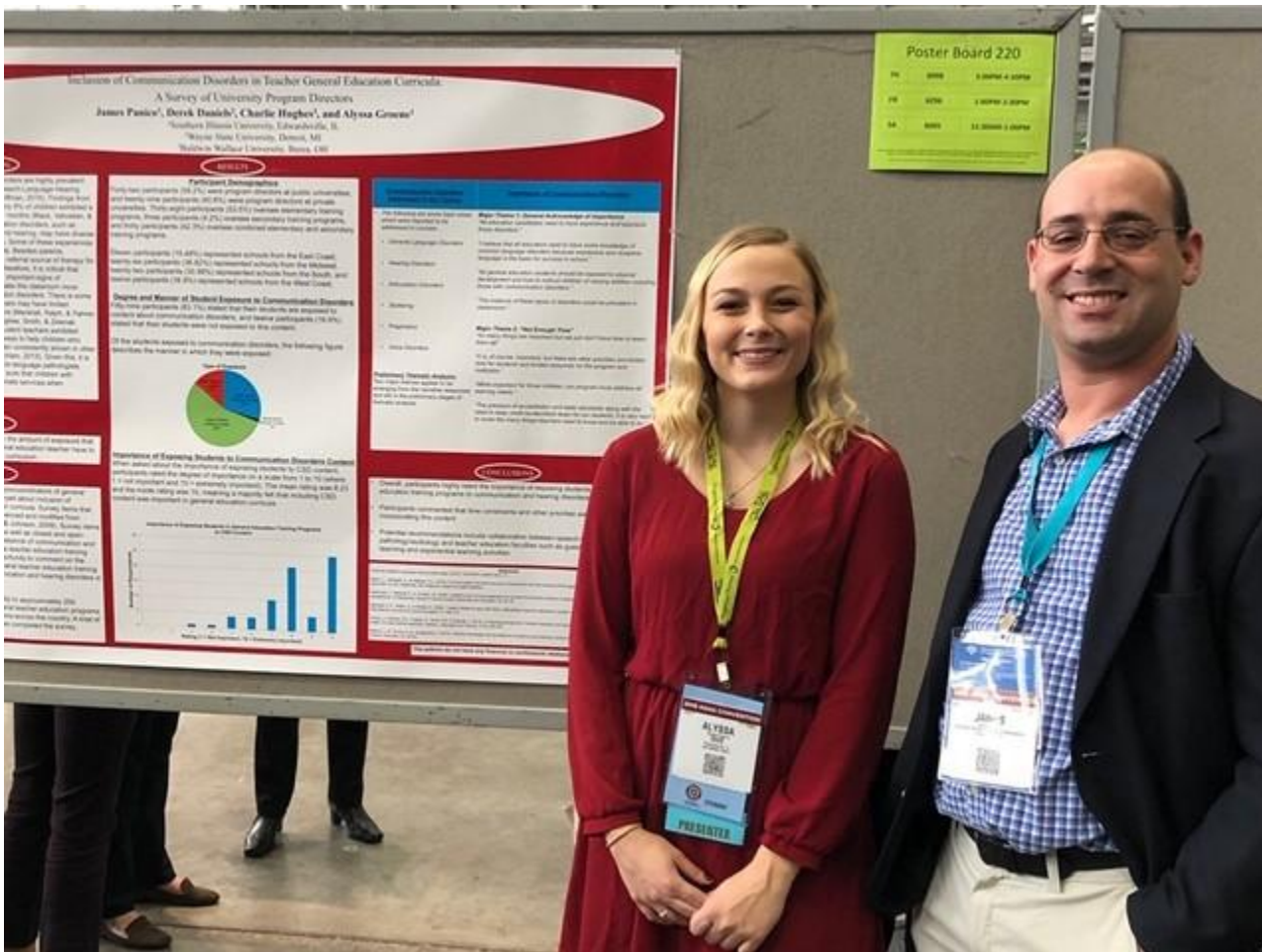


ASHA Conference boosts SIUE student experience

by Megan Wieser

December 17 2018 4:11 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Perhaps two of the most influential experiences a college student can have along their academic journey are to conduct research and attend professional conferences. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville senior speech-language

pathology and audiology student Alyssa Groene had the opportunity to do both last semester, calling her attendance at the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association's (ASHA) annual convention "one of the greatest experiences of my life."

Groene, of Wentzville, attended the ASHA's annual event held Nov. 14-17 in Boston. She joined international conference attendees alongside SIUE's James Panico, PhD, CCC-SLP, associate professor, and speech-language pathology and audiology undergraduate program director in the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior's Department of Applied Health.

"The ASHA convention provides professionals with the opportunity to learn about the latest research and gain new clinical skills," Panico said. "There was record attendance this year with 18,500 people."

At the conference, Panico and Groene shared their research insight regarding the level of exposure students in general education courses have to content in the area of speech-language pathology and audiology.

"Research shows that communication disorders are highly prevalent among school-age children," Panico explained. "Furthermore, classroom teachers are typically the main referral source of therapy for children with communication disorders. However, research suggests classroom teachers may have limited knowledge about communication disorders. Therefore, it is critical that school teachers be knowledgeable about important signs of communication disorders and ways to make the classroom more comfortable for those students."

Panico and Groene noted that significant barriers to covering speech-language pathology and audiology content exist, including limited time and space within general education program curriculum.

"Overall, the results underscored the need for increased interprofessional collaboration including co-teaching, as well as increased experiential learning activities for general education students," Panico noted. "I strongly believe that this particular research with Alyssa highlights the importance of using research findings to inform classroom practices. This ensures that future educators, as well as speech-language pathologists, are best prepared to work with children who exhibit communication disorders."

SIUE's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) program provided Groene with the opportunity to support this important scholarship alongside Panico.

"I know my attendance at ASHA will be a deciding factor for getting into graduate school," Groene said. "Additionally, URCA has taught me an incredible amount. Dr.

Panico is phenomenal. Most undergraduates do not get the opportunity to conduct high-quality research. I am forever grateful for the URCA program and Dr. Panico.”

The [School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](#) prepares students in a wide range of fields including community and public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.