Congratulations and welcome to the newest BCS-S affiliates!

Pamela Holland  
Marshall University Department of Communication Disorders  
Exam date: 11/27/18  
Mentor: Donna Edwards

Diane Meadows  
Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center  
Exam date: 01/15/2019  
Mentor: Marty Coan

Jenna Nassar  
University of Mississippi Medical Center  
Exam date: 01/23/19  
Mentor: Derek Palmer

Anais Cook  
Texas Children’s Hospital  
Exam date: 01/18/19

Hannah Tahhan-Jackson  
Montefiore Medical Center  
Exam date: 01/28/19  
Mentor: Cesar Ruiz

Message from the Chair

“And now we welcome the New Year, full of things that have never been.” - Rainer Maria Rilke

Every year brings opportunity to improve upon the current condition. Where to focus energies and resources depends on the individual mission of the organization. In these first few weeks of 2019, the American Board of Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (AB-SSD) has spent time in reflection and planning for the upcoming year. The process of reflection on our mission included:

• administering an efficient certification program for specialists in the clinical practice and research in swallowing and swallowing disorders,
• providing advanced-level educational opportunities for practitioners,
• maintaining a mechanism by which the public can identify those practitioners with specialized clinical knowledge, education, and experience
• and increasing awareness of validated assessment and treatment procedures, and promote educated choices for provision of services

Considering our mission, we have set priorities for 2019 that will expand on our corporate partnership program, put into practice an updated testing instrument to reflect the most current evidence-based information in diagnosis, management, and rehabilitation of dysphagia, and grow
our advanced level, continuing education offerings.

In 2018, 25 new speech-language pathologists earned the Board-Certified Specialist in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders (BCS-S) distinction. As we start 2019, there are a total of 345 BCS-S credentialed speech-language pathologists in practice, the most there have ever been. This represents an almost 10% increase in the number of specialists from 2018 to 2019. However, this number also indicates that only 2% of ASHA certified speech-language pathologists (N=166,334) carry the BCS-S distinction.

As we work our way through 2019, I hope all of our current affiliates will help to identify and encourage their colleagues who meet the criteria for board certification in swallowing and swallowing disorders to actively pursue earning this distinction. I would love to report in 2020 that there are even more BCS-S credentialed speech-language pathologists available in the clinical work force to assist individuals with dysphagia. Please partner with me and the rest of the AB-SSD to achieve this goal in 2019.

I look forward to the challenges and rewards that await us this year. Thank you for your dedication to helping individuals with dysphagia through your clinical work and research. It is a pleasure to represent all of you in service to the AB-SSD.

Memorie M. Gosa, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S

2019 Year in Review – AB-SSD Committees

Application Committee

The applications committee reviewed a total of 76 applications for BCS-S certification in 2018. This year marked the beginning of the revised continuing education requirement that 40% of CEU’s received must be from live conferences. A policy for BCS-S Life Membership was also developed for those members who have had their BCS-S for 10 years and are eligible for ASHA Life Membership.

Communication Committee

The communications committee has worked closely with the public relations committee, reviewing the functionality of the AB-SSD website. Board information has been updated for 2019. We have identified several website improvement goals to be targeted for 2019, including better use of information banners on the home page, addition of biographical information for board members and development of informative video clips for prospective applicants.

Exam Committee

In 2018, the exam committee completed the revision of the AB-SSD adult and pediatric examinations. This was accomplished using two sub-committees, each dedicated to either adult or pediatrics.

A sub-set of committee members reviewed all of the core questions which were broken down into the following broad categories: instrumental and clinical assessment; anatomy and physiology of swallowing; neural controls of swallowing; etiologies of dysphagia; therapy techniques including identification of relevant physiology, justification for use, and supporting evidence. Recommendations were made for which questions and cases should remain, be eliminated or revised. Test question statistics (e.g. percent correct etc.), current literature and standard practice patterns also guided the revisions. The new exams will be uploaded starting in February 2019.

For the year (as of November) exam activity included:

• 17 adult exams; all passed
• 8 pediatric exams: 6 passed
Mentorship Committee

The Mentorship Committee wants to remind all BCS-S mentors and applicants that new applications are now only available online, no longer in paper form. Please inform your mentees that going forward, they must apply online through the website. For those already in the process of applying, no Word or PDF versions of the application will be accepted after March 1, 2019.

Progress in 2018 included updating of all mentorship documents, which are available under the Mentor tab on the AB-SSD website. A mentorship newsletter will be rolling out in 2019.

Continuing Education Committee

2018 has brought a major change to the leadership of the continuing education committee. A huge thank you goes out to both Deb Suiter and Laurie Sterling for leading this group the past few years. Their efforts this past year included securing CE opportunities to be developed on our website, organized and awarded the AB-SSD sponsored awards at DRS and ASHA, established a working group with Susan Langmore for exploring FEES standardization, and collaborated with SIG-13 for ASHA continuing education events. The new chair, Donna Scarborough has taken over this committee and she looks forward to moving forward on a number of initiatives.

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations committee reorganized in May of 2018 under the leadership of new PR committee chair, Yvette McCoy. The primary goal during start up was to raise awareness of the AB-SSD via social media. The Facebook page was updated, and Twitter and LinkedIn accounts were created. New members were also recruited, and they are as follows: Theresa Richard, Tiffani Wallace, Karen Sheffler, Stefanie Moynahan and Jodi Antinoja. The committee began its outreach in June of 2018 with Dysphagia Awareness Month. Affiliates were asked to submit a short video describing why treating patients with dysphagia was important to them. There was a nice response with informative video clips. In the months leading up to ASHA, the committee promoted, via social media, courses sponsored by the AB-SSD and hosted an informational gathering during the ASHA Convention for prospective BCSS affiliates. Finally, the committee will go into 2019 with the continued goal of raising awareness about dysphagia and promoting the BCSS and all of its wonderful affiliates.

Dysphagia Research Society Meeting

The annual meeting of the Dysphagia Research Society will be held in San Diego, CA, at the Wyndham San Diego Bayside Hotel on March 7-9, 2019. The meeting is a great venue for clinicians, researchers, physicians, and students to hear about cutting edge research on diagnosis and treatment of dysphagia. It is also a wonderful place to network with other professionals and BCS-S colleagues.

The brochure is available here:
Click here to view DRS 2019 brochure

Registration is open now and can be accessed with the webpage link below:
Click here to view DRS registration webpage

The AB-SSD Distinguished Research Award in Dysphagia is awarded each year at the Dysphagia Research Society Meeting to a speech-language pathologist who presents a meritorious scientific paper on a topic related to swallowing function and disorders. The criteria for the award can be found here:
AB-SSD Distinguished Research Award in Dysphagia