

Hit the Ground Running | CEHS

07/26/2016



When Tim Slocum began searching for five new staff members, he had no idea he would hire all five of his favorite applicants.

“This is the dream team,” he said. “We got the first five draft picks, our first picks for every position.”

The Special Education and Rehabilitation (SPER) department has a staff of twelve people, and this fall almost half of the faculty will be new.

“We are becoming very young. This is like the rebuilding phase,” Slocum said. “It’s very exciting because we’re going to have this young, energetic crew.”

The new faculty will bring a youthful balance to the department, but also impressive research. For instance, Sarah Pinkelman is joining Utah State University after working at George Mason University, where she researched the application of behavior analysis in schools.

“I’m continually fascinated by how the science of behavior can be used to improve the lives of children and families,” she said. “The science is so powerful and has the potential to produce sustained behavior change at a large scale.”

Pinkelman began working for the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education this summer, and research have already bought up 10 percent of her time.

“We’ll be able to hit the ground running,” Slocum said.

Accomplished researchers choose to come to Utah State University because of the supportive research environment, Slocum said. The SPER department culture

emphasizes cooperative, collegial support, he said — “and that’s what it’s all about.”

“It is energizing to know that I will be working alongside colleagues who are just as committed as I am to improving the educational experiences of students with disabilities,” said Kaitlin Bundock, who is joining the SPER department this fall.

Slocum said Bundock is on the cutting edge of research in effective math instruction for students with disabilities . He said it’s a “huge need area.” Bundock is coming from the University of Utah, and has exceptional practice-based experience in secondary schools.

She had to find her own way,” he said of Bundock. “There are not a lot of experts out there, but she’s oen of three or four in the country who’s part of the next generation.”

And that, Bundock said, is why she accepted the position at Utah State University.

“The Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services and the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation both have excellent reputations for teacher preparation and research,” she said.

To Karen Hager, who graduated from Utah State University, returning this fall as a faculty member is an exciting opportunity.

“I know how committed the faculty members are, and I have first-hand experience with the high quality teaching and research conducted at Utah State,” she said.

Also joining the SPER department are Trenton Landon and Anne Larson. Landon has been working at Michigan State University, researching professional development support for rehabilitation counselors. Larsen, who is coming to USU from the University of Minnesota, is passionate about improving the language environment for young children with disabilities.

Between the fresh, new researchers and SPER’s current faculty, Slocum said they have a lot to look forward to.

“We’re really excited about the people coming in, and the vision.”