



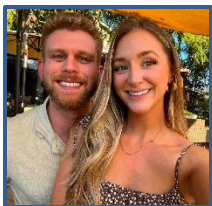
USC_COMD Newsletter

Spring 2026

Top Articles:



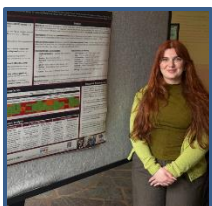
[Recent Student Highlight: Jessica Regenwether](#)



[Recent Alumni Highlight: Jillian Gierman](#)



[Detecting Language Difficulties](#)



[SC Family Study Lab at SCAND 2026](#)



[NFXF and LivJoy Foundation Webinar Series](#)

Announcements:

A huge thank you to all volunteers, students, and employers who came out to our meet and greet event on February 28th! We had 23 employers from all over the state attend our meet and greet! Our soon-to-be graduating class is well on their way to searching and securing their clinical fellowships. Thank you everyone for coming!

Many of our faculty, staff, doctoral and master students presented at the SCSHA 2026 Conference and the ASHA 2025 Conference. USC_COMD had a total of 13 presentations and posters at SCSHA and 32 presentations and posters at ASHA.





[Ph.D. student, Samin Ashjaei presented her poster at the American Auditory Society Conference in February 2026.](#) (Under 2026 Annual Meeting – Poster Abstract & Poster Presenter Bios)



[WIS10 News Spotlights FMR1 Premutation Research at the University of South Carolina](#)



[USC leads the nation in fragile X research and education](#)



[I Am Public Health: Keandra Warren](#)



[Brain Trust](#)

* Recent Grants and Publications from October 2025- April 2026

Faculty members are **bolded**

Mentees are underlined

[Please check out the NFXF and LivJoy Foundation Webinar Series where postdoctoral fellow Lauren Jenner was featured on a session.](#)

[USC COMD alumni, Erin Forward, was interviewed recently for the ASHA Leader.](#)

[Congratulations to Wesley Kephart, USC COMD Masters student, appointed to the SCSHA Student Engagement Committee!](#)

[Congratulations to USC COMD doctoral alums Kimberly Smith and Victoria Henbest for being named "Top Profs" by the University of South Alabama's local Mortar Board Sally Steadman Azalea Chapter.](#)

[Congratulations to USC COMD faculty, Dr. Jessica Klusek and Dr. Abigail Hogan, for their instrumental leadership in the new NIH P50 Fragile X Center of Excellence \(overall PI: Dr. Jane Roberts\).](#)



Recently Awarded Grants and Awards*:

Jamy Claire Archer. USC Student Disability Resource Center. [Two Thumbs Up Award](#). 2026

Dr. Mesam Arjmandi. ASHA Foundation. [ASHA Foundation Clinical Research Grant](#). 2025. \$50,000.

Samin Ashjaei. [American Auditory Society](#). Mentored Student Research Poster Award (research was from a collaboration between Translational Auditory Neuroscience Lab and Aging Brain Cohort Research Group). 2026. \$1000.

Thomas Christensen. USC Office for the Study of Aging. [2025 Graduate Student Scholarship in Aging](#). 2025. \$1000.

Kathryn Cushman. Arnold School of Public Health (ASPH) Office of Research. [November 2025 Student Poster Award Winner](#). *Exploring co-occurring DLD and ADHD and its impact on negative emotion frequency and word learning: a comparative study*. 2025.

Sara Holden. [Office of Undergraduate Research](#). [Magellan Mini-Grant](#). "Heart Rate Variability and Emotions: Developing Case Study Profiles of Heart Rate and Emotions during Reading-Related Tasks in Children with and without Language and Literacy Problems" awarded funding. \$1000. 2025.

Sigfus Kristinsson. [17th Annual James E. Clyburn Health Equity Lecture](#). [Emerging Leader in Public Health and Health Disparities Research Award](#). April 7th, 2026.

Cara Vandergriff. [SCSHA](#) . [SCSHA Foundation Student Scholarship](#). 2026.

USC_COMD NSSLHA Chapter. NSSLHA. [Gold Chapter Honors Award](#). 2025.

Recent Publications*:

- Ashjaei, S., Farrar, R., **Droege, L.**, Paxton, M., Morgan, K., & **Arjmandi, M. K.** (2026). From Spectral Resolution to Speech Perception: A Review of Findings in Postlingually Deafened Adult Cochlear Implant Listeners. *American Journal of Audiology*, 1-30.
https://doi.org/10.1044/2025_AJA-25-00131
- Bryant, T., Duff, D., Bell, B. A., **Fitton, L.**, & **Adlof, S.** (2026). Invisible print? Reading skill predicts children's learning of novel spoken words. *Infant and Child Development*, 35(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.70062>
- Friedman L, Matchin W**, Berry-Kravis E, **Klusek J.** Semantic and syntactic language differences associated with the FMR1 premutation genotype, *Journal of Neurolinguistics*, Volume 77, 2026, 101287, ISSN 0911-6044, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneuroling.2025.101287>
- Merchant AT, Zhao L, Bawa EM, Yaseri AF, Lohman M, Zhang J, Clay-Gilmour A, **Newman-Norlund RD, Fridriksson J.** Apolipoprotein E4 allele, antibodies against periodontal microorganisms, and cognition in older adults. *J Alzheimers Dis Rep.* 2025 Sep 5;9:25424823251370770. doi: 10.1177/25424823251370770. PMID: 40919417; PMCID: PMC12413519.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40919417/>
- Khoshhal Mollasaraei, Z., den Ouden, D., Fridriksson, J., Hickok, G., & Matchin, W.* (2025). A review of sentence elicitation techniques for assessing grammatical deficits in aphasia. *Aphasiology*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02687038.2025.2570803>
- Klusek J,** Gierman J, Fairchild AJ, Benitez AM, Berry-Kravis E, Mailick MR. Cognitive dysfunction in women with the FMR1 premutation during midlife: The LASSI-L reveals curvilinear CGG-dependent risk buffered by college education. *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease.* 2026;110(1):335-350. doi:[10.1177/13872877251414950](https://doi.org/10.1177/13872877251414950)
- Petscher, Y., O'Sullivan, J., Catts, H., Edwards, A., & **Fitton, L.** (2026). Are automated speech verification systems truly ready for prime time in early screening assessments? *Frontiers in Education: Assessment, Testing, and Applied Measurement*, 11.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2026.1671946>
- Sherzad, N., **Newman-Norlund, R.**, Absher, J., Bonilha, L., Rorden, C., **Fridriksson, J.**, & **Kristinsson, S.** (2025). Lesion-Symptom Mapping of Acute Speech Deficits After Left vs. Right Hemisphere Stroke: A Retrospective Analysis of NIHSS Best Language Scores and Clinical Neuroimaging. *Brain Sciences*, 15(12), 1329. <https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci15121329>



Sylvan, L., **Adlof, S.**, Wade-Wooley, L., & Kohel, L. (2025). Taking Steps in the Right Direction: Considerations for Implementing Universal Oral Language Screenings in the Schools. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 56 (4). 896-911.

https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/2025_LSHSS-25-00008#con1

Wall, C.A., Smith, K., Shic, F., Kelleher, B., **Hogan, A.**, **Will, E. A.**, Roberts, J. E. Heart rate defined sustained attention relates to visual attention in autism and fragile X syndrome. *Sci Rep* **15**, 25389 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-09537-3>

Wang, J., Gebhardt, J., Pai, R., Goodrich, J. M., & **Fitton, L.** (2025, November). *Profiles of home literacy practices among Spanish-English bilingual children*. Poster presentation at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention. Washington, DC (National) - **Selected Centennial Session**.

Wilmskoetter, J., **Kristinsson, S.**, Rangus, I., Busby, N., Rorden, C., den Ouden, D., **Newman-Norlund, R.**, Banister, C., Riccardi, N., Teghipco, A., Newman-Norlund, S., **Fridriksson, J.**, & Bonilha, L. (2026). Gene Expression-Based Lesion-Symptom Mapping: FOXP2 and Language Impairments after Stroke. *Journal of Neuroscience*. 46 (3).

<https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.0413-25.2025>