

O.T. Link



Returning home

*Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L,
Elias Michael Executive Director*



Gaining mobility

Occupational therapist Michelle Klein, MOT, OTR/L (right), works with a patient who has right side weakness and fatigue after multiple strokes. She is training him to effectively use his walker and a leg lifter to transfer out of his sedan with less assistance from his elderly spouse. Klein provides stroke rehabilitation services through our outpatient OT Clinical Practice. Learn more at otservices.wustl.edu.

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From the Director



It is truly a double homecoming for me (page 4) as I return to St. Louis and to Washington University to succeed my colleague and friend, M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, as Elias Michael Executive Director of the Program in Occupational Therapy. Dr. Baum's leadership over the past 31 years has positioned us as the #1 occupational therapy program in the nation. I look forward to building further on that excellence as the Program embarks on its second century of educating the future of our profession.

This fall, we welcomed 94 entry-level students, two PhD students and one post-professional doctoral student to our program. The entry-level doctoral and master's students will be the first cohort under our renewed curriculum (page 8), which is designed to prepare students for the changing health-care systems by using active teaching and learning strategies with an emphasis on process. The foundation for the coursework is the Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) model, and students will learn research-driven, evidence-based evaluation and intervention strategies to support participation and well-being across the continuum of care.

Our clinical arm, OT Services, continues to provide team-based, collaborative care to its patients. Clinical Specialist Karen Balk, MOT, OTR/L, is one of the only Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT) providers in our area. She is part of the interdisciplinary team at the Washington University Pediatric Movement Disorders Clinic, where she sees patients like 12-year-old Ryleigh Moran (page 10). Ryleigh was having up to 30 tics per minute before she began treatment with Karen. I know you will be interested to read Ryleigh's story about the remarkable progress she has made.

Community engagement is a key component of our Program's research, curriculum, collaborations and student activities. We are fortunate to work with more than 100 community organizations in the St. Louis region, and we honor them at two events every year (page 12). The Disabled Athlete Sports Association received our Outstanding Community Partner Award at our 11th annual OT Scholarship Day on April 26. The award recognizes organizations that have developed and sustained a collaborative relationship with the Program, and share our vision, values and goals. We invite all of our community partners to a celebration event in the fall, and this year we honored the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Sickle Cell Association of St. Louis for providing research, educational and clinical experiences to our students on Sept. 25.

As many of you know, Dr. Baum founded our Rehabilitation and Participation Science (RAPS) PhD program in 2012 to develop rehabilitation scientists to build the evidence needed to enhance health, improve quality of life, and reduce illness and disability. Through a major gift, she has established a research fund to support the doctoral projects of our RAPS PhD students. Recent graduate Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTR/L (page 14), shares her story and explains why initial funding is so important to early career scientists.

One of my goals as program director is to explore ways to engage our alumni more directly with our Program, to enable you to offer your insight and guidance so that we can continue to shape the future leaders, researchers, educators and practitioners of our profession. I am looking forward to hearing from you and working with you as we strive to maintain and exceed the standards of excellence that makes us Washington University. I am truly delighted to be at the helm of this tremendous organization and appreciate the warm welcome that I have received.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa T. Connor".

Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

Elias Michael Executive Director, Program in Occupational Therapy

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Smallfield, Taff inducted into Academy of Educators

LISA TABOR CONNOR



Stacy Smallfield, DrOT, OTR/L, BCG, FAOTA, and Steve Taff, PhD, OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA, were inducted as inaugural fellows of Washington University School of Medicine's Academy of Educators on Sept. 24. The Academy is an institutional collaboration of educators who together foster a culture of educational excellence and an institutionally valued community of leaders in health science education. Members actively participate in Academy programs throughout the year and self-report on their engagement annually.

Promoted to faculty

Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP, was promoted to Instructor in Occupational Therapy on July 1. She earned her bachelor's degree in speech-language and hearing sciences from the University of Kansas in 2000 and her master's degree in speech-language pathology from Northwestern University in 2001. Harris earned her doctoral degree in education and a graduate certificate in American culture studies in 2017 from Washington University. She completed her postdoc in 2019 in the Child Health and Education Laboratory, which is led by Allison King, MD, PhD.



Kelly Harris

effects of pediatric chronic disease on developmental and educational outcomes, particularly for youth with asthma and sickle cell disease. Her research examines the interdependence of chronic disease, child development, and educational outcomes for youth in urban and suburban contexts, as well as the use of dissemination and implementation science to improve health and educational equity.

Harris completed the Programs to Increase Diversity Among Individuals Engaged in Health Related Research (PRIDE) program in July 2019. PRIDE is a consortium of NHLBI-funded summer institute training programs for junior-level faculty.

Harris directs the Chronic Disease, Development and Educational Outcomes Research Laboratory, which examines the

Faculty appointments, promotions

At the Washington University in St. Louis Executive Faculty meeting April 3, the following faculty were appointed or promoted in the Program in Occupational Therapy, effective July 1.

Appointments

Pat Nellis, OTD, OTR/L, as associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology; and

Alex Wong, PhD, DPhil, BSOT, as a secondary appointment in psychiatry.

Promotions

Peggy Barco, OTD, OTR/L, SCDCM, CDRS, FAOTA, as associate professor of occupational therapy and medicine;

Jessica Dashner, OTD, OTR/L, as assistant professor of occupational therapy and neurology;

Kathy Kniepmann, OTD, MPH, EdM, OTR/L, as associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology; and

Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L, as assistant professor of occupational therapy and medicine.

Wong to receive ACRM award

Alex Wong, PhD, DPhil, BSOT, will receive the 2019 ACRM Deborah L. Wilkerson Early Career Award supported by CARF International. This award is for individuals whose careers reflect an energetic promotion of the spirit of interdisciplinary rehabilitation. Wong will receive the award at the 96th Annual ACRM Conference in Chicago in November 2019.



Alex Wong

Want more Program news?

Stay up to date on the latest Program news by visiting our website at ot.wustl.edu or connecting with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.



Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L (right), with a research participant in her Community Reintegration After Stroke Laboratory.

PHOTOS BY L.J. PHOTOGRAPHY



A Double Homecoming for Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD

By Stephanie Stemmler

Lisa Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L, wants to know what makes people tick. She says with a laugh, “I’m very curious about how things work and why people do what they do, so that has fueled me over my entire career!”

An acclaimed researcher in stroke recovery and community reintegration, Connor is the new Elias Michael Executive Director of the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine. She takes over the helm of the #1 occupational therapy program in the nation from M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, who stepped down after leading the program for 31 years.

“Dr. Baum nurtured the educational, clinical and research programs here with the highest possible standards of excellence, and with indelible impact,” Connor says. “I look forward to building further on the Program’s excellence at the dawn of its second century.”

It’s a double homecoming for Connor — ask her that standard St. Louis-specific question, and she will tell you her parents and siblings still reside here and she went to Rosati-Kain High School right around the corner in the Central West End. She also is returning to Washington University, where she earned both her master’s and doctoral degrees (’90 and ’92, respectively) in experimental psychology before enhancing her career toolbox by pursuing a master’s degree in occupational therapy from the Program in Occupational Therapy (2013).

Pursuing occupational therapy was a natural progression of her desire to better understand contributing factors to people’s behaviors and their impact on daily living. Connor first went to Johns Hopkins University to study psychology for her undergraduate degree. She focused on scientific research related to animal models of depression, but then had the opportunity to work in a lab investigating the impact of brain injuries on memory and language in humans. She was hooked on investigating the impact of brain injuries on cognitive function. She subsequently returned to St. Louis to learn more about what turned into a lifelong interest in cognitive performance, rehabilitation and community participation.

After graduating from Washington University with her doctoral degree, Connor continued her research as an

NIH-funded postdoctoral fellow, first at the Program on Cognitive Aging at the Georgia Institute of Technology, and then in the Adult Communicative Disorders Program at Boston University School of Medicine. She joined the faculty of Boston University in 1996 and served as the assistant director of the Language in the Aging Brain Laboratory. In 1999, she also was named associate director of the Harold Goodglass Aphasia Research Center.

Along the way, neuroimaging became a more mainstream tool for research and clinical practice, and Connor pondered whether imaging could help her better understand the brain mechanisms of language disorders in stroke patients. Her interest drew her back to St. Louis to work in the Neuroimaging Lab of neurologist Maurizio Corbetta, MD, a stroke rehabilitation expert who was using neuroimaging to study the mechanisms of language recovery in people with stroke and aphasia.

“It was an ‘a-ha’ moment because Maurizio connected me with several colleagues in neurorehabilitation, including Carolyn Baum and others,” Connor recalls. “That turned out to be the key, because they were studying the piece I didn’t know how to study — how do we measure what people are doing in everyday life? I realized then that they knew how to do that in occupational therapy.”

She stayed in Corbetta’s lab for five years, then pursued her degree in occupational therapy. From 2006 to 2014, she served on the faculty of the Program in Occupational Therapy. Drawn to a leadership position in Boston, Connor became the first chair of the new Department of Occupational Therapy at the MGH Institute of Health Professions in 2014. In 2018, she was named the institute’s interim associate dean of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and associate director of its research programs.

“I took a leadership course at Washington University, and my participation in that convinced me that I should go out into the world and apply my leadership skills,” she says. “The MGH Institute never had an occupational therapy program, and it was invigorating to build something from scratch and assemble a team of wonderful, experienced faculty. In just five years,



Top: Connor welcomes the MSOT ’21 and OTD ’22 students at orientation on Aug. 21.

Bottom: Connor meets with second-year PhD student Moon Young Kim, MSOT.



Connor with first-year master's and doctoral students.

"Dr. Connor's extensive experience in research administration, interdisciplinary team development, research and clinical networking, and mentorship of students and junior faculty make her a wonderful match for leadership of our program."

—David H. Perlmutter, MD

we made a mark on the profession and created an excellent program."

Over 25 years, Connor's push to quantitatively model the impact of cognitive, communication and psychosocial factors on community living after stroke has informed intervention approaches for stroke survivors. That foundation of evidence-based research and practice, which has been a long-standing hallmark of the Washington University Program in Occupational Therapy, is one of the reasons she decided to return to St. Louis for a third time.

"Evidence-based practice is part of my personality," Connor stresses. "I've always been a person who wants to see what the evidence is to guide moving forward. I have to understand the options, the interventions and, ultimately, what works. We can't help our clients optimally if we don't know what works."

"I am excited to welcome such a proven leader to the school's outstanding Program in Occupational Therapy," noted David H. Perlmutter, MD, executive vice chancellor of medical affairs, the George and Carol Bauer Dean of the School of Medicine, and the Spencer and Ann W. Olin Distinguished Professor. "Dr. Connor's extensive experience in research administration, interdisciplinary team development, research and clinical networking, and mentorship of students and junior faculty make her a wonderful match for leadership of our program."

Connor is actively establishing her own research lab on campus and will continue her study of evidence-driven interventions that enable stroke survivors to participate more fully in their communities. Her vision as the new leader of the Program in Occupational Therapy is to continue to build the scientific base, further developing the research division to be even more impactful, while also focusing on enhancing the strength of the clinical and educational components. She is acutely aware of the changing health-care environment and stresses that occupational therapists, like other professionals, need to be good stewards of health-care dollars. "Our responsibility is to understand what gives the most bang for the buck and how to best enable people to help themselves. That's why we are focused on evidence and the mechanisms of recovery across the translational continuum, so that we identify and implement effective interventions that enable people with chronic and disabling conditions to function maximally in their communities."

Simply put, she adds, "[Occupational therapy] is deeply embedded in our DNA here at Washington University – and we're helping people where they live do what they need to do."

Connor administers the Kettle Test, which assesses cognitive functional performance in stroke patients.



Designing curricula

BY MICHELE BERHORST

PHOTOS BY MICHELE BERHORST



Left to right: Wanda Mahoney, PhD, OTR/L; Betsy Hawkins-Chernof, OTD, OTR/L, ATP; Steve Taff, PhD, OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA; Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L; and Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, discuss the renewed curriculum at the faculty retreat.

In fall of 2019, Program in Occupational Therapy faculty began teaching a renewed curriculum to the first-year master's and doctoral students. The rollout marks the end of a two-year process of curriculum review, evaluation and renewal

spearheaded by Stacy Smallfield, DrOT, OTR/L, BCG, FAOTA, associate professor of occupational therapy and medicine and assistant director of entry-level professional programs. Smallfield's dedication and commitment to the renewal goes beyond strictly professional interest; it is personal as well. In recent years, she has seen family members receive care in hospital settings both with and without an occupational therapist on the team.

"The health-care system in the U.S. still has the opportunity to make significant improvements in the patient experience while improving health and reducing costs. Occupational therapists are critical members of the team that can make those things happen," explains Smallfield.

Driving change

Academic institutions and disciplines periodically review, renew and/or revise their curricula. However, not all disciplines do so as often as the Program does. Smallfield says there are three main drivers for such frequency.

"The first driver is simply maintaining a contemporary curriculum. Occupational therapy science has emerged rapidly in the last 20 years, and we need to be teaching current practice and evidence-based interventions to our students. The second driver is the changing health-care systems. Managing chronic conditions are putting a strain on the current system, and we need to think about new models of care. [Occupational therapy] interventions need to be much more community based than ever before," shares Smallfield. "The third driver was the positioning of the clinical doctorate degree in our profession. When we started this process in 2017, it looked as if there was going to be a single point of entry at the doctoral level. We needed to be prepared to deliver the curriculum to a full class of 90 or more doctoral students."

The doctoral mandate was eventually put in abeyance, then removed completely before the curriculum renewal was complete. Even without it, Smallfield says the renewed curriculum positions the Program sooner rather than later



Left: Faculty members with Barbara Hooper, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (center), at the June retreat.

Right: Hooper leading a discussion.

for a class composed mostly of doctoral students. “When we began our doctoral program in 2001, we were one of only four schools to offer the degree. Now there are more than 140 programs either at or in process of transitioning to a doctoral degree, and that number is growing rapidly. We need to offer the best degree possible while staying competitive in regards to technology, tuition, scholarship and research opportunities.”

Working backward

The curriculum renewal process began with the Program’s Curriculum Committee deciding what the outcomes were going to be. “We started by asking, ‘What skills do we want a WashU OT graduate to have?’ We wrote those outcomes first and then asked ourselves, ‘How do we get there?’” says Smallfield.

As the committee met each month, core members shared information back to all faculty members for input to help make key decisions. When a complicated issue arose, special task groups were created to explore in-depth the various concerns and possible solutions. After months of intense work, the committee had mapped out the renewed curriculum sequence with course descriptions that met the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards.

The proposed curriculum then went through a series of approvals, beginning with the Curriculum Committee itself and moving internally all the way up to the Washington University School of Medicine Executive Faculty, who approved the renewed curriculum at its Oct. 3 meeting. The necessary documentation was then submitted in November 2018 to ACOTE, and it was approved in January 2019.

To assist with the renewed curriculum design, distinguished educational scholar

Barbara Hooper, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, led a two-day retreat for faculty on June 25-26. Hooper has received numerous teaching and scholarship awards, authored several book chapters and regularly consults with faculty groups nationally on designing curricula, courses and teaching/learning activities for transformative learning. Under her facilitation, the faculty applied principles of subject-centered integrative learning as they worked on renewing courses in the curriculum. The retreat also fostered team building and camaraderie.

“Several new faculty members joined the Program in the last two years. Working together at the retreat helped all of us reach a new level of cohesiveness within the Education Division,” says Smallfield. “It’s also put us all on the same page moving forward.”

Weaving threads

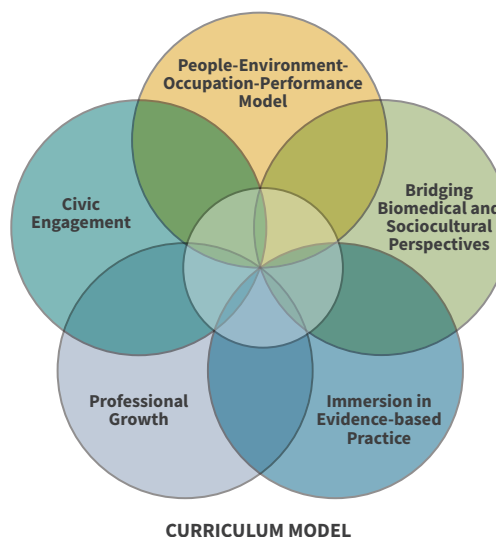
The renewed curriculum prepares students for the changing health-care systems by using active teaching and learning strategies with an emphasis on process. Students will learn research-driven, evidence-based evaluation

and intervention strategies to support participation and well-being across the continuum of care. The foundation for coursework is the Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) model.

“What makes our program unique is our central focus on the person, the environment and the occupation. Our curriculum model is rooted in five central concepts that we call threads, which are illustrated in our kaleidoscope graphic (see graphic below). The five threads are woven through the curricula, but combined with the kaleidoscope concept, they create individualized experiences for each student,” says Smallfield. “The curriculum is the same, but each student will experience it differently because of their backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. Students can also personalize the curricula to meet their learning goals and objectives to prepare them for the career they want.”

In addition to the technical skills taught, the renewed curriculum provides numerous opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning through fieldwork experiences in the Program’s clinical practice sites and student-run clinics. These interactions with actual clients teach students empathy, compassion and inclusiveness. Smallfield was recently reminded of how equally important those skills are to an occupational therapist.

“Two years ago, my father had a bilateral knee replacement surgery. Post-op, day two, my family sent me a photo of my father with his occupational therapist. I knew it was his occupational therapist because she had been my student,” shares Smallfield. “It was a powerful reminder that educators need to teach students to treat the patient how they would want their family to be treated. And by chance, I had taught this occupational therapist how to treat my father.”



Taking control of tics

BY MICHELE BERHORST

PHOTOS BY MICHELE BERHORST

Ryleigh Moran, 11, was just your typical “tween.” She was active in sports, engaged at school and enjoyed hanging out with friends and family. Ryleigh did have a slight head tic, but it did not really concern her mother, Amanda, who experienced a similar mild tic. In the span of one weekend, however, Ryleigh’s tic became so severe that her pediatrician thought she was having seizures.

Ryleigh Moran watches a video recommended by Karen Balk, MOT, OTR/L (right), that explains what tics are to show to her classmates.



"It just came on so hard, and it wasn't something we had ever seen Ryleigh do before. The pediatrician got us in to see a neurologist at Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital the very next day," Amanda recalls. "In addition, Ryleigh would shout out words or phrases. For example, she kept saying over and over, 'I'm a giraffe! I'm a giraffe!' I was sure she had a brain tumor because all of this behavior came out of left field so fast."

After examining Ryleigh, the neurologist assured Amanda that her daughter was not having seizures – it was tics. The Tourette Association of America defines tics as "involuntary, repetitive movements (head jerks, arm movements) and vocalizations (throat clearing, random words)." Onset of tics occurs between the ages of 5-7 years, and tics tend to increase in frequency and severity between the ages of 8-12 years. At this point, Ryleigh was having up to 30 tics a minute. Amanda reached out to a teacher who was familiar with the disorder and whose husband works for BJC HealthCare.

"He recommended we see Dr. Kevin Black, a movement disorders neuropsychiatrist at Washington University School of Medicine. At the time, Dr. Black wasn't seeing new patients," Amanda says. "I continued Googling him and his research, and I came across something called CBIT and the Movement Disorders Clinic at the School of Medicine."

CBIT stands for Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics, and Amanda called to make an appointment with Clinical Specialist Karen Balk, MOT, OTR/L, in July 2018. As one of the only certified CBIT providers in the area, Balk has been practicing as a CBIT occupational therapist for Washington University Occupational Therapy for four years. She recently joined the interdisciplinary team at the Washington University Pediatric Movement Disorders Clinic to provide occupational therapy consults for clients to help manage tic disorders like Ryleigh's from day one.

"I would describe Ryleigh as one of my 'kids in crisis,' who have tics impairing every element of their day – school, sports, social activities and even sleep," Balk says. "Ryleigh had so many tics

that we focused on the ones that were happening the most frequently and disrupting her ability to participate in school and other activities she enjoys."

Balk began working with Ryleigh one-on-one, using CBIT strategies so she became more aware of her tics and teaching her competing behavior when she felt the urge to tic. "In addition to CBIT, I work on occupational therapy environmental strategies with patients to manage the tic triggers. For example, if the tics worsen when a child is hungry, I recommend they

"Working with my CBIT patients is extremely rewarding. Learning these cognitive and behavioral strategies can be life changing for my patients and their families."

—Karen Balk, MOT, OTR/L

have a snack available to help them get through the class or activity," Balk says, who also participated in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings at Ryleigh's school to advocate and educate on how to manage tics in the school setting. "Our goal in the clinic is to get the tic under management and give the patient the tools and supports to get them back to doing what they want to do. We accomplish that through medical interventions and the services I provide."

This interdisciplinary approach between psychiatrists, psychologists, neurologists and occupational therapists is why the Tourette Association of America

designated Washington University School of Medicine as a Center of Excellence in July 2019. "We have been collaborating and conducting research on Tourette and tic disorders for a long time. Being designated a Center of Excellence recognizes those efforts and our commitment to our patients to provide a team-based approach to care," explains Kevin Black, MD, who serves as the Center's director. "Another key element to this approach is connecting the patient and their families to the local and national Tourette Association chapters and other resources in the community. Karen makes sure her families know what additional supports beyond our clinic are available."

Amanda can definitely see the difference in her daughter after receiving the clinic's services. "Ryleigh is much more confident now. She still has tics, and she knows they are not going to go away, but she has been empowered. Ryleigh knows who her 'people' are at school that she can turn to if she needs support," Amanda says. "She is more comfortable talking about her disorder and educates people when she can about her tics so they understand what is happening when they occur. Most of all, she knows she is not alone. She recently asked Karen about Camp Twitch and Shout, a summer camp for kids with Tourette syndrome."

For Balk, this outcome is why she became a CBIT provider in the first place. "Working with my CBIT patients is extremely rewarding. Learning these cognitive and behavioral strategies can be life changing for my patients and their families. I love being able to make such a positive difference in someone's life. That's the main reason I became an occupational therapist – I wanted to help people live meaningful lives."



Left to right: Ryleigh Moran, Karen Balk, MOT, OTR/L, and Amanda Moran following a CBIT session.

DASA receives Outstanding Community Partner Award

The Program in Occupational Therapy selected the Disabled Athlete Sports Association (DASA) as the 2019 recipient of its Outstanding Community Partner Award. The award recognizes organizations that have developed and sustained a collaborative relationship with the Program, and share our vision, values and goals.

DASA is a non-profit organization specializing in adaptive sport and fitness opportunities with a primary focus on participation. Their programs provide therapeutic sports and fitness activities designed to improve self-esteem, growth and well-being while instilling family values. They encourage athletes of all ages and abilities to seek their highest level of independence and become involved to the fullest extent possible with their non-disabled peers and their communities. DASA is also a U.S. Paralympic Sports Club and works tirelessly to educate the community about adaptive sports and provide Olympic-driven sports opportunities for people with disabilities. They host and sponsor the National Adaptive Sports and Fitness Conference bi-annually to educate and train physical education teachers, coaches, therapy professionals and students in various topics related to recreational and competitive-level fitness and sports for people with physical and visual disabilities.

“As occupational therapists, we believe in treating each client using a holistic approach. DASA shares these beliefs and encourages a holistic, healthy lifestyle for their athletes. They empower individuals with physical disabilities to live to the best of their natural abilities with greater emotional and physical well-being,” says Clinical Specialist Kimberly Walker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, who nominated the organization. “Research has shown there are benefits to exercise for people with disabilities. DASA believes that, through participation in sports and fitness activities, athletes will decrease the risk of secondary conditions and common ailments that often affect people with disabilities.”

Since 2014, the Program has partnered and collaborated with DASA in various course activities, student efforts, research projects and outreach programming.

DASA helps educate students by providing guest lectures and adaptive sports and recreation equipment for lab experiences. Doctoral students can complete a portion of their doctoral capstone project working with DASA. Students can volunteer, both formally and informally, in many of their adaptive sports and fitness programs. In addition, DASA has assisted in recruiting research participants and providing them with adaptive exercise equipment to trial.

quality programming. Willing to not only volunteer their time to assist in DASA programming, but also share their knowledge to assist in positive program development,” says Kelly Behlmann, executive director of DASA.

Behlmann accepted the award on April 26 during the Program’s 11th annual Occupational Therapy Scholarship Day.



This past fall, the Program collaborated with DASA and other organizations to host the first Adaptive Sports Day Extravaganza. The outreach event provided education about adaptive sports, in a safe and positive experience, to the St. Louis community.

“It has been a pleasure working with the students and educational team of the Washington University Occupational Therapy Program. The students and staff are committed and engaged to ensure

Left to right: DASA's program director Meghan Morgan and executive director Kelly Behlmann accept the award from Kimberly Walker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP.

Celebrating Community Partners

The Program in Occupational Therapy held its third annual Community Partners Celebration Event on Sept. 25. Organized by the Program's Community Engagement Council, the event brings together and recognizes organizations that provide research, educational and clinical experiences to our students. This year, two organizations were presented with the Community Partner Appreciation Award: the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Sickle Cell Association of St. Louis.

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) has funded research at Washington University for the past 12 years through the Driving and Community Mobility Laboratory, led by Peggy Barco, OTD, OTR/L, SCDCM, CDRS, FAOTA. "Our mutual mission is to keep older adults driving safely for as long as possible and to provide suitable alternatives to driving," Barco says, who nominated MoDOT. "In doing so, we support human health and participation by facilitating safe and reliable modes of transportation to connect persons to their important daily activities."

MoDOT's funding has supported the development of fitness-to-drive screens for clinicians, standardized tools to assess on-road driving performance, and best practices in assisting older adults with alternative transportation after driving cessation. Barco and MoDOT are currently collaborating with state highway patrol and licensure renewal offices to determine if there are ways to use a traffic sign identification test in a more standardized and informative manner during licensure renewal to promote driving safety throughout Missouri.

Students in Barco's lab become familiar with the role of occupational therapy in determining fitness to drive by utilizing a variety of screens and assessments. "Students learn the importance of driving as an [instrumental activity of daily living] and how to address the many unique challenges faced when making decisions related to driving performance," Barco says. "They also learn how to provide clients with appropriate community resources when driving is restricted."

The Sickle Cell Association (SCA) of St. Louis is a not-for-profit organization that strives to diminish suffering and improve the quality of life of individuals affected by sickle cell disease (SCD). The association hosts monthly support groups and acts as a medical liaison and advocate

for clients to ensure that they receive timely and effective medical care. Throughout the year, the SCA works collaboratively with a network of providers through the Integrated Health Network and Community Sickle Cell Initiative to host events throughout the St. Louis community to provide education and raise public awareness about the disease, its management and challenges.

Executive director Rosemary Britts and her team have partnered with Allison King, MD, PhD, and members of her Child Health and Education Laboratory on numerous research studies to improve the standard of care for individuals with SCD. Clinical research coordinator Taniya Varughese, MSOT, OTR/L, nominated SCA and has worked closely with the organization for several years in King's lab.

"The SCA recognizes the importance of providing evidence-based care and interventions for the community they serve. They have a community panel of providers, patients and their families who have served as key stakeholders when we apply for grants, develop protocols and recruit participants for studies," Varughese shares. "The SCA has served as a site for our lab to conduct focus groups with patients and families with SCD. Additionally, Rosemary has helped organize patients and their families to serve as guest speakers for an annual sickle cell lecture for our students. Many students have remarked that the lecture is an especially memorable experience because they were able to hear first-hand from those affected by the disease."

In addition, students from King's lab are regular volunteers at the annual Sickle Cell Stroll awareness event and monthly support groups hosted by the SCA. The



Top: Members of the Driving and Community Mobility Laboratory with Jon Nelson and Amity Jeffries (center) of MoDOT.

Bottom: Regina Abel, PhD, accepts the award on behalf of the Sickle Cell Association of St. Louis.

events help students understand more about SCD; the numerous socioeconomic barriers to care faced by this population; their need for holistic, personalized care; and, in particular, how occupational therapy services can be beneficial when living with SCD.

Varughese feels the lab is able to have a close relationship with the SCD community because of the SCA's commitment to serve this population. "Rosemary is a warrior in advocating for individuals with SCD, and she always puts the community she serves first. She has challenged us on many occasions to identify the needs of the community directly from those living with SCD, and she and her team will be instrumental in designing future interventions to meet those needs and better serve this population."

Funding future scientists

The Rehabilitation and Participation Science (RAPS) PhD degree program develops rehabilitation scientists whose research questions have the potential to generate knowledge that will enhance health, improve quality of life, and reduce illness and disability. Recent graduate Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTR/L, pursued her doctorate after seeing gaps in early intervention care as a practitioner.

“I saw areas where practice delivery could improve, and where evidence is needed to provide the most effective care to support children and their families,” explains Hoyt, who is now a postdoc at the Program in Occupational Therapy. “I wanted to build the evidence needed to improve the quality of care to have a broader, more lasting impact.”

Hoyt’s dedication to pediatric care stems from her own childhood. Growing up in a foster family, she had younger siblings who received early intervention services. Their therapists would often encourage Hoyt to help her siblings practice the various skills they were working on. Hoyt recalls, “When I was 8 years old, my sister, Teresina, had

trouble bringing her hands together. It affected her ability to learn important skills like eating, so we would practice clapping together in the back seat on the ride to school. After weeks of practice, I was delighted when she could finally clap with me! I knew then I wanted to be pediatric therapist.”

For her PhD research, Hoyt focused on identifying methods for early identification of developmental delay by having participants between 2 months old and age 17 wear biosensors to measure movement of the arms outside of the clinical environment. “Children often behave differently at home, in school or engaging in sports and other activities. I wanted a way to objectively describe what children were doing throughout the day,” says Hoyt, who was mentored by Nico Dosenbach, MD, PhD, assistant professor of neurology. “We found that by comparing the activity of the arms, it is possible to detect when children use one arm more than the other, which can be an indicator of brain injury that can cause motor deficits.”

The findings, published April 26 in JAMA Network Open, could help identify children with subtle motor impairments so they can be treated before the limitations develop into potentially significant and intractable disabilities. Hoyt was first author of the paper, which received local and national media attention.

To invest in future scientists like Hoyt, former program director M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, made a major gift to establish a research fund to support the doctoral projects of RAPS PhD students. For her project, Hoyt secured internal funding so she could purchase assessments and compensate study participants. “Early career scientists need these initial funds to pilot their work to gather the information needed to establish feasibility. It is difficult to demonstrate a need to answer the proposed questions without funding like this. It creates the foundation for evidence-based occupational therapy in the future,” she says.

Hoyt knows evidence-based care changes lives. While in practice, she provided occupational therapy services to Claire Peppin, who was less than a year old at the time, with a rare neurological condition known as Moebius syndrome. Claire’s mother, Audrey, is currently a first-year master’s degree student in the Program and connected immediately with Hoyt to thank her again for helping Claire. “Parents are the most important part of the first few years of a child’s life, and I am so touched to have made a positive impact for Audrey and Claire,” Hoyt says. “I can think of no better compliment than Audrey deciding to become an occupational therapist herself, and to join us at WashU.”

Please consider joining Dr. Baum in investing in our RAPS PhD students as they begin their scientific careers by asking questions related to occupational therapy, rehabilitation and participation. Visit alumni.wustl.edu to make a gift online to the Carolyn Baum and Friends Research Fund. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick Delhougne in Medical Alumni and Development at 314-935-9680 or p.delhougne@wustl.edu.

Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTD, OTR/L (right), is a postdoctoral research associate, sponsored by the Program in Occupational Therapy, currently working with Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L (left).

LJ PHOTOGRAPHY





M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA (right), presents alumna Theresa Carlson Carroll, OTD, OTR/L (left), with the Alumni Award on April 26.

OT Program Outstanding Alumni Award

The Outstanding Alumni Award recognizes alumni of the Program of Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine for their individual achievements in or contributions to the field of occupational therapy in research, education, clinical practice or entrepreneurship. The Awards Selection Committee will select up to three alumni per year to be honored with this award. The award(s) will be presented to honorees on OT Scholarship Day on April 24, 2020.

Eligibility

- The nominee must be a graduate of the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine.
- Potential nominees who are associated with Washington University, its governing board, the State government, or State regulatory boards or agencies can be nominated only after they no longer hold their respective positions.
- Self-nominations will be considered.
- The award is to be presented only one time to an individual. Therefore, all previous recipients are ineligible for subsequent consideration.
- All nominees must be living at the time of nomination.
- Nominee must be able to attend OT Scholarship Day on April 24, 2020.

Selection Criteria

Qualified nominees for the **Outstanding Alumni Award** should possess the following attributes:

- **Professional Achievement:** Nominees have attained prominence in their occupational therapy career through research, education and/or clinical practice.
- **Community Participation:** Nominees have demonstrated a commitment and dedication to community participation in regards to accessibility, mobility, policy and/or advocacy.
- **Integrity and Character:** Nominees must have the highest standard of personal integrity and character.

Nomination Materials

Materials to submit with nomination include:

1. A biographical sketch, resume or CV summarizing the nominee's achievements.

If your nominee does not have this available, please include (i) a summary of positions and employment, leadership roles, accomplishments, previous awards and publications, and (ii) a short narrative about the person and their attributes that makes them eligible for the award (see Selection Criteria).
2. Additional supportive documents (i.e., at least one letter of recommendation from a colleague, patient/client, students and/or community member).

Nomination Process

Nominations will be accepted September 1, 2019 through January 31, 2020 and can be made online at ot.wustl.edu/OTalumniaward.

If the nominee is selected by the committee, he or she must be in attendance at OT Scholarship Day on April 24, 2020 in St. Louis, Missouri to accept the award.

If you have any questions about the nomination or selection process, please contact Michele Berhorst at (314) 286-1606 or berhorstm@wustl.edu.

Student happenings



Washington University received the 2019 St. Catherine Challenge MVP Award at AOTA's Annual Conference & Expo in New Orleans on April 6. Students raised \$3,032 to support occupational therapy research grants awarded by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation.



Students prepared and served a hot meal to approximately 50 individuals undergoing cancer treatment and staying at the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge on March 27.



Our Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) student chapter was awarded the 1st COTAD Chapter Excellence Award for demonstrating action toward annual initiatives and passion for diversity/inclusion.



Three students were honored at The Teaching Center's Annual Graduate Student & Postdoc Recognition Reception on May 2. The event recognized and celebrated the graduate students and postdocs who have shown a dedication to teaching.



Students (and their canine friends) enjoyed the annual orientation picnic held in Forest Park on Aug. 29.



With honors

Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (right), represented the School of Medicine at the 2nd Annual Black Graduate and Professional Student Recognition Ceremony at the Music Center on May 16. Among the students honored was Taevin Lewis, MSOT/S '19 (left), who was corded during the ceremony by Berg.

Washington University School of Medicine
Program in Occupational Therapy
4444 Forest Park Ave., CB 8505
St. Louis, MO 63108-2212



Occupational Therapy



Tweets we love
@WUSTLOT

“We found that when you engage and motivate people, they do better.” Enhanced rehabilitation employs motivation during therapy, focusing on goals meaningful to the patient. A recent study shows it's more effective than standard PT or OT care. — @WUSTLmed, Aug 7, 2019

Upcoming events



March 26-29, 2020

**AOTA Annual Conference
& Expo**

Boston, Massachusetts
Boston Convention and
Exhibition Center

*You are invited to the Program in Occupational
Therapy Alumni Reception.*



April 24, 2020

OT Scholarship Day

Eric P. Newman Educational
Center (EPNEC)
320 S. Euclid Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63110

*Registration information to come
at ot.wustl.edu*



May 15, 2020

Commencement

The Program in Occupational
Therapy Commencement Ceremony
will be held in Graham Chapel at
1:00 p.m. on May 15, 2020.

The Program in Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 4720 Montgomery Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-3449. ACOTE's telephone number, c/o AOTA, is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is www.acoteonline.org.