UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

COLLEGE *of* ENGINEERING AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

MSc Seminar

Monday March 9, 2020 at 2:30PM in Reynolds, Room 2224
Bridging the Gap Between DHH Employees and Hearing Employers
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Advisory Committee: Dr. Stacey Scott

ABSTRACT:

Today, a quarter of Canadians have some form of hearing loss with a significant portion of them identifying with the Deaf culture. However, studies show that being d/Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) can result in several career barriers. From getting hired to staying hired to requesting accommodations, DHH employees frequently find themselves working in unhealthy workplaces under non-DHH bosses. DHH people find themselves with inappropriate accommodations (co-workers shout instead of using microphones), glass ceilings (very few DHH Canadians have professional jobs like doctors or lawyers and are less likely to receive promotions), bullying, and unhelpful advice from others (being told to quit the job if you are being discriminated).

I propose a three step process to help address this problem. In the first step, I will follow an autoethnographic methodology to reflect on my own experiences as a DHH (technical? - see below) employee to identify successful and unsuccessful interactions with my hearing employers. Second, to help generalize the findings from Step 1, I will design and deploy corresponding surveys - one for DHH employees, and a matched one for hearing employers - to help capture successful and unsuccessful interactions between these two groups within technical environments. Using the combined results of Steps 1 and 2, I will then identify key issues, factors, and approaches that lead to both successful and unsuccessful outcomes, highlighting both what does work and what does not work.

By clearly identifying the key approaches that can lead to successful and unsuccessful outcomes, my thesis will provide context-sensitive guidance to hearing employers to help maximize the positive outcomes for DHH employees working in technical fields. In addition, my research will serve to empower DHH employees by providing empirical evidence of what works and does not work in a technical work environment.