Five questions with....

Jamie Perry, PhD, CCC-SLP

Jamie Perry, PhD, CCC-SLP, is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders. Beginning in July, 2015 she will be a tenured, associate professor in the department. She completed her PhD at the University of Illinois in 2007 and then was on faculty in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders at Illinois State University before joining the ECU faculty in 2011. Dr. Perry serves on the cleft palate craniofacial team at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, NC. Dr. Perry serves as the coordinator for the resonance disorders clinic where she provides speech evaluations and therapy to individuals with errors related to cleft palate and resonance disorders. Dr. Perry also provides support and training through surgical mission trips to third world countries. Dr. Perry is Director of the Speech Imaging and Visualization Lab. She conducts research using MRI, 3D computer technology, and finite element modeling to study the anatomy, speech, and surgical approaches used to treat cleft palate. Her collaborative work aims to examine the how variations in presurgical anatomy affect postsurgical speech outcomes in children born with cleft palate. Dr. Perry’s research is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

What do you like best about working at ECU?

The people—I really enjoy working with the people in our department, students, and the support staff. The students at ECU are hard working and very motivated. My colleagues at ECU are collaborators and friends. Also, we are extremely fortunate here at ECU to have our own grants contact person, exceptional Biostatistics program to collaborate, and support staff to promote our growth in teaching and research. I did not have all this at my prior institution and I am so grateful to have this here.

What do you find most exciting about your research and its potential?

The most exciting aspect for me is working on innovative research with amazing collaborators across the country. When your research (like mine) challenges current clinical paradigms your work is likely not appreciated or respected by all; however, you have the great potential to do something amazing—if it works. I’m praying for the latter.

What excites you about teaching?

I love seeing students be stretched and challenged to think outside of the box—to question why we do what we do. I enjoy seeing a student think critically about an issue and dig for the evidence to build their understanding.

What do you hope students take away from their experiences from working with you on your research?

I hope my students leave with a strong desire to challenge, question, and examine every thought either in their clinical practice or research endeavors. I hope they never say a study “concluded”—rather, they see clinic and research as always evolving. I hope they see themselves as the key players in this evolution. It is the best perspective to avoid becoming bored, stagnant, and complacent. Most importantly, I hope students take away values of integrity, respect, and discipline.
What is your favorite teaching or research moment?

One of my favorite research moments was when my PhD student was selected to present his research at our national conference in the speaker category, which recognizes the papers of highest distinction (and is attended by about 300 people). This particular student had never presented at the national conference and was very nervous. He also is a person who stutters—in such, oral presentations can be particularly challenging. The student did an exceptional job and received a research grant at the conference. The overwhelming response he received from top researchers in our field was a huge boost for this student to help him see the multitude of supporters and to see the importance of his role in academia and research. I could share stories alike from each of my students, so it is hard to pick just one! They are all exceptional!