Each fall semester, a new clinic class emerges into the Graduate Program of the Communication Disorders department at West Texas A&M University. Each clinic class brings with it new personalities, clinic ideas, and a completely different outlook on the field of Speech-Language Pathology. Mrs. Rebecca Linke, Clinic Coordinator of the Communication Disorders Graduate Program gave a brief overview of the differences and advances brought on by the Clinic Class of the Fall 2010 semester. “This class is larger than classes previously formed, therefore new challenges have arisen. However, the students provided ideas & helped in areas warranted.”

Mrs. Rebecca Linke also provided information regarding advances made in the WT Speech and Hearing Clinic, including the acquisition of new clinic materials and equipment that will aid in providing effective treatment to clients. The clinic has also established contracts with The Turn Center, Guymon ISD, Canyon ISD, and Texline ISD; providing new clinical sites for the students to learn. To add to these exciting enhancements, many new affiliations have also been established providing graduate students hands on learning in the field.

As the clinic classes continue to grow and the program itself continues to advance, the graduate students in the Communication Disorders graduate program will be able to experience more hands on learning opportunities and see more areas of the field of speech-language pathology. With this growing field the students have the world at their fingertips; our program is here to make sure they are able to master the profession.
Research Symposium 2010

This semester, the students in Dr. Leslie Dalton’s first year Research Methods course opted to submit projects to the 8th Annual TAMU Pathways Research Symposium held on October 23rd in Mary Moody Northen Hall. The students formed groups, and together submitted six different research projects encompassing topics from vocal abuse to Autism. Over three hundred fifty projects were submitted to the symposium from different Texas A&M branches throughout the state of Texas. The groups of students set up and presented posters to at least two different groups of judges, answering any and every question the judges formulated regarding the students research. When asked what benefits were obtained from entering a project to the Symposium, Maegan Hulett answered, “Having to defend our research project in a professional manner before a judge who is unfamiliar with our field was very beneficial to me.” She also relayed very helpful information to students planning to enter a project to the Symposium in years to come. Maegan urges future graduate students to “come into the graduate program prepared with research ideas and topics you may be interested in studying, it will only help you in your transition to graduate school.” The symposium was a great learning experience for all of the graduate students that participated.

"Good communication does not mean that you have to speak in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn't about slickness. Simple and clear go a long way."  
- John Kotter
The National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA) is an organization for students of communication sciences and disorders. At WTAMU, we have had the privilege of working together with communities in the local areas to increase awareness of communication disorders.

As NSSLHA has been working to improve the organization as a whole, the West Texas A&M University NSSLHA chapter is improving by the minute. During the past year the chapter has begun doing more community volunteering as well as social networking to build professional relationships for the members. Hillary Green, WTAMU NSSLHA president says “We are trying to build a network for all of the students to keep in touch once we graduate and go our separate ways.” A mentor list has also been made for all of the students. This list has contact information for all of the students. The mentor list is intended to help the student’s network during their educational experiences in the communication disorders department and later on in their professional careers.

During the Fall 2010 semester, the NSSLHA chapter participated in many service projects around the area. A few of these included the Buddy Walk in Amarillo, Babysitting for children with Autism, and several others. The chapter strives to get their names out in the community and educate the community on our field and program at WT.

Professorship

The WT communication disorders department is honored to raise funds for the Buddy Stephens professorship endowment. The interest earned from the endowment will provide the opportunity to enhance the quality of research that is studied within the department. This research is very important and helps the profession as a whole. This professorship is used to research the areas of treatment and diagnosis for Autism, Auditory Processing Disorders, Cognitive disorders, voice and swallowing deficits and many other research interests in the field of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. The goal is to raise $100,000 by December 31, 2011.

The department plans to use these funds to continue the research performed by faculty as well as students in hopes of enhancing their knowledge base in the wonderful fields of speech-language pathology as well as audiology.