



ALLIED HEALTH CONFERENCE

8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. | Friday, Feb. 6, 2026 | Baker Pattillo Student Center

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**ALLIED HEALTH
CONFERENCE**
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Agenda

8:30 to 9 a.m.: Registration and sign-in

9 to 9:15 a.m.: Welcome Message – Sarah Drake MS, RD, LD

Location: Twilight Ballroom

9:15 to 10:15 a.m.: Opening session

Selective Eating in Autism: An Interdisciplinary Approach (1 CPE for RD, SLP and SLP-A)

Location: Twilight Ballroom

Panelists: Sarah Bullard MS, RD, LD; Dr. Lisa McCleary LP, LSP, BCBA-D, NCSP; Dr. Celina Hawthorne, OT; Layne DeBardelaben, MA, CCC-SLP

10:20 to 10:25 a.m.: Relaxation Break

Breathing Exercises, lead by Ginger Stephens, LPC-S, LCDC

Location: Twilight Ballroom

10:30 to 11:30 a.m.: Breakout sessions

From Principles to Practice: Implementing Informed Consent for Texture Modified Diets (1 CPE for RD, SLP and SLP-a)

Location: Twilight Ballroom

Presenter: Hillary Cooper MA, CCC-SLP, Doctoral Candidate

Strong Through Every Stage: Exercise and Health Across Reproductive, Perimenopausal and Postmenopausal Years

Location: Tiered classroom

Presenter: Robyn Whitehead, PsyD, ACSM EP, CWCS

The Power of the Media Placement: How Getting Featured in the News Can Grow Your Practice & Income

Location: Multimedia room

Presenter: Amy Gorin MS, RDN

Agenda

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Sponsor expo, academic resources and posters, lunch

Locations: Regents Suite A and Twilight Ballroom

1 to 2 p.m.: Breakout sessions

Setting the Stage- Foundations for Identification and Medical Intervention Related to Cleft Lip and Palate (1 CPE for SLP and SLP-A)

Location: Multimedia Room

Presenter: Layne Scull, MS, CCC-SLP

Nutrition Program Data Gap and Public Health Issues in East Texas: The Case of the WIC Program

Location: Twilight Ballroom

Presenter: Muswamba Mwamba, DrPh, MS, IBCLC, RLC

AI & Nutrition: What We Learned in 2025 (1 CPE for RDs)

Location: Tiered Classroom

Presenter: Raul Palacios, MS, RDN, LD

2:15 to 3:15 p.m.: Closing sessions

Taking the Stage - A Broad Overview of Assessment and Treatment Related to Cleft Lip and Palate (1 CPE for SLP and SLP-A)

Location: Multimedia room

Presenter: Layne Scull, MS, CCC-SLP

Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Eating Disorder Management: A Comprehensive Approach to Patient-Centered Care

Location: Tiered Classroom

Panelists: Amy Henke, PsyD; Kathy Veath RDN, LD, CEDS; Dr. Robyn Whitehead; Tyler Wooten, MD

New Insights in the Management of Obesity (1 CPE for RDs)

Location: Twilight Ballroom

Presenters: Dr. Lance Sloan, Dr. Katia Sloan, RD

Speaker Bios

Sarah Bullard, MS, RD, LD

Sarah Bullard is a registered dietitian specializing in pediatric nutrition, family-based behavioral treatment and practical strategies for improving the home food environment. She currently supports telehealth-delivered obesity interventions through Children's Mercy Hospital and operates UNstuck Nutrition, a virtual practice focused on anti-inflammatory and realistic meal planning content. Bullard brings over 15 years of clinical, research and teaching experience, translating evidence into simple, sustainable habits for families, including 12 years dedicated specifically to pediatric nutrition, such as early intervention, pediatric feeding disorders, weight management and failure to thrive.

Hillary Cooper, MA, CCC-SLP

Hillary Cooper is an advocate, educator, researcher and self-described dysphagia geek. She owns North Louisiana Swallow Solutions, providing mobile FEES services across North Louisiana and South Arkansas, and co-founded the Dysphagia Outreach Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that operates the only U.S. food and supply pantry for people with feeding and swallowing disorders. Cooper serves as the 2024–25 CSAP treasurer and is a past president of the Louisiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She is pursuing an EdD at Baylor University, with research focused on shared decision-making for diet modifications in long-term care and improving charitable distribution of dysphagia supplies.

Layne DeBardelaben, MA, CCC-SLP

Layne DeBardelaben is a speech-language pathologist and received her Master of Arts in the early childhood intervention specialty training track from the University of Houston. She received her Bachelor of Science in speech and hearing with a minor in child development and family from SFA. DeBardelaben is a long-standing member of both TSHA and the ASHA. DeBardelaben has years of clinical experience as a speech-language pathologist in a variety of settings that include outpatient rehabilitation, hospital, nursing home, early childhood intervention and private practice.



Speaker Bios

Amy Gorin, MS, RD, LD

Amy Gorin is an award-winning plant-based media dietitian and founder of Master the Media and Plant Based with Amy. One of the most-quoted dietitians in the U.S., she has completed over 2,000 media interviews and bylined articles, with expert features in outlets such as TODAY, The New York Times and People, reaching more than 3 billion people. Gorin trains health professionals through Master the Media and hosts its podcast. A U.S. News & World Report Best Diets panelist, she also partners ethically with major brands, including helping implement Panda Express's Panda Promise®. She holds journalism and dietetics degrees from the University of Florida, Northwestern, NYU and Utah State.

Dr. Celina Hawthorne, OTR, OTD

Dr. Celina Hawthorne is the owner and director of Grace in Motion Rehab, an outpatient clinic in Nacogdoches, Texas that provides occupational, physical and speech therapy services across the lifespan. With twenty five years of experience in occupational therapy, she is devoted to providing exceptional, holistic care to the clients she is privileged to serve. Hawthorne earned her Doctor of Occupational Therapy from Baylor University and currently also serves as adjunct faculty in Baylor's OTD program, where she educates and supports both entry level and post professional occupational therapy students.

Dr. Amy Henke, PsyD

Dr. Amy Henke is a pediatric psychologist at Children's Hospital New Orleans with specialized training in pediatric health psychology. She is Louisiana's only mental health professional certified in Family-Based Therapy for eating disorders and leads the state's only FBT-based clinic. Henke's interests include eating disorders, chronic medical conditions and care for gender-diverse youth. A dedicated advocate for the profession, she is the 2024–25 president of the Louisiana Psychological Association and a former chair of the Louisiana Board of State Examiners of Psychologists.



Speaker Bios

Dr. Lisa McCleary, NCSP, BCBA-D

Dr. Lisa McCleary has over 10 years of experience working as a school psychologist and behavior specialist with children, teachers and families. She is a Licensed School Psychologist, a Licensed Psychologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst with Doctoral Designation. McCleary has extensive experience providing psycho-educational evaluations, school-based behavioral and academic consultation, as well as direct interventions in a variety of public-school systems both in Tennessee and East Texas. In addition, she has provided behavioral health services, in a private practice, to a wide range of children and adults with disabilities, as well as a clinic providing ABA therapy to children with Autism. Currently, McCleary is an assistant professor at SFA.



Dr. Muswamba Mwamba, IBCLC

Dr. Muswamba A. Mwamba is an internationally certified lactation consultant, public health scholar and professor whose work focuses on immigrant health and health disparities in the U.S. He supports optimal maternal and infant outcomes by promoting father involvement in breastfeeding and brings a global perspective to teaching infant nutrition and public health leadership.

Mwamba holds degrees in agricultural engineering, human nutrition, food science and public health from institutions in Belgium and the U.S., including the University of North Texas and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Raul Palacios, MS, RDN, LD

Raul Palacios is a registered dietitian and the director of the didactic program in dietetics at Texas Tech University. A rising leader in the AI and dietetics space, Palacios' scholarship and teaching center on how AI can augment, rather than replace, sound clinical reasoning and evidence-based nutrition care to improve nutrition practice in practical ways. Palacios is active in the AI, nutrition and education space, having served on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' AI in Education Workgroup, serving as a guest editor for the International Journal of Obesity's AI Special Edition, teaching Texas Tech's AI Fundamentals undergraduate course for future healthcare professionals, and was a founding member of Texas Tech's Human Centered AI Bachelor's Degree plan.



Speaker Bios

Layne Scull, MS, CCC-SLP

Layne Scull graduated from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center with her undergraduate degree in 2017 and from SFA with her graduate degree in 2019. During almost seven years of being a speech-language pathologist, she has served in a variety of settings including her personal favorite, and current position, as a school-based SLP through Panola County Shared Services Arrangement. In addition to being an SLP, she is also a wife and a mother to two beautiful girls. She has had the distinct privilege to speak about her journey as a mom of a cleft-affected child, and is excited to be back at SFA to share a glimpse into the assessment and treatment of this population from first hand experience.



Dr. Katia Sloan, RD

Dr. Katia Sloan researches lifestyle and dietary impacts on obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease and metabolic syndrome. She has published over 80 peer-reviewed articles, coordinated numerous trials and has experience developing lifestyle intervention programs. She is a professor of nutrition, clinical dietitian and director of research at the Texas Institute for Kidney and Endocrine Disorders, associate editor for *Diabetes Spectrum*, and visiting professor at the University of Marilia, Brazil. She holds a PhD and advanced degrees in nutrition from the University of Sao Paolo, Brazil and completed postdoctoral training in public health and nutrition.



Dr. Lance Sloan, MD

Dr. Lance Sloan is President of the Department of Clinical Metabolism at the Texas Institute for Kidney and Endocrine Disorders and a clinical assistant professor at University of Texas Medical Branch and Sam Houston State University. He holds an MD from UT Houston, completed fellowships in endocrinology, diabetes, metabolism and nephrology, and is board certified in internal medicine, endocrinology and nephrology. A fellow of multiple professional societies, Sloan has served as president of the Texas Endocrine Association and Angelina County Medical Society. His research focuses on diabetes, kidney disease, obesity, hypertension and metabolic disorders, and he has been principal investigator for numerous clinical trials with publications in leading journals.



Ginger Stephens, LPC-S, LCDC

Ginger Stephens is a licensed professional counselor and chemical dependency counselor passionate about whole-person wellness, integrating mind, body, heart and soul. She works with clients seeking change, using tools like gratitude, acceptance and grace, and draws on her experience with substance use, trauma and mind-body connection.

Stephens is a certified integrative somatic trauma therapist and mind-body connection practitioner, with training in complex trauma and polyvagal theory. She holds a BA in mass communications/journalism from Southern Nazarene University and an MA in counseling from LeTourneau University.



Kathy Veath, RDN, LD, CEDS

Kathy Veath received her degree in nutrition and dietetics from the University of Illinois and has been a registered dietitian since 1996. She started treating those with eating disorders in 1998. After moving to Texas in 2007, she opened her private practice Woodlands Nutrition LLC. She took a short break from the outpatient setting to help open and lead the RD team at Eating Recovery Center The Woodlands. Veath is one of only a few registered dietitians in the Houston area who are board certified as an eating disorder specialist dietitian (CEDS) through the International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals (IAEDP). She believes that food is more than "fuel" and should be enjoyed in a way that enhances life and wellbeing to the fullest.



Dr. Robyn Whitehead, EP, CWCS

Dr. Robyn Whitehead earned her Doctor of Psychology in exercise and sport psychology from the University of the Rockies (2016) and holds a Master in Sports Administration (2003) and a Bachelor's in Exercise Physiology (2002), both from University of Southern Mississippi. She has been an ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist, or EP, since 2001 and became a Certified Women's Coaching Specialist, or CWCS, in June 2025. With over 25 years of professional experience across exercise physiology, sport psychology and allied health, Whitehead brings a deep interdisciplinary approach to preparing future health and performance professionals.



Dr. Tyler Wooten, MD

Dr. Tyler A. Wooten is the Medical Director at the Eating Recovery Center in Plano, Texas, and a board-certified child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist with over 25 years of experience. He began his education at Southern Methodist University and earned his medical degree from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, completing residency at UT Southwestern and a pediatric psychiatry fellowship at Children's Medical Center.

Before joining the Eating Recovery Center in 2016, he practiced at Uptown Analytic Practices. His work is shaped by experiences with eating disorders, addictions and the juvenile detention system, informing his approach to psychiatry and psychotherapy.



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