

Student Corner



Jenna Nurick,
Student
Representative



Ashley Dugas,
Alternate Student
Representative

The 2026 PSHA Student Track proved transformative, as students took the lead, using their voices and ideas to inspire their community. As the 2025-2026 PSHA student representatives, Ashley Dugas and I (Jenna Nurick) aimed to create an educational, yet meaningful, convention experience for those in attendance. As graduate students, we reflected on areas of the field that we believe are underrepresented throughout the undergraduate experience. With that information in mind, we created sessions to expose students to these topics earlier in their education.

Session 1, centered around feeding/swallowing, highlighted our student-drive organization (Feeding Matters), reasons for a modified diet/thickened liquids, and a hands-on lab component. Ashley and I selected this content area as undergraduate students are often briefly taught about feeding/swallowing, but it is not until graduate school that this

information is emphasized. We felt it crucial to provide undergraduate students with knowledge and skills to support their career development in niche areas of the profession. With the help of Erin Buckwalter, MBA, M.S. CCC-SLP, and Dr. Kelly Salmon, PhD, SLPD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CLT-LANA, NDC, this session was a huge success. Students, especially the undergraduates, expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this learning experience, as they had not yet engaged in anything similar to this

Our second session focused on the client/patient experience. Ashley and I felt that students rarely interact with individuals who have communication and swallowing disorders until their externship experiences in graduate school. Therefore, we felt it necessary to assemble a panel of clients/patients that future SLPs/Audiologists will interact with in the future. Special thanks to Dr. Akila Rajappa, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, at East Stroudsburg University, for her assistance in the client/patient search and commitment process. This session provided students with the chance to learn the “dos and don’ts” from real individuals’ experiences. The impact of this session went far beyond that of PSHA. Students

were emotional, demonstrating their desire to make a difference, and panel members were finally able to share their story with people who would listen and create change.

Lastly, we would like to thank Drexel University, Elkins Park campus, for sponsoring the luncheon component of the student advocacy event. We appreciate the presence of Representative Brandon Markosek, as he not only shared his experience as a person who stutters, but also as an individual who aims to create change and advocate on behalf of the SLP and audiology community.

Overall, the PSHA 2026 student track was one for the books. Ashley and I are extremely proud of the student turnout and could not have made this happen without the support of PSHA board members and the students' general excitement. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for allowing us to create something so special and meaningful during our term as the student representatives for the 2025-2026 year.

Sincerely,

Jenna Nurick & Ashley Dugas

PSHA Student Representatives