



# COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The Communication Disorders program is a pre-professional program that prepares undergraduate students for graduate programs in speech-language pathology and/or audiology. Students majoring in Communication Disorders take courses such as speech and language development, sign language, language disorders, phonetics and phonology, speech disorders, audiology and research methods. Courses in psychology, statistics, and acoustics are also required. Students also participate and gain practical experience in the field of Communication Disorders by being involved in the Baldwin-Wallace Speech Clinic, which serves the College and the community by providing speech, language, and hearing services, under the supervision of licensed and certified speech-language pathologists.

**Clinical Experience.** Communication Disorders students have the unique opportunity to be actively involved in the clinical aspects in the fields of communication disorders. Communication Disorders students are enrolled in four semesters of clinical experience:

- One semester of CDC 235 Clinical Management and Standards where they complete at least 25 observational hours
- Three semesters of CDC 335 Clinical Practice where they plan and implement speech, language and hearing intervention for patients in the B-W Speech Clinic.

On the average students obtain over 100 clinical hours, which is significantly higher compared to the national

average of 44 hours obtained at the undergraduate level (\*\*CAPCSD, 2001). As part of our required clinical experience, upperclassman spend one semester working in our Intensive Intervention Program for Functionally Nonverbal Children. Here they learn to utilize a wide variety of communication modes with this unique group of clients. Specifically, the students receive training in the use of a variety of Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices.

**Research Experience.** Communication Disorders students are actively involved in the research aspects of the field. They take one semester of CDC 440 Research Methods in Communication Disorders. A requirement of this course is to write a doable evidence-based practice research proposal, which requires students to learn about research methods, critical analysis of published research, critical thinking, and writing skills. A few students each year conduct their research and present their findings at the state and/or national conventions.

Students also have the opportunity to be involved in research through the Faculty-Student Collaborative. In this research experience, students work side-by-side with faculty to solve current research problems, such as the effectiveness of intensive multi-modality intervention with functionally nonverbal children. As a part of this experience students assist with such tasks as data analysis, research on other data collection possibilities, current research trends in the area, and preparation of grants and presentations.

## WHAT CAN I Be WITH THIS MAJOR?

Speech-Language Pathologist

Hearing Scientist

Teacher Aide—Special Needs Preschools

Technician and/or sales associate for AAC companies

Audiologist

Speech Scientist

Careers in other Allied Health Fields

## OUTCOMES

Since 1999, the program has grown from seven majors to over 60 majors. Approximately 80% of the graduating seniors in Communication Disorders apply to graduate or professional programs with a 97% acceptance rate. The vast majority of the graduates have gone onto graduate programs in Speech-Language Pathology; however, other graduates have gone on to programs in Audiology, Psychology, Education and School Counseling. These students have attended a wide variety of schools nationwide, with many being offered scholarships, fellowships and assistantships at:

Case Western Reserve University	The Ohio State University	Cleveland State University
George Washington University	Bowling Green State University	University of Pittsburgh
University of Akron	Miami University	Kent State University

## RECENT STUDENT INDEPENDENT STUDY TOPICS

- The Use of Literacy Activities in Intervention with Functionally Nonverbal Children
- Behaviors in a child with Autism: A comparative study
- Functional Communication Camp for Nonverbal Children
- Autism Phenotypes
- iPod Use in College Students and Hearing Status

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND PAPERS BY STUDENTS

- Caraway, M. & Visconti, C.F. (2010, March). *Analysis of Communication in Functionally Nonverbal Children: A Language Sampling Focus*. Poster presentation at the Annual Convention of the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Columbus, Ohio.
- Emmons, H. & Visconti, C.F. (2010, March). *An Examination of Listener Perceptions and Employment Discrimination Towards People Who Stutter*. Poster presentation at the Annual Convention of the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Columbus, Ohio.
- Lagzdins, A. & Visconti, C.F. (2009, March). *Literacy activities with nonverbal children*. Poster presented at the Annual Convention of the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Columbus, Ohio.
- Klinger, A.L. & Visconti, C.F. (2008, March). *Noise induced hearing loss resulting from modern technology*. Poster presented at the Annual Convention of the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Columbus, Ohio.— Awarded 3rd place in the student poster session.
- Skebo, C.M. & Visconti, C.F. (2008, March). *Autism Phenotypes: Parental observations*. Poster presented at the Annual Convention of the Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Columbus, Ohio.

## FACULTY LEADERSHIP IN STATE AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Dr. Colleen F. Visconti—President for the Ohio Speech Language Hearing Association (OSLHA); and Steering Committee Member for Division 10—Issues in Higher Education for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).
- Mrs. Christie A. Needham— Consumer Affairs Chair on the Legislative Council of OSLHA; Secretary and Past President of the Inter-University Council on Speech and Hearing Supervisors.

## FACULTY

### Colleen F. Visconti, Ph.D.

CCC-SLP, Case Western Reserve University

Associate Professor and Director, Baldwin-Wallace Speech Clinic

### Christie A. Needham, M.A.

CCC-SLP, University of Akron  
Assistant Professor

Clinical Supervisor, Baldwin-Wallace Speech Clinic

## ADJUNCT FACULTY

### Lisa Anne Freebairn, M.A.

CCC-SLP, Case Western Reserve University

Lecturer, Speech-Language Pathology

### Myrita Wilhite, Au.D.

CCC-A, Cleveland State University  
Lecturer, Audiology

### Charles V. Williams

Cuyahoga Community College  
Lecturer, Sign Language

### Sherri Leslie, M.A.

CCC-SLP, University of Akron  
Clinical Supervisor, Baldwin-Wallace Speech Clinic