



2019-2020 Annual Report

Dear CLD Members,

The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) provided much leadership to the field during the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Our theme in 2019-2020 was to “build membership through collaboration and inclusivity.” This report acknowledges some of CLD’s contributions while highlighting the work of our Board of Trustees.

Building Community Through The 41st International Conference on Learning Disabilities

This year’s CLD conference was held in San Antonio, TX, with approximately 308 registered participants. Due to the work of our Conference Committee (co-chaired by Anne Brawand and Maria Peterson-Ahmad), and many other individuals (including Linda Nease, our Executive Director), the conference was well executed, and well-received. The conference began with a moment of silence honoring the loss of Brian Bryant, a CLD past president, leader in the field, and mentor to many. Our J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecturer Dr. Michael Behrmann, Professor Emeritus of Special Education at George Mason University, provided this year’s opening address. His keynote was followed by two days of panel presentations, poster presentations (structured and unstructured), roundtable discussions, and networking.

A new feature of the CLD conference was our “Diversity Spotlight” strand, emphasizing our organization’s commitment to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how these constructs are interwoven into CLD’s mission of “...enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span.” Many thanks to President-Elect and Conference Program Chair, Brittany Hott, and the Diversity Committee (chaired by Brenda Barrio), for their intentional efforts to highlight CLD’s commitment to diversity during the conference and throughout the year.

Developing Leaders through the CLD Leadership Institute and Leadership Academy

The Leadership Development Committee (co-chaired by Esther Lindström), planned and hosted CLD’s day-long Leadership Institute prior to the conference. Twenty-one doctoral students and early-career professionals participated in the Institute. These individuals are now eligible to apply for CLD’s Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy represents a small group of professionals nominated by the LDC to provide leadership within the organization through committee work, scholarship, and mentoring. This year, CLD’s Leadership Academy Cohort 8 was comprised of six doctoral students, or early career professionals, who represented five different universities.

Enhancing the Lives of All Individuals with Learning Disabilities

The CLD Board of Trustees, led by the work of our Diversity Committee (chaired by Brenda Barrio), adopted our first formal “Diversity Statement” which can be found on our website’s homepage. Specifically, the statement makes clear and explicit CLD’s commitment to working toward enhancing the lives of all individuals with learning disabilities, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Formalizing our commitment to DEI was a very important step for our organization. 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.”

Contributing to National LD Policy and Principles for Student Evaluation

Another action-oriented contribution made by CLD in 2019-2020 was the co-development and endorsement of a set of eight joint principles related to “Eligibility for Special Education Under a Specific Learning Disability Classification” (see “CLD Updates” at <https://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org>). This work was led by our Liaison Committee Co-Chairs, Roberta Strosnider and Debi Gartland, who represented CLD as one of 11 organizations contributing to the publication of the joint principles for SLD eligibility and one of 7 organizations contributing to a set of policy and practice resources (also available on the CLD website). The Liaison Committee also represented CLD members in voicing strong support for the federal government’s continued commitment to the education of students with disabilities in light of challenges posed to schools during the pandemic. These contributions can be found on our website.

Engaging CLD Members and Professionals Across the Field of LD

The Membership Committee (co-chaired by Kristi Santi and Nanette Fritschmann), created, distributed, and synthesized results of a membership survey. Results of the survey were used in CLD strategic planning efforts and will be referenced periodically as we continue our efforts to be a responsive organization guided by the voices of its members. The Technology Committee (co-chaired by Lisa Morin and Sarah McCarthy) also worked toward engaging, supporting, and growing our membership through the launch of a new technology platform designed to better track membership as well as create an enhanced conference proposal submission and review process. In the spring, when many of us faced challenges in connecting with our professional community (due to the pandemic), both the Membership and the Technology Committee worked tirelessly to create and launch a virtual series of “chats” on topics important to the field of LD.

Celebrating Teaching and Learning

CLD has a tradition of honoring our teachers and other PK-12 professionals as they act intentionally to implement evidence-based practices. In 2019-2020, our Leadership Development Committee (co-chaired by Min Mize), acknowledged the outstanding teaching of three of our members with the CLD Teacher of the Year Award (Julia Mackay, CO; Jessica Draper, VA; and Veronica Twining, TX). The Leadership Development Committee also led our state chapter collaborations through award of state chapter grants to Colorado, Virginia, and Texas. The

contributions of CLD state chapters to the field of LD are numerous. State chapters support CLD members through the dissemination of current, evidence-based resources and ongoing opportunities for professional development. In 2019-2020, CLD Chapter Presidents included the following individuals: Kelly Murillo – CO, Debi Gartland – MD, Miriam White - MN, Joseph Morgan – NV, Maryam Nozari – TX, Mindy Gumpert – VA, and Emily Duzik – Texas A&M Student Chapter.

Promoting and Supporting Research in the Field of LD

Every year, CLD’s research contributions to the field are numerous, due to the leadership of our Research Committee (chaired by Margaret Flores), and the publication of our flagship journal, *Learning Disability Quarterly* (editor – Diane Pedrotty Bryant). In 2019, the CLD “Must Reads” awards were presented to Rajiv Satsangi (lead author) for his publication in *Learning Disability Quarterly* (“Studying virtual manipulatives paired with explicit instruction to teach algebraic equations to students with learning disabilities”), and Tracy Spies (lead author) for her publication in *Intervention in School and Clinic* (“Scaffolded academic conversations: Access to 21st century communication and collaboration skills”). The Outstanding Researcher Award (ORA) was presented to Alex Smith (University of Southern Mississippi) for his doctoral dissertation titled “Technical adequacy of a spelling curriculum-based measure for English Language Learners”. The ORA is the result of a competitive blind review process completed by members of our Research Committee. And finally, the Floyd G. Hudson Service Award was presented to Lori Severino (Drexel University) for her service to the field of learning disabilities.

Demonstrating Strong Stewardship of Organizational Resources

Much of the work of a Board of Trustees goes unseen by many of its constituents, but this work is critical to the viability of an organization. Thus, it is important to publicly acknowledge the contributions of time, expertise, and resources made by many members of our organization who chaired these important committees during 2019-2020: Bylaws Committee (chaired by President-Elect Brittany Hott), Communications Committee (chaired by Kat Pfannenstiel), Finance Committee (chaired by Treasurer Beverly Weiser), and the Nominations and Elections Committee (chaired by immediate Past President Sheri Berkeley). Acknowledgement is also extended to Apryl Poch (editor – LD Forum) and Meijia Liu, our 2019-2020 archivist.

Last but certainly not least, CLD benefitted greatly from the commitment and contributions of Vice President Joe Morgan, Secretary Heather Haynes, and Parliamentarian Monica Lambert.

As this report illustrates, CLD contributed much to the field of LD. Thank you all for your service.

Sincerely,

Lindy

Lindy Crawford, PhD
CLD President, 2019-2020