



Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

# SLHS NEWSLETTER



December- February 2026

THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND HEARING SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER OFFERS A COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS THAT INTEGRATE CLASSROOM LEARNING, CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH, AND EXTENSIVE CLINICAL EXPERIENCES TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR CAREERS IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCES, SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY, AND AUDIOLOGY.

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

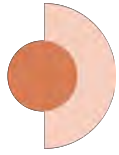


*As we reflect on the winter season, I am continually inspired by the energy, creativity, and dedication of our Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences community. This newsletter highlights the many ways our faculty, students, and staff are advancing scholarship, strengthening clinical practice, and engaging meaningfully with the broader community.*

*From student achievements and faculty recognition to impactful research and scholarships, the work featured here reflects our shared commitment to excellence and collaboration. I am especially proud of the ways our students—at every level—are contributing to research labs, clinical initiatives, and professional conversations within our field.*

*As we look ahead to spring and summer, we remain focused on fostering inclusive learning environments, supporting well-being across our department, and expanding opportunities for research, clinical education, and community engagement. Thank you for your continued contributions to SLHS and for being such an engaged and supportive community.*

*Warm regards,  
Pui Fong Kan*



## Announcements

Recent accomplishments across the department reflect the dedication and achievements of our faculty, students, and staff.



**Dr. Holly Kleiber** was selected for the inaugural Spring 2026 cohort of the [Well-being Innovators Network \(WIN\)](#) and will serve as a liaison supporting workplace well-being in SLHS. This group empowers faculty and staff to lead meaningful workplace wellness efforts across their units.

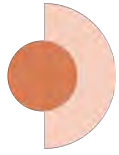
Lecturer **Jenny Maybee** earned board certification as a specialist in swallowing and swallowing disorders (BCS-S).



First-year MA-SLP student **Francesca D'Ambrosio** received the [Dr. Peter Ramig Endowed Scholarship](#).

Undergraduate students **Sabine Erickson, Aleah Cruz, Jack Lawrence,** and **Jamie Sikorski** joined the [Colorado Motor Speech Lab](#) under the direction of **Dr. Allison Hilger**. The CO Motor Speech Lab investigates how motor plans for speech production are executed, and how this process becomes impaired in neurological disorders.

**Lesley Juarez** was elected as the first-year *AuD Graduate Student Advisory Board Representative*. The GSAB serves as a liaison between [audiology students](#) and faculty.

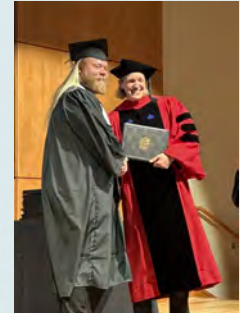
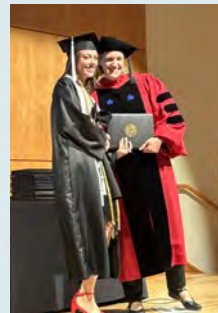


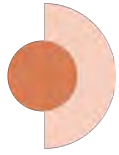
## Winter Recognition Ceremony

On December 13, 2025, the Division of Social Sciences held its Winter Recognition Ceremony in the UMC Glenn Miller Ballroom. We are proud to recognize ten SLHS students honored at the event:

- **Carly Deorio** (SLHS Major)
- **Chelsea Elliott** (SLHS major)
- **Trinity Gildhouse** (SLHS/PSUC Major & EDUC Minor)
- **Olivia "Libby" Hall** (SLHS Major & LING Minor)
- **Madison "Maddie" Jackson** (SLHS Major & LING/EDUC Minor)
- **Andrew Karaki** (SLHS Major & FREN Minor)
- **Grace Lee** (SLHS Major (LING/EDUC Minor)
- **Connor O'Brien** (SLHS Major & SPAN Minor)
- **Lauren Reitz** (SLHS Major)
- **Aubrey Stinnet** (SLHS Major & LING/EDUC Minor)

SLHS Chair **Dr. Pui Fong Kan**, along with **Dr. Christine Brennan** and **Dr. Allison Sedey**, attended the ceremony to celebrate and recognize this year's winter graduates.





## Research & Presentations

Peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and invited scholarly talks represent the department's continued scholarly momentum. This work advances research and clinical practice in SLHS.



**Dr. Allison Hilger** published research examining how speech generates aerosol particles, with implications for disease transmission such as influenza and COVID-19. Hilger A, Stockman T, Murphey C, McCurdy J, Miller S (2025). *The influence of glottal and respiratory factors on aerosol emission during phonation*. PLOS ONE, 20(12): e0321909 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0321909>



**Dr. Allison Hilger** was featured on the Radiolab episode of [Song of the Cerebellum](#), discussing the role of the cerebellum in speech production.

**Dr. Holly Kleiber**, Director of SLP Clinical Education, presented *Enhancing Clinical Education with Supplemental Videos: The Speech-Language Pathology Graduate Students' Perspectives* at the 2025 ASHA Convention, with Dr. Cynthia O'Donoghue (MGH Institute of Health Professions).



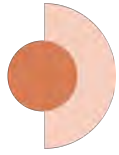
**Dr. Holly Kleiber**, along with Alison Lemke (University of Iowa) and Tedd Masiogale (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville), presented *Envisioning an Inclusive Future for SLP Clinical Educators* at the 2025 ASHA Convention.



**Dr. Lauren Pontis** presented a virtual professional development session for Colorado's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) system titled *Using LENA to Support Language Outcomes in Early Intervention*, with external collaborators Kelly Doolittle and Kim Coulter.



**Donghyeon Yun** presented *Altitude-induced changes in hearing aid output: A computational simulation study* at the 189th Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America and Acoustical Society of Japan in Honolulu, HI.



## Research & Presentations



**Dr. Christine Brennan** presented a talk, titled, *Translating Research into Practice: Enhancing Communication Outcomes in Smith-Magenis Syndrome (SMS) and Neurodivergent Populations* at the American Speech-Language Hearing Association National Convention, in Washington, D.C., in November 2025.



**Dr. Christine Brennan** Christine Brennan also co-authored the 2025 updated Smith-Magenis Syndrome entry in Gene Reviews, a peer-reviewed, expert-authored clinical resource hosted by the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1310/>



In partnership with SLHS, the CU International Film Series presented [Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore](#). **Audra McCorkle-Geng** and **River Frank** participated in a post-film panel alongside a community member.



PhD student **Richy Hayes** and **Dr. Pui Fong Kan** published *Narrative Competence in Japanese-English Bilingual Children* in Frontiers in Psychology.

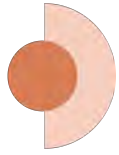
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1747702>



MA-SLP student **Katrina Smoot**, mentored by **Dr. Pui Fong Kan**, presented a poster *A Bibliometric Analysis of Research on Bilinguals with Communication Disorders*, at the 2025 ASHA Convention in Washington, DC.



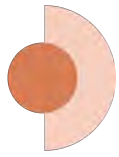
MA-SLP student **Natalie Sesselmann** and PhD student **Richy Hayes**, mentored by **Dr. Pui Fong Kan**, presented research on narrative microstructure and macrostructure at the ASHA Convention.



## Grants & Funding

We are grateful for the support these awards provide to our faculty, staff, and students as they pursue meaningful research, clinical, and educational work. These grants help strengthen collaboration, foster innovation, and expand opportunities that benefit both our department and the broader community.

- **Dr. Allison Sedey** received two year-long contracts totaling more than \$500,000 to support language assessment selection and multi-state outcomes research for young children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH).
- **Jen Lewon** received a \$10,000 SSCI grant to support a new project strengthening clinical training, student learning, and collaborations with Anschutz and the College of Music.
- **River Frank** was awarded an SSCI grant to support a new ASL initiative launching in Fall 2026.
- **Pamela Macias** received an SSCI grant to support the development of an ASL studio, expanding resources for ASL instruction and student learning



## Student Engagement



**Highlight from NSSLHA:** The [National Student Speech Language Hearing Association](#) chapter at CU Boulder continues to grow in engagement and impact, with more than 45 members participating in professional development and service this semester. Students supported community partners including *EXPAND*, *A Precious Child*, *Conversations to Remember*, *Miracles Therapeutic Riding Center*, and the *CU Boulder Literacy Practicum*, and took part in enriching events such as a screening and panel of *Not Alone Anymore* featuring Deaf actress Marlee Matlin, as well as a hearing health workshop led by clinical audiologists. NSSLHA welcomes students at all stages of their academic journey, and executive board applications are now open.

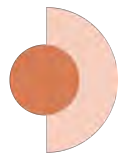


**CSHA Day at the Capitol :** Students and faculty from SLHS participated in CSHA Day at the Capitol, hosted by the [Colorado Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#) at the Colorado State Capitol.

Representing CU Boulder were clinical faculty member **Jen Lewon**, MA–SLP graduate students **Brigid Mitchel** and **Kylen Christensen**, and SLPP alumni **Mina Combs** and **Emerald Vaca**, now graduate students at the University of Northern Colorado.

Participants observed a live legislative session, met with legislators and staff, and advocated for issues impacting both speech-language pathology and audiology.



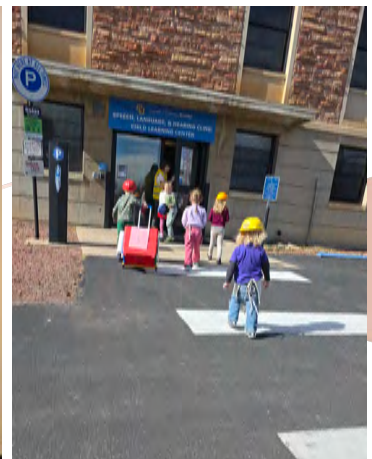
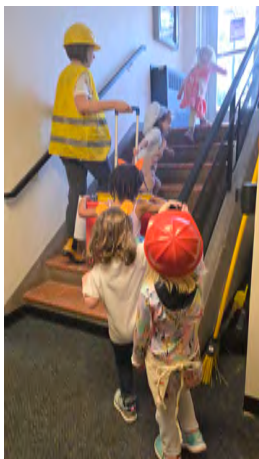


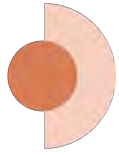
## SLHS Community

**Winter Celebration:** The SLHS department faculty, staff, graduate students, and families attended the SLHS Winter Celebration at The Connection in UMC. Those who attended enjoyed bowling, pool, ping pong, and video games. It was a fun chance to relax and socialize at the end of a challenging semester before winter break.



**CLC Storybook Journey:** Thank you to our SLHS colleagues who participated in the CLC's recent Trash Day and helped bring the *Storybook Journey* to life. Everyone's enthusiasm made this experience meaningful and fun for our children. Visitors are always welcome in the CLC!





## Coming Up

### **Kristina Johnston Memorial Lecture**

Tuesday, March 24, 2026 | 2:00–3:15 PM MST

CU Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences and National Jewish Health welcome

**Aspen Christen**, MS, CCC-SLP and **Ali Bakke**, MA, CCC-SLP for the 2026 *Kristina*

*Johnston Memorial Lecture: Inducible Laryngeal Obstruction (ILO) and*

*Exercise-Induced Laryngeal Obstruction (EILO): Diagnosis, Assessment, and*

*Treatment*. This lecture will explore current best practices in identification, differential diagnosis, and treatment planning for individuals with ILO and EILO.

In person and via Zoom: <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/98922781087>

### **LSVT LOUD® Training**

March 27–28, 2026 | Virtual Live Training

The University of Colorado Boulder Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences program is partnering with LSVT Global to host an official *LSVT LOUD® Training and Certification Course*. This evidence-based training focuses on treatment of voice and speech disorders associated with Parkinson's disease and other neurological conditions.

Hands-on clinical techniques and implementation strategies. Open to: Speech-language pathology professionals and students. Registration required.

<https://www.lsvtglobal.com>

### **TEDxCU 2026: On the Contrary**

Saturday, April 4, 2026 | 2:00pm MST

Our undergraduate student, **Kya Leprone**, has been selected to speak at TEDxCU

2026: *On the Contrary* in Macky Auditorium at CU Boulder! Her talk will challenge

assumptions about communication and stuttering, joining a diverse lineup of

speakers sharing ideas worth spreading. <https://www.tedxcu.com/2026-event>

SLHS is a bronze-level sponsor for this TedxCU.

### **Summer AAC Workshop**

Monday, July 27, 2026 | 8:30 AM–4:30 PM MST

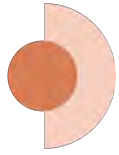
**Dr. Christine Brennan** and **Sherri Tennant** are organizing a free, [full-day workshop](#)

focused on strengthening AAC access and use across home, school, and everyday life. Sessions will address:

- Collaboration among educators, SLPs, and families supporting AAC users
- Language and literacy intervention for AAC users
- Hearing impairment in individuals who use AAC

Behavior prevention and management for individuals with complex communication needs

Intended audience: CU students and faculty, community educators, SLPs, OTs, PTs, individuals who use AAC systems, and family members. At the UMC Glenn Miller Ballroom (with virtual option).



# Academic Calendar Highlights

## Spring 2026

Jan 8 – Classes Begin

Jan 19 – MLK Jr. Holiday

Feb 26 – Midsemester Reading Day

Mar 16–20 – Spring Break

Apr 24 – Last Day of Classes

Apr 27–May 1 – Final Exams

May 2– CU Graduation + [SLHS Recognition Ceremony](#)

## Summer 2026

May 4 – Maymester Begins

May 26 – Sessions A, C, and D Begin

July 27 – Augmester Begins

Aug 13 – Final Exams & Degree Conferral

## Departmental Information

**SLHS Website:** We're refreshing the [SLHS website](#) to improve clarity, navigation, and accessibility, with the goal of launching the updated site by the end of the semester.

**Building & Facilities:** Ongoing improvements include lighting updates, water bottle filler maintenance, office renovations, and continued attention to building needs.

**CU Faculty & Staff Benefits:** Prioritizing your well-being just got easier. Be sure to explore CU benefits, including new wellness offerings such as [WorkWell Employee Group Fitness Classes](#), the [Move.](#) program, [massage therapy](#), [acupuncture](#), and [EGYM Smart Strength machines](#).



*Here's to a strong finish to winter and an exciting semester ahead!*

