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Emphasizing Hands-On Experiences in Graduate Education

William W. Clark, Ph.D., Program Director

I just received a copy of the newly-designed PACS brochure, which we distribute annually to prospective students who are interested in our graduate programs in audiology, deaf education, and speech and hearing sciences. This year, we completely redesigned the previous brochure to give a better “feel” for the training and experiences offered by PACS. This is never an easy process, and every year we consider eliminating the print version of the brochure in favor of information that’s only available online. However, we are one of a small number of programs who still make print materials available. This is not because we’re old-fashioned, but because our prospective students find value in being able to hold information in their hands, flip through it, and lay it on a table to compare to other programs’ information. In short, despite all the advantages of modern media, there’s a unique value associated with the “hands-on” aspect of learning.

We feel the same way about how future audiologists, teachers of the deaf, and scientists should be trained. Although there is a place for the traditional classroom lecture format, and models of distance education can be useful if live experiences are unavailable, we believe there’s no substitute for first-hand observation and practice, and we incorporate such experiences from day one in all

our graduate programs. Our curricula are progressive: Through coursework students advance from the basic and applied scientific foundations offered in the first semester to the more comprehensive foundations in later semesters and simultaneously, they are immersed in extensive opportunities to put into practice what they have learned. The result is that our graduates are well-informed and fully-trained professionals, ready to step into teaching, clinical duties, or research.

I invite you to read more about some of the hands-on experiences afforded to students studying with us in this issue. Also, please refer to our website at pacs.wustl.edu for additional information on our programs.



Hands-on experiences in the classroom.

Practicum Experiences in the Deaf Education Program

Heather Hayes, Ph.D., Director of Deaf Education Studies

Training the teachers of the future is our top priority in the M.S.D.E. program. We believe that the best way to learn how to teach is to *practice, practice, practice!* Here's an example of a recent graduate's year-long practicum schedule. Jennifer Johnson, M.S.D.E. (Class of 2011) shares some of her thoughts on her hands-on experiences below.

#1
Moog Center for Deaf Education
St. Louis, MO
Ages: 0 to 3 yrs

#2
Wentzville South Middle School
Wentzville, MO
Ages: 12 to 14 yrs

#3
Northern Voices
Minneapolis, MN
Ages: 3 to 5 yrs

#4
CID - Central Institute for the Deaf
St. Louis, MO
Ages: 5 to 12 yrs

“At the Moog Center, I was mentored by a variety of well-experienced teachers while working one-on-one with babies. This rotation also gave me valuable experience observing parent support sessions, audiology appointments, as well as IFSP meetings.”

“Moving from babies to students in middle school was a huge shift! While at Wentzville, I learned very quickly how flexible an itinerant needs to be. Serving several schools, this experience showed me how itinerants need to work with ever changing school schedules, field trips, and numerous faculty members daily.”

“For my January practicum, I wanted to expand my practicum experiences outside of the St. Louis area and gain valuable knowledge from yet another great oral school. It was also nice to teach at a school that was much smaller compared to CID and the Moog Center in St. Louis.”

“For my final semester-long practicum rotation I was placed at CID, which was a wonderful learning experience. I was mentored by very knowledgeable and well-experienced teachers. This rotation allowed me to spend the most time in the classroom with my students, which I thoroughly enjoyed!”

“During our second year, I really liked how our schedule was set up. We had practicum in the morning and classes in the afternoon. This worked really well especially when I had a challenging morning and needed some brainstorming help from my colleagues and professors.”

The above teaching experiences aren't the only times that the M.S.D.E. students have hands-on practice. From the very first semester, students are engaged in planning and teaching lessons as a part of their M.S.D.E. coursework. This combination of numerous student teaching opportunities and intensive coursework means that our M.S.D.E. graduates are *ready to jump into the classroom*, with all graduates eligible for state teacher certification at the end of their two-year study. Jennifer, like all current M.S.D.E. students, received a full-tuition scholarship for both years of study. PACS depends on the generosity of our friends and donors to support this important mission of training teachers to teach deaf children how to listen and talk.

A “Concentric Circle Model” of Practicum Experiences in Audiology

Maureen Valente, Ph.D., Director of Audiology Studies

The Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree is designated as a “clinical doctoral” degree, which means the clinical education of students is the primary focus of the training they receive. Students enrolled in the PACS Au.D. program begin their hands-on practicum experiences from day one of their first semester of study. While simultaneously engaging in rigorous coursework, they learn to apply concepts and theories learned in the graduate classroom to their clinical settings as they work with individuals of all ages who are deaf or hard of hearing over the course of the four-year program. PACS structures these experiences via a concentric circle model. During the first year of study, they are placed in our in-house Spencer T. Olin Hearing Clinic. During second and third years (including summer semesters), students experience a wide variety of excellent clinical experiences within the School of Medicine campus, across the St. Louis metropolitan area, and across the United States. Time spent in a practicum setting

increases significantly from the first year through subsequent years, such that second- and third-year students integrate 2-2.5 days per week of clinical practicum, along with intensive graduate coursework. Fourth-year students engage in a full-time clinical rotation at one of our many excellent sites here in St. Louis or across the country.

Impressively and prior to the externship, our students have experienced 7-8 different clinical rotations that encompass the patient lifespan and entire audiology scope of practice. The fourth-year experience is one that allows the student to further develop skills via depth and breadth of experiences or to specialize in a certain professional area. Many students receive multiple externship and subsequent employment offers, optimally prepared to enter the profession as future leaders and highly competent, compassionate and autonomous audiologists.

Class Notes

1970s

Richard Lieding, 1976

Richard is currently serving Clinton Public Schools as a speech pathologist/hearing-impaired specialist. He is also secretary of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi. On a personal note, his latest granddaughter, Ella Renee Groves was born in June 2010, and his son, Derek, is currently serving in the army and was married December 19, 2010.

1990s

Constance (Harrison) Beecher, 1994

Connie is currently completing her Ph.D. in Special Education at Washington State University. A recent story about her research may be found at:
<http://wsutoday.wsu.edu/pages/Publications.asp?Action=Detail&PublicationID=23334&PageID=21>

John McIntyre, 1997

John is currently living in Canada and managing an audiology clinic for Oticon.

2000s

Ellie (Rice) White, 2003

Ellie welcomed a baby girl, Mary Jane White, born on March 29, 2011.

Jennifer (Johnson) Manley, 2003

Jennifer welcomed a baby girl, Molly Joan Manley on January 20, 2011. She weighed 8 lbs, 7 oz.

Kathleen Faulkner, 2004

Katie recently published a paper titled “Identifying cochlear implant channels with poor electrode-neuron interfaces: electrically evoked auditory brain stem responses measured with the partial tripolar configuration,” Bierer JA, Faulkner KF, Tremblay KL., Ear Hear. 2011 Jul-Aug;32(4):436-44.

Krisjeana (Ballard) Vernon, 2004

Krisjeana welcomed a baby boy, Daniel Christopher Vernon, on March 28, 2011. He weighed 8 lbs, 5 oz.

Lauren (Mungenast) Dieckmann, 2007

Lauren and Tom Dieckmann welcomed a baby boy, Noah Thomas Dieckmann, born on July 18, 2011. He weighed 8 lbs, 2 oz.

Catherine (Young) Glommen, 2007

Catherine married Jesse Glommen in June 2008. She is currently living in Roseville, MN and working as an itinerant D/HH teacher for Northeast Metro Intermediate District 916.

Kristin Steele, 2009

Kristen started a new job in October 2010 as the Parent-Infant Educator for the North Carolina Early Intervention Program for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Christine (Alexander) Kelley, 2010

Christine married Matthew Kelley on April 16, 2011.

Amplifications

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We'd like to hear from you! Please send us your email and mailing address, personal news and updates to pacs@wusm.wustl.edu, or call us at 314-747-0104.



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Also, alumni and friends are invited to join our Program's Facebook page, facebook.com/pacs.wustl.edu

We rely greatly on the generosity of our alumni and friends, for recruiting assistance, supervision of student practicum, and financial support. We encourage you to visit the alumni page of our website at pacs.wustl.edu to see how you can help!

4

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