

Department of
Speech and Hearing Science

SHS

2024 Honors and Awards



College of Applied
Health Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Program

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Message from the Department Head



Dr. Pamela Hadley

I look forward to this annual event honoring outstanding students who have received awards, scholarships and fellowships. Each year, your impressive achievements remind us why we chose this path. It is a joy and privilege to educate future professionals who will make life-changing contributions to the understanding and improvement of human communication.

One cannot overstate the importance of research in communication sciences and disorders and the work of speech-language pathologists and audiologists do. They guide people who have suffered strokes in regaining their communication skills. They facilitate communication skills in people with neurodevelopmental and intellectual disabilities in order to better support their social and academic development and general well-being. It is meaningful and satisfying work. Communication is a basic human right and those who focus their professional lives on supporting that right are true heroes.

As you continue your life journey, I know you will be exemplary ambassadors for the Department of Speech and Hearing Science, the College of Applied Health Sciences and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Never stop learning, never stop growing, and you will have the bright and successful future that I wish for each and every one of you.

Message from the Dean



Dr. Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell

On behalf of the College of Applied Health Sciences, I would like to congratulate you on receiving awards and scholarships from the Department of Speech and Hearing Science. This honor recognizes not only your hard work in classrooms, research labs, and clinics but also your willingness to go above and beyond to ensure that individuals are able to communicate to the best of their abilities throughout their lives.

I am so impressed by your many achievements. It is heartening to see how you have embraced the values of this college and your department for cultural diversity, equity and respect. Whether you are advancing the state of knowledge through research or applying leading-edge knowledge in clinical practice, you strive to ensure that effective and high-quality care is available and accessible to all. I see this in the research questions, volunteer experiences and internships you pursue, as well as in the leadership roles you play in professional organizations.

As we celebrate all that you have achieved thus far, I feel confident that your futures will be marked by accomplishment as well. I wish you much success.

Nanine S. Breon Scholarship

This scholarship was established by Nanine Breon (LAS 1972) in memory of her father, Robert Cartier. Recipients are juniors or seniors in good standing in the Department of Speech and Hearing Science who are preparing to work in a public school system.



Jocelyn Gomez

“Receiving this award means so much to me, and I am extremely grateful to everyone in the Department of Speech and Hearing Science who has supported me and offered me all the opportunities I have had! I am so thankful that I’m able to make the staff, and my family, proud.”

Gomez is on track to graduate in May of 2026 with a bachelor’s degree in speech and hearing science. She is pursuing a concentration in speech-language pathology and hopes to use this in an elementary school setting one day. Before settling down and working in a school, Gomez hopes to work for a few years as a travel speech-language pathologist to help those in need all around the country. Gomez is working on a minor in Spanish, as she hopes to be an aid to bilingual children. She is an active member of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA), and recently self-nominated to be a James Scholar after being invited to join the program this semester. Gomez volunteered at the 2024 Illinois Speech-Language Hearing Association (ISHA) Conference. In her free time, she loves to read young-adult novels and can get through multiple books in a week, and loves spending time with her dog, Moose, and her cat, Tibby, as well as the rest of her family and friends.



Morgan Wilderman

“Getting this award makes me feel encouraged in my professional growth and supported by the Department of SHS. I transferred into this program halfway through my sophomore year, and I can’t articulate the difference this department has made in my educational career. This award shows that others believe I will be an agent of equal access to quality care.”

Wilderman plans to graduate with her B.S. in Speech and Hearing Science in May 2025. She is excited to transform the lives of children as a speech-language pathologist in the rural southern Illinois public school system. She is an intern at The Autism Program on campus, a state-funded program that supports individuals with autism. As an intern, she creates physical resources and directs inquiries, working with professionals and parents to support individuals with autism. Wilderman also works as a caregiver for Synergy HomeCare, volunteers regularly with the youth group at Free Methodist Church on Mattis Avenue, and has been a multiple-time Dean’s List honoree. Wilderman enjoys reading, hiking, cooking new foods and spending time outside with her friends.

Susan and Gerald Connor Scholarship

Gerald Connor received a B.S. in Finance from the University of Illinois in 1979. During his junior year he utilized the services of the Speech and Hearing Clinic and was able to overcome his speech impediment. He had a successful career in retail management and met his wife, Susan, in south Louisiana. Susan received her M.S. in Finance from LSU and worked there for 25 years. The Susan and Gerald Connor Scholarship is meant to support either undergraduate or graduate students.



Lauren Stec

“This award means more to me than I can articulate; it will allow me the opportunity to further focus my energy on becoming the best audiologist I can. This award, while monetary in nature, is an opportunity for me to spend more time on my studies, passions, and goals as a future audiologist.”

Stec is on track to graduate in May 2024 with her B.S. in Speech and Hearing Science and a minor in Disability Studies. The following fall, she will pursue her goal of becoming an audiologist, working toward her Au.D. at the University of Illinois. As a transfer student, Stec has made it a priority to be invested in the SHS department and other related departments. She has annotated for Beckman Institute’s Speech Accessibility Project under LAS Research Assistant Professor Heejin Kim, working to diversify speech recognition technology for those with varying speech patterns. She’s a research assistant for SHS Assistant Professor Mary Flaherty’s Child Speech Research Lab where she works collaboratively with peers to collect and record data of participants. She will present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium this coming spring with Professor Flaherty’s lab. Previously, Stec has been a repeat Dean’s list honoree, James Scholar, and received the Mary Jane Neer Scholarship.

Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship

Sylvia Wacker Herzog received a B.S. (1948) and an M.S. (1972) in speech correction from the University of Illinois. Mrs. Herzog was employed as a speech-language pathologist in the Tuscola schools for four years and in the Champaign schools for 30 years. With a desire to support future generations of students, Mrs. Herzog established the Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship to provide an opportunity for undergraduate or graduate students to pursue their career goals in the field of speech and hearing science.



Emily Hackett

“I firmly believe that everyone deserves the ability to communicate. Having Mrs. Herzog’s support to enter a field where I want to help give everyone a voice means the world, and I plan to pay her generosity forward as I work to improve lives through improving communicative abilities.”

Hackett is a senior from Los Angeles, pursuing her bachelor’s degree in speech and hearing science. With minors in creative writing and disability studies, she has always felt deeply connected to poetry and to people, and she looks forward to forming connections with clients throughout her career as a speech-language pathologist. After earning her undergraduate degree in 2024, Hackett plans to study for a master’s degree. While her interests continue to evolve, she plans to work in a hospital setting to help support individuals with dysphagia. Hackett volunteers with the C-U Young Adult & Teen Club, a social group for young adults and teenagers with autism and/or intellectual disabilities who live in the Champaign-Urbana area. Hackett also currently serves as the public relations chair for the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association. Along with writing and discussing written work with peers, she enjoys knitting, going for walks and listening to folk music.



Isabella Lau

Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship continued

“Receiving this award will help my dreams become more tangible by assisting in the continuation of my education. I am so grateful for all of the support I have received from my professors, and the relationships I have built so far during my undergraduate career, without which I would not be where I am today.”

Lau is on track to graduate in May 2025 with a dual degree in speech and hearing science and developmental psychology. After graduating, she plans to obtain her master’s degree and work as a speech-language pathologist in the school setting. Her experiences working as a special education paraprofessional and growing up in a family of educators instilled a passion in her for supporting children in public schools. Lau works as a research assistant in SHS Assistant Professor Mary Flaherty’s Child Speech Research Lab, which focuses on how children understand speech in various environments. She is also involved in the Speech Accessibility Project, transcribing the speech of individuals with various disabilities to assist in improving voice recognition technology. Lau is a James Scholar and on the Dean’s List and was a SPARK Scholar her freshman year. She enjoys spending time outside with friends and family, participating in church and working out.

Barbara Williams Hodson Scholarship

The Barbara Williams Hodson Scholarship recognizes high-achieving students who have demonstrated a commitment to service activities and leadership, who have an interest in applied phonetics/phonology, and who intend to become certified speech-language pathologists. Further preference is given to international students and/or US students who are bilingual.



Elizabeth Gremer

“The endless support that I have received from the Speech and Hearing Science department has been the most important aspect of my time as an undergraduate. I feel fortunate to belong to a group that truly cares and motivates their students to achieve their goals.”

Gremer is on track to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in speech and hearing science. Following graduation, she plans to attend graduate school and work as a speech-language pathologist. Although she is unsure about which population or setting she’d like to work with, she’s excited to explore the field during graduate school. Gremer is an undergraduate research assistant in SHS Associate Professor Marie Moore Channell’s Intellectual DisAbilities Communication Lab. Her primary tasks include recruitment of potential participants for the lab’s current studies and handling data entry. In spring of 2023, Gremer completed a language-intensive study abroad program at Universitat de Barcelona with a concentration in Spanish language and culture. In addition, she has also worked as an intern at The Autism Program and as a mentor through the Illinois Neurodiversity Initiative. Gremer is a James Scholar and has been on the Dean’s List multiple times—she enjoys traveling, reading, exercising and spending time with her family and friends.



Jennifer Yoon

Barbara Williams Hodson Scholarship continued

“Considering my passion for working with children and individuals with communication challenges, this scholarship will be instrumental in helping me achieve my professional aspirations, supporting my professional and personal growth and enabling me to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the speech-language pathology field.”

Yoon is on track to graduate in May 2024, with a B.S. in Speech and Hearing Science and a minor in disability studies. After obtaining her undergraduate degree, she will continue into graduate school to pursue a master’s degree in speech-language pathology. Her long-term goal is to build a career in speech therapy and to work with children who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. Yoon is an intern for The Autism Program, where she creates and individualizes visual supports and other free learning aids for the general public upon request. In addition, she is in her second year of being a mentor for the Illinois Neurodiversity Initiative Program, where she mentors incoming freshmen on the autism spectrum and offers help in promoting students’ social and academic success. Yoon has made the Dean’s List each academic year and is also a recipient of the David Hester and Mary Bloom Scholarship.

Burriss F. Husman Scholarship Fund

Dr. Burriss F. Husman completed a bachelor’s degree in the College of Education and a Master’s degree in Physical Education from the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois. Dr. Husman retired as a professor from the University of Maryland where his research interests included fitness and physical education programs. This scholarship fund was established to assist undergraduates in the College of Applied Health Sciences. The recipient will receive a \$1,500 scholarship credited to their student account.



Sophie Campa

“Being a first-generation college student and having such great aspirations, I was timid to jump into this education. However, this support has validated that my goals of improving the quality of life for individuals, whether it be within the hospital or school setting, are possible.”

Campa is on track to graduate with a B.S. in May 2025. She aspires to become a speech-language pathologist, with the goal of working at a children’s hospital and help those with acquired brain injuries that lead to swallowing and communication difficulties. She also has a special interest in working with children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the school setting, as she believes everyone should be given the opportunity to communicate. Campa works as an undergraduate research assistant in SHS Associate Professor Marie Moore Channell’s Intellectual DisAbilities Communication Lab, where she primarily handles data entry tasks and language transcription. She’s also interning for The Autism Program, where she creates free resources for individuals with autism. Campa annotates for the Speech Accessibility Project, which aims to enhance voice recognition technology for those with diverse speech patterns and disabilities. Campa likes to read thriller novels, dance on the Velocity Dance Team and travel.



Megan Stemm

Burris F. Husman Scholarship continued

“I am truly honored to be receiving this award and am eternally grateful for the support this department receives from its alumni. My hope is to one day give back and recognize a future SHS student in the way that I have been.”

Stemm is a junior studying speech and hearing science with minors in disability studies and psychology. She intends to obtain a master’s degree in speech-language pathology. She is passionate about hearing disorders, pediatric care and Deaf Culture/American Sign Language. Stemm has been working as a research assistant under SHS Assistant Professor Mary Flaherty in the Child Speech Research Lab since her sophomore year. In this time, she has operated audiograms, conducted speech-in-noise tests, interacted with children and collected data from a few students to help develop the Illinois graduate admissions website for SLP and Au.D. programs. On campus, Stemm is involved in NSSLHA, Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society, Girls Next Door A Cappella, and works as a course assistant for the Statistics department. She has been listed on the College of Applied Health Sciences Dean’s List for five semesters and is grateful to receive an AHS scholarship for the first time.

Frances L. Johnson Student Award

The Frances L. Johnson Student Award was created to provide financial support and recognition to undergraduate or graduate students pursuing clinical careers in speech, language, and hearing science. Professor Emerita Frances L. Johnson, who established this award, served on the faculty for more than 30 years and was instrumental in raising the status of speech-language therapy programs in the public schools.



Natalia Rzepa

“I am honored and grateful to receive the support of friends and alumni of the department. This support is incredibly motivating and will allow me to fund my career goal of becoming a speech-language pathologist.”

In May, Rzepa will graduate with a B.S. in Speech & Hearing Science and a B.A. in Spanish. After graduation, she plans to receive a master’s degree in speech-language pathology. Rzepa aims to help individuals with their swallowing and feeding needs; she is also interested in providing services to the multilingual pediatric population. Rzepa is an undergraduate research assistant in SHS Professor Raksha Mudar’s Aging and Neurocognition Lab. This semester, she will be presenting at the Undergraduate Research Symposium—her group is examining the relationship between the switch cost and mixing cost and neuropsychological measures of cognitive control. Since her freshman year, Rzepa has been a Chancellor’s Scholar, a James Scholar, and has made the Dean’s List each semester. She received the 2023 National NSSLHA Undergraduate Scholarship, the CHP Outstanding Senior Award in 2023, and the Barbara Williams Hodson Scholarship in 2022 and 2023. She is president of the Illinois chapter of NSSLHA.

Ronald G. and Patricia L. Stopka Scholarship

Ronald Stopka received his Bachelor's ('62) and Master's of Science ('64) in Physical Education from the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois. He and Patricia established this scholarship to support students in the College of Applied Health Sciences. Applicants must be undergraduate students currently enrolled in the College of Applied Health Sciences.



Makayla Owens

"I received the notification of this award and immediately became emotional, as I had never received any scholarship before. This award demonstrates that my hard work and dedication to my educational experiences have not gone unnoticed and this leaves me with encouragement for my future."

Owens is a senior from the Chicagoland area studying speech and hearing science with a minor in psychology. Throughout her undergraduate career, Owens has worked at the Child Development Laboratory on campus and has become involved in the Speech Accessibility Project as a speech annotator. The Speech Accessibility Project fosters technological advancements to provide accessible voice recognition technology for individuals with disabilities and diverse speech patterns. Owens is awaiting her graduate school acceptance notifications where she aspires to continue her education and pursue a career as a pediatric speech-language pathologist, specifically in schools, then eventually transitioning into private practice. As Owens continues growing as a student, she is excited to expand her knowledge of augmentative and alternative communication components and the implementation process. Owens has also demonstrated her perseverance by accelerating her coursework and graduating a full year early, eager to begin graduate school and enhance one's communication abilities.

Edmund J. James Scholars

The Edmund J. James Scholars Program, named for the fourth president of the University of Illinois, is the honors program within the College of Applied Health Sciences. The program recognizes undergraduates who have achieved academic excellence and provides them with unique learning opportunities. The following students in the Department of Speech and Hearing Science are 2023-24 James Scholars.

Aamina-Nikole Adebayo	Elise Lavaty
Ava Amabile	Janie Lee
Julia Anodenko	Emily Leon
Leila Arias	Emma Lorentzen
Audrey Arlis	Sandra Marquez
Allison Benivegna	Taylor Marzec
Sophia Campa	Madison Mattingly
Madelynn Cichocki	Molly Moran
Caroline Corcoran	Emma Morrical
Victoria Czochara	Emma Mueller
Madelyn Danosky	Layna Mullink
Cassidy Das	Katie O'Brien
Andrea Davila	Samantha Oh
Alicia Diol	Makayla Owens
Melanie Dooley	Holly Panfil
Maya Dye	Athanasia Paraskevopoulos
Annaliese Eisenmenger	Solomiya Pasternak
Marin Flynn	Corrie Penrod
Madalyn Gaede	Tessa Perry
Giselle Gallegos-Sandoval	Nicole Peters
Tess Giddens-White	Zoe Raptis
Shaun Gillespie	Karla Rodriguez
Jennifer Girard	Isabella Rogala
Madison Glowacki	Madison Russel
Marlee Gonzalez	Natalia Rzepa
Elizabeth Gremer	Madeline Shannon
Emily Hackett	Colleen Shea
Kate Harty	Sara Siddiqui
Marc Alexander Haw Tay	Arely Soto
Brenna Hurtado	Lauren Stec
Alexandria Jackson	Abigail Surburg
Margaret Jay	Megan Thing
Estelle Jones	Brianna Tucker
Abigail Keasler	Katherine Varak
Lucy Keigher	Sofia Vasquez
Alexis Kent	Taski Velasquez Perez
Emily Kinel	Chloe Walner
Valentina Krasiy	Avery Waner
Olivia Kuhl	Mia Waters
Josephine Lapapa	Dorota Wulw
Isabella Lau	

Bob Bilger Graduate Student Award

The Bob Bilger Graduate Student Award supports academically talented graduate students who are studying the auditory system. The Bilger Award was established by the late Bob Bilger (1926-2002) who served the Department of Speech and Hearing Science both as a faculty member and department head. Dr. Bilger was recognized internationally as one of the leading researchers in psychoacoustics and hearing.



Rohit M.
Ananthanarayana

“It is an honor to be receiving an award set up by such a leading figure in the field. One of the things I love about this department is how close-knit it is. I am grateful to be part of such an amazing community.”

Ananthanarayana’s current research interest is in speech perception and its development through infancy. He obtained his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in electrical engineering with a focus on signal processing and machine learning for speech and music-related applications. As an electrical engineer, Ananthanarayana was introduced to the field of speech and hearing science through the lens of computational models of speech production, auditory perception, and automatic speech recognition. This was his calling towards the field of human auditory perception. Through his Ph.D. program in SHS and through a future career in research, he wants to better understand and model human auditory perception in ecological scenarios and the factors influencing the development of this perceptual ability through infancy and childhood. In the long-term, Ananthanarayana would love to contribute to the study of communication sciences and disorders in his home country of India. In his free time, he crochets and plays the violin—though not as often as he’d like.



Namitha
Jain

“Receiving this award serves as more than just a financial boost; it also validates the dedication and effort I have put into my work. It serves as motivation for me to persist in my journey of learning and growing as a researcher in hearing sciences.”

Jain is a third-year Ph.D. student in SHS Professor Fatima Husain’s Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience lab. She graduated from the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH) with a master’s degree in audiology, and a bachelor’s degree in speech-language pathology and audiology. Her fascination with tinnitus mechanisms and consequences during her clinical degree shaped her postgraduate thesis. In her current Ph.D. research, she continues to delve into tinnitus, now at the intersection of audiology, psychology and neuroscience. Her focus lies in understanding emotion processing associated with hearing disorders such as tinnitus, misophonia and hyperacusis. Under Professor Husain’s mentorship, she is learning various techniques to deepen her understanding of this complex dimension. In her free time, she finds joy in cooking and dancing. Since moving to the U.S., Jain has developed a deep interest in learning various Latin and ballroom dance forms.



Simran
Singh

“I am truly honored to have received this award because it not only recognizes my academic achievements, but also acknowledges my dedication to studying the auditory system, an area I am deeply passionate about.”

Singh is working towards her Ph.D. in Evolution, Ecology and Behavior under the supervision of LAS Assistant Professor Daniel J. Miller and hopes to complete her work by August 2027. Singh’s research goal is to identify non-invasive biomarkers of auditory fields within the mammalian auditory cortex. Singh intends on using supervised deep learning algorithms to produce a quantitative histological myelin map to mark each region of the auditory cortex based on myelin density. Ultimately, she will utilize the validated myelin map of the auditory cortex to better understand the mechanisms of hearing impairments, like tinnitus. Singh actively engages in outreach activities aimed at fostering public understanding and engagement in science. She particularly enjoys working with children and has been involved in various events, like Genome Day. Singh regularly visits elementary schools within the community to teach kids about the complexities of the mammalian brain in a fun and interactive manner.

Phyllis Ariens Burkhead Memorial Award

The Phyllis Ariens Burkhead Memorial Award is supported by a gift from Mr. Clyde Burkhead. He established the award in 1974 in memory of his late wife Phyllis who was a clinical supervisor in the department. The awards are granted to outstanding Ph.D. students who show strong clinical interest.



Emily Harrington

“I am so appreciative of the ongoing support from the SHS department—this award is a special honor. I am grateful for the recognition of my research and academic efforts and my potential to contribute to the field.”

Harrington is working on a Ph.D. under the guidance of SHS Professor Pamela Hadley. Her research is focused on developing low-intensity early language interventions for children at-risk for developmental language disorder (DLD) and their families. She hopes to positively impact early intervention service delivery by studying the effectiveness and clinical utility of these interventions. Harrington is also a certified speech-language pathologist. Her clinical work in early intervention settings has contributed greatly to her research. After completing her Ph.D., Harrington plans to pursue a faculty position in higher education. She is excited to share her enthusiasm for research and teaching with the next generation of speech-language pathologists. In her free time, Harrington enjoys traveling, cooking new recipes, walking her dog and spending time with friends and family.

Joan Good Erickson Scholarship

The Joan Good Erickson Scholarship in Speech and Hearing Science was established by Professor Emerita Joan Good Erickson, who joined the faculty in 1963 and whose career was devoted to better understanding the needs of multicultural populations. The award honors undergraduate or graduate students in the department who have a demonstrated interest in multicultural issues.



Emily Falcon

“As a soon-to-be bilingual SLP, serving and advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse students is at the center of my values. The Joan Good Erickson Scholarship allows me to continue to focus on completing my education and I am grateful to have been selected as a recipient!”

Falcon is in her second year of the M.A. Speech-Language Pathology program and is on track to graduate in May of this year. She hopes to return to her home state of North Carolina, where she plans to work as a bilingual speech-language pathologist at a Title I early childhood program. Falcon has participated in SHS Associate Professor Laura Mattie’s Development in Neurogenetic Disabilities lab as a research assistant since 2021. In November 2022, she presented the lab’s research during a poster presentation at the annual ASHA convention. She also served as a speech-language clinician on the Illinois Children’s Autism Resources for Equitable Services (iCARES) project, aiding in the provision of interdisciplinary autism diagnostic services to children in the community from underrepresented backgrounds. Falcon was one of last year’s recipients of the H. William Porterfield, M.D., and Linda Obenauf Porterfield Speech and Hearing Graduate Fellowship.

Dean C. and Kathleen R. Garstecki Audiology Graduate Scholarship

The Dean C. and Kathleen R. Garstecki Graduate Scholarships recognize outstanding graduate students in audiology. Dean holds a Ph.D. in Audiology from the University of Illinois. During his career as a clinical and research audiologist, he has held faculty appointments at several major universities, including 35 years at Northwestern University where he served as a Speech and Hearing Science Professor and Department Chair. Kathy, a retired health care professional and hospital administrator, has taken courses at the University of Illinois and holds an MBA degree from Northwestern.



Bisma Noor Choudhry

“It feels gratifying to see the fruits of the hard work and dedication that I have invested in this program. This recognition not only acknowledges my efforts but also motivates me to keep working diligently in my journey to become a polished professional.”

Choudhry is pursuing an Au.D. under SHS Assistant Professor Mary Flaherty and hopes to complete her work by May 2026. She aspires to become a well-rounded clinical audiologist with the research experience to substantiate her academic knowledge. This summer, she is looking forward to completing a T-35 traineeship at Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska. She has served as a graduate instructor for Introduction to Public Speaking for the past three years. Prior to that, she participated in competitive speech and debate and taught public speaking to children from minority groups in her hometown: San Jose, California. Her experience in teaching has inspired Choudhry to examine classroom environments from an audiological perspective. Under the guidance of Flaherty in the Child Speech Research Lab, Choudhry is currently exploring the effects of background noise on children’s speech perception in classroom environments for her Capstone Project. Choudhry is an active powerlifter; she qualified for the 2023 Collegiate Nationals.



Jana Khudr

“Receiving this award means a lot and serves as a source of encouragement for my pursuit of knowledge in the field of audiology and service to those with auditory and vestibular impairments”

Khudr is working toward an Au.D. under the mentorship of SHS Associate Professor Brian Monson, with an anticipated completion date of May 2025. Her clinical and research endeavors are characterized by a keen interest in amplification and pediatric audiology, alongside an investment in research focusing on auditory neurodevelopment and optimizing the auditory experience for preterm infants. Looking ahead, Khudr is excited to embark on her fourth-year clinical externship at Mass. Eye and Ear in Boston, where she will have the opportunity to work with a diverse patient population. This upcoming experience is a pivotal juncture in her journey as she strives to become an independent clinician who aims to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and patient-centered care. Khudr was awarded the mentored student travel award at the American Auditory Society conference (2022), where she presented a research poster titled “Predictors of Auditory Exposures in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.”

Nancy S. Hager and Chester L. Hager Graduate Student Award

The Nancy S. Hager Graduate Student Award in Speech and Hearing Science honors Mrs. Nancy S. Hager (1935-2000), who received a degree in speech correction from the University of Illinois in 1957 and went on to serve a 29-year career with the Carbondale School District, helping children overcome speech and language disabilities. The award was established by her family to support a second-year graduate student who plans to work in public schools.



Amy R. Regenbaum

“I express my utmost gratitude to Mrs. Nancy Hager’s family for receiving their generous award. After my time in Champaign concludes, I will be returning to the northern Chicago suburbs to start my full-time school rotation at the local middle and elementary schools.”

Regenbaum is in her final few months of the M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology program. She hopes to work in the public-school setting with grades K-8. Her passions include school-age language and literacy interventions. She aspires to deliver individualized and culturally competent service to every child she serves. Regenbaum’s clinical experiences at the Illinois Speech-Language Pathology clinic, a local K-5 elementary school, and as a student clinician at Carle Hospital have affirmed her interest in working with school-aged children. Outside of classes, Regenbaum works as a DRES academic executive functioning coach and volunteers with the C-U PJ Library to promote childhood literacy through community service. Her experiences in Champaign have been invaluable in shaping her path towards pediatric speech-language pathology. In her free time, she can be found baking treats for friends, reading romantic comedy “beach reads,” or going on walks around campus listening to podcasts.

Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship

Sylvia Wacker Herzog received a B.S. (1948) and an M.S. (1972) in speech correction from the University of Illinois. Mrs. Herzog was employed as a speech-language pathologist in the Tuscola schools for four years and in the Champaign schools for 30 years. With a desire to support future generations of students, Mrs. Herzog established the Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship to provide an opportunity for undergraduate or graduate students to pursue their career goals in the field of speech and hearing science.

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Sarah Maue

“I am honored to receive the Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship. I appreciate the financial assistance as well as the reminder that I am not alone in my studies.”

Maue is planning to graduate in May 2025 with her M.A. in Speech and Hearing Science. Upon graduation, her goal is to work as a pediatric speech-language pathologist in an elementary school or private clinic in her hometown of Homer Glen, Illinois. During her undergraduate career at Cedarville University, she majored in linguistics and had various experiences teaching English to adults and children who spoke other languages. She greatly enjoyed teaching English and learned many skills applicable to her career as an SLP. Beginning in fall 2023, Maue has participated as a research assistant in SHS Associate Professor Laura Mattie’s Development in Neurogenic Disabilities lab. She is excited to continue to learn through this experience—Maue enjoys spending time with family and friends, going on walks, doing art projects and spending time outdoors.

Ida Levinson Memorial

This scholarship was established to recognize an outstanding second year student in the M.A. Program in Speech-Language Pathology who has excelled in the clinical setting.



Sarah Woodford

“I feel extremely honored to receive the Ida Levinson Memorial Award. The faculty at Illinois have helped me to discover my passions as a clinician. Receiving this award gives me an immense feeling of confidence as I enter this final stretch of my graduate clinical experiences.”

When Woodford completes her graduate studies this year, she plans to work in early intervention or early childhood. She is passionate about working with families to find ways to best support their children. Woodford has been a research assistant in the Development in Neurogenetic Disabilities Lab since entering the graduate program. She has been working on the Speech Accessibility Project, an interdisciplinary initiative focused on making speech recognition software more accessible for people with disabilities and diverse speech patterns. Woodford is currently completing an independent research study, under the supervision of SHS Associate Professor Laura Mattie, to assess reading behaviors by mothers of toddlers with Down syndrome. Woodford has also been a research assistant in the Applied Psycholinguistics Lab, completing data collection to assess typically developing and late-talking children. Woodford enjoys reading, yoga and going for runs around campus.

H. William Porterfield, M.D., and Linda Obenauf Porterfield Speech and Hearing Graduate Fellowship

The H. William Porterfield, M.D., & Linda Obenauf Porterfield Speech and Hearing Graduate Fellowship is supported through a gift from Dr. and Mrs. H. William Porterfield. Linda received a 1968 bachelor's degree in the teaching of speech from the University of Illinois. The fellowship rewards master's students who demonstrate exceptional academic merit and who plan to be practitioners in the field of speech, language, and hearing science.



Natalie Burns

“I am a new student at the University of Illinois, and I could not be more thankful for my classmates, professors, and supportive peers who help make the experience so wonderful. I can't thank the gracious donors enough for their support of the program.”

When Burns completes her master's degree in 2025, she plans to become an accredited speech-language pathologist. Her goal is to make a positive impact in her clients' and caregivers' lives and support them in gaining access to basic human rights: speech and language. She's not exactly sure what population she would like to specialize in, but she strives to become a dedicated speech-language pathologist wherever she works. Burns completed her undergraduate degree at Illinois State University, where she graduated in May 2023, and was a multiple-time honoree on the Dean's List. She held many jobs and enjoyed gaining experience with different populations, including activities assistant at a skilled nursing facility, paraprofessional in a social-emotional learning classroom, and assistant at a pediatric speech clinic.



Tori Hemp

H. William Porterfield, M.D., and Linda Obenauf Porterfield Speech and Hearing Graduate Fellowship continued

“Words cannot express my immeasurable gratitude to the Porterfield family and Department of Speech and Hearing Science for receiving the H. William Porterfield, M.D., and Linda Obenauf Porterfield Speech and Hearing Graduate Fellowship.”

Hemp is a first-year M.A.-SLP graduate student. Upon completion of her degree, she anticipates working as a speech-language pathologist in the private practice, early intervention (EI), or outpatient setting. Her current clinical interests include EI and language/literacy in the pediatric population and aphasia in the adult population. As an undergraduate student at Illinois State University, Hemp participated in the honors program and completed various projects relating to the field of communication sciences and disorders. Additionally, she received an honors in the major dedication through her completion of an honors independent study, which she presented at the Spring 2023 Research Symposium. In addition to participating in the honors program, Hemp also volunteered in the program “Partners in Reading,” which fosters a love for literacy for children. She has served as an assistant teacher in the childcare setting and provides math and reading tutoring services for elementary students.

John C. and Judith D. Turner Applied Health Sciences Scholarship

The John C. and Judith D. Turner Applied Health Sciences Scholarship will be awarded to graduate students in SHS from the State of Illinois, with a preference to students who give back to the university and community through volunteerism. John received three degrees from the University of Illinois from the College of ACES (1955 & 1959) and College of Education (1964) and Judith received a degree in speech correction from the University of Illinois (1959).



Maame Agyarko

“Receiving this award means a great deal to me. This award will not only support my academic journey but also inspire me to continue contributing positively to the field of health sciences and the community.”

Agyarko aspires to work as either a school-based SLP or a speech therapist in a neonatal intensive care unit, and she plans to open a private practice to offer affordable speech-language services for individuals in need. Her research interests include speech sound disorders and child speech. During her undergraduate studies, Agyarko was part of SHS Assistant Professor Keiko Ishikawa’s Voice and Speech Rehabilitation Research Lab. She also participated in the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience in Acoustics and presented her poster at the Acoustic Society of America conference in Seattle, Washington. Additionally, Agyarko was part of the Purdue Summer Research Opportunities Program, where she researched child speech sound disorders and presented her work at the research symposium. Completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Illinois, she volunteered as a lead social media manager and child department teacher at the Carle Auditory Oral School, Kings Assembly Church. Agyarko has previously received the Joan Good Erickson Scholarship and the Gaitros Family Scholarship.



**Katie
Badger**



**Kaley
Graves**



**Erin
Heniff**



**Kirsten
Osborn**

John C. and Judith D. Turner Applied Health Sciences Scholarship continued

“Becoming a speech-language pathologist has been a dream of mine for almost 10 years. Because of the generosity of John C. and Judith D. Turner, I am closer to fulfilling the deep privilege of caring for clients with speech, language, and swallowing needs.”

Badger is completing her final year in the clinical master’s program in speech and hearing science. This semester, she has been placed at the Champaign Early Childhood Center, where she provides speech-language pathology services to a culturally and linguistically diverse population of 3-5-year-old children. After graduation, Badger hopes to become a full-time speech-language pathologist, either working in the educational or medical rehabilitation setting. Incorporating music into speech therapy has always been of interest to Badger. During her undergraduate years at Illinois State University, Badger researched the neurological foundations of musical production and the efficacy of pitch analysis software in coaching untrained musicians to sing. This has continued to her graduate career, where she has taken an interest in melodic intonation therapy for aphasia and the use of music in therapeutic interventions for young clients. Badger also greatly enjoys volunteering at her church and speaking with the Stroke Support Group at OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center.

“This award serves as added motivation for me to continue to grow and develop into an excellent clinician and advocate for those with hearing loss. It also recognizes the incredible efforts of the UIUC Student Academy of Audiology chapter in the past year.”

Graves is working towards her Au.D. under the guidance of SHS Assistant Professor Mary Flaherty and hopes to complete her work by May 2025. She plans to work in a hospital or ENT office after graduation. Graves currently serves as president of the Student Academy of Audiology, a student organization at Illinois that is dedicated to hearing outreach. She is also chair of the Member Relations Committee on the National SAA Board of Directors. Additionally, she works in hearing research on highly specialized areas that range from regeneration of hair cells in the cochlea to aging studies that assesses changes in the auditory pathway. Graves was a recipient of two scholarships by the American Academy of Audiology, the 2023 John C. & Judith D. Turner scholarship, and multiple conference travel awards. She also received the 2024 Inclusive Leadership, Diversity, Service, and Excellence in Outreach Award in the College of AHS.

“I am honored to be recognized as a recipient of the John C. and Judith D. Turner Applied Health Sciences Scholarship. This award allows me to continue my commitment to the field of audiology.”

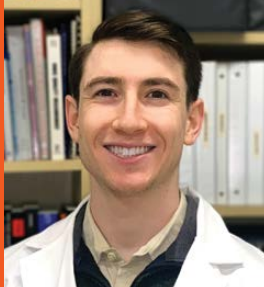
Heniff is working toward an Au.D., which she will complete in May 2025. Heniff will begin her fourth-year audiology externship this May at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She will be working with both adults and pediatrics and is interested in working with cochlear implants and vestibular assessments. After obtaining her Au.D., Heniff hopes to continue working in a large hospital or ENT clinical setting. In addition to her clinical experiences, Heniff is a research assistant in the Human Factors and Aging Lab on the ACCESS Study under the guidance of KCH Professor Wendy Rogers. Through ACCESS, Heniff performs data collection and qualitative analysis of interviews with late-deafened older adults. The focus of the research is to understand their daily challenges and the strategies used in response to those challenges. Heniff enjoys running, watching Marquette University basketball and Chicago Cubs games, playing with her dog and baking.

“This award allows me to pursue my dream of continuing my education in a field that will positively impact the lives of others, and I will be forever grateful for this generous support.”

Osborn enjoys giving back to her community through volunteerism. She was a volunteer tutor with Project READ at Parkland College, where she assisted individuals working towards completing the General Education Development (GED) test. She also enjoys assisting with youth programs, such as the golf and tennis programs in her hometown. Osborn is currently a member of the Student Academy of Audiology on campus and has participated in providing free hearing screenings. She has been a lab member in SHS Assistant Professor Ian Mertes’ Hearing Research Lab since 2022, where she assisted with creating an Institutional Review Board protocol, and she will assist with obtaining research data this semester. She is a previous recipient of the Sylvia Wacker Herzog Scholarship and a Bronze Tablet honoree in 2023. After completing her Au.D., Osborn wants to serve rural and medically underserved communities by providing easier access to audiology services to the citizens in these communities.

William K. and Emily H. Wickhorst Scholarship

This scholarship was established to support fellowships at the graduate level for studies in speech disorders with preference being given to the study of stuttering.



Charlie Nudelman

“Beyond the financial help, this award is like a green light for me to keep chasing my dreams in research. It feels good to know that my hard work is paying off.”

Nudelman is working on a Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Science under the guidance of Associate Professor Pasquale Bottalico and intends to pursue a career as a professor in higher education. So far, his research path has been paved by generous mentors, and he hopes to provide similar support to future students. Nudelman’s research and clinical interest is voice. As an undergraduate, he established a strong foundation of clinically oriented voice research through involvement in various scientific projects that shared a common thread of actionable outcomes related to clinical voice evaluations. These studies focused on clinical voice recordings and instrumentation, the influence of speaking environment on voice intelligibility and diagnostic voice evaluations. Nudelman’s Ph.D. research is centered on the role of real- and virtual-sensory input during voice production. He enjoys exploring the vast world of music, listening to audiobooks, and sharing new board games with friends and family.

Ehud and Janie Yairi International Graduate Student Award

The Ehud and Janie Yairi International Graduate Student Award is supported through a gift made by Dr. and Mrs. Ehud Yairi. Dr. Yairi is internationally recognized for his research on stuttering. Janie, a retired speech-language pathologist, is actively involved in many Champaign-Urbana public service organizations. The award recognizes outstanding international doctoral students in the department with preference given to those students who are pursuing research related to stuttering.



Eliza Baby

“Being recognized and appreciated with an award that acknowledges differences in the pathways adapted towards the common love for science, is both reassuring as well as encouraging.”

Baby is working to complete her Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Science by May 2027. Her intention is to develop and advance evidence-based research in communication sciences and disorders. Baby has gathered clinical and research expertise in the diagnosis and management of acquired communication and swallowing disorders. Her current work focuses on understanding the neurocognitive aspects of prospective memory in the aging population. Baby’s past honors include the Elaine Paden Scholarship given to incoming Illinois Ph.D. students with outstanding academic merit; the University of Mysuru Honor Gold Medal for securing highest academic merit in the Master’s in Speech-Language Pathology program, and the Bangalore University Honor Gold Medal award for outstanding academic merit in Bachelor’s in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. Owing to her service to the community as an SLP while also being a mother to a doting baby boy, her journey has been featured in the coffee table book dedicated to 100 mothers from across the globe, titled “100 Self Portraits 100 Dreams.”



Vahid Delaram

Additional Recognition

Ehud and Janie Yairi International Graduate Student Award continued

“I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the awarding committee, the Yairi family, my Ph.D. mentor, lab mates and SHS faculty for their unwavering support throughout the last two years.”

Delaram is pursuing his Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Science under the mentorship of Associate Professor Brian Monson, with an anticipated graduation date of May 2027. With a background in clinical audiology, he aims to merge his previous expertise with the research competencies developed during his doctoral studies to facilitate translational research that bridges the gap between laboratory findings and clinical applications. He is driven by a keen interest in speech perception, hearing aid technology, and the integration of innovative methodologies like big data and artificial intelligence in auditory science. His goal is to extend assistance to a wider demographic experiencing hearing impairments by advancing clinical diagnostics and augmenting the speech understanding and recognition capabilities provided by hearing aids. Delaram delights in exploring various hiking paths across Illinois and its neighboring regions. In his leisure time, he reads books related to human psychology, leadership and management.

Ron and Sonita Gaitros Scholarship

Fall 2023

Silvia Murgia
Daniela Fanta Alarcon
Bisma Choudhry

Spring 2024

Makayla Clark
Nadia Hernandez
Abigail Keasler
Yadira Alonzo Espinoza
Yoonjee Sim
Erin Heniff
Emily Harrington

Applied Health Sciences Student Council

Carly Roberts

National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association Executive Board

Natalia Rzepa, *president*
Isabella Lau, *vice president*
Bella Platt, *treasurer*
Corrie Penrod, *secretary*
Maddie Russel, *membership director*

Student Academy of Audiology Executive Board

Kaley Graves, *president*
Yadira Alonzo Espinoza, *vice president*
Yoonjee Sim, *treasurer*
Madison Oakes, *secretary*
Rhiannon Hinckley, *membership director*

American Sign Language and Deaf Culture Club Executive Board

Stephanie Patterson, *president*
Audrey Arlis, *vice president (SHS student)*
Alexis Ferraren, *treasurer*
Sara Siddiqui, *secretary, (SHS student)*
Christopher Perdriau, *membership director*

Bilingual Organization for SHS Students (B.O.S.S)

Andrea Davila, *vice president*
Brianna Wynne, *treasurer*
Corrie Penrod, *secretary*
Arie Barfield, *membership director*



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