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Pascal van Lieshout, PhD

A Word from the Chair

It is with great pleasure, that as the new chair of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology I can take this opportunity to write a few words to all our readers of the Intercom newsletter.

Let me start by thanking my predecessor, Elizabeth Rochon, for doing such a wonderful job as interim Chair and making the transition to this position so much easier. Being in this job for almost 6 months (by the time you read this), I have witnessed the commitment and enthusiasm of our faculty, staff and students in making our department stand out as a beacon of excellence in clinical education, training and research. We rank among the very best programs in North-America and can be proud of our achievements.

One of the highlights for the past year I wish to bring to your attention is the establishment of a new endowed scholarship for student support by our illustrious former chair, Jean Walker, a true champion

for our department and the field of speech-language pathology in general. We thank Jean for her continued support and I thank Luigi, Elizabeth and our new Senior Development Officer, Katie Rock, for doing most of the legwork on getting this scholarship established. We are also very grateful to the Cizman family for endowing a scholarship in honour of one of our great alumnae, Ruth Glennie.

Other highlights I wish to mention are my pleasant and productive interactions with our Alumni Association, who, as in previous years, organized several events in support of our students, including a very successful Graduation Reception in the perfect ambiance of the Music Room at Hart House. At this event, students, family and guests were treated to an engaging performance of the Barbershop Quartet, led by one of the department's strongest supporters, Mr. George Shields, who after all these years still leads the Harmonize for Speech Fund with much enthusiasm and success in support of our students and to the benefit of those who are affected by speech and/or language disorders.

We also look back at our very successful annual Awards & Recognition Breakfast which not only showcased the achievements of our students in the professional and research programs, but also the creativity of our first year students who produced a truly professional music video that will amaze you, so do check it out on YouTube (Life's Speechie; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJNcXAh7Fbg>).

The last bit of news I like to share concerns our research student program. After a few years of careful (and sometimes frustrating) negotiations, it has been decided that our research stream program will merge with the newly approved Rehabilitation Science Institute (RSI) in order to facilitate administration and student funding. Needless to say, our research students will remain an integral part of our department through their work in the labs of our faculty. This development will allow us to maintain a strong research agenda and promote the knowledge gained from our research across disciplines and with different stakeholders.

Finally, I want to thank all our alumni, supporters and friends for their contributions and for helping us to keep this department on track in its mission to deliver the best education and training for students who at one point will become our future leaders in the field. I encourage you to let me know how we are doing and how you wish to be involved in our departmental activities. Together, we can make sure Speech-Language Pathology will receive the recognition and support from government and others to ensure people in Ontario and elsewhere can get the care they deserve to facilitate two of the most important human functions in life: communication and swallowing.



Teaching Abroad

In May and June 2014, Tim Bressmann was invited to spend time at the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Ramathibodi Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand. Ramathibodi is the academic hospital of Mahidol University. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is the only training program for Speech-Language Pathology in Thailand. It is housed in brand new facilities and is very well-equipped. Over the course of four weeks, Tim taught a class on voice disorders, cleft palate, and head and neck cancer to a group of graduate students. The time of the visit coincided with a military coup and the declaration of martial law in Thailand. While there were inconveniences such as a curfew and roadblocks, the coup took place in a fairly orderly manner, and the normal operations of the hospital were not affected. Tim spent a lot of time teaching and then preparing more lectures, but his hosts also took him on numerous outings to interesting and beautiful places around Bangkok. Tim particularly enjoyed the varied, delectable Thai cuisine and developed an appreciation for the durian fruit.

Awards and Honours Do



2014 SLP Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award Winner

Dr. Judy Seligman-Wine (left) is a speech language pathologist who was a pioneer in the development of the field of AAC internationally. She was on the team in Toronto that first used Blissymbols as a tool for communication with children with cerebral palsy, before moving to Israel. She was a founding member of ISAAC – the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, and served in a leadership capacity in that organization for many years. She founded the Israeli chapter of ISAAC – ISAAC-ISRAEL – and served as its chairperson for 14 years. She has taught courses on AAC in several of the Communications Disorders departments in Israel and has also taught abroad, including courses in Prague, Budapest and India. From 1996 until 2012 she served as a faculty member in the School for Augmentative and Alternative Communication at the Benedetta D'Intino Foundation in Milan, Italy. Over the years, she has worked in the development and implementation of AAC systems for many different populations of children and adults. In the past twelve years, she has specialized in providing communication tools to children with both Rett and Angelman syndrome.



Wightman-Berris Academy Award

The Individual Teaching Award, Health Professions Program recognizes excellence in teaching within the capacity of clinical education. This year, both Gordon Nicholson (bottom right) and Martin Vera (top) status Lecturers with the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, were recipients of this award and we are so glad to see their many contributions recognized! Both were nominated by students that they taught through U of T clinical placement courses, and by their peers. In particular, students commented on their ability to motivate critical and effective thinking while ensuring an environment rich with learning opportunities. Both, were also described as excellent leaders and mentors.

Learn more about the [Wightman-Berris Awards](#)



Do you know of SLP Clinical Faculty or Alumna who have recently won an award? Contact us at slp.web@utoronto.ca

Convocation 2014

The U of T S-LP Alumni Association hosted another successful Convocation Reception and Awards Ceremony this November at Hart House. Several students received awards of special recognition, which were presented by department faculty, community clinicians, Alumni Association members. Congratulations to the graduating class and award winners!

[\[Read more...\]](#)



Research Corner

Voice and Resonance Lab

Tim Bressmann, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are interested in speech disorders related to craniofacial syndromes (e.g., cleft palate) and head & neck cancer. Some of our current research focuses on the assessment of tongue movement with ultrasound and the acoustic analysis of oral-nasal balance in speech.

Childhood Hearing Loss Lab

Alice Eriks-Brophy, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are currently investigating the role of culture in parent-child communicative interactions for children with hearing loss using the LENA system. We are also examining cultural bias in assessment, intervention, and language outcomes for Canadian Aboriginal children.

Speech Fluency Lab

Luc De Nil, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are exploring brain processes that lead to the development of stuttering in children and adults. By looking at functions and anatomy using state-of-the-art brain imaging, we can understand what factors cause stuttering and, importantly, what we can do better in treatment. In a recent study (Beal, et al. 2013 published in Cortex) we found that there are significant differences in brain anatomy between children who do and do not stutter.

Child Language Lab

Luigi Girolametto, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are exploring second language learning patterns in sequential bilingual children who speak Cantonese in the home. Our aim is to determine typical error patterns in learning English to improve SLP assessments of Cantonese-speaking children with language disorders.

[\[find out more...\]](#)

Language and Cognitive Development Lab

Elina Mainella Arnold, PhD, Faculty (Tenure Track)

We are investigating nonverbal cognitive mechanisms involved in language development. We are looking at the links between memory, attention, motor coordination and reasoning in children with typical and impaired language development.

Swallowing Lab

Rosemary Martino, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

Our current research focuses on swallowing problems (dysphagia) in patients with head and neck cancer, stroke and other neurological diseases such as Parkinson's disease. We are studying how swallowing problem and its medical consequences can be identified earlier and more accurately. The ultimate goal of our research is to enhance disease recovery and reduce patient burden.

[\[find out more...\]](#)

Language Sciences Lab

Elizabeth Rochon, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are identifying the nature and components of linguistic and cognitive impairments subsequent to brain damage. We are developing new treatment approaches for language impairments in aphasia.

Oral Dynamics Lab

Pascal van Lieshout, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are conducting research on oral motor control processes in speech production using state-of-the art technology. Our aim is to provide a better understanding of underlying physiological and physical control mechanisms based on dynamical system theory principles in healthy and speech-disordered populations across the lifespan.

[[find out more...](#)]

Speech Production Lab

Yana Yunosova, PhD, Faculty (Tenured)

We are developing an instrumental protocol for the assessment of speech changes in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and a process to automatically predict who will develop a bulbar form of ALS as disease progresses. We are developing a novel game-based therapy to improve articulation in patients with Parkinson disease.

CANlab,

Boaz Ben-David, PhD, Assistant Professor

(status-appointed)

We are currently using eye-tracker to assess online processing of speech perception in noise with older adults. We are identifying, sensory and cognitive sources for age-related differences in rating of emotions in spoken language.

Meltzer Lab

Jed Meltzer, PhD, Assistant Professor

(cross-appointed) Dept of Psychology

We are neuroimaging language through the use of fMRI, MEG, and EEG. We are evaluating dementia through computational linguistics. We are measuring neurostimulation in stroke and dementia, with TMS and TDCS.

[[find out more...](#)]

Swallowing Rehabilitation Research Lab

Catriona Steele, PhD, Professor (status-appointed)

We are investigating the pathophysiology of swallowing impairment and determine effective treatments to restore swallowing function. We are examining the mechanisms by which texture-modified foods and thickened liquids may lead to improved swallowing function in people with dysphagia.

[[find out more...](#)]

Outcomes Measures Lab,

Bloorview Research Institute

Nancy Thomas-Stonell, BSc, Assistant Professor (status-appointed),

We are investigating the outcomes of speech and language therapy for preschool children. We are promoting the uptake of the FOCUS outcome measure world-wide.

[[find out more...](#)]

Department of Speech-Language Pathology

If you are interested in making a donation to the Department and/or supporting the Alumni Association, click on the link below, enter the amount under the Department of Speech-Language Pathology section and click add to cart. The form will expand allowing you to enter text in the "additional information" box specifying the type of donation (i.e. "Departmental donation " for the Department or "Alumni Association" for Alumni support).

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Wishing you relaxing holidays and a healthy, successful
and stimulating New Year!

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