


NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2026 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Nominations must include this as the cover page of the nomination package PDF submission

Name of Applicant:	Kazlin Mason
Institution:	University of Virginia
Category (choose only one): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baccalaureate Institution• Masters/Comprehensive Institution• Research/Doctoral Institution• Two-Year Institution• Rising Star	Rising Star
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	
Printed Name of President or Chief Academic Officer:	Brie Gertler
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Mission Statement

The University of Virginia is a public institution of higher learning guided by a founding vision of discovery, innovation, and development of the full potential of talented students from all walks of life. It serves the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world by developing responsible citizen leaders and professionals; advancing, preserving, and disseminating knowledge; and providing world-class patient care.

We are defined by:

- Our enduring commitment to a vibrant and unique residential learning environment marked by the free and collegial exchange of ideas;
- Our unwavering support of a collaborative, diverse community bound together by distinctive foundational values of honor, integrity, trust, and respect;
- Our universal dedication to excellence and affordable access.

Source: www.virginia.edu/statementofpurpose

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dr. Kazlin Mason is a nationally recognized speech scientist, clinician, and educator whose work is shaping new assessment and treatment approaches for pediatric speech disorders, specifically those that arise from conditions that affect the face and skull, such as cleft palate. As a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist (SLP), she brings a rare blend of clinical expertise, innovative science, and dedication to student development to her work. In less than five years since beginning her tenure-track appointment, Dr. Mason has established an early record of research excellence characterized by a high and accelerating volume of highly cited publications and over \$2.2 million in competitive grant funding as Principal Investigator from the National Institutes of Health and leading foundations such as The Hartwell Foundation and the Wallace H. Coulter Center for Translational Research. Her research has produced two provisional patents on MRI-based surgical prediction tools and is focused on clinical translation that aims to reduce failed speech surgeries and improve lifelong communication outcomes for children born with cleft and craniofacial conditions.

Her reputation as an educator is equally distinguished. She has earned UVA School of Education and Human Development's (SEHD) Lasting Legacy Award for Teaching (2023), which is a student nominated honor that celebrates faculty whose instruction and mentorship leave a lasting impact on students' academic and professional development. She also consistently achieves outstanding student evaluations across undergraduate and graduate courses. She is widely recognized as an exceptional mentor and fosters the success of students across disciplines through inclusive guidance and meaningful research opportunities. Her mentorship has helped trainees grow into respected leaders in speech science and clinical care. Her former trainees now serve as lead clinical speech-language pathologists, members of craniofacial teams, national presenters, published researchers, and award recipients. Their success reflects her deep commitment to preparing the next generation of speech scientists and clinicians.

Teaching and Mentoring

Dr. Mason's teaching exemplifies the integration of evidence-based pedagogy, inclusive practices, and clinically relevant instruction. She has taught undergraduate and graduate courses including Voice & Resonance Disorders (EDHS 7090), Dysphagia (EDHS 8130), Neuroanatomy (EDHS 7190), and Introduction to Communication Disorders (EDHS 2045), consistently earning outstanding evaluations. Across all courses taught, her overall averages range from 4.6-4.9 / 5 in areas such as "teaching effectiveness" and "respect for diversity and student perspectives". Students describe her courses as "one of my favorites" and "engaging in each class" and "providing a much deeper understanding of a subject I had no prior experience in". They also praise her for "making traditionally difficult subjects approachable and inspiring". Even during the challenges of pandemic-era teaching during her first year on the tenure track, Dr. Mason demonstrated exceptional engagement with her students, creating inclusive and interactive learning environments that left a lasting impact on students' confidence and clinical preparation.

Her teaching philosophy emphasizes Universal Design for Learning, hands-on case-based activities, and active learning strategies such as 3D model-building, storytelling, and diagnostic simulations. She integrates her imaging research into her courses, allowing students to engage directly with anatomic models and case studies. These methods promote accessibility, empathy, and develop clinical reasoning. Representative student feedback from course evaluations further underscores the impact of Dr. Mason's teaching, highlighting her ability to foster belonging, inspire confidence, and translate complex material into meaningful educational outcomes for clinical practice:

- *"I have not to date participated in a course that was so effectively structured and aimed at shaping future clinicians."*
- *"Dr. Mason's skill as both a researcher and an educator is evident in all that she does."*

- *"Dr. Mason has an infectious passion for the topic and always provided us with extra resources to deepen our understanding."*
- *"Dr. Mason is a wonderful SLP and an even more wonderful person. She is so extremely knowledgeable but never makes you feel stupid for not understanding something."*
- *"This was one of my favorite courses I've taken in this program. Even though it was online because of the pandemic, I felt engaged each class and gained a much deeper understanding of a subject area I had no prior experience in."*
- *"Dr. Mason highlighted the importance of culturally responsive practice and created a safe and welcoming environment for all students."*
- *"Dr. Mason is the most organized professor I have ever had. Every activity was so helpful, exercised my clinical skills, and pertained to course material."*
- *"This course was incredibly well organized and provided students with a wealth of resources for their future clinical assignments. Dr. Mason is both a well-respected leader in her field and an approachable teacher."*

Dr. Mason's mentorship record is similarly impressive. She regularly advises 65 master's students in the Communication Sciences & Disorders program each academic year and has mentored 70+ undergraduate and graduate trainees through her lab. Her lab is known as an inclusive, supportive environment where students play an active role in shaping research. They co-design projects, present nationally (22 student-led presentations), and co-author peer reviewed publications (8 published manuscripts with students). She has also collaboratively mentored 7 PhD students, significantly exceeding the typical expectation in her department. In addition, she has supported 3 master's theses, 24 graduate projects, and 33 undergraduate projects (more than triple the departmental average). This demonstrates her deep and sustained commitment to student development at every level. Her mentorship pipeline is also highly unique and spans diverse fields including communication sciences, biomedical engineering, psychology, data science, and biology, underscoring her interdisciplinary impact.

Discovery

Dr. Mason has quickly established a nationally visible and externally funded research program that advances precision medicine for children with craniofacial conditions. Her scholarship is organized around three interconnected themes: 1) quantification and mechanistic understanding of craniofacial and velopharyngeal (speech) anatomy, 2) linking anatomy to speech outcomes, and 3) clinical translation. A central focus of her work is translating anatomic insights into tools that directly improve surgical planning and speech outcomes for children with cleft palate and other craniofacial conditions.

This work is important because more than 30% of surgeries to correct speech disorders for these children fail, often due to a lack of objective, patient-specific information to guide treatment. Her work directly addresses this problem through the development of child-friendly, fully awake, non-sedated speech MRI protocols that produce high-quality, usable imaging for children as young as two years old. These innovative methods enable high-resolution 3D and dynamic imaging of the speech mechanism and overcome a long-standing barrier in the field. Her work is reducing reliance on invasive and subjective assessments and her research has shown that specific anatomic features, such as the levator veli palatini muscle ratio and tissue migration after speech surgery (pharyngoplasty), can predict whether a surgery will succeed or fail. These findings, published in prestigious journals including *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, *Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal*, and *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, are already guiding clinical decision making. By providing surgeons and speech pathologists with objective, patient-specific predictors of outcomes, her work is helping to reduce the need for repeat surgeries and improve long-term speech function for children.

Dr. Mason is also expanding the clinical utility of imaging data through computational modeling and AI-based tools that support surgical planning. Her cross-disciplinary team is

developing patient-specific simulations that model how a child's speech anatomy may respond to different surgical techniques, which will help clinicians make more informed and personalized decisions before a single incision is made. This work is supported by NIH funding and will improve surgical success rates. Her most recent projects continue this translational work by exploring new surgical techniques using regenerative biomaterials. In collaboration with biomedical engineers, materials scientists, and surgeons, she is leading a new application of novel biomaterials for palatal reconstruction designed to promote tissue healing and support long-term speech development. She has also expanded her imaging methods to other clinical populations, including children with cerebral palsy, voice disorders, and head and neck cancer, demonstrating the adaptability and significant scope for her scientific approaches. This cross-disciplinary work reflects her strong commitment to precision imaging and personalized care, with the ultimate goal of helping children speak clearly, connect more easily with others, and thrive socially and emotionally.

Dr. Mason's research productivity includes 27 peer-reviewed publications, the majority as first or senior author, and 33 invited presentations at national and international venues. Recognition of her scholarly excellence includes a university-wide Research Excellence Award (2024) and national recognition through the Emerging Leader Award from the American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association (2022). She is emerging as one of the nation's leading translational scholars at the interface of speech physiology, imaging science, and clinical practice.

Knowledge Integration

Dr. Mason excels in integrating research, teaching, and clinical practice. She brings state of the art clinical methods and assessment protocols into graduate courses, allowing students to apply research findings to clinical cases in real time. She has developed open-source preparation tools and training materials including interactive video cues, standardized MRI initiation guides, and family-friendly websites that have been adopted at multiple research and clinical sites. Her imaging protocols are already in use at UVA Health and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where surgeons incorporate MRI-based assessment data into surgical planning. This early clinical adoption underscores the translational value of her work.

Beyond UVA, Dr. Mason contributes to professional knowledge dissemination as Editor of Perspectives of the American Speech Language Hearing Association Journal (since 2024), where she shapes national conversations on evidence-based practice in craniofacial disorders. She also writes for The Informed SLP, a leading knowledge-translation platform that connects clinicians and scientists by providing clinically actionable reviews of current and emerging evidence-based practices. Dr. Mason's reviews have been read by more than 60,000 clinicians in 71 countries.

Her national leadership and research in advancing clinical care has also been recognized by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Her presentation, "Advancing Clinical Care for Cleft Palate: Innovations in Imaging and Biofeedback Technologies," was designated a Centennial Session for the 2025 Convention, and was selected from over 3,700 peer reviewed sessions. Centennial Sessions are reserved for work that exemplifies forward-thinking scholarship with the potential to significantly impact the field by addressing future challenges, shaping practice, and leading transformative initiatives.

Dr. Mason's integration between research innovation and clinical relevance has also been highlighted in NIH study section reviews of her grant proposals, which emphasize both the significance and translational potential of her work:

- *"The project addresses a well-articulated, quite dramatic need to improve surgical outcomes for children with velopharyngeal insufficiency."*
- *"The proposed work is novel, interdisciplinary, and of high societal impact."*

- *“The PI and team are solving a patient problem and an issue that currently creates a significant family and health care burden.”*
- *“The sophisticated, cutting-edge technological approach, together with demonstrated feasibility, shows great promise for producing impactful results.”*

Such external validation underscores Dr. Mason’s reputation as an investigator whose program is both innovative and clinically essential. Her work is already improving the accuracy of diagnostics, reducing failed speech surgeries, and enhancing communication outcomes for children. Looking ahead, her research program is poised to expand these advances through broad clinical translation and cross-disciplinary collaboration positioning her work to establish new national standards of care in pediatric speech disorders. Through these efforts, she ensures that her innovations not only advance science, but also reach students, clinicians, and patients.

Service

Dr. Mason’s service reflects a deep commitment to excellence in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where she actively advances clinical care, education, and institutional development. At UVA, she has served on six program committees supporting curriculum planning, program development, accreditation, and faculty governance, and has contributed to the graduate admissions process for five years. She has also supported two faculty searches, helped facilitate UVA New Faculty Orientation, and received UVA SEHD’s Excellence in Service Award for these contributions. Clinically, she is an active collaborator with the UVA Cleft Palate Team, UVA Voice & Swallowing Clinic, and UVA Sheila C. Johnson Center where she provides advanced consultative assessments, contributes to interdisciplinary surgical decision-making, and mentors graduate students. These roles underscore her leadership in fostering cross-disciplinary institutional excellence, student success, and collaborative clinical care.

Nationally, Dr. Mason has also built a strong record of professional leadership, advancing the fields of craniofacial care and speech-language pathology. She currently serves as Co-Chair of the Membership Committee for the American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association (ACPA), sits on the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Coordinating Committee for Special Interest Group 5, and has previously served as Continuing Education Content Manager for ASHA. She has chaired national forums, led planning for ASHA’s Annual Convention, and co-founded the John E. Riski Memorial Speech Scholarship through the ACPA. Her editorial leadership includes reviewing more than 80 manuscripts across 16 flagship journals, serving on the ASHA Journals editorial board since 2020, and currently serving as Editor of *Perspectives*. Internationally, she has extended her impact through Smiles International Foundation supporting the speech team in Mexico by supporting the development of sustainable clinical protocols. Collectively, these roles highlight her national and global influence while reinforcing her dedication to service excellence at UVA and across Virginia.

Conclusion

Dr. Kazlin Mason exemplifies both the promise and impact of a Rising Star. As an early career scholar, she has quickly built a highly funded, innovative, and nationally visible research program. She has advanced precision medicine for craniofacial care and translated her discoveries into clinical and educational practice. She has developed a reputation as an award-winning teacher and mentor, recognized with honors in research, teaching, and service from both UVA and national professional organizations. Her mentorship of over 70 trainees, combined with her editorial and professional leadership roles of national significance, ensures her influence will extend to future generations of students, clinicians, and scientists. Through her novel imaging methods, interdisciplinary collaborations, and commitment to inclusive pedagogy, Dr. Mason is shaping the future of speech science, clinical practice, and higher education. Her accomplishments reflect an exceptional trajectory for an early-career scholar, with a scope and influence that signal sustained national and international impact on children’s health, communication, and quality of life.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

I grew up in a small rural farming town where curiosity and building new things shaped everything I did. In fifth grade, I spent months reconstructing a life-sized cow skeleton for a science fair project. I was captivated by how each bone fit together. That experience taught me to understand how anatomy influences physiology and how the form of something shapes what is possible. Later, as I studied music, I became equally fascinated by how subtle changes in resonance, timing, and coordination could transform sound into a form of communication. These early experiences sparked a way of seeing the world that I still carry with me. I'm guided by careful observation, curiosity, and creative thinking aimed at solving problems and building systems that improve people's lives.

This perspective is what eventually led me to pursue a career in speech-language pathology. During one of my first clinical rotations, I worked with children born with cleft palate. Many had undergone multiple speech surgeries and still struggled to be understood. I remember one child who, after his third operation, looked up at me and asked, "Why can't they fix it?" I had no answer. I carried that question with me into every graduate course and clinical rotation. It has subsequently shaped my career which is focused on improving speech outcomes for children like him by reducing the number of surgeries required to be clearly heard and understood. Today, my work spans MRI suites, speech therapy clinics, operating rooms, machine-learning pipelines, and university classrooms, all centered on the intersection of structure, function, and communication. At its core, my work consistently circles back to what first pulled me in: linking the mechanics of speaking to the deeply human experience of being heard and understood.

This commitment to ensuring every voice is heard also guides how I teach, mentor, and support students. As the first in my family to pursue an advanced degree, I remember what it felt like to enter unfamiliar academic spaces... to not know the rules or the jargon. I often see that same quiet uncertainty in my students. Because of this, I center my teaching around creating space where students can ask questions, take risks, and grow in their confidence. I'm frequently reminded of students in my Voice and Resonance Disorders course. A student recently pulled me aside and said she didn't think she belonged; that interpreting perceptual speech data felt overwhelming. We walked through one case together. Then another. Slowly, she began to trust her instincts. By the end of the semester, she was leading discussions and mentoring others. As we met throughout the semester, she told me it was the first time she felt both challenged and supported in equal measure. That is the kind of transformation I always aim to facilitate, not just knowledge acquisition, but a shift in confidence and self-belief.

I've also found that my dual clinical and research background enhances my teaching and often uniquely allows me to bridge foundational science with the complexity of patient care. I currently teach advanced graduate courses on developmental and acquired communication disorders and I design learning experiences that challenge students to move beyond memorization and engage with uncertainty by interpreting imaging, solving diagnostic puzzles, analyzing anatomy, and applying evidence to care planning. I emphasize not only *what* to do, but *why*. I ask students to connect systems, to reflect on lived experience, and to consider how biological complexity intersects with clinical decisions. We integrate hands-on imaging analyses and case-based discussions to mirror real-world challenges. Similarly, in my lab, students are not passive observers. They formulate impactful research questions, collect data, analyze structure and function, and build predictive models tied directly to patient outcomes. Too often, students are taught to simply compartmentalize knowledge. But I ask them to connect it across the classroom and the clinic, between the data and the patient, and between what they know and what they wonder. Watching students grow into independent thinkers who ask better

questions, make bolder choices, and believe in their ability to contribute is one of the most rewarding parts of my role as an educator.

As a scientist, my research began with a simple but urgent question: Why do so many speech surgeries for cleft palate repair fail? Over 30% of children require multiple operations, and with each attempt at surgical revision, the chance of success diminishes. Behind each failed surgery is a child whose ability to speak clearly remains just out of reach. That gap between intervention and outcome drove me toward a different approach. What if we could better understand the anatomic and functional differences that predict surgical success? And what if we could use that information *before surgery* to guide clinical decisions?

These questions pushed me toward developing new approaches using MRI and machine learning to create automated assessment tools and predictive models. These tools detect subtle differences in anatomy and speech function, offering insight into which children are likely to benefit from surgery and which may not. This translational work has led to two provisional patent applications and ongoing NIH funding. But more importantly, it represents a new path forward where we intervene with patient-specific insight, reduce the surgical burden, and bring the possibility of clear, confident communication closer for every child. The impact of this work on children's communication and quality of life is what keeps me asking the next question.

I'm also consistently drawn to the intersections where disciplines meet: where imaging informs communication, where new engineering tools shape surgery, and where anatomic insights drive clinical care. These are the spaces where I do my most meaningful work. My questions aren't just about what we can discover, but about how that knowledge fits into broader systems of education and clinical practice, and how it can be used to improve quality of life across different domains. Collaboration is central to this process. Working with students, engineers, data scientists, speech pathologists, and surgeons, I've learned that the most impactful insights often come when we break through disciplinary boundaries. A single measurement can change how a surgeon operates, how a speech therapist plans treatment, or how a research team frames the next study. My role is often to connect those threads by linking data to clinical context and linking evidence to decision-making. This also shapes how I teach. When students begin to see how one observation can connect to multiple areas of care or scientific inquiry, they understand how research becomes more than data collection and learning more than rote memorization. And when students experience that shift, they begin to see themselves not just as learners, but as contributors to knowledge that has a direct impact on people's lives.

These connections don't stop at the lab or the classroom. They extend into broader areas of service with clinical teams, academic communities, and professional organizations where knowledge must translate into action and care. Sometimes my service work is visible in leading a workshops, organizing a cross-site trainings, or mentoring a new clinicians in an under-resourced setting. Other times, it's behind the scenes and focused on aligning processes, coordinating across teams, or reviewing and consulting on cases late into the evening to support thoughtful, timely decisions. But no matter the scale, the goals are always the same: bridging the gaps between data and care, connecting students with opportunity, and building from what is to what could be.

All of these experiences guide how I teach, how I serve, and how I ask questions. I'm continuously energized by what lies ahead and consistently shaped by what I learn from the students and the children I work with each day. They remind me that education, at its best, is not just about knowledge, but about building systems of support that help others find their voice, their confidence, and their place in the world.

KAZLIN N. MASON, PHD, CCC-SLP

[FACULTY BIO](#) • [GOOGLE SCHOLAR](#) • [LAB WEBSITE](#)

EDUCATION

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE	DATE	FIELD OF STUDY
State University of New York at Fredonia, NY	BS	05/11	Communication Sciences
State University of New York at Fredonia, NY	MS	05/13	Speech-Language Pathology
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA	Fellowship	05/14	Craniofacial Disorders
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC	PhD	12/17	Rehabilitation Sciences: Communication Disorders

SELECTED ACADEMIC & SCIENTIFIC APPOINTMENTS

2020 – Present	Assistant Professor, Tenure Track; University of Virginia; Charlottesville, VA Director, Imaging and Communication Outcomes (iCO) Lab
2018 – 2020	Clinical Instructor, Communication Sciences and Disorders Program Human Services Department; University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
2017 – Present	Speech Scientist, Chief of Speech/Language Research Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Center for Craniofacial Disorders; Atlanta GA
2024 – Present	Editor, <i>Perspectives</i> of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association

SELECTED HONORS & AWARDS

2024	Research Excellence Award, University of Virginia
2023	Lasting Legacy Award for Teaching, University of Virginia
2022	Nominated for Peer-Reviewer of the Year, Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Journal
2022	Emerging Leader Award, American Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Association
2021 – 2023	Invited Scholar, Integrated Translational Research Institute of Virginia
2019	Excellence in Service Award, University of Virginia
2018	1 st Place, Best Data Visualization, Open Data Challenge, Charlottesville, VA
Other Contributions and Service	<i>Peer Reviewer</i> for 10+ scientific journals in the fields of speech physiology, speech pathology, communication disorders, cleft palate, surgery <i>Coordinating Committee Member,</i> American Speech-Language Hearing Assoc. <i>Graduate Student Advisor</i> (N=65 students), CSD Program, UVA <i>Search Committee Member</i> (2022 & 2024), SEHD, University of Virginia <i>Faculty Judge,</i> Hunter Student Research Conference

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (underlined represents mentored student)

Total= 27 publications, h-index: 9, i10: 9 | See all published work at: [NIH NCBI Bibliography](#)

1. **Mason KN**, Gampper T, Black J. (2025). Achieving Clinical Success in Nonsedated Velopharyngeal MRI: Insights for Optimal Data Quality & Effective Patient Selection. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*. 155(3), 562e-572e.
2. **Mason KN**, Botz E, Gampper T. (2024). Differential Diagnosis and Therapeutic Monitoring of Velopharyngeal Function Using MRI During Speech Production. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. 34(1), 1-11.
3. **Mason KN**, Gampper T, Black JS. (2024). Levator Veli Palatini Muscle Ratio is a Clinically Significant Anatomic Predictor for Velopharyngeal Surgical Need. *Cleft Palate Craniofacial Journal*. 62(2):250-262.
4. DiSalvo M, Blemker SS, **Mason KN**. (2024). A Computational Model Reveals How Varying Muscle Activation in the Lateral Pharyngeal Wall and Soft Palate Differentiates Velopharyngeal Closure Patterns. *Journal of Speech, Language, Hearing Research*. 67(12), 4663-4675.
5. **Mason KN**, Hanson B, Black J. (2024). Measurement Matters: MRI Analysis of Differing Anatomic Measurement Techniques for Velar Length and the Velopharyngeal Needs Ratio. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Global Open*. 12(2), e5617.

6. **Mason KN**, Black J. (2023). Incorporating Velopharyngeal MRI into the Clinical Decision-Making Process for a Patient Presenting with VPD following a Failed Palatoplasty. *Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Journal*. 61(9), 1563-1573.
7. **Mason KN**. (2022). Magnetic Resonance Imaging for Assessing Velopharyngeal Function: Current Applications, Barriers, and Potential for Future Clinical Translation. *Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Journal*. 61(2), 236-246.
8. **Tran VT**, Blemker SS, Perry JL, **Mason KN**. (2022). Simulation of Velopharyngeal Biomechanics Identifies Differences in Sphincter Pharyngoplasty Outcomes: A Matched Case-Control Study. *Cleft Palate/Craniofacial Journal*. 61(2), 339-349.
9. **Mason KN**, **Sypniewski H**, Perry JL. (2020). Academic Education of the Speech-Language Pathologist: A Comparative Analysis on Graduate Education in Two Low Incidence Disorder Areas. *Perspectives of the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association, Special Interest Groups*. 5(1), 164-172.

GRANT FUNDING RECORD

Total Funding \$2.2 M received as PI since 2020

Active: Agencies: NIH (NIDCD R21, NIDCR R21, NCATS KL2) and External Foundations
2 NIH (2023-26, \$1.1 M) MRI-guided prediction of surgical success and development of novel surgical interventions; Hartwell Foundation Award (2025-28, \$550K), Coulter Foundation Award (2024-2027, \$165K)

Completed (2020-23): 4 primary projects including NIH NCATS (\$250K), Center for Engineering in Medicine (\$175K) UVA Internal Pilot Grants (Combined, \$100K)

PATENTS

Title: *Product, System, and Method for Velopharyngeal Modeling, Visualization, and Measurement*
U.S. Provisional Patent App. Serial No. 63/830,154

Title: *Product, System, and Method for Using Measurements from the Levator Veli Palatini (LVP) Ratio as a Surgical Prediction Tool* | U.S. Provisional Patent App. Serial No. 63/830,285

RECENT INVITED PRESENTATIONS (INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, & LOCAL) (TOTAL N = 33)

1. **Mason KN**. (November 2025). Advancing Clinical Care for Cleft Palate: Innovations in Imaging and Biofeedback Technologies. Invited Speaker, 1-hour seminar, Envisioning Possibilities for the Future. American Speech Language Hearing Association Annual Convention, Washington DC. ***Awarded designation as a Centennial Session, selected from over 3,700 presentations.*
2. **Mason KN**. (February 2025). Transforming Velopharyngeal Assessment with Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Artificial Intelligence, and Predictive Analytics. Invited Speaker. Craniofacial Grand Rounds, Saint Louis Children's Hospital. St. Louis, MO.
3. **Mason KN**. (June 2024). Outcome Measures to Evaluate VPI Pre- and Post-Operatively: New and Future Perspectives. Invited Panelist. European Cleft Palate Craniofacial Association Annual Meeting. Milan, Italy.
4. **Mason KN & Dillow KW** (August 2023). Incorporating Velopharyngeal MRI into the Craniofacial Clinical Workflow: Overview and Tutorial for Surgeons, SLPs, and Radiologists. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Scottish Rite. Atlanta, GA.
5. **Mason KN**. (March 2022). Evolution of Velopharyngeal Imaging: Insights into the Physiology of Speech and Resonance. Center for Craniofacial Molecular Biology at Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.

SELECTED TEACHING & MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Graduate and Undergraduate Teaching

Voice & Resonance Disorders (2020 - Present):
Graduate course, ~35 students/term, mean course evaluation: 4.8/5

Introduction to Communication Disorders (2018):
Large undergraduate course, ~80 students/term, 100% pass rate on final case exam

Supervised Research (2018 - Present)

2 Post-docs | 7 PhD Dissertations
3 MS Theses | 8 peer-reviewed manuscripts co-authored with trainees
22 student-led national presentations
70+ total students and trainees mentored

LETTERS OF SUPPORT (EXCERPTED)

Prof. Mason has brought together diverse teams of researchers and clinicians using novel applications of technology, imaging, and data science to develop assessment protocols for clinical translation. She has received national recognition, including the Emerging Leader Award from the ACPA. Prof. Mason is also an exceptional educator. Her goal is to train future speech-language pathologists to be critical thinkers and highly skilled, research-driven clinicians who apply best practices across the diverse communities they will serve. She consistently evaluates and refines her instructional strategies to identify and address barriers related to differences in students' prior exposure to scientific content, varying levels of clinical experience, diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and differing comfort levels with active learning. Prof. Mason's contributions to scholarship, teaching, mentoring, and service distinguish her as a rising star in the field. Her work is having an impact on scholarship and practice, ultimately benefiting students and the public through advances in both science and training.

- Stephanie J. Rowley, Dean, UVA School of Education & Human Development

Dr. Mason's work is on the cutting edge of MRI research in speech-language pathology. It is a remarkable development in our field that speech-language pathologists' research now informs surgical practice, and Dr. Mason's work is a big part of this achievement. Dr. Mason has quickly established herself as one of the academic spokespersons of our field. Despite still being a comparatively junior researcher, Dr. Mason is already an accomplished and well-rounded scholar. The University of Virginia is lucky to have her as a faculty member, and I am certain that she will continue to accomplish great things over the course of her academic career.

- Tim Bressman, Ph.D., University of Toronto

During my time at the University of Virginia, I had the privilege of working closely with Dr. Mason while serving as the lab manager for the Imaging and Communication Outcomes (ICO) Lab...Dr. Mason [was] a dedicated and inspiring mentor. She consistently modeled thoughtful leadership and fostered a collaborative, supportive environment that allowed me to grow both professionally and personally. Dr. Mason exemplifies excellence in teaching, both in the classroom and the lab. As an undergraduate student, she took the time to explain complex topics related to craniofacial anomalies and created countless opportunities for me to grow as a student and leader, including attending the Craniofacial Clinic at UVA's Children's Hospital and the ACPA Annual Conference. Dr. Mason's dedication to discovery is evident in her countless research contributions and her ability to seamlessly integrate findings into her teaching. Her work bridges clinical research, student education, and community service, ultimately enhancing the quality of care provided by the future speech-language pathologists she teaches. Beyond her academic roles, Dr. Mason is an advocate, mentor, and leader. She supports and uplifts students and colleagues at every level—myself included. Working alongside her has been an invaluable experience, and I aspire to one day model the same mentorship she has shown me.

- Kennedy Wilkins (former student)

Dr. Mason's research efforts involving MRI based 3D volumetric modelling to evaluate velopharyngeal function and perhaps guide surgical planning represent groundbreaking advances in the care of [children with cleft lip and palate who are at risk for multiple surgeries]. As a teacher, her philosophy of encouraging critical thinking and applying knowledge gained through research to clinical practice will produce cohorts of exceptional clinical practitioners and researchers who will, in turn, advance the field of speech-language pathology and enhance the care provided to affected individuals. Dr. Mason's trajectory toward success and recognition as an expert in the clinic, the laboratory, and in the classroom has been steep. She clearly has the drive, focus, and skillset to continue that trajectory.

- Jerald Moon, Ph.D., University of Iowa

In addition to her commitment to innovative and clinically applicable research, Dr. Mason is dedicated to providing excellent instruction for her students. She creates an enriching classroom environment in which her students are both challenged and encouraged in their academic development. As an instructor, Dr. Mason provides foundational knowledge as well as clinical insights which guide her students on their path to becoming confident clinicians.

- Emily Sherrod (former graduate student)

I have had the privilege of collaborating closely with Dr. Mason on groundbreaking research integrating advanced MRI imaging with clinical decision-making for children with cleft palate and velopharyngeal dysfunction. We have worked together for multiple years with our work being presented nationally and internationally with great interest. Dr. Mason is an exceptional teacher whose dedication to mentoring students, residents, and interdisciplinary colleagues has elevated our research and clinical teams. She excels at translating complex imaging and biomechanical concepts into accessible knowledge, fostering learning across medicine, speech-language pathology, and engineering. Her commitment to discovery is evident in our joint projects, which have yielded novel MRI protocols and machine learning approaches to objectively assess velopharyngeal function. These innovations hold transformative potential for surgical planning and speech outcomes in children with craniofacial conditions. We are already seeing that translation at work in the clinical space with our cleft palate team at UVA. In integrating knowledge, Dr. Mason bridges the gap between engineering principles, imaging science, and clinical care. Her ability to synthesize insights from diverse disciplines has accelerated the translation of research findings into practical, patient-centered interventions. In every respect, Dr. Mason exemplifies the qualities of a rising star in academia.

- Jonathan S. Black, MD, FACS, FAAP, Associate Professor, UVA Medical School

Dr. Mason's preparation for a course begins with a richly developed pedagogical model that guides every aspect of her teaching...In the classroom, Dr. Mason is expert and facile in leveraging modern technologies to support student learning...In the lab, Dr. Mason demonstrates superb leadership and productivity in advising a large cadre of multidisciplinary undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students in collaborative research projects...Dr. Mason's end-of-term student reviews clearly support the conclusion that students find her an effective instructor of the first rank. Their comments validate the conclusion that she is an inspirational role model in terms of professionalism, achievement, and leadership. She inspires many students to identities as researchers and top tier clinicians.

- Randall R. Robey, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Virginia

Kazlin Mason is an early career scholar who draws on her clinical background as a speech language pathologist while analyzing biophysiological data in search of insights that will meaningfully impact the lives of children who were born with craniofacial anomalies...She is a consummate collaborator who works with surgeons, multidisciplinary health care teams, data scientists, parents, young children, and graduate students in Virginia and Georgia to collect and analyze primary data, including functional magnetic resonance images and quantifiable speech output. Hers is an aggressive pursuit of new knowledge that is generating findings that surgeons and speech language pathologists use in the near term to improve children's speech intelligibility for the rest of their lives. Dr. Mason's line of research excites communication sciences and disorders graduate students, who express great enthusiasm for swallowing, voice, and resonance disorders after experiencing her truly masterful classroom teaching. Moreover, Kazlin's innovative questions, insightful discoveries, indefatigable drive, intelligence, and innate scholarly aptitude have put her on the road to becoming one of the nation's foremost researchers in speech language pathology. The future is bright because Kazlin is shining her brilliant light into the unknown. Countless children, along with the entire discipline of speech language pathology, will be better for it.

- LaVae Hoffman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Virginia