

Utah Speech-Language-Hearing Association Annual Conference

2025 SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES AND DISCLOSURES

Hannah Allen, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-S graduated from the University of Utah in 2015 and completed her clinical fellowship at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, a Level I Trauma Center. She has worked in acute care, outpatient, post-acute rehab, and long-term care. She has grown to love post-acute and skilled nursing care and strives to bring the highest quality intervention to our patients in these settings through development of evidenced-based programming and practice. In 2023, she obtained her BCS-S, and continues to advocate for robust dysphagia programming in skilled nursing care. She currently works as Director of Rehabilitation at Heritage Park Healthcare and Rehabilitation.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Brenda Beyal taught for 32 years in the Nebo School District, including two years as an advocate for Native American students and families. Currently, she serves as the Program Coordinator for the Native American Curriculum Initiative with the BYU ARTS Partnership. In this role, she builds relationships with Utah's eight sovereign nations and develops arts-integrated educational resources for teachers. Brenda's work fosters cultural awareness and inclusion, providing teachers with tools to incorporate Native American perspectives into classrooms across Utah, and advocating for the educational needs of Native American students and communities.

Financial Disclosures: Wages received from the Brigham Young University ARTS Partnership

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Brittany Bown, Au.D., PASC., CCC-A received her bachelor's degree in communicative disorders and deaf education followed by a Doctorate of Audiology from Utah State University. She has specialized experience working with children performing diagnostic assessments, auditory brainstem response testing, hearing aid management, temporal bone implants and cochlear implants. She has worked in an ENT setting for the past eight years along with her role as a specialist on a multidisciplinary cleft and craniofacial team. Dr. Bown is a certified member of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, the American Academy of Audiology and holds the Pediatric Audiology Specialty Certification from the American Board of Audiology.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Candi Bown, Au.D., CCC-A, received her bachelor's degree in communicative disorders and a master's degree in audiology from Utah State University. She later received her doctorate degree in audiology from AT Still University. She is a board-certified member of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and was on the Utah Speech-Language Hearing Association (USHA) board for almost 20 years. She has worked as the full-time educational audiologist for Nebo School District for the past 35 years and feels that she has the best job in the world.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Brooke Buchanan, M.Ed., CCC-SLP has been a practicing SLP for over 16 years in a variety of settings; including schools, private practice, and home health. She received her Masters of Education in Speech Language Pathology from Utah State University in 2008. Brooke is trained in PROMPT, DTTC and recently completed Apraxia Boot Camp in Summer of 2023. After having a child of her own with severe apraxia, it ignited a fire within Brooke to pursue continuing education about apraxia. Her

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passion is in helping children with CAS.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Sarah Hargus Ferguson, Ph.D., CCC-A an associate professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Utah, where she also directs the Doctor of Audiology program. Her research investigates talker factors that affect everyday speech understanding, especially by older adults with hearing loss. Most of this research has centered on clear speech, aiming to identify which acoustic characteristics make it easier to understand. More recently, her research has shifted from speech intelligibility to the emotions listeners perceive when they hear clear speech. Many talkers sound angry when speaking clearly: the next step is to figure out why.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: A manuscript describing the present work is currently under review for the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America.

Heather Ferguson, M.S., CCC-A is a speech language pathologist and co-owner at Something To Talk About, LLC, a company that specializes in providing speech language therapy services to charter schools in Utah. She received her bachelors degree in Speech and Hearing Science from the University of Utah and her masters degree in Speech Pathology from the University of Nebraska, Omaha and has been an SLP for over 25 years. Heather is trained in PROMPT, DTTC and is listed on the Apraxia Kids Directory of SLPs with expertise in Apraxia.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Annalise Fletcher, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Utah State University. Her research evaluates the causes and responses to reduced intelligibility in speakers with neurological speech disorders.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Haydee M. Franco, M.S., CCC-SLP is a native Spanish Bilingual SLP and founder of Franco Speech Solutions. She has over a decade of experience in traditional public and charter schools and later worked as an adjunct clinical educator at Brigham Young University (BYU) for two years. With over 12 years of experience, Haydee now runs her multilingual evaluation and consulting business and is licensed in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. She also guest lectures at BYU and provides cultural competency professional development training for school districts throughout the State of Utah.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Bailee Goddard-Hymas, Au.D., CCC-A is a Pediatric Audiologist and Hearing Aid Coordinator at Primary Children's Hospital. Before her time at PCH, she previously worked for 7 years at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and Children's Health Dallas before moving back home to the mountains. She graduated with her AuD from the University of Utah. She has an interest in research, hearing aids, and improving outcomes for children with hearing loss. When she isn't at work, you will likely find her playing Mario with her husband and son or reading a book with her dogs.

Financial Disclosures: Dr. Goddard-Hymas is a paid employee of Primary Children's Hospital

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Sarah Hargus Ferguson, Ph.D., CCC-A is an associate professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Utah, where she also directs the Doctor of Audiology program. Her research investigates talker factors that affect everyday speech understanding, especially by older adults with hearing loss. Most of this research has centered on clear speech, aiming to identify which acoustic characteristics make it easier to understand. More recently, her research has shifted from speech intelligibility to the emotions listeners perceive when they hear clear speech. Many talkers sound angry when speaking clearly: the next step is to figure out why.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: A manuscript describing the present work is currently under review in the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America.

Kimberly Hirte, MA CCC-SLP, BCS-S is a Speech Language Pathologist at Primary Children's Hospital, specializing in managing patients with complex feeding difficulties. She holds a board certification in swallowing and swallowing disorders. Kimberly primarily sees patients in the outpatient setting, working in a feeding clinic alongside a dietitian to help wean patients from feeding tubes. She is also a team member of the cystic fibrosis and aerodigestive clinic teams. Currently, Kimberly is focused on program development and leads the hospital's feeding training program. She is passionate about utilizing family-led and responsive feeding approaches in all settings.

Financial Disclosures: Ms. Hirte receives a salary from Primary Children's Hospital.

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Kate Johnson, AuD, CCC-A is an audiologist providing services for cochlear implants and adult diagnostics. Her passion lies in adult cochlear implantation, and she is trained to work with individuals with severe to profound hearing loss. She enjoys guiding patients through the cochlear implant process, from evaluation to activation, to lifelong follow-up care. Her research interests include cochlear implant patient outcomes, and quality of life. Dr. Johnson joined the University of Utah Hospital following her graduate studies at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. In her free time, she loves to spend time with family and friends and travel.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Aryn Kamerer, PhD is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Hearing Health Laboratory in the Department of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education at Utah State University. She received her PhD in audiology from the University of Kansas and completed her postdoctoral training at Boys Town National Research Hospital. Aryn's research program is focused on understanding pathologies that cause hearing disability and developing clinical measures to detect and characterize sensory and neural pathologies. Her areas of expertise include human and animal auditory physiology and electrophysiological measures of hearing.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Steven Lewis, Au.D. CCC-A F-AAA is a clinical audiologist that current works at Southern Utah ENT in St. George, UT. He currently offers diagnostic and rehabilitative services for adult and pediatric populations.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Jaime Lee, Ph.D, CCC-SLP is an Associate Professor in the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department at the University of Utah. She teaches courses in the areas of neurogenic communication disorders and is engaged in clinical research focused on improving communication

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and life participation in adults with chronic aphasia. She has published on topics such as attention and aphasia, computer-based treatments for aphasia, and facilitation of aphasia groups. Her most recent research interests include exploring transactional and interactional aspects of texting with aphasia.

Financial Disclosures: Receives salary from the University of Utah, Salary from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders of the National Institutes of Health under award R15DC020836, Salary from National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90IFRE0007).

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Stephanie Morgan, M.Ed. holds a Master's degree in Educational Administration and Policy and a Bachelor's degree in Special Education with an emphasis for the Deaf. With over 20 years of experience working in Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind, Morgan has held various roles, from early intervention to secondary education, from the classroom to outreach services. Currently, she serves as the Director of the Parent Infant Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Financial Disclosures: Paid Employee of Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Brett Myers, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is an associate professor and the Director of Clinical Education for Speech-Language Pathology in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Utah. Brett provides gender-affirming voice training and is a Core Team leader in the University of Utah Transgender Health Program. He established the first graduate-level course in Utah on Gender-Affirming Voice Care. He is the director of the Clinical Voice Studies Lab, where he investigates issues regarding voice outcomes for transgender and gender-diverse individuals.

Financial Disclosures: Salaried employee at the University of Utah

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Neil S. Patel, MD is an Assistant Professor of Neurotology and Skull Base Surgery within the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Utah. He has a joint appointment as Adjunct Assistant Professor in Neurosurgery. Dr. Patel's relevant clinical interests include cochlear implantation in adults and children, bone conduction implants, robotic-assisted cochlear implantation, auditory brainstem implantation, and research related to speech and cognitive outcomes after cochlear implantation.

Financial Disclosures: Dr. Patel receives grant support for research from Cochlear Corp and an honorarium for presentation from IotaMotion Inc.

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Kirsten Russell, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Disorders at Brigham Young University. Her research seeks ways to better identify children who are impacted by language disorder and improve the outcomes of their treatment. She specializes in single-subject experimental design, combining her love of clinical work with her passion for exploring innovative treatment methods. Currently, she is studying the impact of different treatment approaches for remediating grammatical deficits in children with DLD and children with Down syndrome. She hopes you will leave this session with additional tools you can use in your language therapy sessions.

Financial Disclosures: Dr. Russell receives a salary from Brigham Young University for her research and received an honorarium from the Utah Speech-Language Hearing Association for this presentation.

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Jordan Schramm, MD is a board-certified otolaryngologist-head & neck surgeon, subcertified in complex pediatric otolaryngology. He is a partner at Peak ENT Associates, with offices in Lehi and Provo. He attended the University of Rochester School of Medicine, where he earned dual MD and MS degrees, with a focus on auditory neuroscience. He was an otolaryngology resident at the University of Nebraska, and subsequently a pediatric otolaryngology fellow at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. While he enjoys caring for children with any ear, nose, or throat disorder, Dr. Schramm has a special clinical interest in pediatric hearing loss.

Financial Disclosures: Dr. Schramm is a consultant for the medical education division of Smith+Nephew ENT

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Emily Soderborg is the project manager for the BYU ARTS Partnership Native American Curriculum Initiative. In this role, she strengthens relationships with the eight sovereign nations located within Utah, develops authentic and approved content, and disseminates materials for teachers and students. Before working for BYU, she was a K-6 music specialist and elementary teacher.

Financial Disclosures: Ms. Soderborg receives wages from the BYU ARTS Partnership

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

Karen Straw, CCC-SLP is a Speech Language Pathologist with over 15 years of experience treating individuals with dementia. As a certified Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Trainer® and Positive Approach to Care® specialist, she founded DementiAgility in 2023 to empower others in providing exceptional dementia care. She regularly educates Assisted Living communities and presents to various groups about dementia care. Drawing from both professional expertise and personal experience as a caregiver to her 90-year-old father with brain change, Karen brings unique insights to her work. When not teaching, she enjoys exploring the nation's back roads on her Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: Karen is a certified independent trainer and champion teacher with Positive Approach to Care® and a certified Alzheimer's disease and dementia care seminar trainer with National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP).