President's Note

Can you make a difference? The answer is YES! You are made to make a difference, so embrace every opportunity to do so. We are often worried that we are not doing enough for those we serve and weary from trying to fulfill the mountain of obligations and challenges that our professions present. As I face the end of another school year, I want to reflect not on the disappointments and hardships of the year, but on the accomplishments made by my students and the professional growth I have achieved. I want to experience less stress, enjoy work more, network with my valued colleagues, and enjoy time with my family at the end of the day. I will celebrate the day’s small victories and then leave the negative experiences at work. I challenge all SLPs and Audiologists to practice self-care and be KIND to yourselves. Dream Big... but have tangible GOALS! Don’t just aspire to make a living. Aspire to make a difference.

A few quick updates:
THANK YOU to Alison Kemph. She served 2 years as Vice President of Advocacy and 2 years as President-Elect. She had to step down as President of TAASLP in March due to an unplanned relocation. We wish her the best.

THANK YOU to Brittany Day, John Williams, and those who attended Day on the Hill. Read more about our recent advocacy victories on page 4.

WELCOME to the new EC members, showcased on page 2.

Lastly, one of my goals as TAASLP President is to address issues facing school-based SLPs. Check out our efforts to address caseload sizes and how to get involved on page 5.

Lindsey Eastland
TAASLP President

This Quarter's Roundup

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Welcome to New Executive Council Members

Following the fall elections, we’d like to welcome the following EC Members:
- Kelley Corcoran as Vice President of Convention
- Danielle Garland as Vice President of Communications
- Jill Omer as Vice President of Membership

When TAASLP President Alison Kemph relocated this spring, Lindsey Eastland moved from the position of President-Elect to President. This prompted a special election to fill the open President-Elect position. The votes are in, and we’d like to welcome Jennifer Wilson as our newly elected President-Elect!

For bios and contact information about all TAASLP EC members, check out https://taaslp.org/about/leadership/

The ACE is a formal recognition of professionals who have demonstrated their commitment to lifelong learning by earning 7.0 CEUs (70 contact hours) within a 36-month period.

TENNESSEE ACE AWARD RECIPIENTS
- Heidi Baschnagel
- Katherine Blevins
- Kelley Corcoran
- Emily Culver
- Julie Davis
- Alisha Desai
- Lydia Dudney
- Emily Duke Wishik
- Robert Dwyer
- Kristy Eisenzopf
- Wendy Ellmo
- Mary Sue Fino-Szumski
- Teresa Fowler
- Gregory Garrett
- Paulette Gentry
- Laura Green
- Julie Griffith
- Kerry Hankins
- Patricia Harris
- Helen Barry Jahangir
- Kristin King
- Samantha Lee
- Kerri McClain
- Jena McDaniel
- Shannon McGurk
- Amy Melton
- Heidi Moreland
- Jennifer Muckala
- Emily Nolen
- Amanda Oslund
- Lydia Perkins
- Kerry Proctor-Williams
- Gwen Provo
- Todd Ricketts
- Lindsey Rollins
- Elizabeth Rose
- Elizabeth Sestini
- Ashley Shaw
- Marcy Sipes
- Mallory Sliger
- Julie Sosebee
- Phyllis Tanner
- Melissa Teague
- Kelly Toline
- Kelli Turczyn
- Sara Unrein
- Elizabeth Weathersby
- Wanda Webb
- Amy Zeller
MTSU PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

BY KATHLEEN O’NEAL

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, prepares future audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech-language and hearing scientists through an undergraduate pre-professional degree. The Department of Health and Human Performance at MTSU offers students a Bachelor of Science in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. While MTSU does not house a graduate program in either speech-language pathology or audiology, it provides students the necessary educational and clinical foundation to pursue graduate degrees in such areas. MTSU’s undergraduate students have the unique opportunity to enroll in clinical courses and take part in clinical practica, allowing for coursework to directly support clinical application. Courses offered through the major include those related to communication disorders in popular culture, language and literacy development, neurology, diagnostic procedures, and research methods, among others. MTSU students engage in clinical practica through the University Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, which serves children and adults with a variety of communication needs, including those related to hearing, language, speech sounds, and stuttering. Undergraduate students are supervised by speech-language pathologists and audiologists certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

MTSU’s Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program also offers students the ability to engage in off-campus speech-language pathology clinical practica and audiology practica experiences by meeting specific criteria set forth by the department.

MTSU undergraduate students in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program proudly represent their institution on the community, state, and national level. MTSU’s National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) chapter frequently volunteers in the community and provides educational opportunities through an annual conference open to speech-language pathologists and graduate students. The chapter recently hosted the 13th Annual Mid Tenn Conference on Communication Disorders with a focus on pediatric and adult swallowing.

MTSU students are also fierce competitors during the Spirit Bowl and College Bowl at the annual Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists (TAASLP) convention. In addition, MTSU undergraduate students can also be found representing their program through the presentation of research at the annual ASHA convention.

Overall, the undergraduate Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program at MTSU offers prospective students valuable clinical opportunities and a strong educational foundation to support future endeavors!
Not one, but TWO advocacy victories!

BY: JOHN WILLIAMS, TAASLP LOBBYIST

The Tennessee legislature has passed legislation which will make it possible for the services of speech pathologists in their Clinical Fellow year to be reimbursed by Medicare and other third-party payers.

Until now, Clinical Fellows have received a ‘registration’ number from the Board of Communication Disorders and Sciences. Medicare and most insurance companies refuse to pay for the services of those who do not have a license.

The recently passed legislation provides that Clinical Fellows will obtain a ‘provisional license’ from the Board rather than a registration number. Those who have already registered with the Board will be deemed to have a provisional license. The provisional license will allow them to work until they have completed the Clinical Fellow year and are eligible for full licensure.

In 2016 the Board of Communication Disorders created a Task Force to study this problem and recommend a solution. The report issued by the Board in November 2016 determined that most states, including several of the states which border Tennessee, issue provisional licenses to Clinical Fellows. The Board asked the Department of Health to prepare a rule change from registration to provisional licensure for Clinical Fellows.

During the next two years, four different attorneys from the Department of Health were assigned to advise the Board and to prepare the language of the rule change. No progress was made on this issue.

Finally, in March of this year, the Department of Health advised me that a statute change would be needed if Clinical Fellows were to have provisional license. A rule change would not be sufficient. Since the Department of Health does not assist health boards with changes in statute, it fell to TAASLP to accomplish the necessary statute change.

With the help of lobbyists for the Tennessee Hospital Association (which will benefit from this change) and with the extraordinary efforts of Sen. Rusty Crowe of Johnson City and Rep. Robin Smith of Hixson, I drafted the necessary legislation, and the two legislators did the rest. The General Assembly passed the bill unanimously on April 22, 2019. Gov. Lee signed this bill into law on May 8th, becoming immediately effective.

Our second accomplishment is the long awaited repeal of the Professional Privilege Tax for 15 of the 22 originally included professions, including SLPs and Audiologists. This means that the PPT is still due for 2019 but will not be due in future years. Governor Lee is fully expected to sign this bill into law by the end of May.

Join us in future advocacy efforts: https://taaslp.org/about/advocacy/
TACKLING SCHOOL SLP CASELOADS

BY LINDSEY EASTLAND

School-based SLPs, we heard your frustration about caseload sizes and listened. We have just completed collecting surveys from our state’s school SLPs regarding their caseloads and workloads. Thank you if you participated in this or forwarded it to other school SLPs—we got well over 200 responses! We will be compiling and analyzing this data over the next few months in order to develop a report that will then be shared with both legislators and officials from the Tennessee Department of Education as TAASLP determines the best path to take next.

Keep an eye on your email and TAASLP social media feeds for Action Alerts related to school caseloads!

SAVE THE DATE!
2019 TAASLP/TAA Annual Convention November 7-8

Chattanooga Marriott Downtown

Do you have a topic you’re passionate about, a program you’ve recently implemented, or research you’ve done? Share with your peers by speaking at the convention! Call for Papers is open now at https://taaslp.org/convention/

Attendee registration will open in August 2019.

Contact convention@taaslp.org if you are interested in being a convention volunteer or vendor!