts with employers
■ Discover the benefits of national NSSSLHA membership
■ Hear from representatives of the ASHFoundation and learn about the wonderful support they provide students
■ Understand the clinical fellowship experience and have your questions answered
■ Speak with representatives from CSDCAS and get tips on how to prepare your graduate school application

Let’s eat!

After all that learning and networking, you’ll be hungry. We welcome you to attend the NSSSLHA Honors Ceremony and Luncheon to celebrate the recipients of NSSSLHA Honors, have lunch with NSSSLHA members and professionals, and enjoy a keynote presentation from Dr. Juan Jose Beunza.

Dr. Beunza is a medical doctor specializing in internal medicine. Among many other career achievements, he is the Associate Professor of Public Health and Interprofessional Education in Madrid, Spain. Dr. Beunza is well known for his expertise in interprofessional collaboration and helping individuals become leaders in their careers.

Dr. Beunza will present his session titled Beyond Technical Training For Professional Success: Interprofessional Education. Having spoken to ASHA in the past, Dr. Beunza is sure to provide an exciting, motivational, and educational presentation.

Complementing ASHA’s efforts to expand interprofessional education and interprofessional collaborative practice, Dr. Beunza will provide tips and tools to help you create fluent communication networks inside highly efficient teams for an overall positive interprofessional work environment.

Praxis makes perfect

After all the awards, Praxis Prep is a can’t-miss session for anyone preparing for the Praxis exam.

The Praxis National Advisory Committee will review foundational knowledge and key content areas covered on the audiology and SLP Praxis exams. Also, the committee will provide sample questions, case studies, study resources, and tips for developing effective study plans.

Bowl us over

The NSSSLHA Experience will close out the day with the Knowledge Bowl. This is your time to come out and represent your region! Watch as the 10 regions battle it out to be the top region of 2015. Support your region while being exposed to practice Praxis questions, and try for prizes from our sponsors!

NSSSLHA encourages all students to attend the NSSSLHA Experience for a day full of educational sessions sure to help you “change lives” and “lead the way” within your future careers.

The convention committee and I have enjoyed working to make this year’s NSSSLHA Experience as informative and exciting as possible for all students from undergraduate to PhD. Whether you are about to pursue a career in research, embarking upon a doctoral degree, about to take the Praxis, or eager to apply for graduate school, you’re sure to find the NSSSLHA Experience beneficial.

We look forward to seeing you in Denver and hope we can help you lead the way in changing many lives in your future.
The 2015 “NSSLHA Loves” campaign to support Sertoma is underway.

An annual community service activity, NSSLHA Loves encourages members to raise funds to support national organizations that work with people living with communication disorders. The recipient organization receives 100% of the funds raised. NSSLHA encourages ASHA members to join with the students and NSSLHA chapters to make a contribution. The NSSLHA Loves fundraising goal for Sertoma is $20,000. Last year NSSLHA Loves raised over $23,000 in donations for Hands and Voices. Let’s do even better this year!

Steven Murphy, Executive Director, Sertoma/Hearing Charities

A MESSAGE FROM SERTOMA
Celebrate Sound: To Hear and Be Heard

Vows were exchanged, toasts were made, and now the bride and her court dance and laugh to the beat of the music. With a break in the music, the bride makes a quick dash across the floor to fill her glass, and spots her grandmother quietly watching the celebration. The bride swings by the table and bends over, and among the cacophony of clinking glass and conversation, whispers to her grandmother. The look on their faces tells it all: a moment shared defining a life.

It is in these moments that we truly understand what it means to hear and be heard. Such acts are so much a part of our lives, that most think no more of them than the air they breathe, right up to the moment they are gone.

Helping assure those moments remain in our lives is our mission. For more than fifty years, through awareness, grants, and scholarships, we have supported the needs of families and the work of speech pathology and audiology.

A new challenge

Today we are expanding our work beyond Sertoma communities through our sister organization Hearing Charities of America.

We are very excited to have the support of the future of the speech and hearing profession, the students of NSSLHA, as we prepare to launch our most ambitious effort: the Hearing Aid Project.

The Hearing Aid Project will expand access to professional services and technology for low-income families. This effort will also increase awareness of the need for hearing health and communication services in those communities.

The Project requires the engagement of individuals and organizations who share our mission. There are those who donate and help collect the used hearing aids. Others provide clinical services free or at a reduced rate. Some spread awareness and help raise funds to assure the program has the resources to meet the need.

We know the model works because we developed the Project from our support of dozens of successful community and statewide programs.

The success of those and all our programs are the result of strong community partners. At the heart of our work are the scholarships for young people with communications disorders and those studying to serve that need.

Helping each other

Working with NSSLHA Chapters as community partners is a special opportunity. Sertoma and Hearing Charities want to be more than grateful recipients. We want to be active partners in support of students and chapters of NSSLHA.

As you look forward to careers and practices in new communities, being known and viewed as a leader can be a major advantage. A great way to be noticed is through volunteer leadership, and those are skills we have been helping our members develop for more than 100 years.

While you are helping us this year, let us help meet the community service goals for your Chapter, and your own personal development. We are excited to have worked already with some Chapters.

The sounds of success

Some want to provide our SAFEars!® program to help young people learn about and prevent noise-induced hearing loss. We have partnered with NSSLHA Chapters to host successful CELEBRATE SOUND® events to raise money for their local projects while helping increase our scholarships and grant programs. We can think of no better way to thank people for their support than offering to be a partner in their service or philanthropy.

The power of the work shared by Sertoma/Hearing Charities and NSSLHA is best expressed by the people we help. Erin, a multiple Sertoma scholarship recipient, recently shared her story:

“I received my first set of hearing aids at age eleven, and even though my hearing loss has plateaued, I still faced many social and technological obstacles along the way. Thanks to the many supports, role models, and service providers who helped me connect to the hearing world.”

That is just part of a great story, and you can hear more about the change in Erin’s life by watching her entire video on the Sertoma YouTube channel. It’s the best way for us to say thank you for selecting Sertoma/Hearing Charities for the NSSLHA Loves campaign.

Because of you, many more people will hear and be heard.
Now in its 12th year, the NSSLHA Experience has evolved into a rich and comprehensive day of activities developed by students for students. Join us for lively educational sessions, the NSSLHA Honors Ceremony and Luncheon, and the always entertaining and competitive Knowledge Bowl. The NSSLHA Experience will enhance your professional development as never before through education and networking.

The Regional Round-Up
For NSSLHA chapter officers and advisors only
8:00 a.m.–9:00 a.m.
SILVERTON SALON 1
NSSLHA chapter officers and advisors, here’s your chance to network with other chapters in your region. Discover the most effective practices of chapters, learn how to apply for NSSLHA awards and honors, and spend time with your regional representative exchanging information and ideas about what matters in your region.

The NSSLHA Honors Ceremony and Luncheon
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
SILVERTON BALLROOM, SALONS 1-3
Celebrate the recipients of NSSLHA Honors! Ignite your passion for the profession and enjoy lunch with our special guest speaker Dr. Juan Jose Beunza, MD, as well as NSSLHA students and ASHA professionals.
TICKETED EVENT. Tickets are $10 for students and professionals. Ask about availability at Registration.
Co-sponsored by

Rapid Roundtables
9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
CRIPPLE CREEK 1 & 2
Back by popular demand, these “educational speed-dating” sessions offer in-depth conversation on a wide variety of topics. Pick your own course and get the information you need. Engage with the experts as they share their knowledge about specific topics in career development, the Clinical Fellowship, grants and scholarships, or national membership in NSSLHA. Get everything you need to successfully launch your professional career in one location. Topics include:

- “SIGNificant Resources for Students
  Learn about the 19 ASHA Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and how joining a SIG can make you a better practitioner. Connect with professionals in these exclusive communities and build “SIGNificant relationships that will benefit you long after you are a student.

- Career Pathway
  You obtained your CCC, now what? Career growth does not end there. Find out how you can grow professionally through leadership opportunities, PhD programs, continuing education courses, specialty certifications, and more.

- Negotiating Salary
  Salary and benefit discussions can be difficult for anyone. Learn how to initiate the discussion in a professional way, review contracts, and identify appropriate requests.

- National NSSLHA
  Discover the great benefits that come with national NSSLHA membership. Learn more about the NSSLHA-to-ASHA conversion discount, access to ASHA journals, discounted SIG membership, reduced convention registration costs, and more!

- Demystifying the Clinical Fellowship
  The transition from student to Clinical Fellow (CF) may leave you with questions. Get help from professionals about how to approach your fellowship and what is expected of you and your mentor.

- ASHFoundation
  Meet with foundation representatives to learn about the wonderful support they provide for research, graduate education, and special projects that foster discovery and innovation in the field of communication sciences.

Praxis Prep!
Join members of the Praxis Audiology National Advisory Committee and the Praxis Speech-Language Pathology National Advisory Committee for a review of foundational knowledge about key content areas covered on the exams. Explore sample questions and case studies. Learn about study resources and tips for developing an effective study plan.

- Strengthening Foundational Knowledge and Clinical Decision Making: Preparing for the Audiology PRAXIS Exam
  1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
  CRIPPLE CREEK SALON 1

- Preparing for the SLP PRAXIS Exam: Connecting the Dots
  1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
  CRIPPLE CREEK SALON 2

Battle of the Regions: NSSLHA Knowledge Bowl
3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
SILVERTON BALLROOM, SALONS 2 AND 3
The 10 NSSLHA regions battle it out through a friendly competition based on questions similar to the Praxis exam. Wear your region’s color, make signs, create cheers, and support your team. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams!
Co-sponsored by
More ways for students to enhance the convention experience

Enjoy the Exhibit Hall
Visit exhibitors offering new and exciting services and products. Check out the Career Fair and take advantage of the Résumé Star program. Shop the ASHA Store for new resources. Drop by the Caring Square to participate in the ongoing community service projects. Pop into the Audiology Lounge. It’s all in the hall!

NSSSLHA Student Lounge
Thursday–Saturday
CC, UPPER LEVEL, EXHIBIT HALLS E/F
Use the lounge as your home base to rest, meet up with fellow students, and learn about opportunities for students. Get all your NSSSLHA and student-related ribbons here! Pick up a badge to display on your ASHA poster presentation. We’re proud of all our NSSSLHA poster presenters!

The Graduate School Fair at the NSSSLHA Lounge
Thursday, November 12
10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 14
9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
CC, UPPER LEVEL, EXHIBIT HALLS E/F
Opportunities for everyone! Academic programs recruit and/or interview students for admission and share their vision of communication sciences and disorders (CSD) graduate education. Students talk with program representatives about goals and get information about curricula, clinical experiences, opportunities for participation in research, and other subjects.

The Résumé Star Program at the ASHA Career Fair
Friday, November 13
Noon–4:00 p.m.
Bring your résumé and sign up for a 15-minute review by a professional recruiter.

The PhD Information Center at the NSSSLHA Lounge
Friday, November 13
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 14
9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
CC, UPPER LEVEL, HALLS E/F
Program representatives, practitioners, and other interested students can meet and talk one-on-one about research doctoral education opportunities in CSD.

First Timers’ Welcome
Wednesday, November 11
5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.
HYATT, 4TH FLOOR, CAPITOL BALLROOMS 1-4
Gain tips and tricks for negotiating your first convention, and meet fellow first-timers.

Welcome Reception
Thursday, November 12
5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.
EXHIBIT HALL
Meet, greet, and network.

Attend the ASHA Awards Ceremony
Friday, November 13
6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.
CC, BELLOCO THEATRE
Celebrate and possibly meet some of the legends of our discipline. Be sure to review the list of open houses following the awards ceremony for some Friday night fun.
The NSSLHA Executive Council will acknowledge the following individuals and/or organizations for their outstanding achievements at the NSSLHA Honors Ceremony on Friday, November 13, 2015, during NSSLHA Experience at the ASHA Convention.

**Honors of NSSLHA**

**Julie A. G. Stierwalt, PhD**

Julie A.G. Stierwalt, PhD, certified ASHA member and ASHA Fellow, is the 2015 recipient of the highest honor bestowed by NSSLHA, the Honors of NSSLHA. In addition to serving as NSSLHA’s consultant at large and then editor of NSSLHA’s journal *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science and Disorders (CICSD)*, Dr. Stierwalt taught courses in dysphagia, motor speech disorders, acquired communication disorders, structural-based communication disorders, and medical speech pathology at Florida State University’s School of Communication Science and Disorders. The local chapter or at the national level, Julie’s belief in nurturing the natural gifts and abilities of her students has made a lasting impact on the profession.

In 2015, Dr. Stierwalt will be moving on to a position with Mayo Clinic in Minnesota as a senior associate consultant in the Division of Speech Pathology in the Department of Neurology. She will continue to motivate and inspire future professionals in this capacity.

**Chapter Advisor Honors**

**George Pagano, CCC-SLP**

Since 2012, George Pagano, MS, CCC-SLP, has been the faculty advisor of NSSLHA’s chapter at Long Island University, Brooklyn campus, as well as clinical supervisor at the school’s speech-language-hearing clinic. He has been practicing for thirteen years, mainly with school-age children who have articulation and language-learning disabilities.

**Distinguished Students of Service**

**Region 2**
- Sharia Huda
  - State University of New York, University at Buffalo

**Region 10**
- Deena Fam
  - Chapman University
- Kelly Ibanez
  - California State University, Northridge

**Region 5**
- Andrea Murphy
  - University of the District of Columbia
- Cora Sagar
  - University of the District of Columbia
- Kathryn Kirk
  - University of the District of Columbia
- Nicole Caputi
  - University of the District of Columbia

**CICSD Editor’s Award**

**Courtney T. Byrd, Jennifer Watson, Lisa M. Bedore, and Anna Mullis**

The 2015 CICSD Editor’s Award is awarded to “Identification of Stuttering in Bilingual Spanish-English-Speaking Children” by authors Courtney T. Byrd, The University of Texas–Austin, Jennifer Watson, Texas Christian University–Fort Worth, and Lisa M. Bedore and Anna Mullis, The University of Texas–Austin (Spring 2015, Volume 42).
Learn from a global leader in early language intervention and get the tools you need to collaborate effectively with families.

Visit The Hanen Centre’s booth (#1110) at the 2015 ASHA Convention or drop by the ASHA Peaks of Knowledge area, where you’ll find Hanen featured under Parent Involvement and Autism.

Can’t make the convention? Stay in the loop by signing up for The Hanen Insider – a special newsletter geared specifically to SLP students to help prepare you for working with families and delivering effective naturalistic early language intervention.

www.hanen.org/SLP-students
Big on SIGs

Affiliate with one of ASHA’s 19 Special Interest Groups

Learn. Share. Connect. Discover the ASHA Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Engage with the experts as they share their knowledge on specific topics in speech, language, hearing, and related areas. The “SIG”nificant relationships you build with professionals in these exclusive communities will benefit you long after you are a student.

SIG 1: Language Learning and Education

Learn from and share with professionals whose mission is to support children and adults with developmental language disorders and their families.
- Provide clinicians and researchers with resources related to language development, disorders, and education.
- Promote excellence in evidence-based clinical practice with children and adults who have developmental language disorders, and their families.
- Promote the development and dissemination of basic and applied research in language development and disorders.
- Advocate for professionals specializing in language-related clinical practice and research.

SIG 2: Neurophysiology and Neurogenic Speech and Language Disorders

- Become part of a professional community dedicated to serving individuals with neurogenic communication disorders. Join your colleagues and help to:
  - Improve clinical service delivery.
  - Increase awareness and availability of evidence-based practice guidelines in neurogenic communication disorders.
  - Advocate for the profession and individuals with neurogenic communication disorders.
  - Address issues that affect service delivery to those with neurogenic communication disorders.
  - Increase integration of best practices within the constraints of the clinical employment environment.

SIG 3: Voice and Voice Disorders

Network and learn from those concerned with the interdisciplinary study of the human voice and its manifestations across the life span, drawing on the rich body of knowledge both within and outside the field of SLP.
- Provide leadership and advocacy for issues in voice.
- Help ensure that delivery of service is provided by qualified individuals.
- Acquaint clinicians and consumers with new developments.
- Address issues, trends, and advances from four perspectives (professional, clinical, educational, and scientific), covering the entire spectrum of voice perception and production, including vocal development and life span changes, and the continuum of voice production from disordered through superior performance.

SIG 4: Fluency and Fluency Disorders

Join professionals committed to furthering education and research in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of people with fluency disorders, including stuttering and cluttering.
- Provide resources and education to facilitate understanding of fluency disorders, provide comprehensive assessments of fluency disorders, and promote effective treatment for people with fluency disorders.
- Participate in advocacy and public education activities to improve the quality of life for people with fluency disorders.
- Support new and ongoing research on the nature, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of fluency disorders.

SIG 5: Craniofacial and Velopharyngeal Disorders

Belong to a professional community that:
- Promotes, interprets, and disseminates information relevant to the interdisciplinary study, research, and practice of congenital or acquired craniofacial and velopharyngeal disorders.
- Serves as a conduit for the exchange of information and ideas among SIG affiliates.

SIG 6: Hearing and Hearing Disorders: Research and Diagnostics

Participate in a community of peers who are interested in a wide range of issues involving the auditory and vestibular systems.
- Serve as a forum for collaboration between researchers and clinicians to translate research into evidence-based practice related to hearing and balance.
- Promote continuing education opportunities for affiliates.
- Provide input concerning education and training of hearing scientists, clinical researchers, and practitioners.
- Promote communication and networking opportunities for affiliates.

SIG 7: Aural Rehabilitation and Its Instrumentation

Work with fellow professionals to facilitate the ability to minimize or prevent, across the life span, the limitations and restrictions that auditory dysfunctions can impose on well-being, and on communicative, interpersonal, psychosocial, educational, and vocational functioning.
- Provide a forum for professionals who have an interest in audiologic/aural rehabilitation to exchange and discuss current research and practice information.
- Make available professional development opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills.
- Promote practices and policies related to the provision of effective interventions and use of hearing aids, cochlear implants, implantable devices, and other hearing assistive technologies.
- Promote research related to audiologic/aural rehabilitation.

SIG 8: Public Health Issues Related to Hearing and Balance

Address public health issues related to hearing and balance through a transdisciplinary approach. SIG 8 provides a forum for discussion on topics that include:
- Noise and hearing conservation;
- Hearing loss prevention;
- Acoustic measurement and standards including classroom acoustics;
- Tinnitus management;
- Environmental studies and policies.
▲ Legislation pertaining to public, educational, and occupational accessibility and accommodations to those with hearing and balance disorders;
▲ Epidemiologic and sociologic considerations (e.g., aging);
▲ Balance disorders with and without hearing impairment;
▲ Forensic audiology
▲ Emergent issues related to high risk variables including ototoxins, infectious disease, acoustic (neuro-otologic) trauma, and domestic abuse/violence;
▲ Innovations in teleaudiology.
In addition, SIG 8 promotes collaboration with others to disseminate information to professionals and to the public.

SIG 9: Hearing and Hearing Disorders in Childhood
Join fellow professionals who are passionate about issues surrounding hearing and hearing disorders in children and their families.
▲ Provide a unified voice and advocacy for childhood hearing issues within ASHA.
▲ Serve as a forum for demonstrating and sharing new technologies, research, clinical developments, and treatment outcomes.
▲ Offer input into education and training issues related to hearing in childhood.

SIG 10: Issues in Higher Education
Become part of a professional community committed to:
▲ Developing the ever-expanding knowledge of teaching, learning, and curriculum design and implementation across both clinical and theoretical contexts to provide the underpinnings of education and skills for practice of the profession.
▲ Fostering collaboration among academic programs, faculty, students, research laboratories, and administration so that common concerns are addressed and resolved in the best interests of our academic members.

SIG 11: Administration and Supervision
Take part in a community of peers working to advance best practices in administration, leadership, and supervision by offering educational activities, providing networking opportunities, and supporting research and scholarly initiatives. Topics include:
▲ Career ladders;
▲ Conflict resolution;
▲ Continuity of care;
▲ Critical paths;
▲ Documentation.

SIG 12: Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Participate in a community of peers dedicated to improving the quality and availability of AAC services to consumers throughout the life span, promoting clinically relevant research, educating and mentoring current and future professionals, and identifying and addressing the needs of service providers in the professions of SLP and audiology.
▲ Promote continuing education for ASHA members at introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels.
▲ Advocate for ASHA membership regarding clinical service needs.
▲ Advocate for preservice and in-service personnel preparation in the area of augmentative and alternative communication.

SIG 13: Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (Dysphagia)
Take part in a professional community committed to:
▲ Providing leadership and advocacy for issues in swallowing and swallowing disorders.
▲ Serving affiliates who evaluate and manage individuals with swallowing and feeding disorders across the lifespan by supporting professional development, research, education, and communication necessary for delivery of the highest quality services.

SIG 14: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
Learn from and participate in a professional community that serves as a leading resource for advancing knowledge of the influence and importance of cultural and linguistic diversity on human communication and the infusion of this knowledge into research and clinical practice.
▲ Provide leadership and advocacy for best practices relating to audiology and SLP services for culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
▲ Promote research.
▲ Provide networking, collaboration, education, and mentoring opportunities for affiliates, students, and their service providers.

SIG 15: Gerontology
Join the professional community dedicated to improving the lives of older individuals through:
▲ Clinical practice;
▲ Research;
▲ Education;
▲ Advocacy;
Collaborate with others and learn more about:
▲ Normal aging changes in hearing, speech, language, cognition, and swallowing;
▲ Identification and intervention for mild cognitive disorders;
▲ Best practices for working with older adults with communication and swallowing disorders;
▲ Improving interdisciplinary team work;
▲ Working with older adults in all health care settings;
▲ Self-advocacy strategies;
▲ Medicare changes and how they impact practice.

SIG 16: School-Based Issues
Become active in a community providing leadership and advocacy for all SLPs and audiologists with interests in school-based issues, including clinicians and researchers from schools, universities, and all other settings.
▲ Promote the highest quality services within early childhood programs and schools by addressing clinical, educational, administrative and legislative/regulatory concerns at local, state, and federal levels.

SIG 17: Global Issues in Communication Sciences and Related Disorders
Join fellow professionals working to provide leadership related to global issues in audiology and SLP services by promoting research, networking, collaboration, education, and mentoring for its affiliates, students, and other service providers in the global marketplace.
▲ Foster global cooperation and collaboration among SLPs, audiologists, speech/language and hearing scientists who are interested in communication and related disorders around the world.
▲ Foster creation and sharing of information across countries and the U.S. Territories.
▲ Provide a platform for global networking among professionals around the world.

SIG 18: Telepractice
Affiliate with a professional community dedicated to providing education, leadership, and advocacy for issues in telepractice, telespeech, and teleaudiology.
▲ Provide resources and education related to telespeech and teleaudiology.
▲ Promote excellence in evidence-based clinical practice in telespeech and teleaudiology.
▲ Foster the development and dissemination of research in telespeech and teleaudiology.

SIG 19: Speech Science
Be part of a community of members who are interested in the scholarship, application, and teaching of speech science. Collaborate and learn about:
▲ Speech biophysics;
▲ Comparative communication science;
▲ Technology;
▲ Theories and modeling;
▲ Learning;
▲ And so much more—because science informs practice!
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Program Highlights
• The first Doctor of Audiology program in Northern California.
• The Pacific Hearing and Balance Center on the San Francisco Campus, along with collaborations with many Northern California medical and audiology centers, provides rich and diverse student clinical experiences.
• The Pacific Hearing and Balance Center on the Stockton Campus serves as an additional clinical site for students.
• A strong and cohesive group of full-time faculty with areas of expertise covering a wide variety of the topics within the scope of practice of audiology.

“Employment of audiologists is expected to grow by 37% from 2010 to 2020, much faster than the average for all occupations.”
Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor

Apply Today! Applications are due February 1st.
Applicants that meet this deadline can expect an admissions decision from the department by the end of March. Our goal is to make admission decisions earlier to allow applicants to make their graduate school plans earlier. This three-year accelerated program serves a cohort of 20-25 students per year and draws students with any undergraduate major interested in the field of audiology.

For more information, contact Rupa Balachandran, PhD, Audiology Program Director - Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology at rbalachandran@pacific.edu or 415-400-8225.
More details about the AuD program is available at www.pacific.edu/aud.
The NSSLHA chapter at the University of Central Missouri was recently awarded Gold Status once again from the Executive Council of the NSSLHA. Chapter advisor Mrs. Kim Stewart announced the good news at a celebration at the Welch-Schmidt Center for Communication Disorders.

Mrs. Stewart and her co-advisor, Mrs. Anna Campbell, have worked with undergraduate and graduate students for the past five years to ensure that the chapter sets annual goals—and achieves them.

Prior to the school year starting, the Executive Board has an annual planning session with their advisor to review the constitution and plan the upcoming year's activities.

**Sticking with the plan**
Establishing a calendar for the year's activities is a critical piece of the planning process. Some events are annual at UCM, such as the kickoff picnic in August, hayride, and NSSLHA Awards Banquet at the end of the year, but some events are added for just one year.

**Keeping in touch**
The President and Advisor maintain consistent contact with the National NSSLHA website. They create a plan for completion of all activities and tasks within required National NSSLHA deadlines to obtain gold status. National NSSLHA supports the local chapters with professional literature, chapter and member honor awards and recognition, and answers to any questions or concerns that may arise.

UCM's co-advisors have taught NSSLHA officers several key skills to make the UCM chapter successful. One of these is how to lead monthly meetings in an effective and efficient manner. This key skill keeps students on task so that meetings are shorter and more productive.

Happy hour meetings held at a local restaurant have proven to be successful at UCM. The NSSLHA chapter purchases appetizers and non-alcoholic drinks, and students enjoy the opportunity to socialize with student and faculty members after the meeting.

**Grooming future leaders**
Mrs. Stewart believes that teaching students to utilize the various committees, such as the philanthropic committees, to carry out each activity required for the event allows the chapter to accomplish several goals every year. She also believes that these committees are a great tool for introducing newer, undergraduate students to NSSLHA and encouraging them to later serve as officers.

This gives faculty members a chance to assess and facilitate newer students' leadership skills to enable students to become effective future Executive Board members. Breaking down larger tasks, such as planning a large fundraising event, into smaller tasks is a key to the event's success. Each task can then be assigned to various members of the Executive Board to allow everyone to contribute to the success of the event.

**Sharing the load**
Another skill that UCM has identified as critical for student leaders is the ability to delegate responsibilities. "I have seen an excited graduate student take on an office in NSSLHA and then try to do everything himself/herself. As adults, we know that delegating skills to others is a key skill to getting several tasks done and preventing one person from experiencing burnout." Mrs. Stewart reported.

During service activities, it is vital for many students to get involved so the outreach of the event can be broadened. One of the successful service activities sponsored by UCM NSSLHA has been a partnership with the local library to offer a free literacy event called Saturdays, Stories & Slices for families with young children.

Fun literacy activities are presented to encourage parents to read with their young children, books are available for children to choose and take home, and lunch is provided to everyone in attendance.

**Taking the lead**
The President and Vice-President of the organization are critical leaders who are encouraged to meet at least weekly to check in with the various committees to assess the progress on assigned tasks.

Managing money is another excellent skill to teach NSSLHA officers throughout the year. Members often suggest additional philanthropic events. The total cost has to be considered by the NSSLHA Executive Board and then the budget must be reviewed.

For example, it may be suggested that the organization pay for the entire board to attend a state or national convention. However, after reviewing costs, the organization may be better served by covering only part of the expenses, then requiring students to attend certain events and report back to the organization on what they learned.

**Spreading the word**
Recruiting students to get involved in NSSLHA is an important part of any chapter's success. This process starts at freshmen orientation, where the NSSLHA advisor distributes a NSSLHA goodie bag to students who have identified their major as SLP. The goodie bag contains contact information for the chapter, a schedule of events for the year, and professional literature.

NSSLHA Executive Board members speak to freshman- and sophomore-level CD classes on a regular basis, and invite students to attend the event happening that month.

Constant communication between the Executive Board and the members is another key to a chapter's success. Technology can play a key role. UCM's chapter of NSSLHA uses Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to inform students of upcoming events. Facebook chat is used for meetings when several students cannot physically attend the Executive Board meeting. Meeting invitations on the Facebook site allow for attendance head count. A reminder app is used to text all student members to ensure they are aware of meetings and activities.

Mrs. Stewart concludes, "At the end of each year, we evaluate the success of all of the events, discuss new ideas, and start the planning process all over again for the next year!"
TOP 10 THINGS FOR STUDENTS TO DO AT THE 2015 ASHA CONVENTION

8 Get your resume reviewed by a professional recruiter at the Career Fair.

To meet with an employer in the Résumé Star Program for a 15-minute session, stop by the Career Fair information booth to have your badge scanned and receive a list of participants.

7 Attend NSSLHA Educational/Clinical Sessions.

These offer a wealth of knowledge in ASHA's Special Interest Groups, career paths, salary negotiations, National NSSLHA membership, demystifying the CF, ASHFoundation, and CSDCAS. Plus two sessions on preparing for the Praxis exam in audiology and SLP.

Embassy Suites. Friday, November 13, 9:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

6 Enjoy the ASHA Awards ceremony.

Presentations will be made to recipients of the Honors of the Association—ASHA’s most prestigious award, which recognizes lifetime achievement—and to ASHA Fellows, whose contributions are the cornerstones of the professions. Additional awards, including the Annie Glen Award, will be given to others who have contributed to the professions and the association.

CC, Belco Theatre. Friday, November 13, 6:15 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

9 Attend the opening session.

Hear energizing addresses by the ASHA President, convention co-chairs, and keynote speaker Dr. McGonigal.

CC, Belco Theatre. Thursday, November 12, 8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.

10 Attend the NSSLHA Luncheon and Awards Ceremony.

While enjoying a delicious lunch, mingle and connect with all those people during the NSSLHA Luncheon and Awards Ceremony. Easily meet with an employer in the Résumé Star Program for a 15-minute session, stop by the Career Fair information booth to have your badge scanned and receive a list of participants.

Embassy Suites. Friday, November 13, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
TOP OF THE WORLD

TOP 10 THINGS FOR STUDENTS TO DO AT THE 2015 ASHA CONVENTION

1. Attend the Closing Party at the Denver Art Museum.
   Relax and celebrate another great year with friends and colleagues while taking in the exhibitions. Tickets are free to registered attendees and exhibitors but must be reserved through registration. Tickets are sold out but you may still be able to get one by visiting the Member Services Center on site.
   Denver Art Museum.
   Saturday, November 14, 6:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

2. Attend the First-Timers’ Welcome.
   Is the 2015 convention your first? Come to this popular gathering to preview programs and activities slated over the next three days. An exclusive chance to meet the NSSLHA Executive Council, ASHA President Judith Page, and convention co-chairs.
   Location TBD.
   Wednesday, November 11, 5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

3. Enjoy the ASHFoundation Fundraiser Twilight Reception.
   This fun evening supports scholars and science. Enjoy cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, music, and networking.
   The Pinnacle Club in the tower adjoining the Grand Hyatt Denver, within walking distance of the CC and many convention hotels.
   Thursday, November 12, 7:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

4. Watch the NSSLHA Knowledge Bowl—or participate!
   The 10 NSSLHA regions battle in a friendly competition based on questions similar to the Praxis exam. Wear your region’s color, make signs, create cheers, and come support your team. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams!
   Embassy Suites.
   Friday, November 13, 3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

5. Attend the Welcome Reception.
   Join us in the Exhibit Hall on Thursday evening to catch up with friends and colleagues, and mingle with exhibitors. Recharge your battery with light snacks and a cash bar before you head to the Twilight Sessions. Open to all fully registered attendees; guest tickets are available so friends and family can join the fun.
   CC, Exhibit Hall.
   Thursday, November 12, 5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.
EXPAND YOUR HORIZON
Clinical fellowship: a world of possibilities

First, hearty congratulations are in order! You have finished your coursework, studied hard, passed your exams, and completed your 400 clinical practicum hours. Now you are just steps away from becoming an SLP and embarking on the next leg of your journey toward obtaining your ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC).

Obtaining the CCC is a very important step in your career as an SLP. ASHA’s voluntary certification is an internationally recognized credential that shows you have met rigorous standards. By earning the CCC, you affirm that you have received the highest quality preparation and training to provide quality care that our patients, regulators, and other stakeholders can trust.

Step up to the CF

After graduation from a Council for Academic Accreditation accredited program, you are ready to complete a Clinical Fellowship (CF) experience.

As a clinical fellow, you will select an ASHA-certified SLP to be your CF mentor and help you transition between being a student clinician and an independent service provider. You will work with your mentor to identify your personal goals, strengths, and weaknesses, and gain the all-important foothold in the process of managing a client population of your choosing.

While under the supervision and guidance of your mentor, you will become confident in your assessment, treatment planning, and intervention abilities, as you take on more independent responsibilities. The CF experience is invaluable!

During your CF experience, you will be required to work at least 1,260 hours over a minimum of 36 weeks, which equates to 35 hours per week for 36 weeks of full-time employment. Since ASHA realizes that this option may not be possible for all clinical fellows, you have up to 48 months to complete a minimum of 1,260 hours.

A world of possibilities is now open to you. You can select the setting of your choice, from schools to private clinics to healthcare facilities. ASHA does not require that your CF be completed in a setting in the United States. Yes, you can complete your CF abroad!

Please note that your CF mentor must be an ASHA Certified Member who currently holds the CCC-SLP. ASHA has certified members all across the globe. Whether you want to provide language therapy in London or gain experience in Ghana, our member directory can help put you in contact with a CCC-SLP in your country of choice. Visit http://community.asha.org/network/members/findcertifiedmember.

The benefits of going global

Here are a few of the many benefits for clinical fellows from the United States looking to complete their CF abroad:

- Gain insight into working with individuals from different cultures. The United States is a diverse country with individuals from all over the world. As an SLP, you are likely to encounter many varieties of cultures and religious beliefs.
- “…by increasing experiences of students in international forums, we can presumably increase their abilities to work with clients of different backgrounds at home.” Pickering and McAllister (2000)
- See the world. When not working with clients, you will be able to experience a new country, visit cultural icons such as museums and natural wonders, and participate in activities integrated into the customs of your new home.
- Fine tune your language skills. If you are interested in providing bilingual services, for example, in Spanish, immersing yourself into the culture of Mexico or Spain will enhance your language skills. You will need to rely Spanish as your primary language in day-to-day interactions.
- Gain valuable life experience. For many individuals, once they begin a career and settle down, the opportunity to travel abroad becomes diminished. Completing your clinical fellowship experience abroad lets you take advantage of this wonderful time of your life with fewer long-term commitments. It helps you learn self-reliance, too.

Bring it home

Did you earn your graduate degree outside the United States? You can still complete your Clinical Fellowship experience here in the U.S. To ensure that your CF hours are counted correctly, simply follow these procedures:

- Read the 2014 SLP Certification Standards to understand the academic, coursework, and practicum hour requirements.
- Visit the Certification Information for International Applicants to view an application timeline and locate required documents
- Complete your application for your CCC-SLP first. As a graduate from a non-U.S. accredited university, your academic program and credits must be individually approved before you begin your CF. If you begin your CF first and are missing academic coursework, the hours that you spend in your CF may not count.
- Be sure your application packet includes academic transcripts from all colleges, universities, and institutions, plus course descriptions.
- Once you receive confirmation that your academic coursework and practicum meet ASHA’s requirements, locate a CF mentor at community.asha.org/network/members/findcertifiedmember.

Make sure it counts

Remember, it is your responsibility to ensure that your supervisor is a member who is currently certified. This can easily be verified by clicking the “Verify ASHA Certification” button at the top of the page at asha.org/certification/.

For more information on the value of providing service abroad, please visit asha.org/events/convention/handouts/2011/higdon-battle-crowley-gonzales-owre-salas-provance-rodriguez/. You can find all forms and information related to your Clinical Fellowship at asha.org/certification/ clinical-fellowship/.

Take advantage of this unique period of your life. Completing your clinical fellow experience as an SLP in the country of your choice may be the best decision you ever make!
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Follow us @gcpshr
Do you want to be featured in our newsletter? The spring edition is geared toward audiology. Tell us why you have chosen a career in audiology or the hearing sciences.

- Do your SAA and NSSLHA chapters collaborate on events?
- Have you overcome any obstacles or adversities while pursuing your degree?
- Do you have an externship that is teaching you things about audiology you didn’t learn in class?

Share your story! Email NSSLHA Member-at-Large Nia Potier at mematlarge@gmail.com by December, 2015.

Take advantage of these audiology student resources from NSSLHA and ASHA:

- Friend NSSLHA Audiology on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/NSSLHAAudiology
- Join the Audiology Student Group on the ASHA Community: http://community.asha.org/Home/
- Purchase a copy of the “Audiologic Rehabilitation Issue” of Contemporary Issues in Communication Science & Disorders: item 0310411 in the ASHA Bookstore.
- Read past issues of the audiology edition of NSSLHA Now!: http://www.asha.org/Publications/NSSLHA-Now/
- Apply for a position on the NSSLHA Executive Council: http://www.asha.org/nsslha/governance/
- Apply for the NSSLHA Scholarship: http://www.ashfoundation.org/grants/GraduateScholarships/
- Apply for ASHA Awards: http://www.asha.org/students/awards/

Sound off
Let’s hear from audiology students in the spring edition of NSSLHA Now!

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As I see it

Disability, individuality, and community engagement through practicum: a student’s perspective

Upon graduating high school, I was accepted into the Speech and Language Pathologist Assistant Diploma Program at Medicine Hat College. For the next two years, I was enrolled in extensive rehabilitation and disorder development classes.

During my time at the Medicine Hat College, I felt that I had acquired a greater understanding. My experiences there imbued me with much confidence, and I sincerely felt I was prepared to be successful in my future therapeutic career.

Engaging the community

Part of our experience during the program was to participate in a practicum component. During my practicum, I experienced a variety of environments, which included work in a private rehabilitation school, as well as the Public School Board.

Witnessing the difference that I was making in people's lives fueled my passion and further motivated me to work toward making this my career. During the final weeks of practicum, I applied for full-time positions in speech and language therapy.

I soon landed an interview with a nonprofit company that worked specifically with school-age children with disabilities. As a new "Child Development Facilitator", I was part of a special program. I went into the homes of children ages pre-kindergarten to kindergarten diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Remembering my classes in college, I thought to myself: I've got this! But only time would tell.

On-the-job training

During my first day in my new position, I remember going to the home of a child who had high-functioning ASD with severe echolalia. Let's call this individual "Pat." (Name changed to protect privacy.) Pat had extensive social skills deficits but also some pretty lofty communication goals. Little did I know, however, that Pat would actually shape my whole perspective on disability and rehabilitation, and ultimately help to change me as a person.

Over the first few weeks, I spent a lot of time working with Pat at home. I began to recognize aspects of ASD that were never taught in our disorder classes, or that were never discussed when we studied symptoms of ASD.

Of course, the textbook symptoms of ASD were present with Pat, including lack of eye contact, limited social engagement, and the near inability to develop a meaningful relationship. However, from working with Pat I began to understand how important it was to take a new look at everything that I was taught, go back to the basics of the child's specific symptoms, and examine the child's individual tendencies.

Obviously, I had to keep in mind the broad understanding of the disorder/syndrome in a medical model approach. But I also needed to resist the urge of trying to place Pat into some sort of a category. I needed to exercise my own judgment as an individual (and professional) and employ more of a social-model approach.

Once I acknowledged the individuality and uniqueness of the situation, I believed I would be able to work more effectively on improving Pat's skills.

Tuning out, tuning in

For the next several months, I worked with Pat while keeping in mind how a child like this might react to a situation in the environment and try to compensate accordingly. I started to realize that many of the things I learned in my disorders class did not paint a complete picture and in some cases were even a little misleading.

Pat's progression through the summer was phenomenal. When I started to pay attention to Pat's specific behaviors, it opened my world up to what disabilities (specifically ASD) truly meant.

I learned that children like Pat see the world in a different way than typically developed children. I realized how Pat was teaching me to acknowledge even the most insignificant situation or action in my environment. I realized just how little I acknowledge what is going on around me, and I began to see how much I have missed in my own world.

The importance of reflection

In every situation, I now see that there is always something for which to be thankful. Even though Pat could not have a meaningful conversation, counting and simple math equations were not a problem. Pat was always happy and enjoyed the “Cheerio milk” snack break every day.

I learned how there can be so much love, happiness, and development of understanding when you stop thinking about the person as “a disability” and look at who they are individually.

I realize how much I learned from Pat. Life should not be about typicality, it should be about praising our differences and trying to see the world in a richer, more meaningful way. Thank you, Pat!
Stop by booth 704 at the 2015 ASHA Convention to participate in an informative and fun hands-on educational opportunity and receive a gift. Then join us at the 2015 NSSLHA Experience, Friday, November 13, when the grand prize winner will be announced.

Download the NEW TRACHTOOLS™ communication app FREE for a limited time at the app store or www.passy-muir.com/app
Cleaning up a problem

CU Boulder’s SOAP note for advocacy

As SLPs, we often take on the role of advocate. We advocate on behalf of our clients to families, insurance companies, teachers, administrators, and medical professionals. We act to ensure that our clients’ communicative, cognitive, and swallowing needs are met.

In graduate school we learn about IDEA, ADA, IEPs, and a variety of other legal mandates that we use as tools to improve the quality of life for our clients and ensure they receive the services they need. But what do we do when current laws don’t align with what we know to be best practice?

Unintended consequence

In July of 2013, the state of Colorado passed a law creating a certification process for SLPs. The requirements included the completion of a clinical fellowship (CF).

Unfortunately this bill made it impossible for SLPs to bill Medicare during their CF with less than 100% supervision. This was not a problem for those students who wanted to complete a CF in a school, but it was prohibitive for recent graduates seeking a career in the medical field.

To gain the competence necessary to provide services in a medical setting, one must gain experience and training during a CF. We needed to change the law to allow Colorado’s recent graduates to participate in medical CF’s. The University of Colorado’s NSSLHA chapter decided to advocate for ourselves!

The result: CU Boulder’s “SOAP” note for advocacy.

See the problem and serve your clients

If you think a law is written poorly and not serving the community it was meant to serve, change it!

Legislators seek to change their communities for the better, but they don’t have a master’s degree in SLP. If a law is inadequate or difficult to navigate, the problems are unintentional.

In political circles, a law that does not complete its intended purpose adequately or without negative consequences is said to have “unintended consequences.” Pay attention to regulations and laws governing the practice of SLPs and audiologists in your state. You know your field! If you see a problem...

Offer a solution

Before approaching state representatives and other officials in a position to make a change, have a solution in mind. Approach individuals and groups in our field to brainstorm possible ways to fix the problem.

In Colorado this involved speaking to employers, recent graduates, ASHA Health Care Regulatory Advocacy department professors, lobbyists, and the Colorado Speech Hearing Association (CSHA).

Emily O’Shea, CU’s NSSLHA Graduate Secretary, researched the regulations and laws governing certification in other states to determine how they allowed their students to participate in a medical CF. We needed to change the regulations to allow graduates to obtain provisional certification during their CF. Once a feasible solution (or three!) has been determined...

Advocate for your cause

In Colorado we spoke with Representative Jonathan Singer, a co-signer of the original certification law. After trying to find a solution with the Department of Regulatory Agencies, Representative Singer agreed to write a “clean-up” bill (which addresses an unintended consequence of an otherwise successful law).

Once the law had been written, it was our turn to advocate. David Sabados, vice-chair of the Colorado Young Democrats, helped educate NSSLHA members about how to advocate at the capitol.

We contacted every legislator who would be voting on the bill. NSSLHA member Lesley Lange (aided by Clare Henderson, Ellen Riggs, and Allina Robertson) spoke with every legislator or assistant and handed out pamphlets about the importance of the legislation.

Pass the law!

House Bill 15-1373 passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. It was signed into law by Governor Hickenlooper on May 29, 2015. On September 1, 2015, our graduating cohort was eligible to apply for their provisional certification!

Important tips for talking to lawmakers:

- Know your bill’s identifying number (put it on an informational pamphlet).
- Find out the date and time your bill will be before a committee. Be sure to be there to testify.
- Lobby in advance by knocking on doors.
- Speak to aides if legislators aren’t available.
- Have a clear, simple handout.
- Dress professionally.
- Be courteous but firm. You may have to jump in elevators or walk a legislator from one meeting to the next to find that free moment.
- Have good public speakers to testify.
- Keep it short, but be prepared with statistics if called to justify statements. If a legislator asks you a question and you don’t know the answer, say you are unsure and offer to get back promptly with the answer. If you misspeak, you may lose your credibility.
- Send emails ahead of votes to argue for passage. Ask family members to submit these, too.

We were fortunate to have excellent support from Kirsten Schuchman, CU’s lobbyist, and our bill’s sponsors. Ask for help with contacting legislators from faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students (writing letters or emails, calling, signing petitions, etc.).

The result of all this advocacy was...
EASY DOES IT

Advice on writing a successful graduate school application

Congratulations! You’ve chosen a rewarding career that will put you in the company of high caliber professionals. Application season is approaching, and the learning curve is sharp for completing a successful application. This article offers tips on making your application rise to the top, and helping you view this as a learning opportunity, not a dreaded chore.

Relax
Your state of mind while completing the application will be reflected in the final product. People are more productive when calm and relaxed. RELAX
Relaxing will put you in charge of a positive experience. Although a healthy degree of stress is appropriate, demonstration of thoughtfulness will impress the committee.

Allow enough time
Many parts of graduate school applications depend on timelines you can’t control (e.g., requesting transcripts and recommendation letters from professors). You are one of many who are doing this same thing. Don’t put yourself in a position where deadlines aren’t met.

Follow directions
Take your time and pay special attention to the requirements for each program. It’s easy for reviewers to immediately and quickly reject an application that doesn’t contain what is required. You don’t want your accomplishments and strengths overlooked simply because you missed application details.

Be professional
Language conveys important information. You are seeking a position in a rewarding career. With those rewards comes responsibility, including a professional demeanor when conducting official business.

Professional protocol dictates a formal approach to your letter. For example, address recipients as “Doctor” or “Professor” instead of by first name.

Focus on content and presentation
Take time with your application and avoid careless mistakes. Check and double-check spelling and grammar. It is never good to misspell the name of a city, person, or university.
Use a more formal writing style than you would in email communication with a friend. Proofread carefully. Turn on grammar and spell checking functions. Sloppiness in the application will give a poor impression to the Admissions Committee.

Be yourself
Don’t try to create a persona in your application that isn’t truly who you are. Being transparent and highlighting your strengths and weaknesses will come across as more real than trying to be something you are not.

“Authenticity is magnetic.” — Danielle LaPorte.

Make contingency plans
You may have a lot of confidence that you will be accepted into a particular program. Confidence is an asset, but not if it shuts you out. Having a backup plan puts you in charge of your professional future in a very competitive field.
This does not mean you should arbitrarily add two or three programs to the list. Your contingency plans should involve as much thought as your first choice. Consider only those programs you deem acceptable should you not get your first choice.
Besides taking the steps above, also take care to avoid these common pitfalls.

**Lacking information about the program**
Taking charge of one's application includes doing research. All accredited programs have a website where important information is provided.
Consider how it looks to a committee when a department’s website requests three letters of recommendation, and the student calls, asking how many are required. Finding this information helps put you in charge, and helps determine whether this program is a good fit for you as a student learner.

**Writing a damaging personal statement**
Admissions Committees receive hundreds of applications from people “passionate” about audiology and speech pathology. Most applicants “want to help people.” Instead, show the admissions committee how your background and experience make you an excellent fit for their program.
Attempts to be funny can easily backfire. An extensive listing of personal problems you have overcome can be disastrous to a successful application.

**Failing to communicate clearly**
You are applying to programs in speech pathology and audiology, so quality communication is vital. Write clearly with good sentence structure, grammar, and no spelling errors.

**Overdoing attempts to impress**
Don’t go overboard with flattery and praise for the program. Excesses can be interpreted as insincere. Most programs are aware of their strengths. Name dropping is frowned upon, as are letters from Senators or members of Congress.

**Obtaining harmful letters of recommendation**
Ask your recommenders, “Would you be able to write me a strong letter of recommendation?” and be ready for honest answers. Because letters of recommendation are often never seen by the students requesting them, be proactive about obtaining documentation of your strengths and weaknesses from someone who views your abilities in a positive light.
In conclusion, you cared enough to read this article, so you care about this process. The authors wish you the best in your application efforts!

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Special cases

Exploring the role of the SLP in cleft care

Cleft lip and palate is one of the most prevalent birth conditions in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that more than 2,500 children per year are born with a cleft palate and more than 4,000 children per year are born with a cleft lip, with or without a cleft palate.1

This translates into 1 child with a cleft for every 600 children born in the U.S. Thus, it would be expected that one or two children with oral clefts are enrolled in an average-sized elementary school.

There is significant clinical need for effective speech, language and feeding services for children with cleft lip and palate. Studies document the lack of cleft-specific training at the graduate level,2 and a large proportion of SLPs in the field feel unprepared to provide assessment and evaluation services.3,4

This article outlines what makes cleft care special in the field of SLP, and ways you can acquire knowledge toward becoming a competent and confident clinician in this area.

The power of the team

Working in the area of cleft lip and palate means participating in the gold standard of care for these children: a cleft and craniofacial team. The core members of a cleft team include an operating surgeon, orthodontist, and the SLP. The team also includes many other professionals who provide critical services, such as otolaryngologists, audiologists, nurses, psychologists, social workers, geneticists, pediatricians, and more. The team environment provides rich opportunities for excellence in clinical and research collaboration.

The team extends beyond the medical setting. The SLP works hand in hand with family members, sometimes even prenatally, as well as community treatment providers.

More than just a “slice of life”

Many professionals in our field interact with their patients for a few weeks or months, or even a few years, in the treatment of a communication disorder. In cleft team care, we follow patients from infancy to adulthood. As SLPs we see the outcomes of our care in the life of the individual and family, including developmental milestones, school pictures, and college acceptances. Few other areas of SLP offer the privilege of forming relationships that last through the full developmental journey.

Putting it all together

Evaluating a child with a cleft may be your first opportunity to integrate knowledge from coursework on both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as you evaluate articulation, resonance, language, feeding, social and pragmatic skills, voice, and fluency. This knowledge allows you to figure out the complex puzzle of how all of these factors interact in a person right in front of you.

You also have the ability to hone professional skills such as counseling and interviewing families, and you learn the difference between providing information to families and reporting results to medical professionals. The assessment results or treatment outcomes are integral to the entire treatment plan for a child—for example, surgical plans.

Additional learning and experience

Within your graduate program, take advantage of coursework that focuses on cleft lip and palate. Connect with faculty members who may be able to identify practicum opportunities or facilitate observation of therapy sessions or a cleft team clinic visit. Several special clinical fellowship programs focus on cleft and craniofacial care.

Within the professional community, you can seek information and resources through ASHA’s Special Interest Group 5: Craniofacial and Velopharyngeal Disorders, and the American Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Association (ACPA). Networking and mentorship opportunities for students abound in these organizations.

On your own, you can read, listen, and learn as much as possible. SIG 5 Perspectives and the Cleft Palate Craniofacial Journal (CPCJ) are both available online. Several reputable, comprehensive, and clinically relevant textbooks provide background knowledge on all aspects of cleft and craniofacial care.

The ACPA website (http://www.acpa-cpf.org/education/educational_resources) has speech samples for practicing perceptual assessment of cleft palate speech. Self-study courses are available through ASHA or websites such as www.speechpathology.com.

Working in this area of our field is rewarding, and SLPs in cleft care know the importance of mentorship and training. We’ve all been there! Reach out and do your homework. This area of SLP is rewarding, intellectually challenging, and inspiring.

Acknowledgements. An example of the teamwork in the world of cleft care is my colleagues who brainstormed with me and contributed to this article. Thanks to Adriane Baylis, Kelly Cordero, Scott Dailey, Kristen Deluca, Angela Dixon, Sara Kinter, Lynn Marty-Grames, Helen Sharp, Anna Thurmes, and Kris Wilson.

REFERENCES


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