STRAIGHT TALK from the Ball State University Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology: Information for Alumni & Friends

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Abstract

For four years, I have spent my days and nights studying to become a Speech-Language Pathologist. As a relatively small department in comparison to other areas of academic study at Ball State University, the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology is a close knit group of professionals and students. I have had the opportunity to build and grow relationships with fellow classmates and faculty members during my time in the undergraduate program.

As I began considering project ideas for my senior honors thesis, I wanted to complete a project that would not only be personally enriching, but would also be beneficial for the faculty, staff, and fellow students in the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology. These people have impacted my education and personal life in a way that is inexpressible, and I feel that this senior honors thesis is the perfect way for me to give something back to the department that has shaped me into the professional that I will become. This project focuses on the necessity and methods used to maintain relationships with other alumni in order to inspire them to contribute to the department as well. Three newsletters geared towards alumni were developed to act as a template that the department can use in the future to help maintain the support and involvement of alumni in order to satisfy various needs of the department.
Acknowledgements

- First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Karen Thatcher. This project was certainly not an easy journey, but Dr. Thatcher offered knowledge, professional advice, support, encouragement, care, understanding, wisdom, and time. For all of this I am indescribably grateful. This project would not be what it is without her assistance and willingness to assist me through the process of putting together this project. Thank you so much for everything you have done for me throughout this process! I could not have done it without you!

-I would also like to thank Marissa Emerson from the Department of University Marketing and Communications for taking time out of her busy schedule to listen to my ideas and educate me on the process of developing a publication. Her suggestions, opinions, and expertise were an instrumental part of my brainstorming process.

- I would also like to give a special thanks to my parents, Greg and Sheila Stephens. They have been incredible parents who have taught me how to be the successful adult that I am becoming. Without their love and support I would never have made it this far and would not be the person I am today. Thanks Mom and Dad for everything that you have done and continue to do for me!

- Last, but certainly not least, I would like to express my gratitude to all of the faculty members and students who were willing to spare their time and resources to share with me about their experiences, work, and accomplishments. They all expressed enthusiasm and interest in the project and were more than willing to offer whatever help I needed to put together a professional project. Without their help, there would be nothing to put in the newsletters. It was certainly exciting to be able to learn about the extraordinary and busy lives that all of these individuals lead on a daily basis.
Rationale and Author's Analysis

of

STRAIGHT TALK from the Ball State University Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology: Information for Alumni and Friends

By

Amanda R. Stephens
Like the majority of honors college seniors, the process of putting together my senior honors thesis began towards the close of my junior year. As an aspiring Speech-Language Pathologist, clients and their families are the most important part of my job. I have spent a lot of time in the past few years working with children and their families in the on-campus Ball State University Speech-Language Hearing Clinic. When given the chance to complete an independent project such as this honors thesis, I wanted to choose a project that would provide me with a learning experience while benefiting the department, the clinic, and all of the individuals involved in the clinic whether they be students, faculty, or clients. I began making preparations for the development and distribution of a monthly newsletter geared towards the clients and families attending the clinic. Just as the initial preparations were coming together, extenuating circumstances required that I change faculty supervisors.

Although I was disappointed to lose my first advisor, this seemingly insignificant transition may have been a blessing in disguise. The supervisor change sparked a chain of events that would prove to be the most challenging portion of my senior thesis experience. The new faculty advisor chosen to oversee the project, Dr. Karen Thatcher, is familiar with the department of University Marketing and Communications and the process of distributing a publication in the university setting. As a precautionary measure, she contacted a representative from this department, Marissa Emerson, to discuss any regulations or requirements that I might need to meet before distributing the newsletters to the clients and their families each month. The information provided by Ms. Emerson on the necessary level of involvement of the public relations department in order to design, approve, and distribute written publications from any university department or person
suggested that my project would be too intensive to be completed as proposed and distributed in the designated time frame. This was a major setback that required me to revisit the brainstorming process. Dr. Thatcher challenged me to define and express some of the main goals that I desired my project to meet in order to restructure the project in such a way that the original ideas were not lost.

I analyzed my original project idea to define three main goals for the project. The first goal is that the project should inform others. In Speech-Language Pathology, as in all careers, it is very important to provide clients, families, colleagues, and other professionals with information in a constructive and functional manner. In order to ensure that I had chosen the best format for my project, Dr. Thatcher set up an appointment with Ms. Emerson to discuss different options for informative publications. During this interaction, I learned about benefits and drawbacks to different physical, tactile, and visual formats.

In conjunction with providing information, my second goal for this honors thesis is that it will benefit others while providing me with a personal learning experience. The main group of people that I hoped would benefit from this project was the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology. Aiding the department in developing a beneficial publication that could become a permanent offering in the future is the primary focus of this project. I shared this goal with my advisor, Dr. Thatcher, and discussed with her possible audiences to which the newsletter should be directed. Additionally, because the primary goal is to benefit the department, the department chair, Dr. Mary Jo Germani, and the clinic coordinator, Ms. Hinkley, were consulted on the current offerings from the department in this area and queried about the type of newsletter they felt would most benefit the department.
The feedback I received aided me in deciding on the audience to which the project would be geared. Ms. Hinkley brought to my attention the fact that much of the content that would be included in a client focused newsletter was already being provided through the letter that each client receives upon enrollment in the clinic and during interactions between clients and student clinicians. Based on this information, the client focused newsletter seemed to be redundant and unnecessary. Dr. Thatcher and Dr. Germani both explained that the department had previously distributed a newsletter for alumni and donors, but this publication had since been discontinued due to changes in budget funding and the lack of a person or committee to put the publication together. However, the development and distribution of a new alumni newsletter had recently been in discussion within the department. Additionally, Dr. Germani shared that the university had been prompting departments and colleges to develop an online newsletter to maintain alumni and donor relationships.

I also questioned Dr. Thatcher, Dr. Germani, and Ms. Hinkley on department needs that could possibly be met if alumni relationships were better maintained. All three faculty members agreed on several specific ways in which improved alumni relations could help improve the department. The first and most common way that alumni continue to be involved with their department is by donating a financial gift. There are many ways in which these financial gifts can be used within the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology. Some of the most prominent ways in which financial donations can be used include purchasing new testing and therapy materials for the clinic, providing updated technology for speech and hearing assessments, and updating the facilities within the department and clinic. Secondly, alumni who are loyal to the department may be more apt
to volunteer to teach a seminar or give a special interest class lecture. In this way, alumni can help improve the quality of the educational experience of students at all levels within the department receive. Thirdly, alumni who maintain interest in the department may be able to provide an internship site for graduate students. With interest in the graduate program causing increases in enrollment, there are more students needing internship placement in their final semester of study. Placing these practicum students in positions with former Ball State students would be extremely beneficial for the student because their internship supervisor would be familiar with the courses and information to which the student has been exposed. This collaboration would also be beneficial to the alumnus because it would give them a chance to stay connected with the program and have first-hand experience to new information that is being implemented into the curriculum.

Similarly, alumni who maintain their relationship with the department may also have an interest in offering undergraduate students a job shadowing experience. As with any profession, gaining experience early through job shadowing is one of the best ways to fully understand the intended career and assess the compatibility of the student with her career choice. The combination of all information gained from each of these three faculty members led me to shift the target audience from the clients and families seen in the on-campus clinic to department alumni and donors.

After making decisions on the format and target audience for the project, I began conducting more in-depth research. First, I consulted Ball State's website to gain information on the current alumni relations efforts of the university as a whole, as well as within individual colleges and departments. In addition to the extensive resources and relationship maintenance efforts of the Ball State Alumni Association, many other
departments have departmental alumni resources available online. While the format and methods used to maintain alumni relations vary between colleges and departments, many have formed department or college specific alumni advisory boards. Additionally, it evident that the college of Sciences and Humanities, to which the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology belongs, had the fewest alumni resources available in comparison with other colleges. Furthermore, there are a select few departments within the college that have developed some method of maintaining alumni relations, however these efforts are much less involved and detailed than other colleges and departments on campus. This can most likely be attributed to the fact that this college encompasses such a broad range of professional fields, and is therefore unable to combine resources to produce collective college alumni relations efforts as other colleges, such as the College of Architecture and Planning, the College of Business, and the Teacher’s College, have done. By developing more intensive alumni relations efforts such as this newsletter, the Speech Pathology and Audiology department could inspire the establishment of alumni resources from other departments within the college.

Secondly, the use of alumni newsletters by Speech Pathology and Audiology departments at other universities was researched. The majority of the universities researched were from the surrounding states of Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee; however, other universities throughout the country were randomly selected for review. Information was obtained from the web pages of each department which were accessed through the American Speech-Language Hearing Associations website. Approximately half of all Speech Pathology and Audiology department web pages accessed contained a newsletter or alternative form of maintaining alumni relations which
was separate from the university's alumni association. More specifically, larger universities and more nationally known Speech Pathology and Audiology programs had the most thorough efforts for maintaining alumni relationships. While the degree of efforts at these universities may be a result of the availability of more resources due to greater size and status, these same characteristics may be positively impacted by the degree to which the university and department continue to maintain alumni contributions and involvement. By increasing efforts to keep department alumni informed about department activities and needs, these Speech Pathology and Audiology departments may have access to and be able to offer additional resources that Ball State's department of Speech Pathology and Audiology does not have. If the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at Ball State increases its efforts to maintain contact with alumni and keep them involved by developing a newsletter such as the one developed for this project, they may too reap benefits that could help them to grow in size and recognition throughout the state and nation. 

Aside from gaining information on the presence of alumni newsletters and alternative relationship maintenance methods of individual colleges and departments at Ball State and other universities, I also took note of the reasons behind development of these alumni relations efforts and what types of information were provided to alumni. The Ball State Alumni Association states on the website that it, 

"...exists to foster and fully realize the ideals and mission of the University. The Alumni Association encourages loyalty, participation, and support of the University by informing alumni of the achievements and needs of their Alma Mater. The
Alumni Association advances the University throughout the world and unites all alumni in closer bonds of education, fellowship, tradition, and mutual assistance.” Many of the individual colleges and departments at Ball State that had established alumni advisory boards had similar statements of purpose. Additionally, Speech Pathology and Audiology departments at other universities listed comparable reasons for developing extensive resources for alumni.

While each newsletter and alumni information method varied on the content included, few common elements were seen. As mentioned in the mission statement of the Ball State Alumni Association, many of the departments and alumni associations provided information on activities, events, achievements, and updates happening within the department or university. Sharing this type of information is a way to provide feedback on what monetary donations may be used for, as well as informing alumni of physical or academic growth that is taking place within the department. A second commonality was in the content of alumni information was that many departments and universities highlighted extraordinary accomplishments made by fellow alumni. This is important because it shows the interest of the university or department in maintaining a two-way relationship with the alumni while simultaneously speaking to the quality of the educational experience provided by the department or university. Similarly, many departments and universities recognized faculty achievements and projects as well. This too shows the pride that department or university has in its faculty and their continuous efforts to further their education and professional development. Furthermore, featuring faculty achievements increases the credibility of the university or department as a successful educational provider.
Before applying the information obtained during research to the project, I investigated the frequency and length of alumni publications from departments at Ball State and other Speech Pathology and Audiology departments. These two aspects of alumni publications were the most varied between departments and universities. Data from the different departments and universities consulted was so varied that a specific length or frequency of distribution could not be identified as the most commonly used. However, it seemed as though frequency and length were inversely related in such a way that the longer the length of the publication, the fewer times it was distributed per year and vice versa.

With all of the information gained during my research, I was able to confirm the need for a Speech Pathology and Audiology department alumni publication and begin making decisions about the details of my publication including format, content, length, and frequency of distribution. After looking at a multitude of different formats for printed publications with Ms. Emerson from the department of University Marketing and Communications, I chose a two-color newsletter format for the project because I felt it was a very common, familiar, and relatively inexpensive form of providing information to a large group of individuals. Additionally, I have had experience putting together a newsletter in the past. This past experience allowed me to develop a professional publication while keeping the focus of my project on the content of the newsletter rather than the computer design component.

It was decided that the content of the newsletter should be similar to content included in alumni information from other departments at Ball State and other universities. The majority of the articles included in the publication are dedicated to highlighting faculty
accomplishments and improvements being made physically and academically within the department. In addition, articles highlighting the achievements of some of the current undergraduate and graduate students within the department were included. I felt that this information was appropriate to include because the ambition and quality of the students enrolled in the department also speak to the quality of the education provided by the curriculum. Sharing this information shows alumni that the department is continually making attempts to improve and may help to increase alumni interest in becoming involved in these improvements.

Finally, it was decided that the publication should be shorter in length but distributed more frequently. Each newsletter consists of four pages printed as two double-sided sheets. Having a brief publication will render it quick and easy for alumni to read, thereby making it more functional. Moreover, since department students and faculty are constantly busy with other projects and assignments, making the newsletter less labor intensive by decreasing the length may support the continuation of this project by making it more feasible for the department to produce.

Due to the shortness in length, it was subsequently decided that the newsletter should be distributed three times annually. If an alumni newsletter such as that developed in this project is adopted by the department, the first newsletter will be distributed at the start of the academic year and will concentrate on highlighting summer accomplishments and forecasting projects to be done in the upcoming year. The next newsletter will be distributed midpoint of the academic year. This second issue will update alumni on the outcome of projects done during the fall semester as well as highlighting forthcoming events and projects. The third and final newsletter of each year will be distributed at the
close of the spring semester and will address the completion of any projects done throughout spring semester.

When all research and decisions had been made, work on the construction of the mock newsletters began. All information included in the newsletters was obtained through interviews with faculty and students within the department. Individual appointments were scheduled over a period of several weeks. These appointments allowed me to maintain previously established relationships with some faculty members and students as well as forming new contacts with other members of the department. Following each interview the information obtained was put into article form. A template from Microsoft Office’s Publisher program was altered to form the unique format for the newsletter. Finally, pictures were included for most articles. These photos were obtained through submission by the subject of the article, acquired online, or taken by the author of the project. Once completed, a compact disk of the blank template and professional copies of the three newsletter issues were submitted to the department during a brief presentation during a faculty meeting. In addition, a disk containing the Portable Document Format (PDF) version of each newsletter was provided to the department so that the newsletters could be offered on the department website in order to satisfy the university’s request for an electronic alumni newsletter.

The last goal for this project was that it would produce a product and provide skills and information that will continue to be useful even after its completion. This project is designed in such a way that this goal is satisfied in two ways. First and foremost, all of the skills and knowledge required to produce the publication as well as those learned throughout the process will be readily applicable in my future career. It is probable that at
some point in my career I will need to develop and provide a printed informational source to employers, other professionals, or clients and their families. By completing this project, I have learned the necessary skills and knowledge needed to produce the right printed source to match the needs of the situation and audience.

Second, the project serves as a proposition and template that the department can use to develop and distribute an alumni publication in the future. As previously discussed, maintaining alumni relationships in this way could bring about a multitude of benefits for the department. In completing this project, I have done much of the groundwork that would be required to produce a tri-annual newsletter. With this base work completed, the department could adopt such a publication with less time and effort than was previously needed to design and distribute the preceding alumni newsletter.

In satisfying the personal goals set for the project, I feel that the project also meets the requirements to be considered the capstone project of my educational experience within the Honors College at Ball State University. The project required that I apply a broad range of skills and knowledge gained throughout my college education in a functional manner. Additionally, although the project was an independent effort, it required collaborative work with both peers and faculty members in such a way that resembles the teamwork that will need to be done in the professional setting. Finally, this project shows my ability to develop an idea into a concrete, purposeful product. Every aspect of this project and the learning experience which it provided demonstrates that the Honors College, the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, and Ball State University have effectively prepared me for the obstacles and challenges that I may encounter in my professional and personal life following the receipt of my Bachelor's degree.
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Vanderbilt Department of Hearing & Speech Sciences
Website: http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/root/vumc.php?site=hearing
STRAYT TALK is a new publication being distributed to alumni and friends of the department of Speech Pathology and Audiology. We cherish your continuing involvement and interest in the department and hope that STRAYT TALK will serve to keep you informed about the changes, events, and achievements of the department, faculty, clinic, and students. Please feel free to contact us with any comments, questions, or suggestions.

Sincerely, the STRAYT TALK team

Dr. Germani takes on title of ISHA president

Following four other department professors including Dr. Thomas Hemeyer, Dr. Mary Jo Germani will take on a new job this semester when she is named President of the Indiana Speech-Language Hearing Association (ISHA). Dr. Germani has been a member of ISHA since 1991. Two years ago she was elected as the future president and began serving as president elect. Her position as president will finally be made official with her inauguration in September. Upon accepting this position, she will take on many duties within the organization. Some of these duties include managing the budget, handling legislation issues, overseeing the functioning of teams within the organization, helping to organize professional development functions, and promoting the profession of Speech Pathology throughout the state of Indiana.

Aside from the responsibilities required of her title, Dr. Germani has some specific personal goals for her time in office. The first goal is to increase membership. By recruiting new members, she hopes the organization will have better resources to do more to promote the profession throughout the state. Aside from recruiting new professional members, Dr. Germani also desires to improve relationships with stakeholders such as the department of education, the association of special education directors, and ICASE. Her goal in increasing these relationships is to assist in diminishing the shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists throughout the state. Her last goal as president coincides with her favorite part of the job. The aspect of her duties that she is most interested in is “working on legislation to promote and protect the profession.” Likewise, she would like to get the members of ISHA more involved in legislation issues as well.

Even with all of her new responsibilities, she will still maintain all of her duties within the department at Ball State. She expects that balancing her duties as department chair, professor, advisor, and her new position as ISHA president will be stressful and may not be easy, however, she anticipates that overall, it will be worth it.

The aspect of her duties that she is most interested in is “working on legislation to promote and protect the profession.”

Special thanks to all of STRAYT TALK’s sources for this issue:

- Dr. Mary Jo Germani
- Ms. Ingrid Hinkley
- Dr. Lauren Shaffer
- Dr. Barry Wagner

Images obtained from:

- Amanda Stephens
- Pedigree image from Dr. Robert Tissot, University of Illinois Chicago (online)

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Ms. Hinkley steps in as the new Clinic Coordinator

With her attention to detail, organization, and previous managerial experience under her belt, Ms. Ingrid Hinkley is well-qualified to fill the position of clinic coordinator beginning this semester. As with the title of department chair, the clinic coordinator is chosen by the faculty and staff of the department. At the end of Mrs. Karen Ahlbrand’s three-year term in the position, Ms. Hinkley was nominated and elected as her successor.

As the clinic coordinator, Ms. Hinkley will be responsible for many different aspects of the clinic. Maintaining the client database, assigning supervisor caseloads, and recording and approving all student hours are some of her main duties in the campus clinic. Additionally, she will be in charge of setting up, assigning, and maintaining contracts for off-campus practicums and externships as well. Aside from these duties, Ms. Hinkley is involved with numerous committees within the department, assists in the graduate school application process, teaches undergrad and graduate classes, and acts as a clinic supervisor.

Ms. Hinkley is going into the job with expectations and plans for ways to improve the current clinic program. One of her main goals is to set up a more involved relationship with a local hospital. Ms. Hinkley commented that having a hospital so close to campus could be a great resource for students. She said that establishing an involved relationship with the hospital “would give more resources to students for the medical side of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.” While her new title includes many responsibilities, Ms. Hinkley said that she is grateful that “everyone in the department is supportive of each other which makes the clinic run more smoothly and makes my job better.”

New Genetics Course to be Offered

A new genetics course is being offered beginning this semester. While attending a workshop in Washington, D.C., Dr. Lauren Shaffer developed a plan for developing a new genetics course for SPAA students. She used her plan to teach a one-hour seminar in 2006 and then further developed it into the two-hour course that is now being offered to Graduate students in the doctorate program.

The course covers many different topics throughout the semester and is concluded with a mystery project. Basic cell biology and bio technology are covered early on in the course. Following these basics, information about genetic counseling is also included. The students in the class learn how to develop a pedigree, or ancestral line, used in tracking diseases. Another important topic that is discussed in the class is the ethics behind genetic testing. All of this information is tailored to specifically address aspects of genetics that are applicable to communication disorders. The students are required to use the information and skills learned throughout the course to complete the final mystery project at the end of the course.

Dr. Shaffer recommends the course for students in both Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. She explained that the need for information about the involvement of genetics in communication disorders is growing and ASHA is beginning to develop plans for educating all Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists about genetics. Dr. Shaffer feels that the information covered in this course would be beneficial for all career settings.
Professor continues research on Augmentative and Alternative Communication

After working with David Beukelman from the University of Nebraska during a post-doctoral experience, Dr. Barry Wagner became intrigued by Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Since this time, he has completed many research studies on the subject. Three of these studies have been published in well-known professional journals such as the Journal of Communication Disorders and the Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research.

While Dr. Wagner is interested in all aspects of AAC, his studies are primarily focused on the role of memory in the use of AAC devices by children. Dr. Wagner examined how many symbols could be remembered by children in different age groups as well as which locations were easiest for the children to remember. Additionally, Dr. Wagner has also investigated the success of different types of scanning techniques that highlight items on the AAC device to assist the user in finding the desired information.

Currently, Dr. Wagner and his research assistants are conducting data on memory capabilities of children with Down’s Syndrome who use AAC devices. Much of the funding for this and previous studies has come from the Lilly Foundation. The money has allowed Dr. Wagner to hire graduate assistants to help with collecting data and purchase new equipment needed for his research. Dr. Wagner plans to present the findings on his current study at the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication’s conference in Montreal next August.

New Hearing Research Laboratory Opens

As students come back from summer vacation, they will notice a new addition to the department. Room AC101 has been remodeled and converted into the new Hearing Research Laboratory. Construction on the new lab began in the previous academic year, but was finally completed for the start of the fall semester. A grant provided by the Lilly Foundation for research purposes helped the department to purchase the sound proof booth and much of the state of the art equipment that will be used in the new lab.

As a research lab, it is primarily used by graduate and research assistants, however it is open for use by the clinic at certain times during the week. Dr. Shaffer’s research on otoacoustic emissions is the primary research being conducted in the laboratory at this time. Special equipment including audiometers with ultra-high frequency capabilities and two state of the art Mac computers containing custom made software for measuring otoacoustic emissions are available in the new lab.

This addition to the department will certainly improve the program in a number of ways. The research lab offers an immersive learning experience for students in the department. Through this experience, students will have access to more detailed learning about theories, analyzing data, and computer operating systems that they may not have had access to otherwise. Additionally, the research being done may bring in extra government funding that could bring about more assistantship opportunities for students. Providing students with assistantships may enable students to attend the program who may not otherwise have been able to enroll. Lastly, the lab and research being done will help to bring recognition to the department which will produce many additional benefits including more external funding and higher enrollment.
To: Jane Doe
1234 College Avenue
Muncie, IN 47304

HOW CAN YOU STAY INVOLVED WITH THE DEPARTMENT?

- Register with the Alumni Association online at http://www.bsu.edu/alumni/
- Give a Class Lecture
- Provide an Internship site
- Allow a student to job shadow you
- Donate:
  - Provide for graduate assistantships
  - Help update and expand the clinical facilities
  - Assist in covering costs of therapy in our clinic for clients who qualify
  - Aid in the purchasing of new assessment and treatment materials

If you have a question about ways to stay involved or want to update us on your current status contact: STRAIGHT TALK
Speech Pathology & Audiology Department
AC 104
Muncie, IN 47306

Department and clinic expand with new offices and therapy rooms

Each year the SPAA program and the Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic on campus continue to grow with more students and clients choosing to attend. In order to offer the services needed by these students and clients, the department has begun executing plans to construct new offices and convert the spaces that currently house professor offices into new clinic treatment rooms.

The conversion plan involves dividing AC 119 into several offices. Once this has been done the next phase of the project will be to begin moving professors that occupy the 8 offices on the first floor into those offices in AC 119. Upon completing these moves, those eight empty first floor offices will have sounds system equipment and observation windows installed to prepare them for use as therapy rooms.

This transformation will not only provide professors with newly remodeled offices, but it will also make the clinic better able to serve a larger number of clients. The extra capacity will be especially useful for the after school hours in which the highest number of clients are available for therapy.

In addition to providing better service for clients, having extra clinic rooms will benefit the students as well. A larger client population will give practicum students more opportunities for hands-on learning. The hands-on training offered is one of the aspects of the program on which the department is most prided.

Construction on the new offices will be finishing up in the spring, and then work can begin on converting the old offices into therapy rooms. The department hopes to have all professors moved into their new offices and the new clinic rooms ready sometime next year.
Dr. Germani takes on title of ISHA president

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From the Ball State University Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology
College of Arts and Communications
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To: Jane Doe
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HOW CAN YOU STAY INVOLVED WITH THE DEPARTMENT?

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  Provide for graduate assistantships
  Help update and expand the clinical facilities
  Assist in covering costs of therapy in our clinic for clients who qualify
  Aid in the purchasing of new assessment and treatment materials

If you have a question about ways to stay involved or want to update us on your current status contact:
STRAIGHT TALK
Speech Pathology & Audiology Department
AC 104
Muncie, IN 47306

Department and clinic expand with new offices and therapy rooms

Each year the SPAA program and the Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic on campus continue to grow with more students and clients choosing to attend. In order to offer the services needed by these students and clients, the department has begun executing plans to construct new offices and convert the spaces that currently house professor offices into new clinic treatment rooms.

The conversion plan involves dividing AC 119 into several offices. Once this has been done the next phase of the project will be to begin moving professors that occupy the 8 offices on the first floor into those offices in AC 119. Upon completing these moves, those eight empty first floor offices will have sound system equipment and observation windows installed to prepare them for use as therapy rooms.

This transformation will not only provide professors with newly remodeled offices, but it will also make the clinic better able to serve a larger number of clients. The extra capacity will be especially useful for the after school hours in which the highest number of clients are available for therapy.

In addition to providing better service for clients, having extra clinic rooms will benefit the students as well. A larger client population will give practicum students more opportunities for hands-on learning. The hands-on training offered is one of the aspects of the program on which the department is most proud. Construction on the new offices will be finishing up in the spring, and then work can begin on converting the old offices into therapy rooms. The department hopes to have all professors moved into their new offices and the new clinic rooms ready sometime next year.

New hallway and professor offices in the last stages of construction.
New Clinic Coordinator is settling into the position with the start of the Spring Semester

STRAIGHT TALK followed up with Ms. Hinkle to find out how her first semester as clinic coordinator went.

Coming into the role as clinic coordinator, Ms. Hinkle had only seen the clinic from the perspective of a professor and supervisor. After her first semester serving as CC, she has been able to see the inner workings of the clinic from a completely new and different perspective. She commented that the combination of her previous view of the clinic and her new perspective has allowed her to see the much bigger picture and has made her more aware of the details involved in running the clinic.

When asked what her favorite part of the job has been so far, she said that she "enjoys getting to interact with all of the students" in the department rather than being limited to the select few that she supervised or taught in classes prior to taking on this new position. She explained that having more contact with all the students gives her the opportunity to see them grow and change throughout their time in the program. Like many Speech-Language Pathologists, paperwork was mentioned as her least favorite part about her new role. The paperwork involved with her new duties takes away from time that she could be spending interacting with students. Because of all the responsibilities that come along with her new title, Ms. Hinkle said that she is most grateful for her graduate assistant, Lindsey Hohlbein.

After her first semester, Ms. Hinkle has settled into her role as clinic coordinator. While her graduate assistant and peers in the department have given her lots of support, she is looking forward to the point when she feels very comfortable in the position. She anticipates having an easier time coming up with answers to the many questions asked of her, and she is hopeful that in time, things will run more smoothly in both her job and the clinic.

Department sad to see professor leave

Mrs. Karen Ahlbrand finished out her last semester as a professor in the SPAA department in December. After serving as a professor in the department for many years and spending the last three years acting as the clinic coordinator, Mrs. Ahlbrand is beginning a new chapter in her career.

As students and other faculty members went home for the holidays following a busy semester, Mrs. Ahlbrand and her family finished packing up in preparation for the move to their new home in Indiana. Mrs. Ahlbrand will begin her new job as the Speech Pathologist at an Indiana public school system.
Professor co-authors book chapter

With the recent completion of a book chapter, Dr. Alice Dyson and her former student Dr. Mousa Amayreh are pioneering studies of the Arabic language. Dr. Dyson first worked with Dr. Amayreh when he was a doctoral student in Florida in 1991. She was the supervisor for his thesis project in which he developed an articulation test for the Arabic language. Dr. Dyson studied the language in order to be a more knowledgeable supervisor and these studies peaked her interest in the Arabic language.

Dr. Dyson’s interest in the language led her to begin visiting Jordan once or twice per year to study language acquisition in children under the age of six. She also spent an entire year on sabbatical teaching in Jordan.

In 1994, Dr. Dyson and Dr. Amayreh began several research projects that eventually led to the work reported in the book chapter that will be released in April or May of this year. The chapter is entitled “Jordanian Arabic Speech Acquisition” and will be included in a reference book entitled International Speech Acquisition. The book addresses language acquisition for many different languages including two sections on non-standard varieties of English. Dr. Dyson said the book will be of interest to professionals working with ESL clients.

Although this is their first book chapter, the two professionals have co-authored several journal articles together in the past in addition to individual work done by both. Dr. Dyson plans to continue her work with the Arabic language because since the language has not been studied by many others, there are still many aspects of the language to be investigated.

Students spend summer vacation getting experience

In the wilderness of Eastern Oregon is a camp called Meadowood Springs Speech & Hearing Camp that specifically caters to children with speech, language, and hearing disorders. Each summer the camp runs two two-week long sessions in July. During the sessions campers with speech, language, and hearing disorders come for fun, fellowship, and speech therapy.

Three Ball State students, Cara Bearman, Megan Eley, and Michelle Harker, chose to spend their summer vacation working as student clinicians at the camp. During this experience the three students were responsible for several campers each.

They accompanied each of their campers to the different activities and provided therapy within each activity setting. They also had one-on-one therapy sessions each day.

Each of the three students mentioned that meeting new people, receiving varied clinical experience, and having the opportunity to get to know and see progress in their campers were the best parts of attending the camp. Megan Eley, who spent one summer working at the camp, elaborated "These kids were so motivated to do well and the environment was unlike a normal clinical experience."

Because of having such a great experience, all three students said that they would recommend this experience to anyone studying Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology. Michelle Harker, who worked at the camp for three years, commented "Camp has really helped me grow professionally. The general setup of the daily activities requires on-the-spot decision making."

Cara Bearman who acted as a student clinician for one year discussed a benefit of the experience which was mentioned by all three students. Cara commented, "This experience built extraordinary teamwork skills in all of the clinicians." Additionally, Cara summed up the sentiment of all three ladies by saying, "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!"
Professor & daughter inspire department to get involved with statewide foundation for Cranio-Facial differences

Dr. Karen Thatcher has an advantage in her career because she has not only been able to see her work through professional eyes, but also the eyes of a parent who has a child with a craniofacial anomaly. Her youngest daughter Abby was diagnosed with Treacher Collins Syndrome at a young age. While this diagnosis has brought many challenges to Abby, Dr. Thatcher and their family, it has also given them a chance to be involved with the Heads Up Foundation.

The Turner’s daughter was born with cleft palate, they felt that there were no resources for parents with cleft palate and other cranio-facial differences. The Turner family wanted to help other parents in their situation by providing resources for them. In order to get the money needed to provide the desired resources, the organization collects used printer cartridges. The foundation teams with a company that buys the used printer cartridges and refills them for resale. The money collected by the foundation is used for scholarships to send children to camp About Face, sponsor an annual conference at Riley hospital called “Parenting 101”, and fund other craniofacial awareness events within the state.

Because of their gratitude to the foundation for sponsoring scholarships, camp About Face wants the campers to help collect cartridges for the foundation. Each year the camp holds a contest to see which camper can collect the most cartridges. Naturally, Abby had an advantage because of Dr. Thatcher’s involvement at the University. After the first year, Abby declined participation in the contest, but continued collecting cartridges with the help of Ball State’s NSSLHA group.

NSSLHA and Dr. Thatchers graduate assistant have been aiding Abby and Dr. Thatcher in collecting cartridges for the past four years. In those few years Ball State has become one of the top 10 suppliers of cartridges by contributing between two and three thousand cartridges each year. With the help of businesses in the community and other departments on the Ball State campus, Abby, Dr. Thatcher, NSSLHA, and the entire SPAA department hope that this service project can continue to grow and benefit the Heads Up Foundation for many more years to come.

If you would like more information about the Heads Up Foundation please visit:
www.headsupfoundation.org

Ink Cartridge Collection Box in AC219

Several years ago, Dr. Thatcher enrolled Abby in About Face, a summer camp dedicated to children with cranio-facial anomalies. During her time at camp, Abby learned about the Heads Up Foundation. The Heads Up Foundation was started by the Turner family. When

Heads Up!!!

Foundation

For Cranio-Facial Anomalies

If you would like to help NSSLHA’s efforts by submitting your empty cartridges to the Heads Up Foundation cartridge drive please contact:
Dr. Karen Thatcher
Ph: 285-8169
E-mail: kthatcher@bsu.edu
The SPAA department is holding its 3rd annual Scholastic Book Fair this semester.

THEME: a day at the beach
WHEN: April 2nd-4th
HOURS: 8am-5pm
WHERE: AC 108
WHO CAN COME: Everyone!

The book fair is always a big event within the department for a number of reasons. First, it provides the literacy library with free books. Second, it gives students in the department access to books and resources that they can use with their clients. Lastly and most importantly, it gives clients’ parents a chance to get involved with their kids by picking out books together that they can read at home.

Dr. Thatcher’s graduate assistant, Cara Bearman, has been hard at work this year preparing for the event. NSSLHA is also getting involved by helping with setup, working shifts while the fair is open, and tearing down on the 4th.

In an attempt to get more people involved and interested in attending the book fair, a campus wide e-mail was sent out to all Ball State departments, faculty, and students. Flyers and newspaper ads were also used to advertise the event.

This year, the book fair will also include read-alongs. Some of Ball State’s student athletes have been invited to come during designated times to read stories for a story time. After the stories are read, the children will have a chance to meet and talk with the student athletes. Dr. Thatcher and the department hope that children attending the read-alongs will be more inspired to read after seeing role models, like the student athletes, being excited about reading.
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Although the literacy library has grown greatly in the few short years since it opened, Dr. Thatcher still has many dreams and goals for it's future. Work is already being done with the special education department at Ball State to try to give access to all students with any kind of disability. One of the long term goals is to install computers and include more technology options within the lab. Overall, Dr. Thatcher desires the literacy lab to continue to grow into an even more valuable resource not just for the students and faculty, but for the entire community.

Inside the Literacy Library

Special Thanks to all of STRAIGHT TALK's sources for this issue:
- Dr. Karen Thatcher
- Blair Decker, grad student
- Rachel Kinker, student
- NSSLHA members
- Dr. Updike
- Dr. Shaffer

Images Obtained from:
- Amanda Stephens
- Blair Decker
- Dr. Claudia Updike
- Department of Speech Pathology & Audiology's website

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NSSLHA group finishes out a busy year

The Ball State chapter of the National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association has been hard at work this year. Under the leadership of graduate student Tracy Rochester during the fall semester and the co-leadership of graduate students Blair Decker and Melissa Fisher during the spring semester, NSSLHA has grown and become more involved on campus.

For the first time in many years, NSSLHA participated in the majority of the football homecoming week events. All of the members put in many hours of work on hall decorations, banners, costumes, and other projects for the different events that are held on campus to celebrate the week of homecoming. All of their efforts benefited the club by earning awards for hall decorating, banner decorating and bed races. In addition, Rachelle Reichert, an undergraduate student in the SPAA department was named homecoming queen. Most importantly, participating in these events gave NSSLHA the chance to become more well-known by non-departmental students and other organizations on campus.

The group continued the traditional Abby Candles sale fundraiser. This year a project that is completed annually just before Christmas and earns the most funding for the group. Aside from this main fundraiser, the organization sold homecoming t-shirts, ran a bake sale, and sold department t-shirts, polos, sweatshirts and bags. While t-shirts and other clothing items are also an annual fundraiser, the group attempted to improve this project by extending sales to the clients and families that receive services in the clinic. All of these projects added to the group's budget while serving as a method of advertisement around campus to increase pride in the department.

The money earned from each of these projects was used to host two guest speakers, fund the annual awards banquet, and most importantly, provide a means to serve others through donations. This year the group agreed on making donations to Interlock, an organization dedicated to autism, and Ball State's annual Relay for Life, which is sponsored by and benefits the American Cancer Society. Members also participated in Angel Tree which was a fun game night for underprivileged children.

Although much has been accomplished this year, it has not been "all work and no play" for members. A social movie night was held early in the spring semester to give members a chance to get together and bond outside of the classroom setting. Additionally, the second annual "make it, take it" night was held in February. This was a night for members to get together in a fun, social setting while putting together creative, functional games and manipulatives that could be used in clinic lessons.

With the hard work and organization of the new leaders combined with enthusiastic members who are willing to get involved, NSSLHA has had a very productive and successful year. It is hoped that the organization will continue to grow and develop even more in future years.
**Dr. Updike completes research on new FM system**

At this year’s ISHA conference, Ball State’s own Dr. Claudia Updike presented a research project that she has been conducting over the last couple years. A company by the name of Phonak approached Dr. Updike about conducting research on the new personal FM system they developed, Edulink. The Edulink system was manufactured for use in the classroom by children with Auditory Processing Disorder. Dr. Updike’s research assessed the level of increase in the attention and classroom performance of students with APD and ADD when using the Edulink system.

Dr. Updike has been interested in studying Auditory Processing Disorder for many years, therefore, she did not hesitate to accept the research project from Phonak. Phonak provided her with grant money to fund her research as well as providing the Edulink systems on a loan basis to be sold to the children included in the study at a greatly discounted price.

Dr. Updike’s research found that the Edulink system had an extremely positive impact on the classroom performance of children with both APD and ADD. With her hard work, Phonak is now able to show evidence that their system is a beneficial tool for APD children in the classroom.

The project has previously been presented at ASHA and the ASHA schools conferences. Following the presentation at ISHA in April, Dr. Updike will travel to many other conferences throughout the next several months to share her findings. Some of the conferences she will be attending are the Educational Audiology Association conference, Midwest conference at Purdue University, University of Cincinnati conference on APD, and the Canadian Academy of Audiology’s conference.

Dr. Updike’s involvement in this project has also provided the clinic with new equipment. Several Edulink systems have since been purchased and distributed to clients of the Ball State University Speech-Language Hearing clinic. These systems were given out to clients on a loan basis and must be returned to the clinic at the end of the school year. With knowledge from her research, Dr. Updike is able to offer her clients exceptional information and service on the loaner systems. This interaction is also beneficial to the clients because they get direct access to the expert behind the information.

**Dr. Shaffer continues research on Otoacoustic Emissions**

With a background in biology, Dr. Shaffer developed an interest in the subject of otoacoustic emissions (OAEs). Since 1994, she has been putting her interest into practice by conducting research on OAEs, specifically the possibility that there is a link to genetics. In the past, Dr. Shaffer has studied the OAEs on different types of animals such as kangaroo rats and guinea pigs as well as testing human OAEs.

Currently, Dr. Shaffer and her research assistants are attempting to get funding for a twin study on the subject. If similarities in the emissions of identical twins are greater than those of fraternal twins, then the findings of the twin study would indicate a genetic factor in the production of OAEs.

To date, Dr. Shaffer has completed approximately four studies, and she continues to use her findings to develop new research projects. Ultimately, she hopes that her research can help find measures of OAEs that could be more useful in a clinical setting. At the present time, the only clinical use for OAEs is to determine whether the cochlea has normal or impaired functioning. Once functioning has been determined, behavioral tests are currently used to find out more information about the degree to which the cochlea is impaired. However, some populations such as infants and individuals with severe cognitive and physical impairments are unable to complete these behavioral tests. Dr. Shaffer would like to see her research lead to the use of otoacoustic emissions as a non-behavioral tool in clinical testing of the cochlea.
SPAA department honors students at the annual end of the year awards banquet

The SPAA department held their annual end of the year honors banquet on Friday evening March 31st. The banquet has been held at many different places throughout the years, but this year NSSLHA chose to hold the banquet at the Alumni center. Faculty members, students, and family members gathered at 6:00pm for a social followed by a Ball State University catered buffet-style dinner. Guests mingled and were entertained by live piano music throughout dinner.

Several awards were given out to undergraduate and graduate students in both specialty areas. Undergraduate seniors who will graduate by December and maintain a GPA of at least 3.5 were honored with a certificate for excellent academic achievement. Graduate students in both Speech Pathology and Audiology who maintain a GPA of 3.7 or higher and will graduate by December were also honored. Following these awards, specially engraved plaques for the single most outstanding undergraduate senior, outstanding graduate student in Speech Pathology, outstanding graduate student in Audiology, and outstanding doctoral student in Audiology were awarded. Specialty awards from ISHA, NSSLHA, and NAFDA were given out to students who are members of the organizations and show outstanding academic performance as well as a high degree of involvement.

In addition to the student awards that were chosen by faculty members, the co-presidents of NSSLHA, Blair Decker and Melissa Fisher, took time to honor their advisors, Mrs. Melanie Houk and Mrs. Judith Thornburg, with a special gift. They also praised the remainder of their executive board by presenting a personal gift to each officer and sharing about the contributions each had made throughout the year.

While the awards gave a sense of formality to the banquet, guests were certainly entertained throughout the banquet by the witty commentary of the department chair, Dr. Mary Jo Germani, and her enthusiasm for giving door prizes. Overall, everyone had a wonderful time and the annual banquet was once again a success thanks to the hard work and planning of NSSLHA members and department faculty.
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- Give a Class Lecture
- Provide an Internship site
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- Donate:
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  - Help update and expand the clinical facilities
  - Assist in covering costs of therapy in our clinic for clients who qualify
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