

# UConn

## SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND HEARING SCIENCES

# Research in Review 2026

## Event Overview

<b>EVENT NAME</b>	UConn SLHS Research in Review 2026
<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	<b>February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM</b>
<b>VENUE</b>	UConn Alumni Center -- 2384 Alumni Dr, Storrs, CT
<b>WHO IS INVITED?</b>	UConn SLHS Alumni, Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, clinical educators, faculty, and current students
<b>REGISTRATION</b>	\$35

# Continuing Education Event: UConn SLHS Research in Review 2026

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Eight UConn researchers will be presenting their latest findings in speech, language, and hearing sciences, emphasizing clinical implications. Afterward, a moderated panel will allow attendees to engage with speakers, explore diverse views, and assess real-world applications. This event will foster dialogue among clinicians and researchers on evidence-based approaches to communication disorders.

## Event Highlights

- Presentations from leading researchers in speech, language, and hearing sciences
- Focus on evidence-based practices and translational research
- Interactive panel discussion with Q&A
- Designed for clinicians, educators, and professionals seeking to enhance their practice

## Learning Objectives

1. **Analyze current research findings** to identify evidence-based practices in the assessment and intervention of individuals with speech, language, and hearing disorders.
2. **Integrate contemporary research insights** into educational and clinical decision-making to support diverse populations across developmental stages and communication needs.
3. **Evaluate the translational impact of emerging studies** on service delivery, interdisciplinary collaboration, culturally responsive care, and technology-assisted interventions.

## Time-Ordered Agenda

<b>START TIME</b>	<b>END TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
5:00 PM	5:45 PM	Cocktail hour with a cash bar available
5:45 PM	6:30 PM	Buffet dinner catered by UConn Dining Services
<b>BEGIN PRESENTATIONS</b>		
6:30 PM	6:45 PM	Dr. Adrian García-Sierra – Speech Perception and Language Development Lab
6:45 PM	7:00 PM	Dr. Kathleen Cienkowski – Aural Rehabilitation Lab
7:00 PM	7:15 PM	Dr. Rachel Theodore – UConn Laboratory for Spoken Language Processing (SLaP)
7:15 PM	7:30 PM	Dr. Emily Myers – Language and Brain Lab (LAB)
7:30 PM	7:45 PM	Dr. Jennifer Tufts – Hearing Conservation Lab
7:45 PM	8:00 PM	Dr. Derek Houston – Hearing Experience and Language Learning Outcomes Lab (HELLO)
8:00 PM	8:15 PM	Dr. Lindsey Butler – Brain & Language on the Autism Spectrum Team
8:15 PM	8:30 PM	Dr. Tammie Spaulding – Language Learning & Disorders Laboratory
8:30 PM	9:00 PM	Moderated Discussion Panel

# Our SLHS Faculty Presenters

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## **Dr. Adrian García-Sierra**

Lab Website: <https://speechlanguage.uconn.edu>

Dr. García-Sierra is an Associate Professor in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS), as well as the Associate Department Head of the SLHS Undergraduate Program and the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Cognitive Sciences. Dr. García-Sierra's research interests include brain plasticity, language development, event-related potentials, speech perception, and bilingualism.

Dr. Garcia-Sierra has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. He has no relevant non-financial relationship(s).

## **Dr. Kathleen Cienkowski**

Lab Website: <https://aural.rehab.uconn.edu>

Dr. Kathleen Cienkowski is the Interim Department Head for UConn Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and an Associate Professor in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. Her work centers on aural rehabilitation, community-engaged learning and the integration of patient-centered care into hearing healthcare. She collaborates with community partners to create experiences that help students understand the lived experiences of individuals with hearing loss and the importance of communication accessibility.

Dr. Cienkowski has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. She has the following relevant non-financial relationship(s) – she is a member of HLAA – Eastern CT Chapter and serves as the Vice President.

## **Dr. Rachel Theodore**

Lab Website: <https://slaplab.uconn.edu>

Dr. Theodore is Associate Professor of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and Faculty Affiliate of the Language and Cognition program in the Department of Psychological Sciences. She is also Faculty Affiliate of the Cognitive Science Program. She is the former Director of the Neurobiology of Language graduate training program and recently directed two language sciences programs at the U.S. National Science Foundation. She is currently key personnel on the NIH/NIDCD T32 Cognitive Neuroscience of Communication – Connecticut training grant. Dr. Theodore's research interests include perceptual learning, speech perception, cognitive neuroscience, and language acquisition.

Dr. Theodore has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. She has no relevant non-financial relationship(s).

## **Dr. Emily Myers**

Lab Website: <https://myerslab.uconn.edu>

Dr. Myers is a Professor of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and Psychological Studies. She is the principal investigator for the UConn Language and Brain Lab. Dr. Myers's research interests include cognitive neuroscience of speech and language, aphasia, and speech perception.

Dr. Myers has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. She has grants through NIH. She has no relevant non-financial relationship(s).

### **Dr. Jennifer Tufts**

Dr. Jennifer Tufts is a professor of audiology in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at the University of Connecticut. She is a past president of the National Hearing Conservation Association and is a past recipient of two NHCA Outstanding Lecture Awards (2014 and 2023) and the NHCA Outstanding Poster Award (2010). Her research interests include hearing protection and enhancement devices, auditory fitness for duty, and music perception.

Dr. Tufts has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. She has a DOD grant. She has no relevant non-financial relationship(s).

### **Dr. Derek Houston**

Lab Website: <https://hellolab.speech-language-hearing.uconn.edu>

Dr. Houston is the principal investigator for the UConn Hearing Experience and Language Learning Outcomes (HELLO) Lab. His work (supported by NIDCD) investigates the role of early auditory experience and parent-child interactions on cognitive, linguistic, and social building blocks of language development. He also engages in community-based participatory research aimed at addressing barriers families face in obtaining high-quality early intervention services for their children.

Dr. Houston has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut and has an NIH grant. He has no relevant non-financial relationship(s).

### **Dr. Lindsey Butler**

Lab Website: <https://butlerlab.speech-language-hearing.uconn.edu>

Dr. Butler is an Assistant Professor of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, a Faculty Affiliate of the Connecticut Institute for the Brain and Cognitive Sciences, and the director of the Brain and Language on the Autism Spectrum Lab. Her research focuses on autistic children who use minimal or no spoken language. The goal is to identify individual cognitive and linguistic profiles and characterize the brain mechanisms associated with limited spoken language development.

Dr. Butler has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. She also has an NIH grant. She has the following relevant non-financial relationship(s) – She is a member of ASHA. She utilizes equipment in her research from NIRx Medical Technologies, LLC and SALT Software, LLC.

### **Dr. Tammie Spaulding**

Dr. Spaulding is the Associate Department Head of Speech Language Pathology and an Associate Professor. Dr. Spaulding studies the nature, identification, and outcomes of young children, adolescents, and adults with communication disorders. Dr. Spaulding's research program is designed to enhance the evidence-base behind our clinical decision-making.

Dr. Spaulding has the following relevant financial relationship(s)— receives a salary through the University of Connecticut. She has no relevant non-financial relationship(s).



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