



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities December 2023

## President's Message



Dear CLD Colleagues,

I hope that everyone is doing well as we approach a well-deserved break this winter. I hope that you were able to easily catch up with things back home after the conference in Denver, Colorado. There were many highlights and new sessions,

and I hope that they enhanced your experiences as they did mine. The opening keynote focused on student engagement gave us inspiring examples of responsive teaching. The panel *Navigating the Multiverse: A Conversation About Current Issues and Future Pathways for Scholarship in the Field of Learning Disabilities*, which opened Day 2, provided thought-provoking challenges and possible solutions to critical issues in our work with individuals with learning disabilities. The Research Committee's hard work led to a dynamic session for researchers developing and refining new projects with feedback from others. I want to thank Sara Flanagan for designing a program in which researchers and practitioners had a variety of engaging sessions across important topics throughout the conference, including an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. It is vital that we continue to examine our practices, understand, and respond to the experiences of traditionally marginalized groups.

A special thanks goes to the Conference Planning Committee, led by Maria Peterson-Ahmed, Randy Keeley, and Cynthia Massey. They worked tirelessly, attending to minute details so that conference activities occurred seamlessly. Maria completed her term as chair, but I want to especially recognize and commend her for extending her tenure through the fall to ensure that the Denver conference was a success. Thank you for going above and beyond for CLD! I want to thank Julie Cordell, who experienced her first conference as our Executive Director. She diligently worked with the Conference Planning Committee and took care of many critical activities that occurred behind the scenes.

Finally, I want to thank the presenters and conference participants for being generous in sharing their work and experiences and making the CLD conference a welcoming place for all to learn from each other. I especially want to thank the presenters and proposal reviewers for the patience

and grace they showed last spring as they interacted with the proposal system. We have a new system in place through a different vendor to address the issues you may have experienced. Those of you who are interested in presenting at the Charlotte, North Carolina, conference will have a simple and straightforward experience when the new proposal system opens at the beginning of January.

As the year goes on, please continue to share your voice with other CLD members. We have committees to suit a variety of interests and strengths. Committee chairs are always looking for new members and diverse points of view. Committee chairs or other CLD leaders (Apryl, Sara, Brenda, or I) would be happy to answer your questions or provide information about different committee tasks. Please share your work and your point of view by submitting to *LD Forum*. Help keep the field informed by submitting to the *CLD Research to Practice Corner*, a helpful resource for pre-service and in-service teachers. Know that your voice, vision, experience, and contributions are necessary for our organization to grow and provide effective support for individuals with learning disabilities.

**Margaret M. Flores**  
2023–2024 CLD President

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# Candidates for the Position of Vice President on the Executive Committee of the Council for Learning Disabilities

The Nominations and Elections Committee of the Council for Learning Disabilities is pleased to announce two highly qualified candidates for the position of vice president of the Council for Learning Disabilities, to be elected in the spring of 2024. Below please find brief biographies for each of the two candidates (presented alphabetically by last name) as well as a statement of their goals for the Council for Learning Disabilities if elected.



**Dr. Alyson A. Collins**

*Texas State University*

Dr. Alyson A. Collins is an associate professor of special education at Texas State University. She has been an active member of the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) since 2015, serving on the Research Committee and currently as Secretary of the Executive Committee. Prior to earning her doctoral degree in special education from Vanderbilt University, Alyson taught in Texas public schools for nine years, providing evidence-based literacy instruction to students with learning disabilities and leading professional development with teachers. Alyson

currently serves as the principal investigator (PI) or Co-PI on four Institute of Education Sciences (IES) grants aimed at enhancing writing instruction for students with learning disabilities. She also serves as director on two Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) preparation grants, one of which offers special education teachers a master’s degree with a concentration in learning disabilities and a dyslexia specialist certification. With over 20 years in education, Alyson’s career aligns with CLD’s mission to improve instructional practices and outcomes for students with learning disabilities, including dyslexia. As vice president, and later as president, Alyson aims to expand the reach of CLD’s membership, while maintaining its commitment to inclusivity and diversity.



**Dr. Nathan Stevenson**

*Kent State University*

Dr. Nathan A. Stevenson is an associate professor of special education at Kent State University. Dr. Stevenson joined the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) in 2013 as a member of the Research Committee. He has served on the CLD Board of Trustees (BOT) since 2021. He is co-author of *Research in Special Education: Designs, Methods, and Applications—Third Edition*, as well as numerous research publications, book chapters, and practitioner-focused articles.

Dr. Stevenson began his career as a teacher with New York City Public Schools. He has worked with children with learning disabilities throughout his career. To stay connected to the needs of students and teachers Dr. Stevenson continues

to serve as a substitute teacher in local schools. He earned a doctoral degree in special education from Michigan State University in 2015. His teaching and research focus on assessments and interventions to improve the quality of instruction for children with learning disabilities. As a teacher educator Dr. Stevenson is committed to ensuring current and future teachers have the skills needed to thrive in schools.

As vice president Dr. Stevenson will be dedicated to advancing the mission of CLD by (a) ensuring all functions, committees, and initiatives serve the core mission of CLD, (b) reestablishing the tangible benefits of CLD membership to existing and new members alike, (c) broadening the diversity of CLD membership, and (d) repositioning CLD as a leader in a crowded field of professional organizations and conferences. Thank you for your support.

## 2023–2024 Election Information for the Vice President of the Council for Learning Disabilities

This spring, the Nominations and Elections committee will oversee elections for the position of Vice President of the Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD). The Vice President is elected into the presidential line of CLD, serving for one year in each of the following positions: (a) Vice President, (b) President-Elect, (c) President, and (d) Immediate Past President. In the role of Vice President, the elected candidate shall:

- 1) *Serve in the President's place and with the President's authority in case of absence or disability of the President and President-Elect,*
- 2) *Assist the President and President-Elect in the planning and preparing of the plan of operation, charges to committees, and annual budget,*
- 3) *Assist the President and perform such other duties as may be assigned to the office,*

- 4) *Serve as member of the Bylaws and Policies Committee, and*
- 5) *Serve as the program chair for the following year's conference.*

Ballots for the election of the Vice President will be disseminated electronically to all active members of CLD. Ballots will be disseminated by **January 15, 2024**, and voting will close on **February 1, 2024**. Election results will be verified by the immediate past president and two other members of the council prior to notification of candidates. Results of the election will be published in the April issue of *LD Forum*. If you have any questions about the election process, please contact Dr. Brenda Barrio, Immediate Past President, at [brenda.barrio@unt.edu](mailto:brenda.barrio@unt.edu).

## CLD Finance Committee Updates

The Finance Committee met in person (with some joining virtually) during the CLD 2023 Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado. Members on the committee include Beverly Weiser (treasurer), Brenda Barrio (past president), Steve Chamberlain (past president), Julie Cordell (executive director), Rebecca Shankland, Sharon Ray, Beth Jones, Yan Wei, and Pakethia Harris. During the conference and throughout the year, the finance committee (a) monitors the fiscal practices of the organization, (b) develops guidelines and makes recommendations for management, (c) creates procedures for use of reserve funds that are consistent with the objectives of CLD's Mission Statement, (d) reviews the annual budget prior to being submitted for approval by the Board of Trustees (BOT), (e) serves in an advisory capacity to the

BOT regarding matters that would affect the revenues and expenditures of the organization, and (f) assists with reviewing and providing feedback on the biannual internal reviews completed by the Treasurer. The Finance Committee, along with the BOT and other committees, supports leadership development among professionals who serve individuals with learning disabilities and other challenges in learning. Additionally, the Finance Committee collaborates with other CLD committees on ways to build membership and further help special educators, researchers, university and college students, and parents of children experiencing learning difficulties. Any CLD member wishing to be part of this committee would be welcome; please contact Beverly Weiser at [beverlyweiser@gmail.com](mailto:beverlyweiser@gmail.com) for more information.

## Candidate for the Position of Secretary on the Executive Committee of the Council for Learning Disabilities

*The Nominations and Elections Committee of the Council for Learning Disabilities is pleased to announce one highly qualified candidate for the position of Secretary of the Council for Learning Disabilities, to be elected in the spring of 2024. Below please find a brief biography for the candidate.*



### **Dr. Maria Peterson-Ahmad**

*Texas Woman's University*

Dr. Maria Peterson-Ahmad is an associate professor of special education at Texas Woman's University with a research concentration in teacher effectiveness, particularly for general and special education teachers of students with mild/moderate disabilities, with a focus on educational technology and high leverage practices.

Maria has served for 4 years on the CLD Conference Planning Committee as co-chair and was a member of the CLD Leadership Academy Cohort 3. She also serves as the co-chair for the CEC Advanced Standards Revision Workgroup, is a member of the CEC Professional Standards & Practices Committee, and has collaborated with the CEEDAR Center to create professional development materials on high leverage practices.

## 2023–2024 Election Information for the Secretary of the Council for Learning Disabilities

This spring, the Nominations and Elections committee will oversee elections for the position of the Secretary of the Council for Learning Disabilities. The Secretary will serve a three-year term. If elected, the elected candidate shall:

- 1) *Keep records of the Annual Business, BOT, Special and EC meetings, including all reports filed,*
- 2) *Send copies of all such records to BOT members no later than 15 working days after each meeting, and*
- 3) *Maintain a permanent file of the records of all meetings to be passed onto the next person elected to the position of Secretary.*

Ballots for the election of the Secretary will be disseminated electronically to all active members of CLD. Ballots will be disseminated by **January 15, 2024**, and voting will close on **February 1, 2024**. Election results will be verified by the immediate past president and two other members of the council prior to notification of candidates. Results of the election will be published in the April issue of *LD Forum*. If you have any questions about the election process, please contact Dr. Brenda Barrio, Immediate Past President, at [brenda.barrio@unt.edu](mailto:brenda.barrio@unt.edu).

## CLD Leadership Initiatives

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) is responsible for providing a safe proving ground to build early career leadership skills. Under the LDC, the CLD Leadership Academy was started more than 12 years ago. In 2017, an additional tier of that structure was built by Dr. Diane Bryant and Leadership Academy Cohort 6. At that time, the first annual Leadership Institute was launched. These leadership initiatives are meant to build knowledge and skills for future leaders within CLD itself and in the larger learning disabilities community to continue and build upon the work of those initial founders of CLD.

The seventh annual Leadership Institute took place the day before the start of the October 2023 CLD Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado. Twelve early career faculty and doctoral students were accepted as participants for this year's Institute after undergoing the application process. They were welcomed by the presidential line up: Brenda Barrio (past president), Margaret Flores (president), Sara Flanagan (president elect).

The highlight of the day-long institute was a presentation by Dr. Don Hammill and Dr. John Hoover. Dr. Hammill discussed the history of CLD from its inception. He provided archived articles that described the differences of opinion in those early days. As one of the earliest members of CLD, Dr. Hoover provided his perspective. This rich history is critical to sustaining CLD as a community of learning disabilities leaders.

Another highlight of the Leadership Institute is always the publishing panel, which is held with editors of the CLD-related publications. These editors provide tips for writing and getting published in the individual sources. Representing *Learning Disabilities Quarterly* was Sam Choo, PhD, associate editor. Representing *Intervention in School and Clinic* was one of two new editors, Robbie Marsh, PhD. Finally, representing *LD Forum* was the outgoing editor, Apryl Poch, PhD, and the incoming editor, Alex Smith, PhD. Participants found that the panel provided insights that were new to them.

In addition, rotating round table discussions covered topics such as interviewing for faculty positions; tenure and promotion; writing small grants and conducting evaluations for grants; instructional practices; and the job market outside of higher education. These presentations are provided by CLD members who donate their time.

The day ended with the opportunity for the Leadership Institute participants to join the Board of Trustees, past presidents, and Leadership Academy members in a social reception to build connections with the current leaders in CLD.

The goal is to bring early career and doctoral students to the table to learn skills, make connections, commit to working on CLD committees in the future, and become our future leaders. Reviewing the list of past presidents and current Board of Trustee members will identify many former Leadership Institute and Leadership Academy members.

Look for more information about the Leadership Academy in a future issue of *LD Forum*. To apply for the Leadership Academy, you must have attended the Leadership Institute and served on a CLD committee to demonstrate your commitment to the organization. A call for applications for the Leadership Institute and Leadership Academy comes out in early May with a deadline of May 31st each year.

**Leadership Institute 2023 Members:** Farwa Abbas, Omolola Aneke, Tina Clark, Roba Hrisseh, Joo-Young Lee, Catharine Lory, Kimberly McFadden, Reagan Mergen, Deborah Perez, Hope Rigby-Wills, Marilyn Roberts

**Leadership Academy 12:** Schuyler Beecher, Jenna Gersib, Qingli Lei, Karen Omohundro, Josh Otarola

**Leadership Academy 11:** Mona Calhoun, Danielle Feeney, Sarah King, Jennifer Kong, Cassandra Smith, Courtney Toledo

**Leadership Academy 10:** Rachel E. Donegan, Anna Gibbs, Rachel Juergensen, Anna Macedonia, Cynthia C. Massey, Jennifer Elaine Smith



## Introducing the New Editor of *LD Forum*



The Affiliated and Organizational Partnerships Committee is pleased to announce the new editor of *LD Forum*. Alex Smith, PhD, is an assistant professor of special education in the Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. His research focuses on data-based instruction and writing for students with learning disabilities. Dr. Smith received his PhD from The University of Missouri

in 2018, and he was a member of Cohort 7 of the CLD Leadership Academy.

Prior to receiving his PhD, Dr. Smith worked in special education in several U.S. states as well as in South Korea and the United Arab Emirates. He would like to thank Dr. Apryl L. Poch for her mentorship and support in his transition into the role of editor. Dr. Smith will assume full editorial responsibilities of *LD Forum* for a three-year term beginning on January 1, 2024.

## Have a Question About Research?

Do you have a question about research that you would like to have answered by an experienced CLD researcher? Drop us an email at [AskACLDResearcher@cldinternational.org](mailto:AskACLDResearcher@cldinternational.org), and we'll do our best to find answers for you. We welcome questions related to theory, methodology, and logistics, including the challenges of conducting research in schools. Your questions can be specific and technical, related to your

own project, or more generally seeking advice as you begin your career as a researcher. Once we receive your question, we will provide a response or connect you with someone who has expertise in that area. Additionally, we will prepare a quarterly summary of common questions and answers that will be published on our website and here in *LD Forum*.

## 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.

## 2023–2024 CLD Board of Trustees

### Executive Committee

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## 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 learn-

ing 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.