

# CSD CONNECTIONS



**IOWA**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

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# Message from the Chair

I am thrilled to return to the University of Iowa. It's been 22 years since I graduated from this wonderful program, but I still remember how lucky I felt to begin my academic pursuits here. Like me, I'm sure when you walked into the Wendell Johnson Speech and Hearing Center you felt the invitation to become part of this legacy of excellence offered by the past and current giants in the field that resonated in the classrooms, research labs, and clinic. Now, as alumni, we carry a "service-to-field" mindset that allows us to impactfully lead all over the world.



The University of Iowa is where the fields of audiology and speech-language pathology were born. Thanks to the pioneering work of Carl Seashore, a meeting was held in 1925 in a home on Summit Street in Iowa City which led to the formation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association; the house still stands (see page 8). When ASHA approaches its 100-year anniversary in 2025, Iowa's CSD program also enters a new chapter as it moves into the new Health Sciences Academic Building.

In October, we broke ground for this state-of-the-art building. The new building will be a gateway to unparalleled educational experiences, with modern experiential classrooms, a cutting-edge speech and audiology clinic, and state-of-the-art research spaces. In addition to Iowa CSD, the Health Sciences Academic Building will also house two other world-renowned programs: 1) the Carver College of Medicine's Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Sciences department, which is the 4th ranked program in the country with over 150 doctoral students; and 2) the Health and Human Physiology Department, with over 2000 students and 6 undergraduate areas of study including movement physiology. The physical proximity with these two outstanding programs will create opportunities for both students and faculty to engage in new interdisciplinary research and learning synergies.

This year, faculty and students in CSD have achieved remarkable successes. While we could list achievements in research productivity in terms of numbers (for example, one faculty member had 21 papers and 26 presentations accepted in 2023), the real indication of our program's strength is the impactful stories, just a few of which are presented in this newsletter. As you will see in the stories in this newsletter, our alumni, faculty and students are continually finding new ways to serve the surrounding community and make an impact in the world. We are proud that so many of these efforts by current and former faculty and students have been recognized with some of the biggest awards in the field.

2025 will mark the 100th anniversary of ASHA's formation here in Iowa. We are already planning a celebration for this incredible event in our new building. Because Iowa is indeed where it all began! We welcome all alumni, former faculty, and friends of CSD to return to Iowa for this celebration of Iowa's past, present and future.

# AAC team equips emergency responders to avoid communication breakdowns

Imagine an already stressful situation: a fire, car crash, or injury. But when first responders arrive, they cannot effectively obtain important information with the people at the scene. This scenario can become a reality when those needing help have limited speech due to autism, aphasia, cerebral palsy, or other conditions limiting verbal speech.

CSD Clinical Associate Professor Krista Davidson and graduate student clinicians on the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) team have stepped in to help.

The group created a training course to teach first responders in Iowa how to approach emergencies where they encounter individuals with limited speech. They've presented information and strategies in Monticello, Tiffin, and other Iowa communities, both in person and through Zoom.

"The overarching goal of this project is to equip first responders with knowledge and resources to effectively communicate with patients who have limited oral speech," Davidson explains. "They walk away with strategies for how to respond to a communication breakdown during an emergency."

Understanding how to interact with patients with limited speech isn't currently a part of emergency personnel training, noted a local firefighter, but adds that's an important skillset he took away from the training session and plans not only to use and share with his colleagues.

"I knew helping first responders communicate with patients with complex communication needs could be a great project for our graduate students as well as an excellent avenue for student hands-on learning and community engagement," explained Davidson, whose clinical expertise is AAC.

In addition to educating others, the students also experience valuable learning and counseling experiences themselves.

"This was an educational experience for me!" said Anna McCormick, MA-SLP graduate student. "Education is a major part of being a speech pathologist—prior to this experience, I had only considered parent education, but community education is just as important."

Communities continue to express interest in offering this workshop to police, ambulance, and fire services in the area. The workshop currently comes at no cost to the agencies and provides free, laminated communication boards.

"Our hope is to give first responders tools to make communication with patients in emergency situations as accessible and efficient as possible, ultimately resulting in improved patient care," Abby Wickre, said MA-SLP student. "I am happy to be a part of a team that supports the great work first responders do."



MA-SLP grad clinicians Abby Wickre, Hannah Krug, Anna McCormick, Hannah Leeper, Abbi Shekleton and Clinical Associate Professor Krista Davidson at the Tiffin Fire Department prior to their training presentation

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**"You can tell when a training leaves an impact on people by the comments and conversations afterward. I heard nothing but praise from everyone in attendance. Please keep up the good work!"**

- Monticello firefighter and workshop participant

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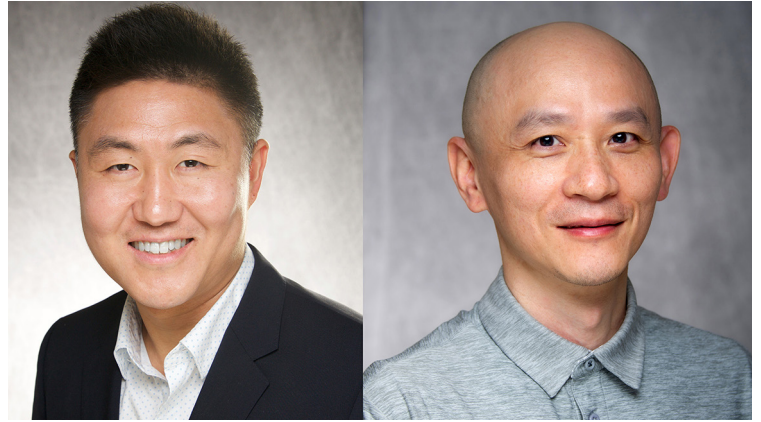
# Interdisciplinary research aims to amp up hearing aid satisfaction

Combine the intellectual curiosity of an audiology researcher, a neuroscientist, and two computer scientists and what's likely to happen? Hearing aid users can look forward to playing a bigger role in their own hearing care.

CSD's Yu-Hsiang Wu, MD, PhD, and Inyong Choi, PhD, are joining interdisciplinary forces with UI's Octav Chipara, PhD, (project PI) and his Computer Science colleague, Bijaya Adhikari, PhD. The combined research team secured \$1.2 million in funding from the National Science Foundation this year with two main approaches for personalizing hearing aids.

First, the team aims to make hearing aids more accessible and customizable for users, an approach Chipara calls "shallow personalization." In other words, the team will configure existing sound processing algorithms in hearing aids, but not fundamentally change their design.

Second, the team will tackle the problem of speech processing disruption that traditional hearing aids do not correct, which Chipara calls "deep personalization." The researchers hope to integrate deep neural networks (DNNs), electro-encephalogram (EEG) signals, and user feedback to develop hearing aid algorithms, thereby enhancing speech understanding in challenging listening situations.



CSD's Inyong Choi and Yu-Hsiang Wu

Hearing loss is one of the most prevalent chronic conditions affecting older adults. The shallow personalization will significantly impact the direct-to-consumer market by providing better personalization. The deep personalization adopts a novel approach that amplifies sound using deep neuronal networks to maximize effective speech processing as measured by EEG.

These techniques are expected to significantly impact subjects with more severe hearing loss or those who encounter difficulty listening situations, improving the quality of life of older adults with hearing loss.

## CSD'S NEW HOME



Plaza area of the future Health Sciences Academic Building

**48,400**

SQUARE FEET

Total space dedicated for CSD

**18,000**

SQUARE FEET

Speech & Audiology clinic

**39**

State-of-the-art research labs

## CSD WELCOMES A NEW CHAIR...



After a national search, the University of Iowa named Eric Hunter CSD Chair and the Harriet B. and Harold S. Brady Chair in Liberal Arts and Sciences. He began the role in August. He returned to Ulowa after earning a PhD in 2001. He previously worked as an associate dean for research at Michigan State University and was instrumental in rebuilding and revitalizing MSU's Communicative Sciences and Disorders program. Prior to that, he was the deputy executive director of the National Center for Voice and Speech. He leads an active research lab with a continuous track record of multi-disciplinary funded research, serving as principal investigator or co-investigator on approximately \$8 million in federal research funding.

"I had a wonderful experience at Iowa as a graduate student, and the dynamic and collaborative environment that I remember is just as strong today," he says.

## AND NEW (AND RETURNING) FACULTY...



**Nancy Almasi, SLP.D., CCC-SLP**, is a Visiting Assistant Professor and Clinical Supervisor in the MA-SLP program. Nancy specializes in pediatric speech and language disorders. Special areas of interest include peer-mediated intervention, AAC use in early intervention and for school-age children with complex communication needs, and the needs of children following brain injury. In the classroom, she teaches Developmental Language Disorders and Language Disorders in School-Aged Children.



**Mili Kuruvilla-Dugdale, Ph.D., CCC-SLP**, Associate Professor, researches articulatory motor performance in neurodegenerative diseases, with a long-term goal of developing more sensitive dysarthria assessments. She's also working on innovative systems to track tongue dysfunction and build personalized electronic voices for individuals with progressive speech loss. She teaches Structural Disorders, Motor Speech Disorders, and Experiential Learning: Community Engagement Through Communication and Literacy Programs.



**Alison Lemke, MA, MPA, CCC-SLP**, rejoins CSD as a Visiting Assistant Professor / Clinical Associate Professor after serving as MA-SLP Director of Clinical Education at U Colorado, as a clinical educator at Iowa, and before that, working as an SLP in medical settings. Her professional interests are adult acquired neurogenic communication disorders and best practices for clinical education and supervision. She teaches Neurogenic Disorders of Language, Acquired Cognitive Communication Disorders, Aphasia, and the Undergrad Experiential Learning Course.



**Laura Schmitt, MS, CCC-SLP**, joined the faculty as a Clinical Assistant Professor. Prior to moving to Iowa City, she worked as a Clinical Assistant Professor at Utah State University. At Iowa, Laura specializes in the evaluation and treatment of language and cognitive-communication impairments secondary to stroke, traumatic brain injury, or progressive neurological diseases. She also supervises CSD grad student clinicians in ARC (Aphasia Reading Club) and MAGIC (Modalities Aphasia Group-Improving Communication) social groups for those with aphasia.

## AND WISHES OTHERS A HAPPY RETIREMENT!



*In June, CSD celebrated the retirements of Eileen Finnegan, Carolyn Brown (CB), and Jean Gordon. Each was gifted a print created by local artist Susan Aunan (so they won't forget us). While Eileen and CB continue to live locally and pursue non-professional activities, Jean took on the role as Chair at the Department of Communicative Disorders at the University of Rhode Island.*

# FACULTY & STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

**Kellsie Busho** was awarded a 2023 University of Iowa Outstanding Staff Award, one of only six staff members campus-wide to be tapped for this honor. Her work in healthy hearing outreach is exemplified by publications, social media contributions, and presentations at state and national conferences.

**Kelly Schmidt Clay** was promoted from Lecturer to Associate Professor of Instruction.

**Philip Combiths** was the recipient of the 2023 CLAS Outstanding Outreach and Public Engagement Award. He was recognized for building a community-engaged research project through Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, a non-profit community organization that supports predominantly low-income immigrant families.

**Krista Davidson** was named an ASHA Innovator, an award that recognizes and spotlights the challenging and demanding work performed by talented and innovative communications sciences and disorders practitioners.

**Wendy Fick** received a longevity award for 30 years of employment with CSD, working in the labs of Jerry Moon, Bruce Tomblin, Tricia Zebrowski, and Beth Walker. Over these three decades, Wendy has ever-so-capably helped gather and

manage data from a wide swath of CSD research projects: from muscle activity in the soft palate to stuttering to developmental language disorders, and most recently, to children with mild to severe hearing loss.

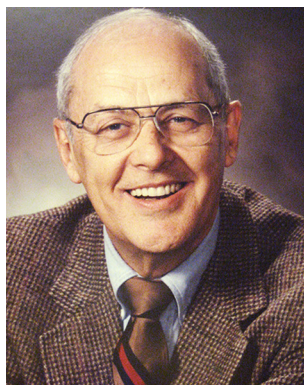
**Stephanie Fleckenstein** was awarded the 2023 Honors of NSSLHA, presented annually to a person or organization who, through their work with students, made significant contributions to both the discipline of communication sciences and disorders and National NSSLHA.

**Louise Pinkerton** was honored with the "Unsung Hero" Award for service to the Pan American Vocology Association as the ASHA Continuing Education Administrator.

**Ingo Titze**, Professor Emeritus, will be honored with the 2024 Gold Medal from the Acoustical Society of America. The prestigious Gold Medal is presented annually to an individual whose contributions to the field of acoustics and to the Acoustical Society have been unusually distinguished.

**Rich Tyler** was winner of the Jerger Research Career Award from the American Academy of Audiology, given to an individual for innovative research contributions in audiology, whose work has had groundbreaking impacts on the field.

# ALUMNI NEWS



**Hughlett Morris, PhD**, Professor Emeritus, died peacefully in June 2023, in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 92.

Dr. Morris had a long and distinguished career at the University of Iowa, serving as CSD Department Chair, and as the Head of the Speech Pathology Services in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Iowa. He became interested in the field of speech pathology as a person who

stutters, although his lifelong career passion was research of those with cleft palates. He was also known for his wicked sense of humor and as an author of fiction and semi-autobiographical works.

His academic work was recognized and respected all over the world, as reflected in his receiving honors and awards from state, national, and international academic and research organizations. Despite the challenge of stuttering, he was a gifted and admired speaker. His many students thrived under his teaching and mentorship, citing that he was skilled at encouraging his students to become good thinkers, to ask good questions, and to be caring and effective clinicians.



*In October, CSD applauded the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Marcia Hay-McCutcheon, PhD, for her amazing audiology service work to under-served individuals in the state of Alabama. In her talk, she described her journey to her current profession as professor at U of Alabama. In the photo above, she congratulates UI AuD student, Amy Bussa, the 2023 recipient of the Dorothy & Bernie Hay Student Support Fund, a fund created in honor of Marcia's parents. Other scholarship honorees are on page 7.*

# BRAVO CSD STUDENTS!

**Srividya Grama Bhagavan**, PhD student, was given the 2023 National Hearing Conservation Association Scholarship Foundation Student Research Award, which provides funding to support her research in hearing conservation.

**Alli Duplain**, AuD student, received an ASH Foundation Graduate Student Scholarship, based on academic achievement, personal qualities and capacities necessary for a successful career in audiology, and demonstrated initiative, responsibility, motivation, and commitment to the discipline.

**Melanie Flores**, third year Speech and Hearing Science major, was given the 2023 Maria Cano Martinez Service Award. The scholarship recognizes a student who promotes understanding through scholarly activity with Chicana / Latinx populations.

**Charlotte Hilker**, MA-SLP student, was selected for a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award for Kosovo from October 2023 to June 2024.

**Trudy Jacobs**, AuD student, was elected Student Representative on the Board of Directors for the Educational Audiology Association for the 2023-2024 year.

**Julia Kerrigan**, MA-SLP student, was selected as one of 13 recipients of ASHA's 2023 Students Preparing for Academic-Research Careers Award. The award is given to cultivate student interest in pursuing a research / faculty doctorate.

**Hailey Kingsbury**, a third year AuD candidate, is serving as president of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association for the 2023-2024 school year.

**Hailey Kingsbury** was awarded the Jerry Northern Scholarship in Pediatric Audiology this year from AAA, and in April, will be part of the AAA Student Research Forum.

**Katie Kingsbury**, AuD student, is serving as the AuD Student State Office for Iowa for the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association for the next year.

**Hector Sanchez Melendez**, a neuroscience student mentored by Kristi Hendrickson in CSD's Psycholinguistics Lab, was a featured scholar in the UI Dare to Discover banner campaign, a showcase for scholars and creators all across campus.

**Maryann Quigley**, AuD student, was elected to the 2023-24 National Board of Directors of the Student Academy of Audiology.

**Abbi Shekleton**, MA-SLP student, was named to Iowa's Homecoming Court, chosen for involvement in University activities, academics, achievements, leadership skills and abilities, service, interpersonal communication, enthusiasm, and sincerity.

**Daniel Tay**, PhD candidate, is winner of the Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship for Spring 2024. His financial award allows for protected, supported time to pursue scholarly research activities.

**Ulowa's Student Academy of Audiology chapter was named the 2022-23 National Humanitarian Champion.**



AuD students Neila Bell, Trudy Jacobs, and Maryann Quigley were honored for creating materials for Iowa City's Riverside Theatre to help patrons with hearing loss. The team created a video, FAQs, and informational flyer to complement the theatre's new loop system.

## Celebrating Scholarship Winners

**Carol & Gerald Nordquist SLP Scholarship:** Abigayle Shekleton

**Dorothy & Bernie Hay Student Support Fund:** Amy Bussa

**Esther Lila Herbert Scholarship:** Melissa Bruce

**H.L. Morris Scholarship:** Janey (Sarah) Galligan

**Iowa Scottish Rite Masonic Foundation Scholarship:** Emma Langel, Megan Wright

**Iowa Speech-Language-Hearing Association Scholar Nominees:** Jess Bednar, Neila Bell, Noel James, Hailey Kingsbury, Ellie Masten

**Kristin Lodge Miller Memorial Scholarship:** Jess Bednar

**Laura Mueldener Memorial Scholarship:** Connor Kaminski

**Laurel Stanzel Memorial Scholarship:** Savannah Heller, Elysia Lee, Allison Ocel

**Leland and Esther Ogdahl Scholarship:** Kelsey Libert

**Ruth A. Bentler Scholarship:** Sam Anderson, Maryann Quigley

**Sassine Graduate Scholarship:** Jean Hong, Brittney Tebbe

**Sertoma Graduate Support Award:** Janessa Klein

**Shirley & Thomas Salmon Scholarship:** Noel James

**Spiestersbach / Hurtig Award:** Ellie Masten

## Stay connected!

Share your updates, new contact info,  
or suggest a feature:

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Sciences & Disorders

## ASHA's earliest roots



*The former home of Lee Edward Travis in Iowa City – the place ASHA held its inaugural meeting – continues to be beautifully maintained as a private residence. ASHA will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2025, the same year as CSD at Iowa moves into its new facility.*