

Wellness



Program in Occupational Therapy | Annual Report 2023



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Occupational Therapy

ON THE COVER

Left to right: Sue Tucker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, Carla Walker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, and Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP, monitor practice participant Donna Carpenter as she trials an exercise session for Morgan's study.

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Welcome

Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

Associate Dean and Director of Occupational Therapy

Elias Michael Professor of Occupational Therapy and Professor of Neurology



The World Health Organization defines wellness as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” In our profession, we hold that occupation is the means to well-being and health. We look past medical diagnoses; rather, we focus on enabling occupations that give someone's life meaning. Our OT focus on occupation and well-being extends into the community, where participation in occupations creates healthy and well populations. In this issue, I am proud to share with you how the Program's three divisions – research, education and patient care – contribute to the health and wellness of those we serve.

Researcher Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP, (page 2) is dedicated to improving the participation of people with mobility disabilities in their everyday life activities. Low levels of

physical activity are common in wheelchair users due to physical disability. They are also at greater risk for obesity and cardiometabolic-health-related diseases. She was recently awarded a \$2.7 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a community-based, randomized trial that compares the benefits of education and access to an adaptive gym with and without personalized coaching.

Lenin Grajo, PhD, OTR/L, and Stacy West-Bruce, OTD, MSW, OTR/L, (page 4) co-chair the Inclusive Occupational Therapy Education Committee (iOTE), a group of nine faculty members and student representatives who are focused on inclusivity and anti-racism. Through a strategic and intentional first-phase planning process, they are developing a guiding document: “The Essential Elements of Inclusive OT Education.” This year, they are beginning phase two of the iOTE plan, where the committee will be converted to three smaller working groups to facilitate a 12-month implementation process for the program.

Maria Coxon, OTD, OTR/L, CLC, (page 6) is an occupational therapist in OT Services' newest service line: Pediatric Feeding Services. She works with children ages 0-18 and their families on strategies to improve feeding and provide a positive mealtime experience for all. She is part of the newly formed Maternal Health Collective, a directed scholarship lab run by both faculty and clinicians. She will mentor our students interested in infant feeding, breastfeeding, neonatal intensive care unit transition and new parent support.

We value our community partnerships. Patricia Nellis, OTD, OTR/L, (page 8), the director of the Division of Clinical Operations, oversees and delivers a cognitive stimulation therapy program at Allegro Senior Living. It's a non-pharmacological intervention designed to supplement other medical interventions and is delivered as a structured group activity. The program consists of two sessions of themed activities per week for seven weeks. Participants have improved their motor skills, relationship-building, and overall quality of life and wellness.

This report also highlights the accomplishments of faculty, staff and students this past year and the impact the support of alumni and donors (page 14) makes in the lives of our students. We are proud to report the 2023 outcomes of our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts (page 11), which we strive to improve each year.

Our mission is to advance human health and well-being by maximizing people's participation in meaningful activity. Through these efforts, we have helped people across the lifespan meet their goals and live their lives to the fullest. With your support, we are training the next generation of occupational therapists to improve the wellness of those they will serve in the future.



Michael Scheller, PTA/L (standing), an exercise coach from Paraquad's Stephen A. Orthwein Center, encourages participant Donna Carpenter to engage in moderate-level-intensity exercise on the NuStep recumbent cross trainer.



Research

In an accessible, community-based fitness center near the campus of Washington University Medical Center, occupational therapists are engaged in a five-year study to identify evidence-based interventional strategies that increase the level of cardiometabolic fitness in individuals using wheelchairs.

“We have anecdotal evidence that increased physical activity can decrease fatigue and pain, but the real benchmark we want to measure is whether or not cardiometabolic health improves as a result of education and coaching interventions,” says Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP, director of the Program in Occupational Therapy’s Enabling Mobility in the Community Laboratory.

The focus on improving cardiometabolic fitness in wheelchair users is a critical health issue. Almost 3 million people in the United States use a wheelchair for mobility. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that adults with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs, are at high risk for cardiovascular diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and obesity due to physical inactivity. And while previous studies have found that people with disabilities are able to engage in physical activity in a community center, not many understand what moderate-intensity exercise feels like to really move the needle on their overall health.

Toward that end, Morgan has been awarded a \$2.7 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a community-based, randomized trial that compares the benefits of education and access to an adaptive gym with and without tailored, one-to-one coaching. She is working with trained adaptive exercise specialists at the Stephen A. Orthwein Center at Paraquad, a community gym and adaptive rehabilitation center dedicated to enhancing independence in persons with disabilities. Over the next five years, 110 people who use power wheelchairs, scooters or manual wheelchairs will come to the Orthwein Center to be part of the study.

Specifically, Morgan and colleagues will measure cardiorespiratory fitness through VO₂ max testing, a standard test that measures the maximum rate

of oxygen consumption during physical exertion. Researchers also will be looking at body composition changes, endothelial function and metabolic blood chemistry before and after 14 weeks of participation in the study. Participants will be randomized into two groups: the first will be educated about what baseline physical activity levels are recommended and will be shown how to use adaptive exercise equipment. They then will be asked to come to the gym three times a week, self-guiding their own exercise routines. The second group will have the added benefit of an assigned personal coach to help them achieve moderate intensity levels in their workouts. “We’ll be able to say this is how fast you should go on a machine, this is the heart rate you need to be at, and point out other indicators that they need to keep them progressing forward as their cardiorespiratory fitness improves,” says Morgan.

Morgan, who has been part of national committees looking into ways to improve the health and mobility of persons with disabilities, says the goal of this latest study is to prove that interventional strategies in a community-based setting can improve overall cardiometabolic health.

“Phase I is to determine at what level we need to engage wheelchair users to obtain cardiometabolic fitness,” she says. “Then we need to identify the specific interventions that enable those individuals to maintain and improve fitness in their own community-based settings.”

Since 2019, the CDC has recommended “moderate-to-vigorous-intensity physical activity and muscle-strengthening exercises” for persons with disabilities. That recommendation has usually been discussed in terms of time — 150 minutes, or 2.5 hours, of aerobic physical activity per week — for anyone, regardless of disability. Morgan notes that while some wheelchair users may not get to 150 minutes weekly, they may still show cardiometabolic improvements if they understand how to achieve a level of intensity during exercise appropriate to them.

A long-term goal of Morgan’s long-standing research into mobility and community-based interventions is to broaden awareness of the benefits of exercise in all populations, those with and without disabilities. Previous research has found that while doctors and other health professionals can influence and promote more physical activity, few do. In fact, one study found that only 44% of adults with disabilities who visited a doctor in the past year received a physical activity recommendation from their doctor.

Says Morgan, “I think that there is a genuine concern or even some fear among some physicians, and also among physical and occupational therapists, that we might hurt people, or that they may hurt themselves, if they increase their level of physical activity and exercise. That’s not the case, and we need to statistically measure and prove that moderate activity really has significant health benefits.”

Morgan explains the Intensity-Controlled Physical Activity Training intervention components with her Community Advisory Board on June 26.



Education



A student completes the Social Identity Wheel, a tool to map out the different intersections of social identities.

When Lenin Grajo, PhD, OTR/L, became the director for the Education Division and associate director of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for the Program in 2022, one of his top priorities was to create a task force to strengthen the Program’s commitment to DEI, justice and anti-racism initiatives. He formed and co-chairs the Inclusive Occupational Therapy Education (iOTE) Committee, a group of nine faculty members and student representatives from the WashU Student OT Association and the WashU chapter of the Coalition of OT Advocates for Diversity who share his passion for enhanced inclusivity and focus on anti-racism. Through a strategic and intentional first-phase planning process, a guiding document is being developed: “The Essential Elements of Inclusive OT Education.”

“This is a living, breathing and dynamic document. We’re approaching it with intentionality and purpose,” explains committee co-chair Stacy West-Bruce, OTD, MSW, OTR/L. “It will guide our collaborative work with faculty, staff and students, but it can change, evolve and adapt as we move through the iOTE program process.”

After meeting monthly for a year, the committee drafted nine essential elements critical to committing to and driving the transformation through the education pipeline (see chart below).

“Many, if not all, of the items came about through an iterative faculty feedback process. Each element starts with our shared values, what we are currently doing, and then what we are committed to doing,” Grajo shares. “We are

determining what is a pragmatic, reasonable expectation for faculty and staff accountability to this guide”

In phase two of the iOTE program plan, the committee will be converted to three smaller working groups to facilitate a 12-month implementation of the program. One of the working groups, led by Salma Bachelani, OTD, OTR/L, with Grayson Owens, OTD, OTR/L, and Grajo as team members, aims to create a faculty fidelity checklist.

Grajo explains: “The faculty fidelity checklist is essentially a DEI+ audit making sure that DEI+ principles are at the core of how we prepare to teach, how we teach, how we measure teaching, and how we give feedback to students. It’s a guide for faculty to see what their strong points are and which areas they need to do better in to make their teaching and learning spaces more inclusive, accessible and anti-racist. The Student Experiences Survey, which was first disseminated and drafted by the Program Evaluation Committee in fall 2022, will build on an existing Sense of Belonging Survey for students to assess feelings of belongingness and satisfaction within the program. Student representatives will be involved in the process.”

The case study working group, led by Kathy Knipmann, OTD, MPH, EdM, CHES, OTR/L, with team members Sue Tucker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, Quinn Tyminski, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH, and Carla Walker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, will serve a dual purpose: to create a guiding rubric so that all case studies follow inclusive and anti-racist principles of teaching and to provide a consultation and feedback group where

Nine essential elements of inclusive OT education





The iOTE Committee (left to right): Lenin Grajo, Stacy West-Bruce, Amanda Mack, Carla Walker, Quinn Tyminski, Salma Bachelani, Grayson Owens, Sue Tucker and Kathy Kniepmann.

faculty can submit their existing case studies for brainstorming on how they can better reflect those inclusive and anti-racist principles.

“From the start, we tell students that the clients you work with are humans first before they are patients. Before, it was the problem first: ‘Patient X is a 64-year-old Black male who had a stroke.’ We want to shift how we present cases to: ‘This person is a single father living in a rural neighborhood’ before introducing the medical diagnosis. This will then shift the way students look at the clients they interact with as a person with occupational and intersecting social identities before they are a medical case,” Grajo says.

“We also talk about cultural humility, which is this idea that, at the end of the day, you’re basically just two people sitting across from each other learning about the other. It removes some of the pressure for us to have to be experts. Instead, it allows the people that we’re serving to be the experts on their lives and for us to be curious,” West-Bruce adds. “It can be more of an exchange between two humans rather than an expert and a patient.”

The faculty professional development working group, co-led by West-Bruce and Amanda Mack, OTD, OTR/L, CLC, will be tasked with seeking experts and consultants who can provide training and support for faculty and staff to continue their professional

development toward the enhanced ability to teach and support students using inclusive and anti-racist practices.

“Faculty and staff development will be key to the program’s success. Last spring, the committee sent out a faculty survey asking where they felt the gaps are around DEI, justice, and anti-racism and what types of training they would like,” West-Bruce says. “Essential elements of survey responses and the gaps that the committee has identified will be used to create these trainings.”

The third and final phase of the iOTE program will be evaluation. The committee will develop tools with two overarching goals in mind: to evaluate the program’s ongoing progress related to both faculty and student development. The evaluation is planned for the end of the 2024 spring semester.

While enhanced inclusivity and anti-racism is a priority for the Program, the goal is to make “The Essential Elements of Inclusive OT Education” available digitally as an accessible resource for OT educators and the profession. “This document is not about what we do or have done about this shared value and core mission. This document is about what we want to really hold ourselves accountable to, our core commitment to the communities we serve,” Grajo says.



Inclusive approaches to clinical readiness include shifting the perception to clients as humans first before their medical case.



Coxon works with an infant patient on visual stimulation by looking at a colorful, large-print children's book.

Patient Care

“The best-case scenario is that after, a couple of weeks or months, a child that wouldn’t eat anything is now eating everything,” says Maria Coxon, OTD, OTR/L, CLC, an occupational therapist in OT Services’ newest service line: Pediatric Feeding Services.

It is estimated that pediatric feeding disorders affect more than one in 37 children under age 5 in the United States each year.* Children take part in meals and snacks multiple times a day and in a variety of settings like home, day care and school. Coxon works with children ages 0-18 and their families on strategies to improve feeding and provide a positive mealtime experience for all: “Part of the reason I’m so passionate about feeding is because there’s so much personal and cultural value assigned to mealtime. It shouldn’t be stressful or a battle of wills.”

Coxon knew as a first-year OT student that she wanted to focus on feeding. “I did my observation hours at The Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh, where they had an intensive outpatient feeding program. I fell in love with it immediately,” Coxon recalls. She earned her master’s degree in occupational therapy in 2018 and her post-professional doctoral degree in occupational therapy in 2019 from Boston University. Coxon completed her Level II fieldwork at Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego in Calif., where she specialized in feeding and worked for two years following graduation.

In infants, Coxon often sees difficulties with breast feeding or bottle feeding and latching, especially with premature infants. “They tend to be less efficient and must work harder to eat. I show parents what to look for if a baby is struggling to eat and develop gentle strategies to set them up for success,” says Coxon, who typically sees infants in the home setting. “If I can observe the feeding, I can see, for example, if the nipple flow is too fast for them and help make an adjustment. There are several devices and environmental adaptations that can help infants feed.”

Transitioning to purees or solid foods (6 to 18 months old) can be a difficult time, and Coxon uses a hands-on approach to help parents get their child to eat. “We work on supportive strategies to introduce new foods, textures and tastes in a positive way. Parents join the sessions with me at the table or by the highchair so there won’t be an issue when I’m not there.”

*Source: Nationwide Children’s Hospital

Coxon uses play to encourage food acceptance and break down the steps of eating. “The goal is to get children comfortable being around food they’re not sure about by touching it, bringing it to their mouth and eventually trying it. We’re making silly faces with food, using food to paint or moving toys through a plate of food. This gives them a ‘toolbox’ of skills to react to a new food that doesn’t involve crying, running away or even hiding. Children can think: ‘I don’t know what this is, but I can use my fork to push it around as Ms. Maria says. I can smell it before I try and take a bite.’”

Medical diagnoses like autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or Down syndrome can bring rigidity and contribute to selective eating. “I look for any skill deficits that may be impacting chewing or swallowing in addition to sensory concerns,” Coxon says. “For example, lower muscle tone in some children with Down syndrome can affect their ability to chew or swallow because it takes longer to build that strength and endurance.”

Feeding issues can continue into the teen years, often stemming from childhood experiences. Techniques they have used to avoid foods may no longer work in adult settings. “As they mature, teens start to realize how much of their social life revolves around food. They tell their parents or providers, ‘I want to go to prom and be able to eat the dinner served,’ or ‘I’m going to college, what do I do about meals?’” Coxon explains. “Their treatment tends to be self-advocacy and learning strategies for when they are in situations where food they aren’t sure about is offered such as how to respectfully ask questions, take a bite, advocate for themselves at a restaurant, or request a substitute. For example, if they don’t like garlic flavor, how can they politely ask for a different seasoning instead?”

Managing expectations is another way Coxon helps her young clients learn to eat new foods. “It can take trying a food 10 to 20 separate times before deciding if they like it. Palates do change, and if they tried it once a long time ago – it may taste different now that they are older,” Coxon says. “Reframing how they think about food can help them open up to new experiences.”

Coxon will be sharing her clinical interests with doctoral students this fall in the newly formed Maternal Health Collective, a directed scholarship lab run by both faculty and clinicians. The



Coxon uses a colorful children’s book to help an infant develop reaching skills.

overarching goal of the collective is to work toward improved perinatal outcomes for parents with a focus on co-occupational engagement; mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual participation; health; and well-being. Coxon will mentor students interested in infant feeding, breastfeeding, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) transition and new parent support.

“It will be an expansion of our existing NICU-Transition Services (often referred to as Baby Bridge), which provide support to infants and their families after they go home from the NICU and until other therapy services like early intervention can begin,” Coxon says. “There will be an arm that focuses specifically on breastfeeding and lactation. Students will not only accompany me on home visits, but also help support program and service development for infants and their families in the community. I hope I can instill the same passion for feeding that I had when I was a first-year student in my lab mentees.”



Pediatric feeding disorders affect more than **1 in 37** children under age 5 in the United States each year.*

Community partnerships



Changes in memory are common among older adults. For those with dementia, they can range from mild to severe as the disease progresses. Staying mentally stimulated and socially engaged can be key to retaining quality of life and wellness for older adults living with dementia. That is why Allegro Senior Living, a family-owned company based in St. Louis, offers a cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) program for their community members. Patricia Nellis, OTD, OTR/L, director of the Division of Clinical Operations for the Program in Occupational Therapy, oversees and delivers the CST program. The partnership began when Elizabeth Dodd, Allegro's assistant vice president of sales and marketing, reached out to Nellis about setting up a resource or social activity program.

"We had previously worked with Elizabeth at The Sheridan at Laumeier Park, another senior community that offered memory care, in 2019. When she moved to Allegro, she saw an opportunity to partner with us again. We talked several times and had a meeting on site," Nellis explains. "Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic put the program on hold until it was safe to resume group activities. We were finally able to launch the program in fall 2022."

CST is an evidence-based treatment developed in the United Kingdom for people with mild-to-moderate dementia. It is well known there and is considered to be effective and evidence-based, but it is only now gaining traction in the U.S.

"It's a non-pharmacological intervention designed to supplement other medical interventions and is delivered as a structured group activity. The program consists of two sessions of themed activities per week for seven weeks," Nellis says. "The goal is to actively stimulate and engage people by soliciting intact long-term memories and bringing them into the current moment through conversations, activities and participation."

Nellis starts each session with a warm-up activity: discussing a current event and stretching. Each group has a name and a group song that everyone sings to help focus participants and build camaraderie. From there, each session follows a theme that facilitates conversation to connect past memories to the present day. There may also be an on-topic activity that can integrate other sensory inputs such as smell, hearing, taste or touch to evoke memory. It's a psychologically safe environment where residents can share thoughts and opinions openly. For Nellis, it is rewarding to see the "a-ha moment" when a participant unlocks a forgotten memory. That moment can even uncover an unused skill or talent in someone who has shut down due to dementia.

"We had a woman from memory care in a group who wouldn't open her eyes. Early on, hearing one of the songs made her open her eyes. She started to open up and sing along. Clearly, she had been in a choir and had a strong voice. We told her, 'Oh my goodness, you're a singer, and you have so much to offer!'" Nellis recalls. "As the session progressed, she participated more and more. She's currently a 'return member' in the latest group, where she is so much more alert, present and aware. It really comes down to the quality of life – I'm still here. I still have meaning. I have something to share," Nellis says.

The groups are spaces to discuss different cultures and listen to the life experiences of others. "One woman lived through World War II in Great Britain. Her family lived in air raid shelters, and her mother's job was to look for injured people following a raid. It's amazing information that people share," Nellis says. "They are all storytellers, and the stories have a lot of meaning, which is attached to who they are."

Participants are also interested in learning about topics that are popular among younger generations. "We did a presentation on Pokémon, which went over surprisingly well. Pictures were shared on a large-screen TV, and cards were passed out for them to see and touch. It led to an interesting conversation about what superpowers they wanted to have and why," Nellis recalls.

Another positive outcome of the CST program is building community and connection among Allegro residents. "One group started having lunch together after sessions to continue the conversations. They know each other much better now," Nellis says.

Allegro Senior Living shares in the excitement surrounding the success of the program and the improvements seen in their residents.

"We are thrilled to continue working with Washington University occupational therapists in offering CST to our residents at Allegro Richmond Heights. It is exciting to see how many individuals participating in this program have improved their motor skills, relationship-building, and overall quality of life," says Douglas Schiffer, President and Chief Operating Officer of Allegro Senior Living. "This outcome goes hand-in-hand with our commitment to providing communities where our residents can Live Beautifully."

The CST program is currently running its third session and is being led by occupational therapists Kaylee Breitenbucher, MOT, OTR/L, and Anna Perlmutter, MSOT, OTR/L. WashU OT doctoral students are also participating in sessions as part of their capstone projects.



Top photo: Nellis answers a question from a CST group member.

Bottom photo: Nellis observes CST group members as they respond to a question.

Nellis engages with a CST group member who is sharing her thoughts and feedback about the session.



Active grants July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

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

Patient Engagement Intervention in Inpatient Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation

Funded by subaward on The Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's Craig H. Neilsen Foundation Psychosocial Research Award

Rural Driving Study and Traffic Signs

Funded by MoDOT

M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA

Multicenter Career Development Program for Physical and Occupational Therapy

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Schultz Lifestyle Profile Series

Funded by Schultz Family Support Fund

Chih-Hung Chang, PhD

IMPACT-Instrument to Measure Pain and Assess Correlation to Treatment

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Erin Foster, PhD, OTD, OTR/L

Prospective Memory Impairment in Parkinson Disease-related Cognitive Decline: Intervention and Mechanisms

Funded by US NIH R01AG065214

Understanding Engagement in Research, Clinical Care, and Community Services Among People of Color with Parkinson Disease

Funded by American Parkinson Disease Association

Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP

Barriers and Facilitators to Implementing Academic Supports in Pediatric Asthma

Funded by WU ICTS Just in Time

Developing an Equity-Focused Understanding of School Health and Engagement: Building a Research-Practice Partnership

Funded by Washington University's Institute for Public Health and the ICTS - Partnership Development & Sustainability Support Funding Program through the CTSA from the NCATS at the US NIH award UL1 TR002345

Development of a School-Based Care Coordination Service Model to Support Youth with Asthma

Funded by US NIH UL1TR002345 CTRFP through the Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies function of the WU ICTS

Diversity Supplement on Allison King, MD, PhD, parent award "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

Leveraging mHealth to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19 in African American Communities

Funded by Subaward on The University of Cincinnati's Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc. 2020 COVID-19 Award

Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTD, OTR/L

Detecting Developmental Delay Among Infants and Toddlers with Sickle Cell Disease

Funded by US NIH NHLBI K12HL137942

Development of a Theoretical Model to Move Towards Equity in Occupational Therapy

Funded by WU Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity "CRE2" Small Grant Funding

Expanding Access to Early Intervention Services in Missouri

Funded by Missouri Foundation for Health Opportunity Fund

Expanding Developmental Screening and Early Intervention for Children with Sickle Cell Disease

Funded by Washington University, Institute for Public Health and the ICTS-PDSS Funding Program through the CTSA of the NCATS at the US NIH award UL1 TR002345

Perinatal Arterial Stroke: A Multi-site RCT of Intensive Infant Rehabilitation (I-ACQUIRE) Study

Funded by subaward on The University of Cincinnati on behalf of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's US NIH NINDS U01NS106655 award

Use of Early Intervention Among Children with Sickle Cell Disease

Funded by St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Utilization of Developmental Screening and Early Intervention in Sickle Cell Disease

Funded by US NIH UL1TR002345 CTRFP through the Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies function of the WU ICTS

Allison King, MD, PhD

ASH Research Collaborative Clinical Trials Network

Funded by ASH Registry, Inc. d/b/a ASH Research Collaborative Award

Cure Sickle Cell Data Strategy Consortium

Funded by subaward on The Research Triangle Institute's (RTI's) US NIH NHLBI award OT3HL147798

Heartland/Southwest Sickle Cell Disease Network

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

Funded by Children's Discovery Institute

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

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Sickle Cell Disease and Cardiovascular Risk – Red Cell Exchange Trial (SCD-CARRE Trial)

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Sickle Cell Improvement: Enhancing Care in the Emergency Department (SCIENCE)

Funded by subaward on The Medical College of Wisconsin's US NIH NHLBI award U01HL1598500

Symptom Screening Linked to Care Pathways for Children with Cancer: A Cluster Randomized Trial

Funded by subaward on The Hospital for Sick Children's (Toronto) US NIH NCI award R01CA251112

The Epidemiology of Silent and Overt Strokes in Adults with Sickle Cell Disease: A Prospective Cohort Study

Funded by Global Blood Therapeutics, Inc.

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

Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP

Wheelchair User Physical Activity Training Intervention to Enhance Cardiometabolic Health (WATCH): A Community-Based Randomized Control Trial

Funded by US NIH NICHD award R01HD111022

Benjamin Philip, PhD

Interhemispheric Communication and Compensation in Peripheral Nerve Injury

Funded by US NIH NINDS R01NS114046

Motor Imagery for Peripheral Nerve Recovery

Funded by American Society of NeuroRehabilitation Clinical Research Network Task Force

Neuroimaging Predictors of Upper Limb Prosthesis Adoption

Funded by Washington University's The Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology

Duana Russell-Thomas, OTD, OTR/L

Regional Arthritis Center – Greater St. Louis Region

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Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L

Community Participation through Personalized Accessibility Information: The Access Ratings NextGen App

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Emily Somerville, OTD, OTR/L

Addressing Mental Health in Older Adults

Funded by WU IPH Pitch Partners2

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 DHHS-NIDILRR 90DPCCP0001

Falls: A Marker of Preclinical Alzheimer's Disease

Funded by US NIH NIA R01AG057680

Acronyms

ASH – American Society of Hematology; CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; CTRFP – Clinical and Translational Research Funding Program; CTSA – Clinical and Translational Science Award; DHSS – Department of Health and Senior Services; DHSS – Department of Health and Senior Services; HRSA – Health Resources and Services Administration; HSS – Health & Human Services; ICTS – Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences; NCATS – National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences; NCI – National Cancer Institute; NHLBI – National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; NICHD – National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; NIDILRR – National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research; NIH – National Institutes of Health; NINDS – National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke; PCORI – Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute; PDSS – Partnership Development & Sustainability Support; SBIR – Small Business Innovation Research; STTR – Small Business Technology Transfer; WU – Washington University

Diversity, equity and inclusion

We continue with our commitment in our 2020 Annual Report to report our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) progress each year. Below are the admissions, recruitment, equity, programs, reporting, task force and presentation outcomes we have made this past year. We are committed to the DEI goal we have set and will continue working toward that goal in fiscal year 2024. We recognize that we have continued work to do and are committed to doing what it takes for our Program to achieve our ideals and live our values.



Admissions and student recruitment

- Review of admissions processes following Affirmative Action Supreme Court ruling
- Revised admissions deadlines to be more competitive
- Enhanced interactions between applicants and newly admitted students with faculty, staff and students through online and in-person events
- Underrepresented minorities comprise 25% of 2023-2024 cohort, a 2% increase from previous year
- MSOT '25 and OTD '26 students were from 20 states and five countries



Faculty and staff recruitment

- Progress made in increasing faculty and staff diversity in FY23
 - +1 faculty
 - +3 staff



HSSU Summer Pathways Program

- Harris-Stowe State University (HSSU), a historically Black university, in partnership with the Program developed a two-week summer academic immersion experience focused on introducing HSSU students to the career of occupational therapy (OT).
 - Program held August 2023
 - Six HSSU students participated
 - Program was condensed to one week with increased program rigor, helping prepare participants for expectations of graduate school



Enhancing inclusivity and accessibility in our educational experiences and spaces

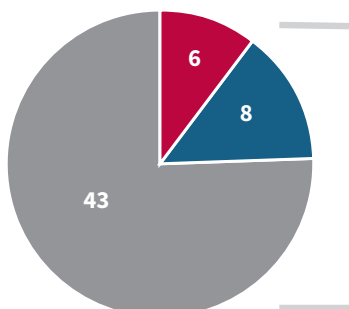
- The Inclusive OT Education committee was formed to review, enhance processes, and develop programs and assessments to enhance DEI+ practices in teaching and learning (see page 4 for more details)
- Dr. Carla Walker was appointed as accessibility advisor and Shannon Eckhoff as liaison to the Disability Resources Center to enhance efficiency with disability accommodations processes and provide opportunities for students to discuss accessibility needs and concerns
- DEI+ audits are now part of faculty annual performance evaluations. This process allows faculty to set individual professional and course-related goals on how DEI+ can be made front and center in course content
- The Competency Attainment Committee was developed and implemented to provide and help design additional supports for students for clinical competency skill building
- The Education Division worked closely with our WashU OT Accessibility Task Force to ensure accessibility of all teaching and learning spaces
- There was an increase in use, community engagements and partnerships in the Community Experiential Learning Center



WU-COTAD

- The Washington University chapter of the Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (WU-COTAD) held five Safe Space events to foster dialogue and discussion:
 - Hispanic Heritage Month (October)
 - Food insecurity
 - Black History Month (February)
 - LGBTQIA+ intimate partner violence
 - Non-sanctioned occupations with EquiOT
 - Disability awareness

TOTAL STUDENTS 57



2023-2024 Admission Cycle Ethnic Diversity

- 6 African American
- 8 Hispanic: 1 Mexican, 4 Mexican American, 2 Puerto Rican, 1 South American
- 43 White, Asian, Non-Reported, Other

URM = 25% of class, a 2% increase from 2022-2023 cycle

Faculty appointments/promotions



Amanda Mack



Brian Johnson



Marit Watson



Grayson Owens



Jessica Kersey



Stephen Lau



Sarah Oberle



Peggy Barco



Jessica Dashner



Duana Russell-Thomas



Emily Somerville



Steve Taff

Appointments

Amanda Mack, OTD, OTR/L, CLC, was appointed assistant professor of occupational therapy and medicine on Aug. 1. She serves as the director of Post-Professional Education. Her clinical and research interests focus on health and wellness with different populations and innovative occupational therapy education.

Brian Johnson, PhD, OTR/L, was appointed assistant professor of occupational therapy and neurology on Aug. 15. His research focuses on understanding the mechanisms underlying human motor learning and memory consolidation to improve and develop motor training and rehabilitation for individuals with neurologic diagnoses.

Marit Watson, OTD, OTR/L, PMH-C, was appointed instructor in occupational therapy and medicine on Dec. 1. Her research explores motherhood with consideration of perinatal mental health, role overload and occupation in the context of bereavement.

Grayson Owens, OTD, OTR/L, was appointed instructor in occupational therapy and neurology on Dec. 1. His clinical interests include addressing health inequities for minority groups who experience deficits and barriers to quality health care.

Jessica Kersey, PhD, OTR/L, was appointed instructor in occupational therapy and neurology on Jan. 1. Her research focuses on participation measurement, examining environmental factors that influence community participation outcomes, and designing interventions to maximize environmental supports and overcome environmental barriers.

Stephen Lau, PhD, was appointed assistant professor in occupational therapy and neurology on April 1. His research interests include neurological rehabilitation, sleep medicine and mobile health technology. His mission is to develop accessible, precise and effective rehabilitation in self-management, health promotion and participation enhancement among adults with stroke-related disabilities.

Sarah Cheatham Oberle, OTD, OTR/L, was appointed instructor in occupational therapy and pediatrics on June 1. Her research interests include occupational performance factors affecting participation

of children who are d/Deaf and hard of hearing, cultural awareness and exploration of d/Deaf cultural richness, and underlying neurocognitive skills related to occupational performance and participation struggles for children with ADHD.

Promotions

Peggy Barco, OTD, OTR/L, SCDCM, CDRS, FAOTA, was promoted to professor of occupational therapy and medicine on Jan. 1. Her clinical research interests focus on driving performance in older adults with various medical impairments. She seeks to develop ways clinicians can better assess clients, driving performance and to identify interventions to prolong driving and community mobility across the lifespan.

Jessica Dashner, OTD, OTR/L, was promoted to associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology. Her research interests include developing and determining the effectiveness of interventions designed to enable participation of individuals with mobility and sensory impairments in the community.

Duana Russell-Thomas, OTD, OTR/L, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy and medicine. Russell-Thomas is the director of the Community Experiential Learning Center. Her clinical interests focus on chronic disease, health disparities and trauma-informed care.

Emily Somerville, OTD, OTR/L, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy and neurology. Her research interests include promoting the participation of older adults with functional limitations through the provision of intensive, tailored home modification interventions designed to enhance the performance of daily activities in the home.

Steve Taff, PhD, OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA, was promoted to professor of occupational therapy and medicine. Taff's research interests include developing and evaluating inclusive learning climates in higher education, the impact of sociopolitical environments and climate change on occupational engagement and the role of disinformation and misinformation on well-being, graduate student and faculty mental health and flourishing, and continuous improvement practices in higher education.

Faculty and staff honors

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

2022 WashU OT Awards

The inaugural Washington University Occupational Therapy Awards were held on July 14. These awards recognize employees who exemplify one or more core values of quality, integrity, caring, inclusion and/or innovation. The 2022 awardees were:

Allison King, MD, PhD
Researcher of the Year

Lorna Kahn, BSPT, CHT
Clinician of the Year

Stacy West-Bruce, OTD, MSW, OTR/L
Educator of the Year

Ryan Risley, MPH
Staff Member of the Year

Bridgette Mack and Tiffany Rader
Core Values Award

Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center
Team Award

Kathy Kniepmann, OTD, MPH, EdM, OTR/L
Directors' Choice Award

Steve Taff, PhD, OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA 2022 Exemplary Educator Award

Taff received the inaugural 2022 Exemplary Educator Award at the Academy of Educators Education Day on Oct. 11. The award recognizes faculty members with at least six years of service who are actively building a legacy as an educator and have made important contributions to education at Washington University during their tenure.

Wanda Mahoney, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA 2023 AOTA Roster of Fellows Award

Mahoney received the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA's) Roster of Fellows Award on April 22. The award recognizes occupational therapists who, through their knowledge, expertise, leadership, advocacy and/or guidance, have made a significant contribution over time to the profession.

Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP 2023 AOTF Meritorious Service Award

Morgan received the 2023 American Occupational Therapy Foundation's (AOTF's) Meritorious Service Award on April 22. The award recognizes retiring and incumbent members of the AOTF Board of Trustees who have made sustained and exemplary contributions in support of the Foundation's mission.

Duana Russell-Thomas, OTD, OTR/L Gerry and Bob Virgil Ethic of Service Award

Russell-Thomas received Washington University's Gerry and Bob Virgil Ethic of Service Award on April 26. The award is given annually to a select group of Washington University community members who exemplify a character of service and engagement with the St. Louis region.

Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L Stacy West-Bruce, OTD, MSW, OTR/L 2023 Master Interprofessional Educators

Berg, Milton and West-Bruce were honored on May 8 as 2023 Master Interprofessional Educators by the Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education at WashU's Medical Campus. The center enhances the ability of faculty and learners to function as interprofessional educators, advances interprofessional curricula and conducts research in interprofessional education.

Jessie Bricker, OTD, OTR/L Dean's Impact Award

Bricker received the 2023 Dean's Impact Award on May 16. The award recognizes faculty members whose superior efforts in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a lasting impact, who demonstrated the highest level of professionalism, and who delivered exceptional results across the missions of the School of Medicine.



Lisa Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L, with Duana Russell-Thomas, OTD, OTR/L, 2023 Gerry and Bob Virgil Ethic of Service Awardee

Clinicians and staff of Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center, the 2022 WashU OT Team Awardees



Donor honor roll July 1, 2022– June 30, 2023

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Named scholarship recipients

The following scholarship recipients were recognized at Commencement 2023.



If you would like to establish a named scholarship, please contact Lauren Walenga in University Advancement at 314-935-4225 or walenga@wustl.edu.

Alumni Merit Scholarship

Megan Elizabeth Albert, MSOT '23
Samuel Dane Allen, OTD '23
Nathaniel Nazareno Baniqued, OTD '23
Jennifer Ann Barnes, MSOT '23
Alissa Monique Bradford, MSOT '23
Sean Brenden Cawley, OTD '23
Dylan Christopher Gable, MSOT '23
Makayla Nicole Settle, MSOT '23
Melissa Viana, MSOT '23
Taylor Lauren Whitson, OTD '23
Ashley Lynn Yelling, MSOT '23

Carolyn Baum Leadership Award

Madelyn Grace Yoo, MSOT '23

Olive Bostrom Scholarship

Zackery Nelson Oates, MSOT '23
Daniela Rodriguez, OTD '23

Fran Cohen Memorial Scholarship

Samuel Dane Allen, OTD '23

Dianna T. Derigo Scholarship

Taylor Nicole Church, OTD '23
Asia Makanani Sato, MSOT '23

Encompass Health Scholarship

Katherine Marie Bucklin, OTD '23
Victoria Hung, MSOT '23
Alicia Sue Mullings, OTD '23
Lauren Katherine O'Young, MSOT '23
Emilie Suyeon Pettersen, MSOT '23
Karalyn Louise Rich, MSOT '23
Laurel Elizabeth Thompson, OTD '23

Excellence in Student Research Award

Sadie Austin Hurwitz, OTD '23
Melissa Lynn Anthony, OTD '23

Ada Wells Ford Scholarship

Lindsay Alexandra Spell, OTD '23

David B. Gray Scholarship in Occupational Therapy

Megan Ann Whitton Smith, OTD '23

Martha Mae Lasche Scholarship

ZaKeriyia Latrice Baselt, MSOT '23
Amber Nicole Bond, MSOT '23
Isabelle Faye Roth, OTD '23

Alice C. Oyer Memorial Scholarship

Kamilla Bernardes, MSOT '23
Diana Paola Castellanos, OTD '23
Nathan Paul Hopkins, MSOT '23

Agnes Fielding Prahman Scholarship

Lindsay Marie Bright, OTD '23
Hailey Francine Furio, MSOT '23
Zackery Nelson Oates, MSOT '23
Lindsay Alexandra Spell, OTD '23

Pauline Cid Schultz Scholarship

Stephanie Judycki, OTD '22
Delaney Brooke McIntyre, OTD '22
Jacob Carleton Sturtevant, OTD '22
Delaney Elizabeth Fretwell, MSOT '22

Lucille B. Schweider Scholarship

Katrina Hope Parnham, MSOT '23

Robert B. Summerville Scholarship

Nathan Nazareno Baniqued, OTD '23

Ben Vereen Scholarship

Jared Hunter Alme, MSOT '23
Meghan Elizabeth Ash, OTD '23

MICHELE BERHORST



The Commencement 2023 class speakers (left to right) Nathan Baniqued, OTD '23; Madelyn Yoo, MSOT '23; and Rachel Heeb Desai, PhD '23. They were selected by their cohorts to represent their class.



Future leader

Hannah “Han” Isenman, OTD/S ’24

Hometown: Arnold, MO

Degrees: BS in Health Management: Exercise Science from Southeast Missouri State University

Leadership: President and Vice President of WU-COTAD, EquiOT Co-Lead, National COTAD Chapters Committee Logistics Manager, peer mentor, doctoral lab student

What are your meaningful occupations?

My most meaningful occupations are sleep and self-care! They both make me feel ready to tackle anything that comes my way. Another meaningful occupation is hanging out with my friends, especially if we are spending time outside hiking or camping. Lastly, I love tumbling rocks and taking care of plants as hobbies.

What is your definition of occupational therapy?

To me, occupational therapy (OT) is a unique profession that takes people on a holistic journey to live their lives however they please. It empowers people to be involved/participate in occupations that make them feel whole. And when an obstacle impacts their meaningful occupations, we are here to problem-solve the best solutions with the person.

Why did you choose the OTD degree?

I first chose the OTD degree because I was interested in growing as a leader and teaching at some point in my career. But as I continued the program, I also learned that I enjoy research! I have learned this about myself through a doctoral lab with Dr. Quinn Tyminski at a local homeless shelter while leading OT group sessions and working on my project exploring the occupations of LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing homelessness.

What are your career goals?

I have so many thoughts when I think about my career goals! I want to start working with transgender and nonbinary patients with their gender expression and establish what OT looks like for gender-affirming top surgery recovery. I am also interested in mental health OT. I want to focus on mental and physical health equity for marginalized communities. Then I want to go into academia and/or research after I have had more clinical experience.

What WashU experience so far stands out to you?

Being able to lead WU-COTAD since I started at WashU has been the most memorable experience. Beginning as the first-year vice president was a great way to immerse myself in OT with a justice, equity, diversity and inclusion lens. I was lucky to serve alongside many talented peers who challenged how I thought and cared about diversity in OT and St. Louis. After two years of leading projects, planning and fun, my time as president ended in May. The COTAD organization is so important to me, and leading our WashU chapter inspired me to run for and win a position on the COTAD Chapters Committee.

Anything else you'd like us to know?

I wanted to thank my parents for allowing me to crash at their house for 3+ years while in school. Also, a big thanks to the WU-COTAD team, my classmates, professors, friends and my cat, Juice. Also, please remember to do your part in protecting marginalized groups from inequities!

Congratulations, Class of 2023!

LJ PHOTOGRAPHY



Master of Science in Occupational Therapy



PhD in Rehabilitation and Participation Science

LJ PHOTOGRAPHY



Clinical Doctorate of Occupational Therapy

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Program in Occupational Therapy
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Occupational Therapy

Inpatient FUNdamentals OT Field Day



Marit Watson, OTD, OTR/L, PMH-C, organized an "Inpatient FUNdamentals OT Field Day" on April 27. The event celebrated the accomplishments of the second-year students in the Evaluation and Intervention: Adults and Older Adults II course. Students competed in teams during their regularly scheduled lab sections to engage in fun occupations such as adaptive dressing relays, transfers, balance activities and a photo booth.