



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

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## President's Message



Dear CLD Members,

I am writing my final *LD Forum* President's Message from my home office. Like many of you, sheltering in place over the past three months, I have found that working from home has its own rewards and challenges. It has been

good for my heart and soul to spend more time with my family, but challenging to be interrupted regularly by barking dogs, vibrating cell phones, ringing doorbells, and the calling of simple carbs from the kitchen. It has been an unusual end to an academic year and my term as CLD President, yet I am grateful for the many opportunities they have both provided me.

CLD updates are numerous since my last message. In addition to the following, you may find other information and updates on our website at <https://council-for-learning-disabilities.org/>. Thank you to **Lisa Morin** and **Sarah McCarthy** (Technology Committee co-chairs) for contributing much time and energy on keeping the website up-to-date as we all strive to educate, and advocate for, students with learning disabilities during this tumultuous time.

Regretfully, the Board of Trustees (BOT) has voted unanimously to make some changes in our conference plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular as it pertains to the 2020 conference. The primary reasons for this decision include (a) concern for the health and well-being of our members, (b) hotel social distancing protocols limiting the size of our large-group gatherings, (c) university and school district restrictions on travel announced for the fall semester, and (d) an opportunity to reschedule now without breaking our contract and without forfeiting any of our prepaid hotel costs. The BOT is brainstorming new, innovative ways to bring our community together this fall, such as a virtual conference, so please keep an eye out for updates as we move through the summer. We will all see each other face-to-face

at our 2021 International Conference scheduled to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Richmond, Virginia, conference has been rescheduled to October 2022.

More uplifting news is that the BOT has approved CLD's inaugural diversity statement:

*The Council for Learning Disabilities is committed to celebrating and enriching the field of special education through its diversity. As a group, we pursue the best practices, research, and policies that exemplify enhancing the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a diverse group of professionals in the field of special education, we believe that this work cannot be completed in a silo, but rather, it must be embedded within every part of what we do. As an organization, we are committed to welcoming, understanding, learning about, and honoring individual diversity.*

We are currently considering how to share this statement more broadly and integrate it more fully into CLD's vision, mission, and actions.

A third update relates to the membership survey completed by many of you during the spring semester. The Membership Committee has completed a final report on the survey

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results and will share the findings with members in the coming weeks. Thank you for taking the time to provide the organization with informative data that have already been used in our strategic planning efforts. Thanks to **Kristi Santi** and **Nanette Fritschmann** (co-chairs of the Membership Committee) for leading these initiatives. Synthesizing feedback provided by our members as well as writing and adopting a diversity statement represent two of the projects CLD has completed in pursuit of our goal this year to build membership through a focus on inclusion.

More good news: many new members joined the BOT for 2020–2021, including **Donna Sacco**, clinical assistant professor at UNC Charlotte (Leadership Development Committee co-chair); **Yun-Ju Hsiao**, associate professor at Washington State University-Tri Cities (Diversity Committee chair); and **Kathy Ewoldt**, assistant professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio (Technology Committee co-chair). Welcome to these new members of the board and thank you to members who are rotating off leadership positions, including **Min Mize** (Leadership Development co-chair), **Lisa Morin** (Technology Committee co-chair), and **Brenda Barrio** (Diversity Committee chair, who is moving into the presidential line of CLD). Thank you also to **Apryl Poch**, assistant professor at Duquesne University, who has agreed to remain as the *LD Forum* Editor through 2020–2021.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge members of our Executive Committee (EC), who have demonstrated a strong commitment to CLD and provided both vision and consistency to the organization over the past year. As **Sheri Berkeley**

rotates off the EC, we welcome **Brittany Hott** as the new president and **Joe Morgan** as president-elect. Also, providing steadfast commitment to the positions of secretary and treasurer (behind-the-scenes positions that carry much of the weight of the organization) have been **Heather Haynes Smith** and **Beverly Weiser**, respectively. We are very fortunate that both of these women will remain in their positions during 2020–2021. I would also like to thank **Monica Lambert** in her role as parliamentarian (as well as “historian at will”) and the forever-patient **Linda Nease** in her role as executive director. These professionals have provided passionate guidance to the organization, particularly in light of some of the challenges we have faced, losses we have endured, and last, but not least, the growth we have experienced.

“To be of service to others is to serve ourselves. Our limitations do not define us. And embedded in the human spirit is a wisdom and strength that can rise to meet our greatest challenges,” as shared by Mehta and Shenoy (2011, p. 6) in their inspiring story about the revolutionary efforts of Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy, who brought sight to millions of people in his homeland of India. I am certain that CLD will continue to meet whatever challenges lie ahead, and I invite you to be of service wherever you can in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,  
**Lindy Crawford**  
CLD President

Mehta, P. K., & Shenoy, S. (2011). *Infinite vision: How Aravind became the world's greatest business case for compassion*. Berrett-Koehler Publications.

## Diversity Committee Announcements

The CLD Diversity Committee continues to stay active. Its members have formed more research groups and continue to disseminate vital information about supporting students with learning disabilities from underrepresented communities. Our members also had a great turnout in volunteering to review conference proposals for this year. For this and all of the other hard work moving the field forward, we want to thank you.

Additionally, please help me welcome the new Diversity Committee chair, **Dr. Yun-Ju Hsiao**, from Washington State University-Tri-Cities. Dr. Hsiao will begin her new role starting July 1st. She has been a key member of this committee for many years and led or participated in many research

groups. As the committee's outgoing chair, I cannot thank the members and the CLD leadership enough for their hard work, their never-ending support, and their commitment to equity and diversity over the past three years. Although there is a lot more work to do, we can accomplish anything together. If you or someone you know would like to get involved, please email Dr. Hsiao at [yhsiao@wsu.edu](mailto:yhsiao@wsu.edu) or join our Facebook group at [facebook.com/groups/CLDdiversity](https://facebook.com/groups/CLDdiversity).

**Brenda Barrio**  
University of North Texas  
Outgoing Diversity Committee Chair

## A Message Regarding CLD 2020 in Richmond, Virginia

Dear CLD Colleagues,

First and foremost, I hope that you and yours are doing well and staying safe and healthy during these most tumultuous of times. The pandemic we have found ourselves in for the past few months has definitely altered all aspects of our lives, from our professional activities to our personal social networks; now we find ourselves again reckoning with a society built on systems of oppression that have created massive inequity for people of color, particularly Black and African American citizens. We stand with our Black and Brown colleagues, as well as all CLD members of color, in demanding justice and in calling for new policies throughout society that prevent these injustices from occurring. During these watershed moments, we know that the work that we do to create a more just and equitable educational system for culturally and linguistically diverse students with learning disabilities is critical to shaping the future of the United States—one that is designed to consider the perspectives of **all** people.

I am writing to you today to inform you that the Board of Trustees of the Council for Learning Disabilities has decided to move the 42nd International Conference on Learning Disabilities to a virtual format and to reschedule our in-person Richmond conference for 2022. We do not make this decision lightly, as this is a critical time for us to gather the collective knowledge of our members to develop innovative solutions to supporting equity for diverse students with learning disabilities. However, out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our members and an awareness of

the ambiguity facing state and university budgets, we believe it is best to identify alternative engagement methods for our members this fall and wait to hold our annual meeting at a later time. We will be back together for the 43rd International Conference on Learning Disabilities in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2021, and look forward to visiting Richmond in 2022 during better times.

We do not have specific details on the virtual meeting that will occur this fall, but we are actively reviewing options and platforms to be able to gather information to discuss with members. While we cannot be together physically, we very much look forward to collaborating and conceptualizing new ways to support the outcomes of our student populations via a digital platform. Details regarding this will be made available mid-summer. We will also be working with presenters to determine if you would like to receive notification of your proposal status for this conference, use your proposal for a future conference submission, or present your work in a virtual format. Stay tuned for that information later this summer.

We value each and every member of the Council for Learning Disabilities and look forward to our continued collaboration regarding research and policy to create a world that is designed to reflect the most important factor of our human existence—the diversity and perspective of our fellow citizens.

Onward,

**Joseph Morgan**

**Vice President, Council for Learning Disabilities**

## Diversity Statement

The Council for Learning Disabilities is committed to celebrating and enriching the field of special education through its diversity. As a group, we pursue the best practices, research, and policies that exemplify enhancing the lives of individuals with learning disabilities, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. As a diverse group of professionals in the field of special education, we believe that this work cannot be completed in a silo, but rather, it must be embedded within every part of what we do. As an organization, we are committed to welcoming, understanding, learning about, and honoring individual diversity.

## Membership Committee Year-End Review

Earlier this year, the Membership Committee developed a survey (which was reviewed by the Board of Trustees and the Strategic Planning Committee) to understand the needs of our members better. The survey results have been shared and are posted to the Members Section of the CLD website. Additionally, in conjunction with the Strategic Planning Committee, the Membership Committee set up a Slack session, “Let’s Talk about Solutions,” for our community at large to discuss ways in which this pandemic’s disruption to teaching

and research can be addressed through a shared knowledge base. The session is still ongoing, and you can access it by going to the CLD website. Please reach out to the committee if you have ideas for the organization that will help you feel more connected as a member. New members are always welcome.

**Kristi L. Santi, PhD**  
**Membership Committee Co-Chair**

### CLD Mission & Vision

**Mission Statement:** The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), an international organization composed of professionals who represent diverse disciplines, is committed to enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span. CLD accomplishes this by promoting and disseminating evidence-based research and practices related to the education of individuals with learning disabilities. In addition, CLD fosters (a) collaboration among professionals; (b) development of leaders in the field; and (c) advocacy for policies that support individuals with learning disabilities at local, state, and national levels.

**Vision Statement:** All individuals with learning disabilities are empowered to achieve their potential.