Communication Disorders

Honors & Scholarships

April 2020
Undergraduate Student Honors

Department of Communication Disorders
Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar

Emily Hass

- **Hometown:** Superior, Ne
- **Major:** Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Organizations:** Kearney Student Speech Language Association (KSSLHA)
- **UNK Leadership:** Loper Leader
- **Community Service:**
  - Alpha Rehabilitation Carnival Alzheimer’s Walk
  - Arc Buffalo County- Hands Speak

“My fondest memory at the UNK was advocating and fundraising for the communication boards. We were able to put up not just one, but TWO boards! This was a satisfying moment because it will help out so many kids. Now they can go to the park and effectively communicate and play just like anyone else!”
Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar

Emily Hass

“Emily Hass demonstrated excellent academic success as an undergraduate student. Her strong performance in her Communication Disorders coursework and her natural ability to apply information from courses to clinical situations earned her this honor. We are thrilled that Emily plans to attend UNK for graduate studies in Speech-Language Pathology.”

by: Dr. Whitney Schneider Cline
Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar

- **Hometown:** Wausa, NE
- **Major:** Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Organizations:** Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association; Peer Health Education; Mortar Board
- **UNK Leadership:**
  - KSSLHA President 2019-2020
  - Peer Health Education President 2019-2020
- **Career Plans:** UNK Graduate School
- **Community Service:** Friends Program, TOPS Soccer, Loper Leader, Cornhusker Girl’s State Junior Counselor

“My favorite memory of being a part of the CDIS Department were the Christmas and End of the Year KSSLHA parties. It was a lot of fun to be able to get to know other members and professors outside of the classroom.”
Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar

Claire Vanness

• “Claire Vanness is an Outstanding Scholar because she is a knowledgeable and hardworking student. She is an active participant in the classroom, asks thought provoking questions, and collaborates well with her peers. Claire has achieved and maintained an overall GPA of 3.9 during her career at UNK, while being an active student on campus. Claire is currently the president of the Kearney Student, Speech, Language, Hearing Association where she has made it her mission to serve those with communication disorders.”

by: Ms. Jill Wilson
Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher

- **Hometown:** Norfolk, NE
- **Major:** Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Leadership:** Thompson Scholar Learning Community & Loper Leader
- **Community Service:**
  - UNK BiG event; Arc of Buffalo County
  - Alzheimer’s Association Walk; TOPS Soccer
  - Northeast Elementary School & Overton Elementary
- **Career Plans:** UNK-CDIS Graduate School
Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher

Madison Clausen

“Madison Clausen is a Senior and was a part of the Undergraduate Research Fellowship (URF) program at UNK. Madison's project titled: "When will we see children’s language scores increase in minimally verbal children with Autism Spectrum Disorder?" investigated how much change will occur in eye contact and verbal expression across four years in early childhood.

Madison examined ten minimally verbal children with Autism and found a pattern where eye contact did not increase across the four years, while verbal expression did increase.”

by: Dr. Philip Lai
Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher

Mikaela Hansen

• **Hometown:** Deshler, NE
• **Major:** Speech-Language Pathology
• **UNK Organizations:** Kearney Student Speech Language and Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
• **UNK Leadership:** UNK Student Liaison for Nebraska Speech Language and Hearing Association (NSLHA)
• **Community Service:** Volunteer-Alzheimer’s Association Walk
  • Volunteer-Children’s Museum for KidZone Respite Care
  • Interacting with exchange students-participating in conversation Partners
  • Volunteer-Early Childhood Conference
• **Fonderst Memory:**
  • My fondest memory was helping raise money for the communication boards to be installed in the Kearney Parks.

“Speech-Language Pathology is an awesome profession. The professors are all wonderful and very inspiring. I cannot wait to continue my education at UNK as a graduate student.”
Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher

Mikaela Hansen

“Mikaela may come off as reserved and shy, but she is very hardworking, punctual, meticulous and serious about getting her work done! She is curious and asks the right questions. She is a delight to work with, and I am looking forward to working with her in graduate school!”

by: Dr. Ladan Ghazi Saidi
Emily Mahr

Outstanding Undergraduate Senior

• **Hometown:** Sidney, NE
• **Major:** Speech-Language Pathology
• **UNK Organizations:** Kearney Student Speech Language and Hearing Association (KSSLHA), International Student Association (ISA)
• **Community Service:**
  • Volunteer within KSSLHA and UNK
  • Volunteering at Homestead of Assisted Living in Kearney
Emily Mahr is being honored as an outstanding senior for her broad success as an undergraduate Communication Disorders Student. Academically, Emily performed well, and she also took advantage of additional opportunities outside of classes to enhance her undergraduate experience and better prepare her for graduate school. We are excited that Emily is planning to attend UNK to pursue her Master’s Degree in Speech Language Pathology starting this fall.

by: Dr. Whitney Schneider Cline
Outstanding Undergraduate Senior

• Hometown: Omaha, NE
• Major: Speech-Language Pathology
• UNK Organizations: Kearney Speech Language and Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
• Career Plans: UNK Graduate School
• Community Service: Conversation partner for international students
  • Volunteer-Alzheimer’s Walk
  • Volunteer-Alpha Rehabilitation
• Fondest Memory:
  • Anytime CDIS students and Faculty
    Got together outside of class to spend Time together (UNK homecoming parade, KSSLHA Christmas Parties
Outstanding Undergraduate Senior

“Mackenzie is energetic, enthusiastic and motivated! She is also hard working, perseverant and always follows through. Mackenzie brings a lot of energy to the class as well as to the lab. I have enjoyed working with her. She is always ready to help others and is a real team player. I am looking forward to accompanying her in the next chapter of her studies.”

by: Dr. Ladan Ghazi Saidi
Graduate Student Honors Department of Communication Disorders
Outstanding Graduate Scholar

• **Hometown:** Blair, NE
• **Major:** M.S. Ed. Speech-Language Pathology
• **UNK Organizations:** Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
• **Internships:** Grand Island Public Schools
  • Kearney Physical Therapy/Good Samaritan Hospital
• **Career Plans:** Work as a Speech Language Pathologist within a medical setting
• **Leadership:** Graduate Assistant Department of Communication Disorders
  • Graduate Student Representative to the Institutional Review Board
• **Community Service:** Head start Community Outreach
  • “Celebrate the Young Child” Educational Community Event
• **Fondest Memory:** Getting to meet new people and create friendships within our graduate cohort, spending time together both inside and outside the classroom.
Outstanding Graduate Scholar

Molly Dibben

“Molly is from Blair, NE and has been an outstanding student throughout her graduate career with a 4.0 GPA. Her organizational skills and attention to detail contributed to her success as a student and graduate assistant in the CDIS department. Molly took initiative to find answers when presented with complex case questions both in the classroom and in the clinic.”

by: Ms. Laura Moody
Outstanding Graduate Scholar

- **Hometown**: Burwell, NE
- **Major**: M.S. Ed. Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Organizations**: Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
- **Internships**: Bell Elementary-Papillion LaVista Community Schools
  - Great Plains Health-North Platte, NE
- **Career Plans**: I have accepted a position as a medical Speech Language Pathologist in Kearney, NE
- **UNK Organization**: Graduate Student Research Day
  - Graduate Assistant for the Communication Disorders Department
- **Community Service**: Kearney Student Speech Language and Hearing Association (KSSLHA) community Halloween event at the Health and Sports Center
  - Bright Futures Community Event
- **Awards**: Poster Presentation-Graduate 1st Place UNK Research Week
- **Fondest Memory**: Presenting research in Washington D.C. and attending the ASHA convention with my classmates
  - Counting over a thousand jellybeans for NASA research with Dr. Lai and working with wonderful professors and classmates!
  - “I am proud to be a Loper, and a UNK Speech-Pathology graduate Alumni! This program has allowed me to grow as an individual and a professional. Thank you the CDIS staff for instilling the confidence in me to grow to my full potential. I am forever thankful for the experiences and relationships I have gained throughout my graduate school career!”

**Elaina Eddy**
Outstanding Graduate Scholar

Elaina Eddy

“Laini is an exemplary scholar, researcher, clinician and a wonderful person. She is polite, professional, studious and an absolute delight to work with. Laini is a responsible person and a serious professional. Her work is always of the highest quality and gives absolute commitment to any task. Laini is always ready to learn, open to constructive criticism and growth. She will go far and I wish her the best on her future endeavors.”

by: Dr. Ladan Ghazi Saidi
Outstanding Graduate Researcher

Erica Brandow

- **Hometown:** Laurel, NE
- **Major:** M.S. Ed. Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Organizations:** Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
- **Internships:** Humphrey Public Schools
  - Therapy Works of Nebraska
- **UNK Leadership:** Co-leading adult TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and CVA (Stroke) support groups at Good Samaritan Hospital during the Spring 2019 Semester
- **Community Service:** Hearing and Language Screenings for Kearney Public Schools
- **Awards:** Oral Presentation-Graduate 1st Place UNK Research Week
- **Fondest Memory:** Spending time in the AAC Lab with classmates!
Outstanding Graduate Researcher

“Erica is a Graduate Student and this Spring she completed her Thesis project titled: "The relationship between communication and temperament when completing tasks that vary on difficulty."
Erica correlated nonverbal behavioral data alongside scores from questionnaires to see if relations exist between performance and self-perceived temperament. Through this project, Erica ran participants, learned a new coding system, and wrote up and defended her Thesis.”

by: Dr. Philip Lai

Erica Brandow
Outstanding Graduate Clinician

- **Hometown:** Omaha, NE
- **Major:** M. S. Ed., Speech-Language Pathology
- **Career Plans:** Job seeking in Omaha area School Districts
- **Internships:** Gretna Public Schools
  - Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital-Omaha Campus
- **Community Service:** Director of Volunteers for Nebraska Miss Amazing
  - Group Leader for Down Syndrome Association for Families of Nebraska (DSAF)
- **Fondest Memory:** Going to American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) annual Convention in Orlando FL with my entire cohort and all staying in one AirBNB

Sydney Ferrera
Outstanding Graduate Clinician

“Sydney is from Omaha, NE and brings a joy that is contagious to her speech-language therapy sessions. Sydney makes all activities so engaging that clients don’t even know they are doing work. Clients of all ages have enjoyed having Sydney and have made great strides in their progress with her leadership.”

by: Ms. Laura Moody
Outstanding Graduate Clinician

Bailey Irwin

- **Hometown:** Rochester, IN
- **Major:** M.S. Ed. Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Experience:** Research and Teaching Assistant; Student Research Day
- **Internship Site:** Central Elementary
- **Career Plans:** SLP at Lexington Regional Health Center
- **Community Service:** Loving Hands & Restore Ministries
- **Fondest Memory:** The potlucks my cohort had to celebrate milestones in our program with Alexis Reinert’s infamous cookie cakes

“Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow from this program with my classmates. I am so happy to be here in Kearney and grateful for the lifelong friendships that I have built!”
Outstanding Graduate Clinician

Bailey Irwin

“Congratulations to Bailey Abbott for receiving the Department of Communication Disorders Outstanding Student Clinician Award. Bailey planned and implemented effective interventions for each of her clients using creative and engaging resources. Bailey challenged herself to go above and beyond to build rapport and helped her clients reach their speech-language goals. Bailey’s dedication to ensure her clients’ success makes her an outstanding graduate student clinician.”

by: Ms. Denise Wolfe
DEAN’S SCHOLARSHIP COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

• Awarded to incoming students who have been admitted to UNK for Fall 2020 as a Communication Disorders major or Graduate Student.
Rachel Kathman

- KSSLHA Treasurer 2019-2020
- Peer academic leader-Thompson Scholar Learning Community 2017-2018
- Honors Program Member 2016-Present
- Gold Torch Society Member 2019-Present
- Loper Leader 2019

Hometown: Lawrence, NE
Major: Speech-Language Pathology
UNK Experience: Treasurer-Kearney Student Speech Language and Hearing Assoc. (KSSLHA)
Community Service: Volunteer for Arc of Buffalo Count Respite Care, Early Childhood Conf., Alzheimer’s walk, Softball coach

DEAN’S SCHOLARSHIP COMMUNICATION DISORDERS
Siany Edwards

DEAN’S SCHOLARSHIP
COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Vice President of the Kearney Student Speech Language and Hearing Association

• Hometown: Omaha, NE
• Major: Speech-Language Pathology
• UNK Experience: Research and Teaching Assistant; Student Research Day
• Community Service: Alzheimer’s Walk, Alpha Rehab
Mikaela Hansen

- **Hometown**: Deshler, NE
- **Major**: Speech-Language Pathology
- **UNK Experience**: Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
  - UNK Student Liaison for Nebraska Speech Language and Hearing association (NSLHA)
- **Community Service**: Volunteer for Alzheimer’s Association Walk, Children’s Museum for KidZone Respite Care, Conversation Partners, Early Childhood Conference

**DEAN’S SCHOLARSHIP COMMUNICATION DISORDERS**
This scholarship shall be awarded to full-time students majoring in Communication Disorders or Speech Pathology. Recipients shall have junior, senior or graduate status, a minimum 3.0 GPA, shall have excellent clinical potential and be active in the student organization KSSLHA.
DR. JOHN COCHRAN SCHOLARSHIP

• UNK Organizations:
  • Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program
  • Student Representative - College of Education Academic Policies & Standards Committee
  • Gold Torch Society
  • Xi Phi chapter of Mortar Board at UNK
  • Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association
  • Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society
  • Dean’s List
  • Kappa Delta Pi Education Society

Madison Clausen

KSSLHA Member
Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society
Dean’s List
Thompson Scholar
Loper Leader
Kappa Delta Pi Education Society
• **Hometown:** Lincoln, NE
• **UNK Experiences:**
  • Kearney Speech Language and Hearing Association
  • Exec. Position for UNK’s Black student Association & SO College Organizations
  • Attended Legislative Day 2020 as a Representative for KSSLHA
  • Volunteered at the Alzheimer’s walk/Run for KSSLHA, & Kearney Children’s Museum

Fondest Memory: “Representing KSSLHA at Legislative day. Being knowledgeable on current issues happening in my field and getting to advocate for bills pertaining to speech pathologist and speech pathology students across Nebraska was truly an honor and an amazing learning experience.”

Katie Hastings

**DR. JOHN COCHRAN SCHOLARSHIP**
Established to help support students in the field of Speech Pathology who have completed a full year of college work. Selection shall be based on past academic achievement and demonstration of potential for future academic and professional accomplishments.
EDNA LARSEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

• **Hometown**: York, NE
• **Major**: Speech Language Pathology
• **UNK Organizations**: Kearney Student Speech Language and Hearing Association (KSSLHA)

• Member of KSSLHA
• **Community Service**: Volunteered in Elementary school helping SLP, Help raise money for Communication boards for Kearney Parks
To be awarded to students pursuing a graduate degree in Speech-Language Pathology. Candidates shall have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above.
Jean’s son had language development problems which encouraged her to enter the field of speech-language pathology. She later focused her work on children with autism and early childhood education.

“The earlier we intervene, the better chance each child will have.”
• **Hometown:** McCook, NE
• **Major:** M.S. in ED., Speech Language Pathology
• **Community Service:** As an undergraduate student Lanette was member of the national service organization Alpha Phi Omega and volunteered for 5 years as a youth mentor in the Friends program.

“Thank you for recognizing me with this honor. I love being a part of the Speech-Language Pathology program. I look forward to applying the skills I am learning at UNK and to have a positive impact on the lives of others.”

Lanette Kinne
KATHRYN O. FALCONER & MARY JO MORROW SCHOLARSHIP

- This scholarship shall be awarded to students majoring in Communication Disorders or Speech Pathology. Candidates shall have junior, senior or graduate level standing and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater. They will also be active members of KSSHLA.

Mary Jo Morrow and Kathryn Falconer were beloved faculty in the Department of Communication Disorders.
Lauren Rezac

• **Hometown:** Brainard, NE
• **UNK organizations:**
  • Kearney Speech Language and Hearing Association (KSSLHA) President
  • Summer Student Research Program,
  • American Reads Tutor 2018
  • Alpha Omicon Pi-Secretary & Historian
  • Volunteer work Around the World Team member
  • Gold Torch Member
  • Volunteer, World Theatre
    Campus Kitchen
    Top Soccer,
    Blood Donation
    Mount Carmel Activities
• **Fondest Memory:**
  Last years KSSLHA Christmas party!

KATHRYN O. FALCONER & MARY JO MORROW SCHOLARSHIP
Awarded to an undergraduate or graduate student majoring in Communication Disorders or Special Education. The preference is for a student enrolled in Communication Disorders. Selection is based upon academic achievement.
Hanna Heil

Hometown: Ord, NE

UNK Organizations:
- UNK Graduate Council
- Member National Student Language Hearing Association (NSLHA)
- Member Kearney Student Speech Language Hearing Association (KSSLHA)-Secretary 2018-2019
- Member Special Olympics College Club-Treasurer 2017-2018
- Member Gamma Phi Beta Sorority-Gamma Kappa Chapter 2015-2019, Ritual Chairwomen 2017-2018

Community:
- Press-on Youth Center-Tutor volunteer
- Walk to End Alzheimer’s –Volunteer
- KidZone Respite Care-Volunteer

“My fondest memory of the program was working with a variety of clients who had differing communication disorders. I want to thank my professors for providing me with the foundation, skills and hands-on experience in order to become a speech-language pathologist. To my family and friends, I thank you all for your unwavering support, positivity, and love as I pursue my passion.”
This scholarship shall be awarded to an undergraduate or graduate student majoring in Communication Disorders. Candidate must be in good academic standing.
Kent taught for the CDIS Department for 41 years, beginning in 1967 and retiring in 2008. He was pivotal in the grant and design of the Speech-Language-Hearing bus, and impacted thousands of students. He was a strong advocate for stutterers and was a member of the National Stuttering Association as well as the American and Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Associations.
Mackenzie Hamilton

- **Hometown:** Omaha, NE
- Kearney Speech Language Hearing Association Member (KSSLHA)
- Conversation Partner for International students
- Volunteer Walk to end Alzheimer’s
- Volunteer Alpha Rehab Carnival
- Fondest memories: UNK homecoming parade, KSSLHA Christmas Party
WAYNE & VIRGINIA MCKINNEY FAMILY SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP

- Candidates shall be pursuing any major in the Department of Communication Disorders with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above. First preference shall be given to students who are residents of Buffalo County, Nebraska. Second preference shall be given to students who are residents of any of the following central Nebraska counties: Adams, Custer, Dawson, Hall, Howard, Kearney, Phelps or Sherman. Third preference shall be given to any otherwise qualified student.
Libi Slack

- Hometown: O’Neill, NE
- Major: Speech Language Pathology
- UNK Organizations
  - Kearney Student Speech Language & Hearing Association (KSSLHA)
College of Education

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES