



Occupational Therapy and Health Sciences

Occupational Therapy and Health Sciences
College of Health Professions

January 2014

2013 A Year in Review

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Growth and New Faces

Both the Occupational Therapy and the Health Sciences department continue to grow. In OT we have 2 new faculty members, Sharon McCloskey and Lola Halperin.

Sharon has been a practicing occupational therapist since 1985, and her areas of expertise include pediatric and school-based practice; leadership and management; health policy and law; and advocacy. In addition to her OT qualifications, she has an MBA and many years of experience in program development as the director and manager of a large rehabilitation company, providing OT and PT services. Sharon is actively involved in



ConnO-TA. She is currently Chair of the Government Affairs Committee, and is actively contributing at a State level to discussions on educa-

tion policy, in relation to the practice of occupational therapy in public schools.

Lola's specialty is mental health and sensory processing in relation to mental health conditions. Lola has studied and practiced internationally and she speaks four languages. She is currently working towards her EdD at Columbia University. Her research is examining the relationships between symptom severity, sensory,



motor, and process skills in adults with schizophrenia. Lola has presented on Sensory Processing in mental health and on client centered care in mental health OT.

The Health Sciences program is pleased to welcome Dr. Raja Staggers-Hakim. Professor Staggers-Hakim holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology from Howard University. She received her Master of Public Health in Community Health Education from New York University and her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Howard University.



Her research interest include; racial and ethnic health disparities, discrimination and health outcomes, social determinant of health and women of color.

Student Capstone Projects Provide Service, Programs, and

Occupational therapy students joined an interprofessional group from Sacred Heart, to provide wheelchairs to individuals in need in the



country of Guatemala.

Student's in other groups provided service to Bridgeport elementary schools by running active play groups during re-

cess to help combat childhood obesity in inner city schools. These students collected data on current play preferences of first grade children. Other second year occupational therapy students provided assistance to the first year students studying anatomy and neuroanatomy, while they also learned about teaching as a future career path. Students raised money for a future interprofessional social skills program for teens with autism spectrum disorder, by showing the film the United States of Autism. The event was well attended and the students raised hundreds of dollars to support the development of the program.

"Capstone projects are in integral part of the occupational therapy curriculum"

Health Science Club Student Events and Plans

President- Michelle Abano
VP- Mariaelena DiStefano
Secretary- Katie Mulyk
Treasurer- Kelsey Palumberi

Fall 2013 a meeting was dedicated to Health Science club members going over schedules and giving feedback on classes so other club members could learn about classes they hadn't taken yet. Pre-professional classes were also discussed. The club is planning for a CCO carnival this spring (like a club fair) to get more students involved in the health science club.

The health science club will link with the Pre-OT club and start a Relay for life team! Lastly, the club is planning a resume workshop and will have someone from graduate admissions discuss the health profession graduate programs.

SOTA events

Students from SOTA have been busy with many social and service events. They ran the Run or Dye race in grueling heat this summer. They have held a student barbeque to help the first years students acclimate to the program, and have done lots of fundraising for charity and for their trip to our national conference. They have played kickball for Amanda Smith's "Making Strides against Breast Cancer" team, helped out at the Ronald McDonald house making meals for those staying there, and have sent Xmas gifts overseas for Operation Christmas Child. They also invited faculty to speak to the group about their career paths.



Animal Assisted Therapy

BETSY DANIELS & RUPERT

MARCH 18, 2013



Last spring, our OT students participated in a special event with the students from the HS301 Spirituality in Health Care class to learn about animal assisted therapy from Betsy Daniels, a local CO-TA. This event was coordinated by Janet Betts, MARS, the occupational therapy student services coordinator and an instructor in the Health Sciences program.

Pi theta 2013

In our 4th induction ceremony for the Gamma Nu Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon, 13 students were inducted into the honor society. Their first activity was to vote for their new board. Their first service event was the Walk for Autism held in Wallingford, CT. Representatives from both SOTA and Pi Theta attended the Student Conclave this fall and met the new AOTA president



Service Learning—Respite Care for Families of Children with ASD

The entire graduating class of 2014 was able to participate in a service learning assignment last spring. Two mothers, each with a young child with autism spectrum disorder, provided an interview discussing family difficulties and stressors, and the service needs that the family

had. Each of our 45 students volunteered in pairs to provide play activities for the children for a total of 4 hours in the semester, thus giving the mothers much needed respite, while allowing the students to learn about the needs of children with ASD and the difficulties fami-

lies face. The students had readings, and assignments about family centered care in ASD. The two families were quite pleased with the student volunteers and both hope to participate again next year.

Faculty Achievements

The Occupational Therapy Department is proud to announce that one of our faculty members learned this fall that she will be receiving the national occupational therapy award of "fellow." A fellow award from AOTA is "to recognize occupational therapists who with their knowledge and expertise have made a significant contribution to the continuing education and professional development of mem-

bers of the Association." Lenore Frost's award is for

***Excellence in
education
through practice
and service***

FAOTA!!!!!!!!!!



Health Sciences Faculty Presentations

Clotile Dudley Smith presented at the ASAHP Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida on Oct 25, 2013. The poster presentation was titled "Seminar In Health Care". The poster presented



course development for a course that was designed to strengthen academic abilities of undergraduate students and to meet the prerequisite required for admission to professional graduate programs in health science. Ultimately, the student will have the necessary skills to create a capstone research paper, publish in a health journal, determine their health care career and have an understanding of all health care disciplines and their interactions.

Faculty Research

Lenore Frost has continued her line of research in safe patient handling in 2013 resulting in a publication entitled Safe Patient Handling Equipment in Therapy Practice: Implications for Rehabilitation, in the American Journal of Occupational Therapy

Heather Kuhaneck and Jacqui Kelleher from Education have

been working on an assessment tool to examine the sensory environment of classrooms and a manual to help teachers to modify their classrooms to assist students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The assessment tool is called the Classroom Sensory Environment Assessment or C-SEA. You can view the current version of the C-SEA, download

a copy to try it out, and watch its progress and development at <https://sites.google.com/site/cseafree/>

AOTA and ConnOTA presentations

Mary-Ellen Johnson presented posters at both the state and national OT association annual conferences along with students and alum. Two of her posters for ConnOTA were *Helping our Heroes- the Firefighters* and *The Role of Occupational Therapists in Health and Wellness on College & University Campuses*. Lenore Frost presented three sessions at AOTA last spring; *Extensor Tendon Injuries: Evidence-based Rehabilitation Protocols*, *A Paradigm Shift: Educators Teach Evidence-based Safe Patient Handling as Best Practice* and *Evidence-based Safe Patient Handling and Movement for Therapists and Students*.

Heather Miller Kuhaneck and OT students/alum presented 2 posters at ConnOTA; *Maternal Self-Efficacy in Mothers of Children with Autism and Pediatricians' Attitudes*

Regarding Occupational Therapy Services. Student/alum presenters included Amber Hawks, Julia Jones, Melissa Syverson, Kate Wisnieski, Caitlin Clark, Tiffany DeVito, Stefanie Seeley, Emily Stack, Yvonne Dobbelmann, Kristen T. Deely, Meghan L. Fera, Jennifer L. Morello, Nicole S. Yarsawich, Lisa Torre, Caren Tucker, Leigh Dogmanits, Oxana Baranova, Katie Torpey, and Allyson Colucco.

At AOTA, Heather presented with one of our adjuncts, Kim Flynn and an alumni, Sarah Yeaton on research behind new program development. Along with colleague Jodi Siviski, this group completed a needs assessment with general education teachers and developed a program called

Stories for Acceptance. The program uses carefully selected children's books about disability, along with therapist created activities, to promote understanding and full inclusion of students with



disabilities in regular education classrooms. Kim has received a SEPTA grant to purchase three sets of children's books to provide the program to 3 Fairfield elementary schools this spring with Heather.

OT faculty are dedicated to developing professional behaviors in our students, through modeling our engagement in professional activities.

Supporting ConnOTA

SHU OT faculty are and have been highly involved with ConnOTA. In our faculty we have former ConnOTA presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, conference chairs, and SIS chairs. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), in collaboration with the Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association (ConnOTA) and the Connecticut Physical Therapy Association (CPTA), recently began a project to revise the *Guidelines for Occupational Therapy in Educational Settings*; and the *Guidelines for Physical Therapy in Educational Settings*. **Sharon M McCloskey, as Chair of Government Affairs for ConnOTA**, became the Chair of the workgroup addressing revisions for occupational therapists. During last school year, 2012-2013, Sharon was asked to place the Revision of Guidelines project 'on hold'; to instead work with a multidisciplinary group to develop guidance documents for administrators and Student and Educator Support Specialists (SESS), as part of the Connecticut SEED educator evaluation system for OT's and PT's in CT schools.

SHU OT PRIDE

Pride stands for principled, responsive, innovative, dynamic, and excellent. For our program this means,

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Fairfield, CT 06825

Occupational Therapy
203-365-4771 or 203-365-
7682

Health Sciences
203-416-3942



Health Science Programs at
Sacred Heart University



PRINCIPLED

- We expect and ensure ethical behavior.
- We make decisions with integrity.
- We are respectful of others.

RESPONSIVE

- We are caring, attentive, and present in interactions with others.
- We value and engage in service to meet needs.
- We identify learning needs and share our knowledge and expertise.

INNOVATIVE

- We promote creativity, originality, and innovation.
- We use innovative strategies and new technologies to promote learning.

DYNAMIC

- We are actively engaged in learning and teaching.
- We accept and support change.
- We take initiative.
- We seek and consider diversity of opinion.
- We gather and use feedback to promote positive growth and change in ourselves and others.

EXCELLENT

- We excel in our areas of practice.
- We seek to exceed standards of competence.
- We engage in evidence based practice and life-long learning.
- We support and encourage curiosity.
- We are globally focused.
- We are committed to our professional organizations.

Sacred Heart Hosts the CT Occupational Therapy Association Fall Conference



On September 28, over 100 local occupational therapists and student occupational therapists attended the fall ConnOTA conference hosted on the main campus of Sacred Heart University. The theme was Brain Injury- Keys to Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration. The conference keynote speaker, Steven Benvenisti, is a lawyer from NJ who is a survivor of a traumatic brain injury (TBI) sustained in an accident many years ago while a student. His story was inspiring for all. Other topics included concussion and mental health issues following TBI.
