



**ANNUAL REPORT
2012**

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Submitted by:

Marc D. Pell, Ph.D.
Director and Associate Dean

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Unit Overview

The School of Communication Sciences and Disorders (SCSD) is an inter-disciplinary, research-intensive teaching unit focused on human communication and its disorders, one that serves as a bridge between the Faculties of Medicine, Science, Arts, and Education. In 2012, the School continued to develop its unique strengths that promote McGill's strategic plan to promote research in the cognitive and behavioural neurosciences, language and cultural studies, and to deliver first-rate education in the professions.

Research and publications –

All tenure-track faculty members in the School are externally funded, pursuing research initiatives with researchers in several McGill departments—Neurology, Psychiatry, Otolaryngology, Physical & Occupation Therapy, Psychology, Educational and Counseling Psychology, Linguistics, and Music—as well as in leading universities and research centres (e.g., Haskins Laboratories, USA; Max Planck Institute, Germany).

Research highlights of 2012:

- SCSD faculty members successfully competed for major operating grants from federal, Quebec, and international funding sources, acting as principal or co-investigator on **13 new grants valued at over \$3.0 million in new operating funds** (nine 'major' grants valued at over \$15,000 are listed below);
- Among the 9.5 tenure-track professors in the School, three faculty members (Baum, Pell, Steinhauer) currently hold **research chairs** through the JMP/WDS or CRC programs, and one additional faculty member (Nadig) will be nominated for a CRC Tier II award in Spring 2013;
- During the reference period, **SCSD faculty members published 23 refereed articles and chapters in leading international journals**. Among these contributions, Dr. Susan Rvachew published a textbook, "Developmental Phonological Disorders: Foundations of Clinical Practice" (Plural Publishing Co., 928 pages) with a recent graduate of our PhD program, Francoise Brosseau-Lapr e. A full list of scholarly works published in 2012 is posted at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/scsd/research/publications>
- Several SCSD faculty members gave **invited keynote addresses and/or workshops** to scientific or professional audiences on the international stage. For example, Dr. Elin Thordardottir was keynote speaker at events in Warsaw (Poland) and Bangor (Wales, UK), and gave a three-day invited workshop on the assessment/treatment of children with specific language impairment in Singapore. Dr. Rvachew gave invited presentations in Manchester and Edinburgh (UK), and Dr. Steinhauer gave keynote addresses in Stuttgart (Germany) and at the 80th ACFAS Conference in Montreal;
- SCSD faculty members participated and served **key leadership roles in the Centre for Research on Brain, Language, and Music**, with SCSD faculty member Dr. Vincent Gracco as its current Director.

External Research Grants Awarded in 2012 (value greater than \$15,000)

FEDERAL/QUEBEC GRANTING AGENCIES

1. Awardee: **V. Gracco** (PI)
Source: NSERC - Discovery Grants
Title: Studies Of Neuroplasticity In Speech Processes
Value: \$165,000, 2012-2017
2. Awardee: **L. Polka** (PI)
Source: NSERC – Discovery Grants
Title: Development of phonetic perception
Value: \$200,000, 2012-2017
3. Awardee: **S. Rvachew** (PI)
Source: NSERC – Discovery Grants
Title: Impact of Speech Input on Speech Production Learning
Value: \$135,000, 2012-2017
4. Awardee: **S. Rvachew** (PI) & **A. Nadig**
Partners: Centre for Literacy; Centre for Research on Brain, Language and Music; TribalNova Inc.
Source: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Title: Impact of Digital Tablets on Shared Reading Interactions and Outcomes
Value: \$200,000 direct funds + \$42,450 partner contributions, 2012-2015
5. Awardee : L. Menard (PI), **V. Gracco**, **A. Nadig**, & J. Irwin
Source: SSHRC - Insight Development Grant
Title: Étude prosodique de la parole produite par des enfants au développement typique et des enfants atteints de troubles du spectre autistique
Value: \$74,604, 2012-2014
6. Awardee: D. Ostry (PI), **V. Gracco**, & D. Shiller
Source: FRQNT Team Grant
Title: Substrats Neuronaux Du Développement Moteur De La Parole
Value: \$238,500, 2012-2015
7. Awardee: L. Duchesne (PI), A. MacLeod, F. Bergeron, N. Trudeau, & **Elin Thordardottir**
Source: Programme IRDPQ-IRD-REPAR/FRSQ en déficience auditive
Title: Implication des parents dans l'évaluation précoce du langage d'enfants sourds profonds nouvellement porteurs d'un implant cochléaire : une comparaison entre trois méthodes
Value: \$18,862, 2012-2014

FOREIGN GRANTING AGENCIES/FOUNDATIONS

8. Awardee: D. Ostry (PI), **V. Gracco**, & D. Shiller
 Source: NIH Operating Grant
 Title: Speech motor learning and sensory plasticity in children and adults
 Value: \$1,783,030 (US\$), 2012-2017
- 9 Awardee: **S. Rvachew** (PI) & C. Erdos
 Source: Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association of North America
 Title: Comparison of Alternative Prepractice Conditions in the Treatment of
 Childhood Apraxia of Speech using a Single Subject Randomization
 Design
 Value: \$25,000 (US\$), 2012-2013

Teaching and learning (graduate) - 2012 Highlights

- A total of 27 students graduated with the MSc (Applied) degree with specialization in Speech-Language Pathology and two students were granted the M.Sc. (thesis) degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders (**100% graduation rate**);
- **Demand for our professional training program (M.Sc.A.) remains extremely high**, rendering this one of the most selective graduate programs at McGill. In 2012, we received 347 applications for 28 available slots. Students in our Sept2012 cohort had a mean entering CGPA of 3.77/4.0;
- Following a site review in Nov 2011, **the School completed its accreditation process** in spring 2012 and was re-accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Canadian University Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology until June 2015. The faculty, students, curriculum, and governance structure of the School were judged to meet or exceed all relevant standards, although an institutional response is required to improve the School's research and teaching facilities;
- **Our PhD program continued to grow.** There are now 27 students registered in our PhD program (70% international), rendering this the largest program of its kind in Canada and the choice of international students who seek training in Communication Sciences and Disorders. The number of students registered in the PhD program increased by 50% between 2007-2012;
- **SCSD faculty members co-operated extensively in teaching** with other McGill departments. Six SCSD faculty members (Gonnerman, Nadig, Polka, Rvachew, Steinhauer, Elin Thordardottir) provided instruction and/or doctoral research supervision as members of the inter-disciplinary Language Acquisition Program, in collaboration with Linguistics, Psychology, and Integrated Studies in Education. Four SCSD faculty members (Baum, Gracco, Pell, Steinhauer) supervised graduate students enrolled in the Integrated Program in Neuroscience. SCSD faculty members also (co) supervised McGill undergraduate/graduate students registered in Psychology, Linguistics, and Arts and Sciences (Cognitive Science program).

Involvement in the community – 2012 Highlights

Academic and Professional Leadership:

- SCSD faculty provided academic leadership in our field both nationally and internationally. Seven faculty members (Baum, Gracco, Pell, Polka, Rvachew, Steinhauer, Thordardottir) served as journal Editors or on Editorial Boards of major journals in our field in 2012, and Drs. Gonnerman and Gracco served on Review panels for the National Science Foundation and NSERC, respectively;
- Dr. Steinhauer co-organized a symposium on “Multilingualism” at the 80th ACFAS Conferences in Montreal (May 2012) which received broad press coverage in the *Globe and Mail*, *Le Devoir*, *McGill Reporter*, and other media outlets;
- Dr. Gonnerman served as Chair of one of the panels at the Provost’s Conference on “Academic Freedom” in September 2012;
- As Director of the Centre for Research on Brain, Language, and Music, Dr. Gracco organized events designed for the Montreal research community and for the general public. He organized the “*Latest on Language*” series of public lectures that touched on topics of public interest, such as language acquisition, bilingualism and reading. He also organized the *Distinguished Lecture Series* for language researchers in the Montreal community;
- Dr. Elin Thordardottir/Dr. Pell represented the CREPUQ on the Comité de la formation of the *Ordre des orthophonistes et audiologistes du Québec* ;

Outreach programs:

- Under the supervision of S. Vaillancourt, **SCSD students worked with Speech-Language Pathologists in Montreal School boards** to provide an 8-week intensive intervention program for children with phonological (speech sound) disorders;
- Under the supervision of K. Root , the SCSD continued a successful partnership with the *Association québécoise des personnes aphasiques* to provide **free clinical services in Speech-Language Pathology for English-speaking Montrealers who live with aphasia**, an acquired impairment that affects language (e.g., following a stroke). This “satellite clinic” provides group and individual therapy to approximately 60 individuals with chronic aphasia, while creating clinical placement opportunities for our M.Sc. (A) students;
- Dr. Elin Thordardottir served on the Steering Committee and Management committee for a COST Action project on bilingual Specific Language Impairment funded by the European Union. She is responsible for promoting and overseeing a uniform selection of diagnostic criteria for studies undertaken in participating countries. She also collaborated with the Reykjavik School Board (Iceland) to develop a language assessment test for speakers of Icelandic as a second language.
- The School disseminated information on the nature of communication disorders, professional services, and clinical training and student research initiatives at the

School through its *Speaking of Language* newsletter. This newsletter was written by SCSD students in consultation with Dr. Rvachew and then distributed to the wider SCSD and Montreal clinical communities. Details may be found at:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/scsd/newsletter> .

Milestones -

- In January 2012, Dr. Marc Pell was appointed Associate Dean and Director in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Faculty of Medicine for the period of 2012-2016;
- In August 2012, the School recruited two new faculty members, each at the rank of Faculty Lecturer, to serve as Coordinators of Clinical Education: Ms. Kelly Root and Ms. Sophie Vaillancourt. These hires represent an expansion of one additional SCSD faculty position responsible for professional training, mentoring, and coordination following the departure of A. Vogt in July 2012;

Honours, awards, and prizes -

- In April 2012, Dr. Pell was named a James McGill Professor (2012-2019) for his research on emotion processing and communication in healthy and brain-damaged adults (award value \$175,000);
- In October 2012, Dr. Rvachew was honoured with a Fellowship of the Association Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, an honour rarely bestowed on researchers outside of the USA.

CONSULTING ACTIVITIES 2012

Name of Faculty Member	Number of Days			
	Private Sector Consulting	Public Sector Consulting	Other (Please explain)	Total
Gonnerman, Laura	Program committee for Cognitive Science Society Annual Meeting			
Nadig, Aparna		Academic consultant to the <i>Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, Laval, QC</i> . Reading Difficulties Committee. Aims to implement early screening and intervention plans across their schools for children with reading difficulties.		
Pell, Marc		External Reviewer of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs of the Department of Applied Linguistics, Brock University (2 day site visit + 3 days report preparation)		
Polka, Linda	Member of Organizing Committee for the International Congress of Acoustics			
Root, Kelly	OMETZ Project			
	AQPA Project			
Rvachew, Susan	Member of Directing Committee – <i>Centre of Excellence for Early childhood Development</i>			
	Consultation to S-LPs at MAB-MacKay Rehabilitation Centre			
Steinhauer, Karsten	Conference organization – ACFAS – Symposium « Recherches sur le bilinguisme et le multilinguisme : Un partage du savoir »			
Vaillancourt, Sophie	TASC: Research Project on Childhood Apraxia of Speech			