

ANNUAL REPORT

2007-2008

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS

FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Submitted by:

Shari R. Baum, Ph.D.

Director

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Section I – Description of Unit

Mission statement

The mission of the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders is to advance our understanding of human communication and its disorders and to promote excellence in scholarship as well as in professional service. This is achieved by providing a challenging multidisciplinary learning environment and engaging in scholarly activities that not only advance basic and applied knowledge, but that will ensure our place among the international leaders of the field.

Activities & Objectives

The School provides both professional and research training in communication sciences and disorders through its M.Sc. (Applied), M.Sc., and Ph.D. degrees. The goal of the M.Sc. (A) program is to educate the next generation of well-prepared and innovative Speech-language pathology professionals by providing enriched classroom training, clinical laboratory activities that enhance the transition from theory to practice, and outstanding clinical practicum experiences.

We are also committed to providing continuing education activities for speech and hearing professionals in the community and to working together with the Ordre des Orthophonistes et Audiologistes du Québec (OOAQ) to maintain the quality and integrity of the professions in Québec.

The objective of our research degrees is to develop leading researchers and scholars who will go on to train future investigators in the field of communication sciences and disorders and who, through their research, will advance our understanding of the processes of human communication and its breakdown. Interdisciplinary interactions are at the core of our research training approach, which includes preparation to conduct both fundamental and clinically-applied investigations.

Academic Staff

Shari Baum, Ph.D.	James McGill Professor & Director
Jeanne Claessen, M.A.	Faculty Lecturer (Head of Clinical Program)
Laura Gonnerman, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor
Vincent Gracco, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Aparna Nadig, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor
Marc Pell, Ph.D.	William Dawson Scholar & Associate Professor
Linda Polka, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Susan Rvachew, Ph.D.	Associate Professor
Karsten Steinhauer, Ph.D.	Canada Research Chair (Tier II) & Assistant Professor
Elin Thordardottir, Ph.D.	Associate Professor

Section II – Past Year's Activities

Academic Staff

- ♦ Two new faculty members joined the School in September 2007. Dr. Laura Gonnerman, a psycholinguist who specializes in morphological processing in a range of populations, and Dr. Aparna Nadig, a specialist in language processing in autism, have quickly integrated into the department and are making substantial contributions to our curriculum and research endeavours.
- ♦ Ms. Elisabeth Christe, a Professional Associate, won the School's Award for Excellence in Clinical Education.
- ♦ Ms. Cathy Mhun, a Professional Associate, won the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology's (CASLPA) Mentorship Award.

Research

- ♦ The faculty continue to publish in internationally well-recognized venues, with 21 articles and chapters published in 2007 and another 28 published in the first few months of 2008 or currently in press; among the leading journals, faculty published in *NeuroReport*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *Cognition*, and the *Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research*.
- ♦ Faculty members have presented invited addresses at numerous events throughout the world (including in Canada, the US, Germany, Iceland, and the Netherlands).
- ♦ Our graduate students and post-docs have a number of papers published or in press, and have presented their work at numerous international conferences.
- ♦ Funding continues to be quite strong for our field, with more than \$1.2 million administered in the School during the 2007-08 academic year; faculty are co-investigators on grants held elsewhere, amounting to another \$700,000 for the past year.
- ♦ Dr. Shari Baum completed her second term as Director of the Centre for Research on Language, Mind and Brain; Dr. Vince Gracco recently took over the Directorship; all faculty members are Principal Investigators within the interdisciplinary Centre.
- ♦ Dr. Marc Pell continues his collaboration with leading investigators at the Max Planck Institute of Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (Leipzig).
- ♦ Dr. Karsten Steinhauser continues his ongoing collaborations with researchers at Georgetown University, as well as at the Max Planck Institute (Leipzig).
- ♦ Dr. Vince Gracco continues his extensive collaborations with colleagues at Haskins Laboratories, the University of Toronto and the University of Connecticut.
- ♦ Dr. Linda Polka has launched a collaboration with Dr. Robin Panneton at Virginia Tech, as well as with Dr. Thierry Nazzi at CNRS (Paris).
- ♦ Dr. Elin Thordardottir continues her collaborations with colleagues in Iceland; she also serves on the Global Developmental Delay working group, led by physicians at the Montreal Children's Hospital.
- ♦ On behalf of the faculty, Dr. Shari Baum submitted a Letter of Intent to the CIHR's Strategic Training Initiative in Health Research. If the LOI is approved, the full proposal will be prepared for fall 2008.
- ♦ Whereas our research equipment is state-of-the-art thanks to several CFI grants received by faculty members over the past few years, our lab facilities (i.e., the physical plant) are less than ideal. Space is extremely constrained and we are unable to accommodate additional equipment or the establishment of novel procedures in certain domains that require dedicated facilities. Space is currently shared by several

investigators, accommodating multiple procedures and technologies, and requiring frequent rearrangement of the lab space; this undoubtedly reduces our productivity unnecessarily and has influenced our ability to recruit new faculty and doctoral students in the past several years. The building in which we are housed has been put on the market and several space plans were prepared by us in consideration of the School's relocation. To date, no resolution to the relocation dilemma has been found.

Teaching and Learning

- ♦ The School is actively participating in new initiatives in Interprofessional Education within the health sciences.
- ♦ In December 2007, we held a Curriculum Review Retreat, organized by Dr. Susan Rvachew. The current curriculum was reviewed along with guidelines for clinical competencies in the field. Several new initiatives were launched as a result of the review, including reorganization of the content of an existing course, as well as an annual workshop on craniofacial anomalies. Proposals for several new courses for our graduate students have recently been approved by the University and will be implemented in Fall 2008.
- ♦ Ms. Anne Porter, a second year student in the M.Sc. (A) program, was awarded the CASLPA Student Excellence Award for McGill. Ms. Jennifer Proulx, another second year student in that program won one of the Faculty of Medicine's Best Clinical Science Poster Awards at the annual student research day. One of our recent graduates, Ms. Catherine Norsworthy, obtained the highest score on the national certification examination in Speech-Language Pathology administered by CASLPA.
- ♦ The School continues to collaborate with the departments of Linguistics, Psychology, and Integrated Studies in Education in the inter-disciplinary doctoral program in Language Acquisition (LAP).
- ♦ The School continues to rely on a number of sessional lecturers, generally specialist clinicians from the community, who are in the best position to educate our M.Sc. (A) students in numerous practically-oriented courses. Because of back-to-back and overlapping sabbaticals in the next few years, the number of sessional lecturers we employ is likely to increase.
- ♦ The School's website is being revised in an effort to enhance recruitment of doctoral students.

Involvement in the Community

- ♦ Dr. Shari Baum serves on the editorial board of the journal *Applied Psycholinguistics*; Dr. Linda Polka serves on the editorial board of *Canadian Acoustics*; Dr. Susan Rvachew serves as Associate Editor of *American Journal of Speech Language Pathology*.
- ♦ Drs. Linda Polka, Susan Rvachew and Elin Thordardottir participated in the Canadian Language and Literacy Network (NCE); Dr. Susan Rvachew served as a member of its Knowledge Mobilization Committee.
- ♦ A bi-annual electronic newsletter continues to be published by our M.Sc.(Applied) students under the guidance of Dr. Susan Rvachew, in an effort to inform our professional associates and the community at large about the latest developments in research and teaching at the School.

- ♦ Dr. Vincent Gracco completed his term on a review committee for NIH; Dr. Shari Baum served as an invited member on a review committee for CIHR; Dr. Marc Pell served as an invited member on a review committee for FRSQ; Dr. Elin Thordardottir served on a review committee for FQRSC.
- ♦ Dr. Linda Polka served as a site reviewer for an NSF-sponsored research centre.
- ♦ Dr. Shari Baum serves on the Board of Directors of the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, as well as a member of its Comité de Vérification.
- ♦ Dr. Marc Pell serves on the Membership Committee of the Academy of Aphasia.
- ♦ Dr. Shari Baum serves on the Accreditation Board of the Council of Accreditation of Canadian University Programs in Communication Sciences & Disorders (CACUP).
- ♦ Dr. Susan Ryachew serves as a member of the Directing Committee, Early Childhood Learning Knowledge Centre, Canadian Council on Learning.
- ♦ The School's M.Sc.(A) students provided over 10,000 hours of professional service, including over 500 hours of hearing, speech-language, and phonological awareness screenings for kindergarten children in the Montreal area. New services are being provided to the English-speaking group of the Association Québécoise des Personnes Aphasiques (AQPA), supported in part by an internal grant (through a Training & Human Resources Development Canada initiative) obtained by Ms. Jeanne Claessen.
- ♦ Several faculty members have presented workshops for professionals in the community to provide them with state-of-the-art knowledge of recent advances in the field.

APPENDIX I**PUBLICATIONS – 2007**url: <http://www.mcgill.ca/scsd/research/>

Shari Baum, Ph.D., Professor
Laura Gonnerman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Vincent Gracco, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Aparna Nadig, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Marc Pell, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Linda Polka, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Susan Rvachew, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Karsten Steinhauer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Elin Thordardottir, Ph.D., Associate Professor

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