



2015-2016 Annual Report

Dear CLD Members,

CLD can be proud of many accomplishments during the 2015-2016 year. It was a year that saw strong leadership from committee chairs and steady, deliberate action taken to achieve proposed internal and external strategic goals. The theme of the year was to “Focus on Students with Severe Learning Disabilities,” and to that end activities were included in committee work to address this theme. The Board of Trustees represents a group of hard working, committed professionals who strive to serve the organization and its membership.

Some highlights from the year follow.

I am thrilled to say that the 2015 conference in Las Vegas (Kyle Higgins and Joe Morgan, Local Arrangements Committee Co-Chairs) was very successful both in terms of content and financial outcome. Approximately, 385 people attended the conference; this is a record number of participants in recent years. We were thrilled that so many people joined us for two days of panels, round tables, and interactive paper sessions. Also, awards for teachers, leaders, and the Outstanding Researcher of the year were disseminated. We were honored to have Dr. Lynn Meltzer as our J. L. Wiederholt Distinguished Lecture speaker who also provided a session packed with follow up ideas. Of course, there was a great deal of networking happening throughout the conference thanks to the planning and hard work of the **Conference Committee** (Co-chairs, Judy Voress and Nancy Nelson)! Thanks to the **Professional Development Committee** (Chair, Kathleen Pfannenstiel) who spearheaded working with conference presenters to obtain copies of their presentations to upload on the CLD website for future review.

At our fall board meeting, work centered on activities that each committee chair would lead during this year and how chairs would work across committees to maximize how we address issues in the field of LD, focus on students with severe LD, and meet the needs of our members. For example, our **Communications Committee** (Chair, Anne Brawand) was busy with social media as a way to connect with members and promote the work of the other committees. Our **Research Committee** (Chair, Kelli Cummings) concentrated on our *Research to Practice Corner* with a focus on students with severe LD and geared up to identify next year’s Outstanding Researcher. The **Liaison Committee** (Co-chairs, Debi Gartland and Roberta Strosnider) was quite busy with legislative alerts, which all of us needed to pay attention to considering the funding for special education research issues in Congress. The Liaison Committee Co-chairs again represented CLD at the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, to name a few.

The **Leadership Development Committee** (Co-chairs, Colleen Reutebuch and Sheri Berkeley) were busy with their many activities including chapter development, awards, and Leadership

Academy (LA) development. CLD state chapters are an integral part of the organization and can benefit from not only connecting at the national level but also, importantly, working with teachers in their states who teach students with LD. As the needs of special education teachers evolve based on shifting roles, state chapters along with the national office can play an important role in providing the support these teachers often seek. So, thank you to the leaders and members of state chapters for tackling school issues regarding services and instruction. Additionally, the LDC is responsible for securing nominations from states for **Teacher of the Year** and the **Floyd G. Hudson** awards, which are presented annually at our fall conference. This was a very exciting time as the awardees, their colleagues, and family and friends join in the celebration of these accomplished professionals.

The LA is another way CLD nurtures future leaders. I am pleased to say that we were in our fifth year with the LA (Cohort 5). The LA was established as a mechanism for “growing” leaders who can then go on to assume various roles within the organization and increase their early career skills. LA members are paired with mentors and activities are planned for them at the fall conference. It has been exciting to see the cohort members become involved with the many activities that frame the organization.

The **Technology Committee** (Co-chairs Joe Morgan and Linda Morin) were busy updating the website with updates about **legislative alerts** and **conference and awards information** among many other topics. The committee also started working on assembling information concerning assistive technology (AT) to support students with severe LD. We are looking forward to reading more about this important information later this spring. AT must be “considered” at IEP meetings so increasing the knowledge base about the use of AT for promoting access and independence for students with LD is vital. Also, the **Communications Committee** worked collaboratively with the **Technology Committee** to ensure that the membership is informed about events, political action items, awards, and more! Check out the website (www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org) and social media (Facebook and Twitter, facebook.com/LDQJournal) as ways to remain updated about the organization and the benefits of being a member!

The **Membership Committee** (Co-chairs, Heather Haynes Smith and Minyi Shih Dennis) was actively working on recruiting new members, retaining current members, and urging former members to return to CLD. The goal was to build an even stronger organization that supports networking, advocacy, and dissemination of timely evidence-based practices. A survey of the members was conducted at the 2015 conference to help the Membership Committee and BOT consider ways to increase service for our members.

The organization’s publications continue to serve the membership well. The *Learning Disability Quarterly* (LDQ), *Intervention in School and Clinic* (ISC), *Research to Practice Corner*, and *LD Forum* are means for obtaining the latest research, research to practice, and newsworthy and practitioner information, respectively. These publications provide members and the larger community with evidence-based practices, literature syntheses, and organizational updates. *LDQ* podcasts are available from leading experts of the special issues such as in reading, Universal Design for Learning, and writing. Practical tips and strategies in *ISC*, which educators can implement easily and immediately with students are also notable for the membership and the *LD Forum* includes not only information about the organization but also ideas for practitioners.

The **Diversity Committee** (Chair, Jugnu P. Agrawal) worked on *Serving English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities: A systematic review*, which is a report we are eagerly

anticipating. Look for the outcome of this important endeavor on CLD's website and social media outlets, and in a future issue of LD Forum. Also, the Diversity Committee reached out to international participants who attended the 2015 conference to engage them more readily in the organization. People from Canada, New Zealand, Germany, and Korea participated in the conference; we welcome them to the organization!

The **Finance Committee** (Chair, Dave Majsterek) continued to ensure that our investments were in line with the fluctuating stock market to maintain fiscally responsible management for the organization. The BOT continued the work of establishing finance policy that utilizes a set amount of interest income for special projects proposed by CLD activities.

The **Standards and Ethics Committee** focused on teacher preparation. A survey of what is happening in higher education regarding teacher preparation and students with LD was a central focus. The concept of "LD teachers" seem to be a thing of the past, thus, the goal is to learn more about how teachers are being prepared to work with students with LD in predominantly inclusive settings.

Each committee made significant progress toward their goals during the year. This is work we can all be proud of and I want to thank everyone for their hard work. I want to particularly thank Linda Nease, CLD Executive Director and the Executive Committee (President Elect, Mary Beth Calhoun, Vice President, Deborah Reed, Past President, Steve Chamberlain, Treasurer, Dave Majsterek, Secretary, Brittany Hott) and Chad Rose, Parliamentarian for all of their tremendous support. Because of the dedication, creativity, and enthusiasm of our membership, the future of CLD is bright. The commitment to leadership development through deliberate mentoring by experienced members is strong and a great reason to engage in leadership positions with the organization. With the continued support of our membership, CLD will continue to thrive as a leader in the field of LD.

Thank you for a wonderful year!

Diane Pedrotty Bryant
CLD President, 2015-2016

