

Leading innovations



Program in Occupational Therapy | Annual Report 2020



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Occupational Therapy

ON THE COVER

Charles (right), is a participant in a new cognitive strategy intervention study led by Erin Foster, PhD, OTD, OTR/L (left), that focuses on cognitive functioning in people with Parkinson's disease.

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Welcome

Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

Elias Michael Executive Director, Program in Occupational Therapy
Professor of Occupational Therapy and Neurology



My first year as the Elias Michael Executive Director of the Program in Occupational Therapy has been extraordinary, to say the least. I spent the first six months settling into my role, engaging with faculty and staff, meeting our students, reconnecting with colleagues across the School of Medicine and meeting new ones. That time reinforced my decision to return to Washington University and the exceptional people who make up this incredible community. When the COVID-19 virus spread across our region in March, I knew this community would come together like it never has before to continue our mission to advance human health through research, education, patient care and community outreach through the pandemic.

This annual report captures those efforts as we have adapted, expanded and transformed how we conduct research, teach, deliver services and interact with our community. You will learn how our research efforts continue to develop rehabilitation interventions to address functional cognition for chronic diseases. You will see the commitment our faculty has made to delivering our renewed curriculum virtually to our students spread across the country this summer. You will see how our clinicians made that same commitment to deliver much-needed services to patients through telehealth visits. You will learn how non-traditional fieldwork opportunities were created by partnering with local community agencies to provide occupational therapy services to at-risk populations during the pandemic. This report also acknowledges the impact our alumni and donors made in the lives of our students by contributing to our annual fund or establishing scholarships. I am incredibly proud of our 2020 graduates, who have proven that they are prepared to face any health-care challenge, including a pandemic, because they are committed to our profession and its unique value to society.

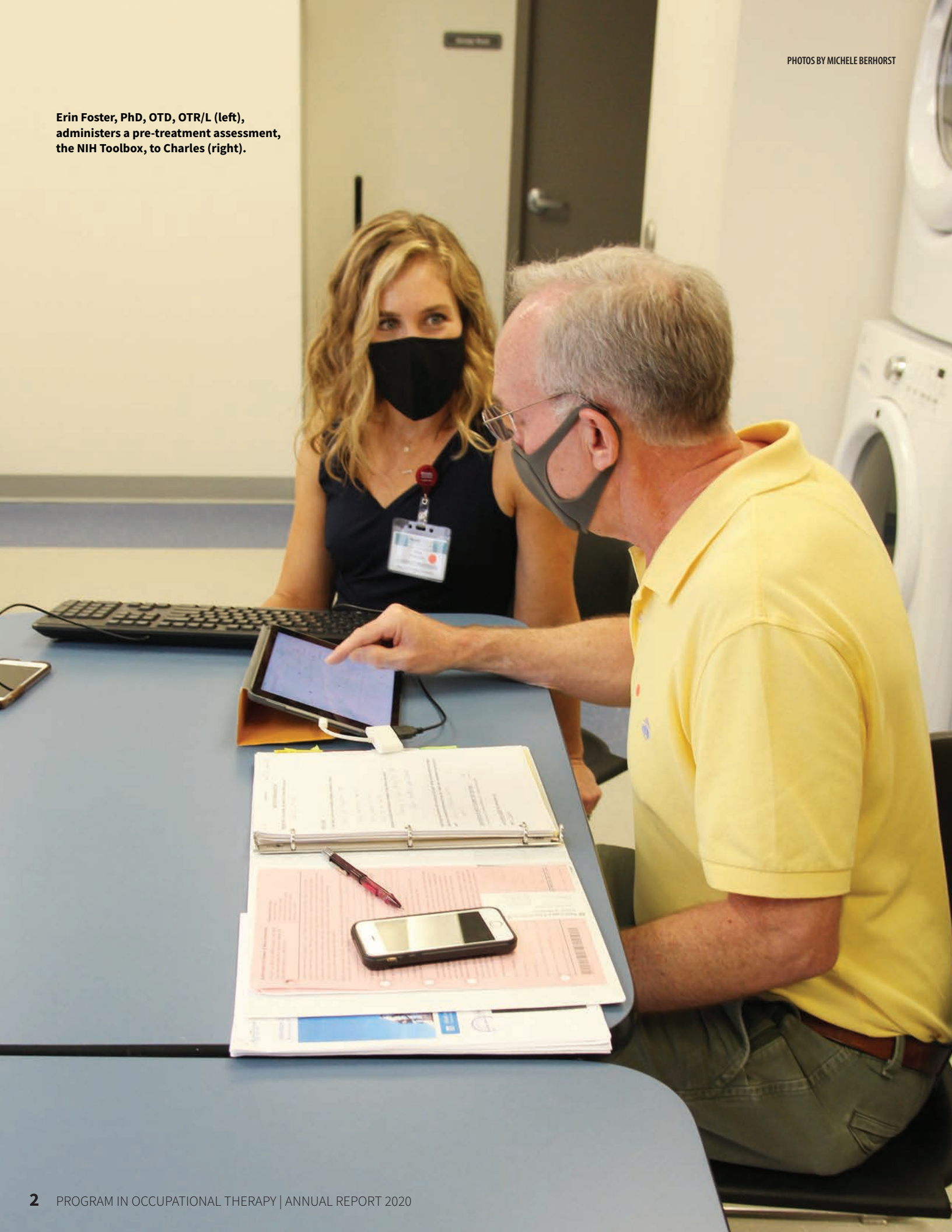
I did not want to conclude this letter without acknowledging the issues of inequality and racism that our nation is facing following the tragic death of George Floyd this May. We have a collective and an individual responsibility to make changes in the Program in Occupational Therapy and to educate ourselves about the history and structures that promote systemic racism. We have established an Accountability Board to hold us accountable for achieving our diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Our next annual report will include what we and that board will have done in fiscal year 2021 to create a structure and culture that supports all members of our community. We are looking forward to working on these initiatives and reporting on those efforts to you.



Top: Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L, records her 2020 Commencement address on May 4. The Program held a Virtual Commencement ceremony on May 15.

Bottom: Connor welcomes the MSOT '22 and OTD '23 students at orientation on Aug. 21.

Erin Foster, PhD, OTD, OTR/L (left), administers a pre-treatment assessment, the NIH Toolbox, to Charles (right).



Research

In his home outside of St. Louis, a 65-year-old resident is working on memory and executive function skills – figuring out ways to keep track of information, create and check off items on his 'to-do' list and, in general, stay mentally, socially and physically active while dealing with a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease.

The resident, Charles, is part of a new cognitive strategy intervention study led by Erin Foster, PhD, OTD, OTR/L, an assistant professor of occupational therapy, neurology and psychiatry in Washington University School of Medicine's Program in Occupational Therapy. The study is an extension of research Foster has done for more than a decade focused on cognitive functioning in people with Parkinson's disease.

"Parkinson's disease is considered to be more of a movement disorder than a cognitive disorder by many clinicians and, as such, rehabilitation has focused on physical or motor impairments," Foster says. "There are, however, many cognitive issues at play that should be key factors when determining which rehabilitative strategies are going to be effective for people with this disease."

As an occupational therapist, Foster's research specifically addresses functional cognition. At its core, functional cognition is the intersection of cognitive skills and the performance of daily life tasks. More than asking if a person can dress themselves or eat, Foster's interest in functional cognition focuses on higher-level, more complex activities, such as whether an individual can manage finances, initiate and engage in ongoing conversations, successfully manage their own medications, or plan a grocery shopping list, get the items and then prepare a meal.

In her early research efforts, published in the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* and the *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research* beginning in 2011, Foster identified a strong link between cognition, namely executive function, and daily life function in individuals with Parkinson's disease. More significantly, the functional cognitive deficits appeared before motor disabilities were noted.

"In controlled studies in our performance laboratory, we have found that cognitive dysfunction is associated with poorer performance of daily living skills and reduced participation in instrumental, leisure and social activities," says Foster. "We actually found that problems with executive functioning in the early stages of Parkinson's disease are more disabling than motor dysfunction."

Foster heads the Cognitive and Occupational Performance Laboratory in the Program in Occupational Therapy, where she is now working with PhD, OTD and MSOT students to better understand and develop rehabilitation interventions to address functional cognition. With funding from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation and National Institutes of Health (R21 grant), she and her team have developed an occupational therapy

intervention that they are testing in clients with Parkinson's disease. The intervention is an adaptation of the Multicontext Treatment Approach initially developed by Joan Togliola, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, at Weill Cornell Medical College. Togliola is a co-collaborator in Foster's study.

"We piloted the occupational therapy cognitive intervention within a very small group to see if people with Parkinson's disease can engage in it and might have positive outcomes," Foster says. "The results were promising, with everyone enrolled in the study documenting clinically meaningful improvements in their functional cognition as well as reporting high satisfaction and enjoyment with the treatment. We now have taken it a step further with a randomized controlled trial. We trained two clinical practice occupational therapists and are evaluating whether the intervention can be administered consistently in the clinical setting over time and whether it is beneficial for people with Parkinson's."

Charles, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2019, is among those involved in the study. Results should be available in the next year or two. "Our intervention uses a guided learning approach to increase people's awareness of their functional cognitive performance and then guide them so that they can generate their own strategies to successfully work around a particular deficit and accomplish their goals," explains Foster.

In addition to this ongoing study, Foster and the students she mentors are working with the local chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA). There, student-led studies evaluating the effects of cognitive stimulation therapy and improvisational dance are under way. Originally conducted in person, those studies have temporarily gone virtual via video-conferencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foster originally majored in biology and psychology before turning her attention to occupational therapy, where she recognized that she wanted to focus on research related to cognition and neurological disorders. In addition to the Program in Occupational Therapy, her lab is affiliated with the Movement Disorders Center within Washington University's Department of Neurology.

"We need to continue to advocate for the non-motor needs of people with Parkinson's disease," she emphasizes. "More than 60,000 Americans are diagnosed with Parkinson's each year, and by 2030, the Parkinson's Foundation estimates that 1.2 million Americans will be living with the disease. Awareness is growing among clinicians for the need for cognitive interventions to treat Parkinson's, but that awareness should be higher. My hope is that my research will help to raise that awareness and will provide evidence-based and effective cognitive treatment options for people with Parkinson's."



Charles completes the Montreal Cognitive Assessment, a test that allows health-care providers to quickly assess a person's cognitive health.



Foster was awarded an R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health (R01AG065214) for a new collaborative research effort involving the Washington University Movement Disorders Center and the Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences, which focuses on underlying mechanisms and interventions to enhance prospective memory in people with Parkinson's. This study couples a cognitive strategy intervention with neuroimaging to better understand and improve prospective memory in this population and to determine whether there are specific biological or other predictors of interventional treatment response.

Education



Top: Course directors Wanda Mahoney, PhD, OTR/L (left), and Betsy Hawkins-Chernof, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, SCSS (right).

Bottom: A couple of the adaptive devices created by students and posted on Padlet for virtual Assisive Technology Maker Day.

In 2019, a new class was created as part of the Program in Occupational Therapy's curriculum renewal – Evaluation and Intervention: Children and Youth. Course directors Wanda Mahoney, PhD, OTR/L, associate professor of occupational therapy and medicine, and Betsy Hawkins-Chernof, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, SCSS, occupational therapist, worked with two other faculty members, Jessie Bricker, OTD, OTR/L, and Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L, for about a year to plan the intensive, six-credit course to be taught to first-year students in the summer.

"In the legacy curriculum, the intervention piece of pediatric content was spread out among several courses. In the renewed curriculum, we wanted a course focused specifically on evaluation and education with children and youth," Mahoney explains. "The plan was to send students in small groups of 10 a couple times per week to sites such as daycares, summer camps and agencies to observe typical development, peer interaction and help set up activities to engage with the children."

But as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the St. Louis region in March 2020, the sites were unable to commit to summer programming. Mahoney and Hawkins-Chernof had to let that part of their plans go even before Washington University made the decision to move all their summer courses online.

"At that point, we asked ourselves: What essential learning experiences do the students need, and how do we recreate them virtually?" Hawkins-Chernof says. "We were adamant to keep the small group experience for feedback and discussions with a clinical mentor. To make it work in the Zoom environment, each mentor had two groups of about five students in two-hour blocks. One group worked on an activity for the first hour while the mentor worked with the other group, then they'd switch for the second hour."

Another challenge they faced was curating a video library to replace the in-person experiences at the sites. Mahoney and Hawkins-Chernof enlisted Program colleagues and a doctoral student completing her capstone to review and help compile the video library from various sources.

"We relied on Simucase, subscription sources and YouTube videos to find short occupational therapy sessions and videos to demonstrate typical child development," Mahoney says. "The textbook we used had a case video compendium as well."

The process of creating an online course was familiar to Mahoney but not to Hawkins-Chernof; however, she leveraged her professional development background, where she had created training videos. "There is a lot of

work on the front end. It's almost like designing a website and a textbook all at once," she says. For many students, [attending] online-only courses was a new experience as well. "Some had taken self-directed online courses such as medical terminology for one or two credits, but nothing like this intense, six-credit course."

Mahoney and Hawkins-Chernof started the course with the whole group participating in activities in one large Zoom meeting. "I taught the gross motor activity in this format so we could all be 'on the floor' together completing the movements. The students worked out their computer logistics ahead of time to get their devices set up to participate," Mahoney recalls. "A fun thing that spontaneously happened was the young children of some of our students decided they wanted to do the activity with their parent, so they ended up demonstrating the movements too."

To keep the course engaging, Hawkins-Chernof used apps such as Padlet to virtually recreate activities such as her popular Assisive Technology Maker Day. "It ended up making the activity more authentic because, in reality, there is no 'pop-up makerspace' with all these materials at your disposal. The students had to use whatever they had at home, and they made devices with rubber bands and cardboard. We will still have an in-person Maker Day, but this put a real twist on what we normally do."

Throughout the course, Mahoney and Hawkins-Chernof were cognizant of how the pandemic and the societal unrest following the death of George Floyd were affecting the students' stress levels and mental health. "To accommodate, we built in a lot more flexibility than [we] would typically do such as granting extensions for assignments. We held Zoom office hours twice a week so students could 'check in' with us about any concerns they were having. Most emails were answered within two hours," Mahoney says. Hawkins-Chernof adds: "I spent a lot of time checking in with my lab students and having individual meetings with them. I even mailed a student a Green Bay Packers mask that I made since she saw mine and wanted one. Whatever we could do to support the students, we wanted to do it."

That commitment to providing the best possible learning experience for students is what drove Mahoney and Hawkins-Chernof through the process. "As occupational therapists, being flexible and adapting to unexpected situations are what we do best. We wanted to make the online course intensive, robust and interactive as much as we could using the technology and resources available. I think we accomplished that and more," Mahoney says.

Clare Lassiter, OTD/S '22 (right), and her 9-year-old daughter, Camila, demonstrate a few of the gross motor development positions they learned during a Zoom session for the Evaluation and Intervention: Children and Youth course.



Jill Jonas, MOT, OTR/L (left), conducts a telehealth visit with Susan Dirsa, who has post-concussion syndrome following a car accident. During the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, Jonas used telehealth visits to continue seeing Dirsa bi-weekly.



Patient care

"I look the same, but I'm not the same. That's been the challenge," says Susan Dirsa, 25, who has post-concussion syndrome following a car accident in July 2019. At the time, Dirsa was a psychology major at Maryville University in her senior year, and she found herself experiencing cognitive dysfunction. "It was hard in the beginning. There was no outward physical injury – I didn't have a gash on my head, but I was not okay. My brain was on autopilot, and I felt very disassociated from my thoughts and emotions. It's like the shoe hit the floor, and it laid there for a while before I realized what happened. I knew it was there, but I couldn't pick it up. And I would tell people, what was coming out of my mouth was news to you and me. I would remember things, but not feel the emotion attached to the memories. It was extremely overwhelming."

In addition to the concussion, Dirsa developed postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS), a condition that affects blood pressure regulation and impacts concussion recovery. Individuals with POTS can experience lightheadedness, fatigue, headaches, chronic pain and other symptoms. It made Dirsa's return to school in the fall even more difficult. Her primary doctor referred her to a neurologist, who referred Dirsa to Jill Jonas, MSOT, OTR/L, an occupational therapist in Washington University's Occupational Therapy Services. Her area of interest is functional cognition, and Jonas primarily works with people like Dirsa who have experienced a traumatic brain injury, concussion or cancer-related impairments.

"The mild-cognitive area is exciting because there is neuroplasticity in the brain. My clinical approach is to encourage people to think about their goals and help facilitate them developing their own strategies that work for them in their lives," explains Jonas, who started seeing Dirsa five months post-accident. "Her primary goal was to finish her degree. Despite the accommodations Maryville University put in place for her, there were many barriers she faced in managing her full course load."

"Reading my textbooks was a big problem. My brain at once couldn't process the information in front of me, but it couldn't ignore it either. Jill suggested covering up one of the pages so I could concentrate better. Also, taking breaks after 20 minutes of reading so my brain could rest helped," Dirsa says. "We worked on strategies for everything by setting realistic, attainable goals. Jill taught me how to break down each task and ask myself: What order do I want to do this in? How can I do it better? How can I solve the problem?"

Just as Dirsa was making progress through their weekly in-person sessions, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Jonas was able to switch Dirsa over to bi-weekly telehealth visits. Dirsa, whose

coursework also went online, was familiar with the Zoom app and eager to resume her sessions virtually. The COVID-19 restrictions created new mental and physical challenges for Dirsa, and Jonas helped her develop coping strategies during the pandemic.

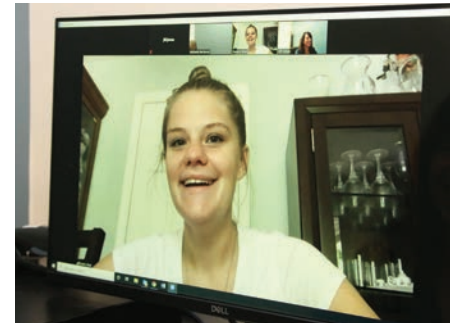
"With POTS, I need exercise to help my blood pressure regulate. Because of the stay-at-home orders, I wasn't getting out and exercising. That resulted in brain fog, and I couldn't focus on my classes at all. Jill suggested I try yoga before class to help stimulate my brain. It helped me so much," Dirsa explains. "I ended up falling in love with yoga, and I continue to practice every day."

The Zoom platform gave Jonas a window into Dirsa's world during the pandemic that she otherwise would not have had. "In preparation for the lockdown, I suggested Susan create a 'classroom' at home. When we met on Zoom for the first time, she showed me the room she had set up. She even made 'class in session' signs to put on the doors so her family knew not to disturb her. It was great – and it worked!" Jonas says.

With the various strategies in place, Dirsa was able to meet her goal of graduating on time in May 2020. As local restrictions eased, Dirsa was also able to have her final four occupational therapy sessions at the clinic with Jonas so she could thank her in person.

"Telehealth allowed Jill to be there for me when I needed her the most. I was at my most vulnerable point during the COVID-19 lockdown with school, stress and learning how to live my life differently. I couldn't imagine going through it all without Jill. She has been one of the biggest, if not the biggest part of my recovery 100 percent," Dirsa says. "She connected me to a concussion support group, and it helps to talk to others who are going through the same challenges I am in resuming life. Jill also taught me to advocate for myself and educate others about concussions. Above all, she's helped me accept I am not the same person I was before."

That acceptance led Dirsa to make the decision to wait a year before starting a master's degree program in social work to give her more time to recover. Not one to sit idle, Dirsa is using the time to help children struggling with online learning as the pandemic continues. "It's a blessing in a way – I wouldn't be able to help these children if I wasn't at this point in my recovery. Social work is my passion, so I see this as an opportunity for me to make a difference in the community now."



Dirsa developed postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS), a condition that affects blood pressure and impacts concussion recovery. She uses yoga to help regulate her blood pressure and alleviate brain fog.



In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified the following as the leading causes of traumatic brain injury (TBI):

48%

of all TBI-related emergency department (ED) visits were due to falls

17%

of all TBI-related ED visits were due to being struck by or against an object

Falls and motor vehicle crashes were the first and second leading causes of all TBI-related hospitalizations, **50% and 20%**, respectively

Community engagement



Top: Maggie Armstrong, MSOT/S '20 (left), reviews COVID-19 safety with LifeBridge client Frank Tyler (right).

Bottom: Lisa Carson, OTD, OTR/L (left), and Jessie Bricker, OTD, OTR/L (right).

The first COVID-19 cases were seen in Missouri in mid-March. Almost immediately, Level II Fieldwork sites across the country began notifying the Program in Occupational Therapy that student placements were either canceled or suspended indefinitely. With only a few short weeks before spring and summer fieldwork rotations were to start, Jessie Bricker, OTD, OTR/L, academic fieldwork and capstone coordinator, knew she had to act fast.

“A majority of these cancellations were mitigated by the Program’s swift action to adjust the course sequence for doctoral students graduating in 2021, but that still left 49 doctoral and master’s students set to graduate in December 2020 without a secure alternative,” explains Bricker. “There were some true emergency placements that needed to be made: two students had their bags packed in the car ready to drive across the country when their fieldwork sites canceled. Another student was in the first week of her rotation when the site was forced to close its doors.”

Colleague Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L, assistant professor of occupational therapy and medicine, joined Bricker in creating non-traditional fieldwork opportunities by partnering with local community agencies to deliver occupational therapy services to populations at risk for physical and mental health issues during the pandemic. Together, they developed the Level II Community Wellness Fieldwork proposal. The proposal assigned students to small teams of six, each supporting a community partner in the St. Louis area, to conduct remote visits with agency clients to address occupational needs. Each group would be supervised by a licensed occupational therapist, provided by the Program, and work with an agency liaison. In addition to client care, students would also participate in ongoing program development activities designed to promote health for clients, caregivers and agency staff as they transitioned in and out of face-to-face support services. After the proposal met all of the criteria set forth by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education for Level II Fieldwork, Bricker and Milton reached out to community partners with the proposal. They were met with an overwhelmingly positive response.

“The community partners said, ‘Let’s do this!’ They were excited to have students, new ideas and hear about what occupational therapy could do to enhance their existing services,” says Bricker. “Ultimately, we partnered with

four area agencies: Brain Injury Association of Missouri, LifeBridge Partnership, Missouri Department of Corrections (Community Supervision Center in Hannibal) and St. Louis Arc.”

Through the diligent efforts of Bricker and Leise Amann, the Program’s fieldwork administrative coordinator, only 19 students remained without a confirmed fieldwork reservation by the start of the summer term 12-week rotation. All 19 displaced students were able to continue their fieldwork rotations as scheduled through the Community Wellness option; no students chose to postpone fieldwork. The student team at LifeBridge consisted of students Maggie Armstrong, Christopher Gonzalez, Rachel Hanson, Juli Harrison and Micki Kleven, who were supervised by Lisa Carson, OTD, OTR/L. Heather Ward, LifeBridge’s chief program officer, served as the agency liaison. The organization serves the changing needs of people with disabilities by empowering them to develop skills for independence and to actively participate in their community.

“The students developed a COVID-19 safety and awareness program so that LifeBridge could resume in-person programming once county restrictions were lifted. They needed to ensure that every client would be able to follow through with safety precautions such as wearing a mask, washing their hands and maintaining social distancing,” says Carson. The students also helped Ward create a transportation safety video to show clients the updated health and safety procedures with regard to LifeBridge’s transportation services.

For the students, the Community Wellness option was a unique opportunity to gain program development skills while working in a community agency instead of “traditional” settings.

“I was originally placed at St. Louis Children’s Hospital in pediatrics for my Level II. I wanted to be in the St. Louis area, so this was a great alternative. LifeBridge has a very different population, but it gave me more experience and exposure so I have a better idea of what I want to look for in the job market,” says Harrison.

As the pandemic presented unprecedented fieldwork challenges, Bricker realized students were experiencing a new set of stressors and needed options that met their individual needs. “It was important to me personally to give students a choice. Whether they wanted to wait a year to have a Level II in an acute setting or had people depending on them to

get licensed and make a dollar, I was going to work with them to make it happen. As a Program, we needed to make sure our students could graduate on time; not only for them, but for the profession as well. We didn't want to contribute to the nationwide bottleneck in certification, licensing or in the job market."

There are plans to continue offering students the Community Wellness option as the high number of fieldwork cancelations continues. Looking ahead, Bricker sees the experience expanding as a permanent addition to Level I and Level II Fieldwork opportunities. "This experience aligns with our curricular design and the Program's commitment to creating equitable and valuable learning experiences for a diverse student body, while bringing to life our vision for occupational therapy to be engaged in community health. By partnering with a variety of community-based organizations, we have the opportunity to actively demonstrate the unique value of our profession."



Top: Frank Tyler (left) gives Heather Ward (right) a thumbs up on learning the COVID-19 transportation safety protocols on the LifeBridge bus as Christopher Gonzales, OTD/S '20, looks on.

Bottom: The LifeBridge student team and their mentor (left to right): Christopher Gonzales, OTD/S '20; Maggie Armstrong, MSOT/S '20; Rachel Hanson, MSOT/S '20; Juli Harrison, OTD/S '20; Lisa Carson, OTD, OTR/L; and Micki Kleven, OTD/S '20.



Active grants July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Peggy Barco, OTD, OTR/L, SCD, CM, CDRS, FAOTA

Rural Driving Study and Traffic Signs: Fitness to Drive
Funded by MoDOT

M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA

ENGAGE: Promoting Participation and Health for People with Stroke-Related Disability and Low Income
Funded by WU CTSA SPIRiT (Sharing Partnership for Innovative Research in Translation) Pilot Program

Schultz Lifestyle Profile Series
Funded by Schultz Family Support Fund

Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Sankofa Culture and Art Wellness Village Senior Summer Camp
Funded by WU Institute of Public Health/ ICTS Pitch Partners Rapid Seed Funding

Chih-Hung Chang, PhD

IMPACT-Instrument to Measure Pain and Assess Correlation to Treatment
Funded by subaward from Bente Technology's US NIH SBIR award R43DA046974

Erin Foster, PhD, OTD, OTR/L

Strategy-based cognitive intervention for Parkinson disease: A pilot randomized controlled trial
Funded by US NIH award R21AG063974

Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP

Barriers and Facilitators to Implementing Academic Supports in Pediatric Asthma
Funded by US NIH award KL2TR002346

Postdoc Supplement

Funded by Dr. Allison King's US NIH NHLBI U01

PRIDE-Functional and Translational Genomics of Blood Disorders

Funded by subaward from Augusta University's US NIH award R25HL106365

Allison King, MD, PhD

Cerebrovascular Disease and Cognition in Adults with Hemoglobin Sc
Funded by ASH Physician-Scientist Career Development Award

Engaging Parents of Children with Sickle Cell Anemia and their Providers in Shared-Decision Making for Hydroxyurea
Funded by subaward from Children's Hospital Medical Center's PCORI award CDR-1609-36055

Heartland/Southwest Sickle Cell Disease Network

Funded by US Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Sickle Cell Treatment Demonstration Program award U1EMC27865

Benjamin Philip, PhD (left), in his Neuroscience and Rehabilitation Laboratory.

Impact of Hearing Impairment on Cognitive Function and Quality of Life in Pediatric Cancer Survivors

Funded by Children's Discovery Institute

The Implementation of Cognitive Screening and Educational Support to Improve Outcomes of Adolescents and Young Adults with Sickle Cell Disease: From Clinic to the Community and Back

Funded by US NIH NHLBI U01HL133994

Implementation of Evidence Based Care for the Acute Treatment of Sickle Cell Disease Pain

Funded by subaward from the Medical College of Wisconsin's US NIH NHLBI award U01HL143477

Sickle Cell Anemia Neurodevelopmental Screening (SCANS) – Mentoring and Research in Patient Oriented Research

Funded by US NIH NHLBI K24HL148305

Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP

Emergency Relief Fund
Funded by Craig H. Neilsen Foundation

Feasibility of a Community-Based Exercise Intervention for Persons with Spinal Cord Injury

Funded by NIH/NICHD K12HD055931 Multicenter Career Development Program for Physical and Occupational Therapy Comprehensive Opportunities in Rehabilitation Research Training Program

Wheelchair Propulsion Training for Manual Wheelchair Users with Spinal Cord Injury

Funded by Craig H. Neilsen Foundation Spinal Cord Injury Research on the Translational Spectrum

Benjamin Philip, PhD

Motor Imagery for Peripheral Nerve Recovery
Funded by American Society of NeuroRehabilitation (ASNR) Clinical Research Network Task Force

Quantitative Handwriting Assessment Tool for Healthy and Impaired Children

Funded by subaward from NewVentureIQ's US NIH STTR award R41HD097833

Duana Russell-Thomas, OTD, OTR/L

Regional Arthritis Center – Greater St. Louis Region
Funded by US MO DHSS

Susy Stark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Building Capacity to Improve Community Participation for People Aging with Long-Term Disability Through Evidence-Based Strategies
Funded by US HHS-NIDILRR 90DPCP0001

COMPASS: A Novel Transition Program to Reduce Disability after Stroke

Funded by US NIH NICHD R01HD092398

Falls: A Marker of Preclinical Alzheimer's Disease

Funded by US NIH NIA R01AG057680

Removing Home Hazards for Older Adults Living in Affordable Housing

Funded by US HUD MOHUU0040-17

Retaining Participants in Longitudinal Studies of Alzheimer's Disease

Funded by subaward from University of Washington's US NIH award U01AG016976

Alex Wong, PhD, DPhil, BSOT

Mobile Rehabilitation for Daily Life Participation Post-Stroke
Funded by US NIH NICHD K01HD095388

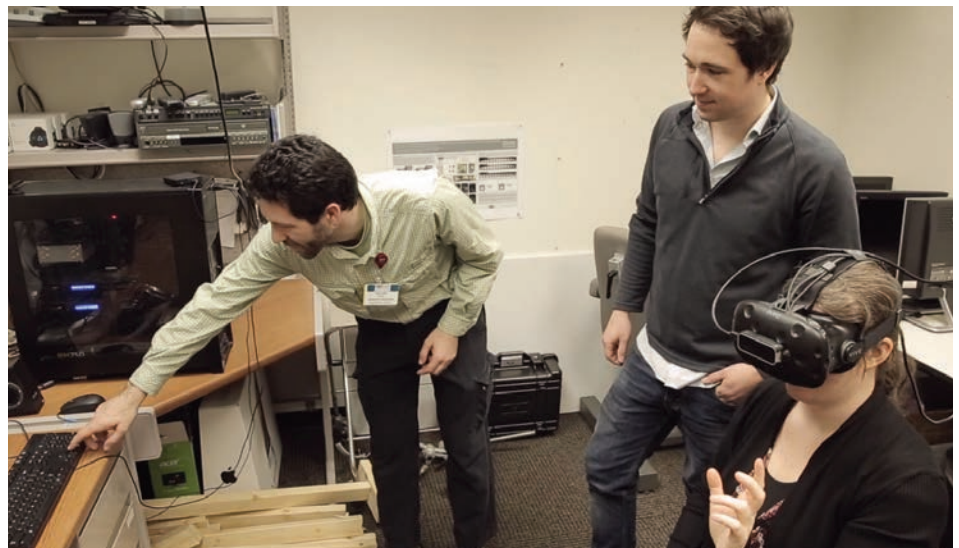
Patient Engagement Intervention in Inpatient Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation
Funded by Craig H. Neilsen Foundation's Psychosocial Research Grants

Recovery Dynamics of Depression, Social Support, and Functional Status in Stroke Survivors after Inpatient Rehabilitation: Longitudinal Evidence from the Stroke Recovery in Underserved Populations Study
Funded by the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston's US NIH award P2CHD065702

SMART Stroke Registry

Funded by the Program in Occupational Therapy

MIKE MARTIN MEDIA



Faculty honors

The Program in Occupational Therapy's faculty were honored this past year with appointments and professional accomplishments.

Chang joint appointed National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine fellow

Chih-Hung Chang, PhD, was appointed to a two-year term starting June 1 as a joint appointed research fellow at the National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine (NRICM), Ministry of Health and Welfare in Taipei, Taiwan. NRICM is a research center responsible for research, experimental and development issues of Chinese medicine. This is an important and significant step toward the modernization of Chinese medicine utilizing a psychometrics and informatics-integrated approach.

Harris selected for IS-2 program

Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP, was selected to participate in the Institute for Implementation Science Scholars (IS-2) program beginning this year and running through 2022. IS-2 is a mentored training program for post-doctoral scholars interested in applying dissemination and implementation research to proven behavioral and social science research to eliminate chronic disease disparities.

Taff and Smallfield inducted as Academy of Educators fellows

Steve Taff, OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA, and Stacy Smallfield, DrOT, OTR/L, BCG, 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.

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.

Tyminski accepted into FITS, TSP programs; receives MOTA award

Quinn Tyminski, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH, was accepted into the Foundations in Teaching Skills (FITS) Certificate Program. The program targets junior educators and faculty who are newly incorporating teaching excellence into their careers. FITS is sponsored by the Office of Education at Washington University School of Medicine. She was also accepted into the 2020-2021 cohort of the School of Medicine's Teaching Scholars Program (TSP). The TSP is a year-long certificate program for early-career faculty wishing to pursue careers in academic health care.

Tyminski received the 2019 Missouri Occupational Therapy Association's Outstanding Educator Award. This award recognizes the administrator, supervisor or educator who promotes professionalism, civic engagement, occupation-based care, volunteerism, mentoring the future generation of occupational therapy practitioners and serves as a positive role model for staff and/or students.

Wong elected secretary to ACRM committee

Alex Wong, PhD, DPhil, BSOT, was elected secretary to the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM) Networking Group Executive Committee. His two-year term began during the 2019 ACRM Conference in Chicago on Nov. 6-8.



Top: Chih-Hung Chang, PhD.
Bottom: Quinn Tyminski, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH, recipient of the 2019 MOTA Outstanding Educator Award.



LISA TABOR CONNOR

Faculty appointments and promotions



Kelly Harris



Pat Nellis



Alex Wong



Peggy Barco



Jessica Dasher



Allison King



Kathy Kniepmann



Lauren Milton

Appointments (Primary)

Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP, was appointed instructor in occupational therapy and medicine and surgery (Public Health Sciences) on July 1, 2019. Her research examines the interdependence of chronic disease, child development, educational outcomes for youth in urban and suburban contexts, and the use of dissemination and implementation science to improve health and educational equity.

Pat Nellis, OTD, OTR/L, was appointed associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology on July 1, 2019. Nellis is the director of the Division of Clinical Operations for the Program in Occupational Therapy. Her focus is on health promotion, well-being and self-management in order to empower patients to take charge of their own global health.

Appointments (Secondary)

Alex Wong, PhD, DPhil, BSOT, assistant professor of occupational therapy, neurology and psychiatry, received the secondary appointment in psychiatry on July 1, 2019. His research focuses on using mobile technologies, neurobehavioral and patient-reported assessments to understand neuro-recovery as a set of dynamic processes in which cognition, mood and daily behaviors are individually organized and vary across time.

Promotions

Peggy Barco, OTD, OTR/L, SCDCM, CDRS, FAOTA, was promoted to associate professor of occupational therapy and medicine on July 1, 2019. Her research interests focus on driving performance in older adults with various medical impairments. Her research goals are to develop ways clinicians can better assess driving performance in their clients as well as to identify interventions to prolong driving and community mobility throughout the lifespan.

Jessica Dasher, OTD, OTR/L, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy and neurology on July 1, 2019. Her scholarly activity includes developing and determining the effectiveness of interventions designed to enable participation of individuals with mobility and sensory impairments in the community.

Allison King, MD, PhD, was promoted to professor of occupational therapy, medicine, pediatrics, surgery (Division of Public Health Sciences) and education on Jan. 1, 2020. Her research focuses on factors that impact a child's opportunity to learn. From a biological standpoint, she studies how chronic diseases such as sickle cell disease or brain tumors alter cognition. In addition, King studies the environment's influence on children's development and participation.

Kathy Kniepmann, OTD, MPH, EdM, CHES, OTR/L, was promoted to associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology on July 1, 2019. Her scholarly activity focuses on social participation and occupational performance for families who have adult relatives with stroke, self-management and wellness, and information-seeking behaviors of family caregivers.

Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy and medicine on July 1, 2019. Her scholarly activity related to educational research includes the scholarship of teaching and learning, such as increasing student engagement through various teaching methods, understanding the student experience and student assessment.

Donor honor roll July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

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Breonna Woods, OTD/S '22 (left), and M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA (right), attended the School of Medicine Scholarship Donor Recognition Dinner on Nov. 23, 2019. The event celebrates donors who generously support student scholarships.

Named scholarship recipients



If you would like to establish a named scholarship, please contact Patrick Delhougne in University Advancement at 314-935-9680 or p.delhougne@wustl.edu.

The following scholarship recipients were recognized at Virtual Commencement 2020.

Carolyn Baum Leadership Award

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Future leader

Maribeth Clifton, OTD '20

Hometown: Cheyenne, WY

Undergraduate degree: BS in physiology from the University of Wyoming

Leadership: OTD Class of 2020 Student Marshall; Agnes Fielding Prahman Scholar; Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity, WashU Student Chapter (WU-COTAD) Co-President (2019-2020)

What are your meaningful occupations?

My meaningful occupations include listening to music, singing, exercising, learning through reading and social interactions, and spending time with loved ones. These occupations allow me to feel joy, heal and provide a sense of connection and belonging to something greater than myself.

What is your definition of OT?

OT is a profession that has the potential to see individuals, populations, communities and beyond with a holistic and equitable lens. Occupational therapists have the opportunity to assist our clients in identifying and elevating their strengths in order to participate more meaningfully within their daily lives. As occupational therapists, we must also understand and acknowledge the barriers that our clients may face resulting from physical injury, disability, mental health challenges, etc. Additionally, it is important to be mindful of the experiences of many individuals as a direct result of limitations placed by social stratification and systemic issues that are deeply rooted within the history of America and act as barriers to performance of and participation in occupations.

Why did you choose the OTD degree?

I chose the OTD degree because it allowed me additional opportunities for growth, mentorship and education in preparation for my future career goals within academia, scholarly work and community-based practice. While pursuing the OTD degree, I have gained skills in research, program development and teaching. Lastly, through intra- and inter-professional collaboration, I have developed relationships with individuals whom I hope to continue to work with well into my future career.

What are your career goals?

My career goals are to establish a community-based organization serving youth with behavioral health challenges and their families. Ultimately, I hope to pair this work with community-based research through efforts at the university level. I anticipate that this work will inform not only my practice, but also public health initiatives and policy for underserved populations. As a person who is extremely passionate about social justice, I will continue to be a part of conversations and action surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion as they relate to our profession and the individuals we aim to serve.

What WashU experience so far stands out to you?

My experience in Dr. Lauren Milton's laboratory has been instrumental in the development of my scholarly interests and the establishment of relationships with various community partners. In addition, working with Dr. Steve Taff on the development of our practice model related to diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education has been a powerful and motivating learning experience. Finally, I have had the opportunity to work and collaborate with the Race and Opportunity Lab at WashU's Brown School of social work on initiatives relating to health, development and opportunity for Black boys and young men in the St. Louis City and County area.



Congratulations, Class of 2020!

Master of Science in Occupational Therapy

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Occupational Therapy

2020 MOTA Hill Day



On March 4, faculty and students traveled to Jefferson City, Mo., for the Missouri Occupational Therapy Association's annual OT Hill Day to increase awareness of the profession and programs in the state of Missouri and the distinct value our schools and practitioners provide in our communities to policymakers.