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Message from the President

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Dear Members of the Academy,

Happy New Year! For my first message of the year, I've decided to interview some of our 2020 Canadian Academy of Audiology student representatives. The academy has student representation from five universities (University of British Columbia; Western University; University of Ottawa, University of Montreal and Dalhousie University). Today, I introduce Bailey Roulson (UBC); Viktoria Peretokina and Ali A. (Western); Philippe Auclair (UOttawa); Kelsey McIntryre and Lauren Peters (Dal). I will continue to have ongoing conversations with all our student reps throughout the year. I think it is particularly important to listen to students across the country- to get to know their interests and goals so the academy can best represent them as they move towards early career professionals.

CAA: Why did you choose to pursue a career in Audiology?

Viktoria (Western): Audiology makes use of science, technology, and healthcare to give a better quality of life for the hearing impaired. One high school experience, in particular, secured my interest in this profession. In 2012, I was volunteering at the audiology department of North York General Hospital (NYGH) when a disoriented older gentleman came in. The secretary found out that he only spoke Russian, so I was asked to translate for the patient during the appointment. It was my first time working with a patient in the field and I was overjoyed. Having an interpreter prevented many complications and significantly reduced the appointment's length. As a result, it was an incredible learning experience and both the audiologist and the patient were thankful for my assistance. This made me realize the value of communication, as well as knowing multiple languages while being compassionate and motivated for this field.

Bailey (UBC): Being raised by my single mother who had severe to profound hearing loss, I grew up learning the importance of communication strategies and essentially acted as my mother's "ears" for years. Within the past 5 years, she has received a cochlear implant and has drastically impacted the way she interacts with the world. It inspired me to start volunteering with an audiologist. I saw how many people struggle with varying levels of hearing loss, and the role audiologists play in positively impacting the way these individuals function within the world.

Ali (Western): I completed my bachelor's degree in biology and moved on to complete a master's degree to begin working as a research assistant in biology research labs. Through my research experience, I became interested in the auditory system, specifically looking at hair cell regeneration in the cochlea. I was motivated to explore this research area further even though my work did not involve the auditory system. I began to learn more about the field of audiology and I found about the potential for working with patients and being involved in research at the same time. The biggest motivation that pushed me to change my career path was the ability to work with

clients to help them hear better, which was absent while working as a research assistant in biology. I was excited to explore this career path that allowed me to have patient interaction and research opportunities.

Kelsey (Dal): After taking my Nana to get hearing aids and seeing the drastic difference they made in her communication, confidence, and quality of life, I was hooked on audiology. I wanted to be able to help people's experiences like that as well.

Lauren (Dal): I always wanted to work in a healthcare profession where I could help other people. I appreciate how this profession is extremely rewarding, for both the patient and clinician. By helping people with their communication skills, audiologists are also providing them with so much more in their lives. This is such a privilege and is also very fulfilling to know that audiologists are making such an incredible impact on other individuals' lives. One thing that particularly interested me was the diversity in the profession. Audiologists see different patients and cases every day and there are so many different opportunities and areas where you can work. I really like how audiologists can complete many different jobs within the same profession. This will allow me to choose a path that best suit my own interests and to enable an appropriate balance in my life. With our aging population in Canada, the need for audiologists is becoming much more significant. Research in this area is always progressing and technologies are constantly evolving. This helps to keep us, as audiologists, constantly learning new things and facing new challenges, which keeps the job very interesting and exciting.

CAA: What area of audiology interests you the most right now?

Ali (Western): I am currently interested in the area of cochlear implants as it represents a fascinating blend of cutting-edge electrical engineering technology combined with the functionality of the cochlear nerve allowing for the perception of hearing to be restored. This represents a great advancement in re-search taking advantage of the plasticity and the functionality of the human body and applying technology for the benefit of human well-being.

Bailey (UBC): Currently, I am most interested in working with cochlear implants in the paediatric or adult population. I am also interested in learning more about vestibular rehabilitation.

Kelsey (Dal): As I head into my final semester of this program, I've realized how my interests have grown and changed, often developing as we dive into a new specialized course. Currently, I've become really interested in noise-induced hearing loss as well as noise protection. Working consistently with Veteran's and worker's compensation patients during my externship has opened my eyes to the prevalence of NIHL. Seeing the effects of the hearing loss, as well as tinnitus in these populations, have sparked my interest in the importance of noise protection. I hope to use my career to really advocate for the importance of noise protection both in the workplace and outside of it.

Lauren (Dal): I am interested in working in a hospital and/or public health setting. I like how these types of settings allow you to see patients of all ages and with a large variety of hearing disorders. At this point in my studies, I am more interested in the diagnostics area of the profession. However, I am eager to see how my preferences will likely change throughout my career, as new opportunities and experiences become available.

CAA: What interested you in becoming a CAA student representative? What would you like CAA to do for students?

Viktoria (Western): I wanted the ability to be the voice for my program on a national scale. I would like CAA to help improve the student experience and to support upcoming professionals.

Bailey (UBC): I wanted to learn more about the role of CAA and how to promote audiology.

Growing up, I found the majority of my friends and people around me did not understand the extent to which a hearing loss could impact daily living. Even once I decided to pursue a career in audiology, the lack of knowledge about what audiology is and what audiologists do astounds me. I personally believe it is incredibly important to advocate for people who have hearing loss, and by being a member of CAA it allows me to be involved in a community that advocates for and enhances the role of audiologists.

Kelsey (Dal): Keeping students connected to professional associations is very important. Attending the CAA conference is a highlight of the final semester for Dalhousie Audiology students, so I wanted to be involved as the CAA Student Representative to help ensure our whole class could have the opportunity to attend.

Lauren (Dal): I think it would be great if CAA provided more information to students regarding the organization's ongoing and/or future advocacy work. I think many students would be eager to participate and help out with these types of opportunities. For instance, at the most recent CAA conference, there was a lot of discussion surrounding the most recent Canadian report card on the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program. This would be a great area for students to become involved. They could reach out to their local MPs and other people in their own regions who could help to make a difference in this area of hearing health. By providing students with information on these types of advocacy opportunities, it could help to enhance the involvement and outcomes for these initiatives

CAA: Speaking with others in your program, what are some of the current challenges that audiology students face? What are the challenges in our profession that students worry most about?

Viktoria (UBC): The inability (or the right) to use the word "diagnose" when identifying a hearing loss can be confusing, and some students feel there is a lack of training on what we can and cannot communicate to clients. Also, the lack of standards with testing procedures can make things very challenging for students. Relative to other industries, it appears like audiology is a free-for-all in terms of tests and what one considers a good test. This can lead to inconsistencies in case history and more work.

Philippe (UOttawa): Tinnitus management counselling can be a difficult task for students during clinical placement. As many different theories and rehabilitation plans exist to manage the symptoms, it can be difficult to choose, with confidence, treatment course which will be most appropriate. Despite numerous research studies, the variability and the lack of evidence regarding certain aspects of tinnitus (dietary impacts for example), increases the difficulties when responding to the client's questions. Developing treatment plans based on factual evidence to treat tinnitus is well suited for an audiologist, hopefully, the growing evidence body on the subject will make it easier for new graduates to feel more confident with the implementation of their tinnitus management programs.

Kelsey (UBC): One challenge audiology student's face in Canada is the uncertainty of quality internship and externships. These placements are where we build the groundwork of our clinical skills before we enter the working world, and so we rely on our clinical educators to be motivated, positive role models and available to help us learn. For some students, this can become especially stressful as there are so few clinical educators available that relocation is sometimes inevitable, during a time when students are already financially unstable.

Lauren (Dal): With our ever-evolving and growing population in Canada, I think students feel more aware and concerned about their preparedness entering the field regarding their cultural competency skills. This is an area that many students would love to see an increase in our

educational programs to better prepare us for these types of situations to ensure that we can provide the most effective and respectful care to all of our patients.

Thank you so much Viktoria, Ali, Bailey, Philippe, Kelsey, and Lauren for your insight and thoughts. They are truly appreciated.