Based in the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Education, the Western Canadian Centre for Deaf Studies (WCCDS) works in collaboration with the faculty’s endowed research chair—the David Peikoff Chair of Deaf Studies—to bridge research and community development.

Established in 1986, WCCDS was founded on the belief that equity is a cornerstone of education. As a collaborative, multidisciplinary hub for scholarly and community work, WCCDS combines innovative research with outputs and project activities that contribute to the empowerment of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals locally, nationally and globally.
The core mission of WCCDS is to advance the science of learning by conducting basic and applied research addressing central questions in Deaf education; providing leadership in the development of programs and services to support knowledge translation and community capacity building; facilitating student education and training for the next generation of scholars; and establishing research networks and strategic community partnerships to achieve these goals.

Our objectives align with the strategic goals of the University of Alberta as outlined in “For the Public Good”, the university’s institutional strategic plan for the coming decade. Visit ualberta.ca/strategic-plan to read the full document.

WCCDS’s objectives are:

• to conduct relevant high quality research and create and sustain a network of collaborative projects with researchers, educators and community partners locally, nationally and internationally.
• to translate science-based finding into meaningful products and tools that support the application of research to educational practice.
• to offer research mentoring opportunities to deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing undergraduate and graduate students within and beyond the university community.
• to provide leadership, liaison, and consultative assistance in the development of programs and services that promote equity, accessibility, and opportunity for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

We are exploring project opportunities in establishing a school-based “Researcher in Residence” program.

• A Memorandum of Understanding between WCCDS and the Ontario Deaf Foundation has been drafted for consideration of future collaboration in administering the Foundation’s Bilingual-Bicultural Research Fund / Legacy Memorial Scholarship Program.

2016/17 PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

WCCDS works to bridge research and community development and to strengthen connections among research, policy, and educational practice through leadership, partnership, innovation and action.

Below are some highlights of the projects and activities undertaken by WCCDS in the past year:

LEADERSHIP

• Served as a university-community resource providing consultative assistance to schools, government agencies and community organizations in the areas of deaf studies, deaf education and hearing loss. Core members of WCCDS were actively involved in post-secondarily accessibility consultations, professional development for educators, and capacity building initiatives supporting families and other stakeholders.
• Supported the research experiences of three graduate and seven undergraduate students from faculties across campus working as research assistants on WCCDS projects.

PARTNERSHIP

• Established new research alliances with researchers from University of Minnesota, Loma Linda University, Gallaudet University, and the University of Manitoba collaborating on both internally and externally funded research projects.
• Ongoing collaboration with community education partners at the Alberta School for the Deaf on two translational projects. We continue to work with deaf students as co-design partners in the development of novel dual language (ASL-English) educational Apps.

ACTION

• Continued to provide research presentations and community engagement lectures across campus and in the community. Highlights include two guest lectures to senior classes in the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, a research presentation for the U of A’s Centre for Comparative Psycholinguistics; and a WEB EX presentation on the impact of cognitive fatigue on deaf and hard of hearing students for teachers across Alberta.
• Contributed to building and using evidence to improve practice by presenting at provincial, national, and international conferences and maintaining a current web and electronic presence that links the Centre’s research and knowledge translation initiatives with the wider education community.

INNOVATION

• The American Sign Language (ASL) Assessment Project, collaboration with Dr. Charlotte Enns at the University of Manitoba, is focused on the development of leading-edge ASL assessment measures for use in research, education, and clinical practice. Test development projects are time intensive and ensuring a large enough sample for the associated validation/norming studies is challenging with a low incidence, heterogeneous, and geographically diverse population. Data collection for McQuarrie’s ASL phonological awareness test (ASL-PAT) and Enn’s ASL production test (ASL PT) has kept our Deaf/hearing assessment team on the road visiting Schools for the Deaf in Ontario, Indiana, Maryland, and California this year. We are appreciative of the invitations for collaboration received from Schools for the Deaf across North America – data collection next year promises to be ongoing and constant!
• Our Dual Language Apps & Literacy Resources Project is focused on translating science-based findings into meaningful educational products and learning tools for preschool and K-12 deaf and hard of hearing students. A children’s book, The ASL Handshapes I-Spy Activity Book is with the publishers. An ASL Handshape Families Poster for classroom use is now in print. Development continues on our ASL Word Wall app for the iPad. The app is organized according to signed language phonological patterns and provides a visual reference of key subject specific vocabulary.

LOOKING AHEAD

• Among the Centre’s main priorities going forwards are: to strengthen our national and international connections through relationships with researchers and education partners, to continue internal advocacy for accessibility services that ensure equity in opportunity for deaf/hard of hearing students and staff on campus; and to secure administrative support for the Centre to ensure sufficient capacity to continue to move WCCDS’s mission forward.
OUR PEOPLE

Lynn Mcquarrie, PhD
David Peikoff Chair of Deaf Studies and Director, WCCDS
Professor, Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
lynn.mcquarrie@ualberta.ca
wccds@ualberta.ca

RESEARCH AFFILIATES & ASSOCIATES

Charlotte Enns, PhD
WCCDS Research Affiliate
Professor & Associate Dean
Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

Linda J. Cundy, MEd
WCCDS Research Associate
cundy@ualberta.ca

Natalia Rohatyn-Martin, PhD
WCCDS Research Associate
rohatyn@ualberta.ca

PEIKOFF TRUSTEES

Martin Coutts, CPA, CA
Associate Vice-President Finance & Supply Management Services
University of Alberta

Christina Rinaldi, PhD
Professor
Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Jill McClay, PhD
Professor Emerita
Elementary Education
Faculty of Education, Usof Alberta

FIND OUT MORE

Visit wccds.ualberta.ca for detailed information about our research, programs and services

wccds@ualberta.ca
(780) 492-3075
6-102 Education Centre North
@wccds.alberta