



Engaged learning in action: Under the guidance of Dr. Amee Shah (second from left), students help set up CrSLA.

# CrSLA Lab Newsletter

A *Velocity Activators Research Group* Production  
Launch Edition (Vol 1) Fall 2015

## Welcome!

This is our first edition of the CrSLA Lab Newsletter!

CrSLA stands for the “Cross-Cultural Speech, Language, and Acoustics Lab” founded in September 2015 in the School of Health Sciences. It is the first independent faculty research lab, and is founded and directed by faculty Principal Investigator, Dr. Amee Shah, Associate Professor in Bachelors of Health Sciences (BSHS) program. Twenty-three students worked with Dr. Shah this semester in various roles of research, set-up of the lab, outreach, technical learning, and administrative tasks.

*We are very excited to share with you our results and accomplishments of this lab and our research group through this newsletter.* Our first edition is the launch edition and will span the whole Fall 2015 semester, however in the future, you can expect to see quarterly editions starting January 2016.

Here are some *highlights and historical landmarks*—hope you are as excited as we are!

### *Lab Space identified and re-configured: Summer 2015*

Thanks to Dean Dr. Bartalotta’s foresight and lobbying with the university, we got our lab space housed within the School of Health Science’s building (West Quad)! This is a crucial milestone as it will help future interdisciplinary collaborations across the various programs of Health. The lab space was modified from a previous conference room and reconfigured with acoustic treatment needed to meet the specifications of this Speech acoustics lab, where high-fidelity speech recordings, as well as speech perception studies will be conducted.

### *Naming of the Lab: September 2015*

The lab was named “Cross-Cultural Speech, Language, and Acoustics Lab”, with an acronym CrSLA, and pronounced “kris-la” for short. The name was selected in consultation with the Dean to meet the vision and mission of the School of Health Sciences, as well as the teaching, research, and service goals of faculty Principal Investigator, Dr. Shah.

### *Vision & Mission of the Lab articulated: September 2015*

#### **Basic Description:**

The CrSLA team conducts research on basic and applied speech and hearing issues, focusing on cultural competency, accents, and dialects. Research projects involve cross-language issues in speech production and perception, with a current emphasis on foreign-accentedness.

### ***Mission Statement:***

- This lab is a space for conducting research, as well as serving as a space of engagement for faculty, students, and clinicians interested in cross-cultural aspects of spoken communication.
- We specialize in the study, measurement, and management of dialect and accent variations.
- We are committed to helping reduce bias and breakdown in communication across cultural and linguistic differences through our research, education, and training.
- Our methods include speech-science based techniques of acoustic analysis, speech editing, audio and video interview, and ethnographic surveys.
- We also focus on social and clinical applications of our findings in community outreach, and developing industry-based programs for diversity management.

### ***Research Interns interviewed and selected: September 2015***

35 undergraduate students applied for the various research volunteer positions in the lab. After a process of individual interviews by Dr. Shah, a final pool of 23 students were selected as a match of their skills, interests, and position requirements. These students worked in various capacities including research assistants, assistant lab managers, clinical research assistants, research ambassadors, and project-based research assistants (their profiles are featured in the “People” page on the [CrSLA website](#)).

From some of their reflections, it appears that this research group greatly enjoyed this unique learning experience:

*“So far, this opportunity has strengthened my confidence and skills in being a leader. I believe this opportunity will continue to strengthen my leadership skills, but also strengthen my skills in being a future clinician and researcher. With the help of Dr. Ameer Shah, learning these skills, while participating in the research group, will help me beyond just learning in the classroom.”*

***- Marianna Naples***

*“While it has not been long, already I have learned so much about clinical research by working on the questionnaire with Savanna Asta, professional partnerships and communication with Dr. Shah and my lab partners, as well as more about the strength of my own work ethic; the fact that I was chosen for this lab work empowers me to challenge myself and work harder than I have before. I would love to continue my work into next semester within this lab as I would like to continue to grow as a future professional in the form of independent study.”*

***-Casey Sullivan***

### ***Team-building Photo-Shoot (SHS newsletter mention: October 2015)***

An informal team-building photoshoot was organized as part of “breaking ground” in setting up the lab. All the students and staff enjoyed the experience and it helped create a sense of ownership and team-spirit as we began the arduous work ahead of setting up the lab, equipment, and infrastructure.



*A mention in the School of Health Science Newsletter can be seen [here](#):*

The School of Health Sciences now has its first research lab. Dr. Ameer Shah, Associate Professor of Health Science, can now provide undergraduate students with valuable research experience in the Cross-Cultural Speech, Language, and Acoustics Lab (CrSLA). The research team will focus on cross-cultural aspects of spoken communication and specialize in the study, measurement, and management of dialect and accent variations.



Engaged learning in action: Under the guidance of Dr. Ameer Shah (second from left), students help set up CrSLA.

### ***Lab Space furnished & equipped: Completed December 2015***

Two work-stations, a central conference/meeting table, an equipment gallery, and a laptop/projector teaching set-up were equipped with furniture. All data storage cabinets and shelving were procured and installments were completed. Various research equipment and software were purchased, computer desktops and laptops were installed, defragged, and configured. Filing and organization of all datasets were completed. Locks and room access for all the student assistants, door signage, wall posters, and other enhancements were completed.

*A huge thank you to the SHS support staff, **Heather Watkins, Nikita Lively, and Debra Wilkinson** for their prompt and tireless assistance over the months that helped a year-long project get accomplished in just four months! Similarly, a big thanks to the research assistants who volunteered their time with utmost dedication and interest—especially, **Marianna Naples, Ashley Golden, Erin Toye, Mariah Smith, Derek Lyman, Kimberly White, and Nicole Kleiman.***

### ***Pilot Research projects started: September-December 2015***

- CAAI Clinical Outreach began; 365 universities reached.
- Doctors Without Accent Borders Patient documentary completed; portions presented at ASAHP.
- Cultural Competence Quotient (CCQ) Survey tool—Online Version completed and available for further research and education.

*Abstracts and updates on these studies will be featured in the next issue of this newsletter.*

### ***Velocity Activators Research Group formed: October 2015 (officially named in December)***

A research group, primarily for undergraduate students, is formed for students working in the CrSLA lab. The purpose is to develop a research culture and provide a well-rounded education to future clinicians in healthcare.

Students will be exposed to the behind-the-scenes activities in R&D. Moreover, they will have an active role in developing the research as well as disseminating it in significant ways that improve the community.



Founding members 24 (23 undergraduate students, 1 graduate student, and 1 faculty advisor); 19 of these students will continue in Spring 2016, of which 7 will also be conducting independent study projects. Weekly research meetings on Fridays in WQ 216 or 210 (dates and times TBA for Spring 2016).

Meetings will address the following:

- Student research updates and brainstorming on issues.
- Student mock presentations for conferences and feedback.
- Invited guest presentation/discussion to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and expose students to a variety of research on campus and elsewhere.

*(All faculty are welcome to attend! If interested in presenting, please email/discuss with Dr. Ameer Shah)*

### ***Independent Studies: Fall 2015-Summer 2016***

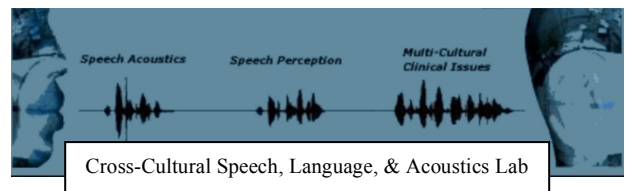
Seven undergraduate students have signed up to undertake Independent Studies (up to 3 credits each), to be completed through Spring 2016 under the direction of faculty mentor, Dr. Ameer Shah. These students volunteered their time to set up feasibility pilots in December 2015 and after completion of the studies, will be presenting their research in the Open House and Day of Scholarships as mentioned below.

### ***Lab Open House: TBA (Late Spring 2016)***

We are working on hosting an Open House to introduce the lab, our research interests, and demonstrate/present some of the work in action. It will be an important day of scholarly dissemination for our research group. The event will take place in late spring, and we will share the dates early in Spring 2016. Please make every effort to attend and support the work of these undergraduate students who are excited to share their discoveries with the Stockton community in their first research endeavors!

### ***Day of Scholarship: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016***

A number of students and the faculty PI, Ameer Shah, are submitting abstracts to the Day of Scholarship. If selected, we will be presenting on April 1<sup>st</sup>, so please stop by and support these endeavors. We will send you a short list of the finalists who will be presenting, with their presentations bearing the **lab logo shown here**, so you can be on the lookout for these presentations! Your support and engagement will be greatly instrumental in sustaining these undergraduate research efforts, so thank you in advance!



## *Awards: November 2015*

We are proud of our first student funding award! Savanna Asta received the prestigious Stockton Board of Trustees Distinguished Student Scholarship Award in November 2015 under the mentorship of Dr. Shah. She will be working on her mentored project, “Quantifying Bias and Stereotypes with the Cross-Cultural Communication Quotient Survey Tool” in Spring 2015.



## *Conferences: October-November 2015*

Dr. Ameer Shah presented a poster titled, “Doctors without Accent Borders: An Outcomes- and Metrics-Based Program for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication” at The Association of Schools of Allied Professionals (ASAHP) Annual Conference in Scottsdale, AZ, in October 2015. With over eight Stockton faculty presenting from the SHS, and one Student Award, Stockton had a strong presence at ASAHP this year! #Stocktonproud



Another major event was the **American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association (ASHA) national conference in Denver, CO**, held in November 2015. The CrSLA Velocity Activators’ Research Group had representation at the conference through two presentations by Dr. Ameer Shah, as follows:

1. Using Phonetics as a window into developing cultural competence"
2. A Test-Case of Integrating IPE across the Health Science Curriculum"



*Sarah Duffy (left of Dr. Shah), a member of CrSLA, received a student travel award to attend the conference (along with another student, Francesca (right of Dr. Shah)), as student officers of the national organization, National Student Speech, Language, & Hearing Association.*



### *Media Story: December 2015*

This December, Dr. Shah was invited by a media reporter to serve as a topic expert to do a featured interview on a topic of human interest. The article appeared on Reddit.com: “Here’s Why a Young Person’s Voice Sounds Different than an Older Person’s Voice ([link](#))”.



### *Lab Website completed and went live: December 2015*

Three students actively worked to complete the CrSLA website under the direction of Dr. Shah. Big thanks to Amy Hertzberg, Krysten Cummins, & Sarah Duffy for their assistance in completing and managing the website: [crslalab.weebly.com](http://crslalab.weebly.com)

**Please visit the website to learn more about our Research Team, Research Interests & Projects, Instrumentation used, and a *Photo Gallery* of our latest news and updates of the Lab & the Research Team.**

HOME PEOPLE INSTRUMENTATION & METHODOLOGY RESEARCH INTERESTS PUBLICATIONS NEWS GALLERY

**CROSS-CULTURAL SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND ACOUSTICS LABORATORY**

**CRSLA (PRONOUNCED "KRISLA")**

### *About Us:*



#### *Who We Are*

Cross-Cultural Speech, Language, and Acoustics Lab is the first faculty-research lab in

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### *Author Note*

*Thank you for reading our first newsletter. Your readership matters to us. Please share your thoughts, comments, feedback, or questions. Such research and scholarly activities are largely a first for these undergrads, and your feedback and support will particularly help sustain their enthusiasm and help them recognize that they are contributing to the School of Health Sciences & to the Stockton community.*

For further dialog & inquiries, contact: [amee.shah@stockton.edu](mailto:amee.shah@stockton.edu)

-----Thank You for Your Support & Interest-----

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