

O.T. Link

Program in Occupational Therapy • Washington University School of Medicine • Spring 2012



STEPHANIE STEMMLER

Jack R. Engsberg and doctoral students Matthew H. Foreman and Ganesh M. Babulal study the ways in which chronically ill children interact with video games.

PhD Program in Rehabilitation and Participation Science Focuses on Research

In the Human Performance Lab at Washington University, doctoral student **Matthew H. Foreman** is studying ways to engage children with chronic illnesses in therapeutic activities. By using motion-capture gaming systems, Foreman is measuring how children move in relation to gaming activity and how such games can enhance participation in life activities.

“Individuals with chronic diseases may leave a hospital or rehabilitation program and have to continue therapy at home,” says Foreman. “We need to understand what motivates these individuals so that they remain engaged in their daily lives.”

Foreman is one of two students enrolled in the Program in Occupational Therapy’s

Rehabilitation and Participation Science doctoral degree track. The university began offering the doctorate last fall.

“We’re the only occupational therapy program in the country that has a doctoral degree focused on participation as an integral component of rehabilitation,” says **Jack R. Engsberg, PhD**, professor of occupational therapy, of neurosurgery and of orthopaedic surgery, and head of the doctoral program. “The entire field is gradually seeking to blend a medical model of how care is delivered into a model that asks, ‘How is a person’s participation in life activities affected by their condition?’ More and more funding agencies are becoming focused on this kind of research.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



OT students Emily L. Berkowitz and Allison R. Mensch talk with Julie Babyak of Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center.

Best Jobs 2012: Occupational Therapist

The profession of occupational therapist is ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the best jobs of 2012, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting employment growth of 33.5 percent between 2010 and 2020. That’s great news for the almost 200 students who turned out for the 2012 Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association (WUSOTA) job fair. More than 30 employers showcased their organizations to both occupational therapy and physical therapy students who came from Washington University and eight other schools.

“Many of our students made important connections with the exhibitors for future fieldwork experiences, job opportunities and general networking,” says **Lauren E. Stone, MSOT ’12**, a student organizer of the event. “I’ve heard from several graduating students who have already been in contact with representatives from the job fair, setting up site visits and interviews.”

The job fair serves as a fundraiser for WUSOTA, with money used for student scholarships, advocacy efforts, professional development and community service donations.



M. Carolyn Baum

From the Director

In your work you are certainly seeing your profession make contributions to the changing health system. It seems that our role in health care is bridging the medical and community models of health, with practitioners working in both arenas.

One initiative that we are addressing is the importance of occupational therapy services to prevent hospital readmissions. Our manager of community services, **Duana C. Russell-Thomas, MSOT '97, OTR/L**, is serving on a Barnes-Jewish Hospital task force to build strategies to manage this difficult problem.

A wonderful change we see is a renewal of occupational therapy's role in mental health. Because of that, our faculty and students are very active in community mental health initiatives. We are closely following the concept of "toxic stress." Studies are pointing to the fact that healthy development can be derailed by excessive or prolonged stress, with damaging effects on learning and behavior. We are approaching this as an opportunity for the profession to use its knowledge of activity and health to help children, adults and seniors manage chronic conditions, particularly using self-management strategies. Assistant professor **Timothy J. Wolf, OTD '09, MSCI, OTR/L**, has funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to test the effectiveness of self-management interventions in persons with stroke and is expanding his work to chronic health conditions.

We were delighted with the turnout for our recent job fair. More than 30 participating employers came from as far away as South Carolina and Texas to recruit our students. All reported that they were very pleased with the professional maturity of our students and the questions they raised as they explored potential career placements. We continue to get exceptionally talented students. We are confident that they will have many opportunities for jobs that allow them to exercise their commitment to help people overcome limitations and barriers in their everyday lives.

As always, please keep in touch and let us know about your career path. We thank you for your continued support of our students through your generous donations.

M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

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

Promotions

*THE FOLLOWING FACULTY PROMOTIONS WERE
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2011.*

- ◆ **Jack R. Engsborg, PhD**, was promoted to professor of occupational therapy. He is also professor of neurological surgery and of orthopaedic surgery.
- ◆ **Erin R. Foster, OTD '05, MSCI, OTR/L**, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy. She is also assistant professor of neurology and of psychiatry.
- ◆ **Claudia A. Hilton, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, MBA**, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy. She is also assistant professor of psychiatry.
- ◆ **Roberta G. Pineda, PhD, OTR/L**, was promoted to research assistant professor of occupational therapy. She is also research assistant professor of pediatrics.

PHD PROGRAM CONTINUED FROM COVER

Foreman says the chance to get involved in innovative research drew him to the Human Performance Lab while pursuing his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering at Washington University. **Ganesh M. Babulal**, also in the PhD program, agrees. A former director of rehabilitation services and occupational therapist in Colorado, Babulal says he was looking to add to his knowledge base to directly impact patient care.

"I'm primarily interested in research that has application," Babulal explains. "I'm looking at the relationship of emotion and cognition and how they contribute to participation. For example, a person with a stroke may learn to walk, talk and follow directions, but how does emotion contribute to motivation and participating in life activities after they leave the clinic? I'm looking to develop tests to measure those aspects of participation."

The program anticipates having 16 doctoral candidates, four added annually over the next several years. Candidates are expected to publish their research on a regular basis to lay the foundation for their work.

"I find the program to be research intensive, which is supporting my development as a scientist," says Babulal. "The research I am doing is addressing issues that are important to me and to the clinical population that occupational therapy serves."

"We have a reputation for doing high-quality research, and we want to teach students how to do the same," says Engberg. "They will have the skills to transfer knowledge gained in research to everyday life."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OT.WUSTL.EDU.

Staff and Faculty News

Naomi Josman, PhD, professor and director of graduate programs in occupational therapy at the University of Haifa in Israel, recently completed a one-year sabbatical with the Program in Occupational Therapy.



Naomi Josman with M. Carolyn Baum

Josman is a long-time research collaborator of **M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA**. At Washington University, Josman served as a visiting scholar and was involved in numerous research projects related to her areas of emphasis, including executive functions and virtual reality in cognitive rehabilitation. She also was part of a team of researchers that wrote three grant applications. Grant writing was a skill Josman wanted to enhance. "I really appreciate the collaboration," she says. "This includes physicians and people from occupational therapy, psychology and other departments. Each person offers discussion, asks for feedback and brings together research from around the world."

Vicki Kaskutas, OTD '08, OT/L, was invited to serve on the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Construction Sector Council. The council, one of 10 established by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), sets research goals that address critical issues in workplace safety and health and then facilitates partnerships to achieve those goals.



Vicki Kaskutas

How you can support the Program in Occupational Therapy

If you would like to honor an individual with a donation to the Program, please indicate the honoree's name on the memo line of your check. Checks should be payable to Washington University and mailed to the Program in Occupational Therapy, Washington University School of Medicine, Campus Box 8505, 4444 Forest Park Ave., St. Louis, MO 63108. All donations to the Program in Occupational Therapy go directly to our scholarship fund unless otherwise requested.



Students from the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University join staff members at The Bridge, which provides a safe place for homeless and at-risk persons in St. Louis. Occupational therapy students contribute to the organization's mission by performing needs assessment for clients at The Bridge and teaching life skills.

Program Spotlight

Bridging OT into the Community

At a St. Louis homeless drop-in shelter, occupational therapy students are bringing services directly into the community. As one of many engaging community practice experiences, the Program in Occupational Therapy has partnered with a shelter called The Bridge. Students pursuing master's degrees are learning to evaluate the needs of the homeless community and present practical solutions to address those needs, while doctoral students focus on developing educational strategies to teach life skills to diverse audiences.

"Doctoral students learn that the attention spans of some of the participants may be short because they are in crisis," says occupational therapy instructor **Steven D. Taff, PhD, MSOT '97, OTR/L**, associate director of professional programs. "We ask our students to use eye contact, gestures, body language and participation experiences to engage their audience. It's critical to learn these so that students are able to teach life skills, such as how to find a job, where to go for special resources, even how to prevent illness or infection while individuals live on the street."

In the master's degree program, second-year students focus on research and developing occupational therapy skills in various settings during their fieldwork rotations. At The Bridge, the shelter is like others across the country, with limited staff and a single social worker.

Adam C. Pearson, OTD '11, OTR/L, works at The Bridge. "Much of what I do was learned in fieldwork settings and in our didactic coursework. I am working with sojourners to maximize strengths, identify and address limitations, and facilitate growth in occupation through various programs," he says.

Dorothy R. Porcello, MSOT '11, was one of the occupational therapy students who worked with **Catina L. Callahan O'Leary, PhD, MSW**, assistant professor, and academic fieldwork coordinator **Jeanenne M. Dallas, MA, OTR/L**, to identify specific barriers facing guests at The Bridge. "We found that transportation and financial concerns were the most frequently identified barriers to participation," says Porcello, who presents the findings in a poster session at the April 2012 national American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. conference. "This suggests that basic needs such as food and clothing are generally being met, and that future occupational therapy involvement at The Bridge should focus on helping guests develop higher-level, transitional skills such as employment, home management, leisure exploration and social supports."

"Occupational therapists are adept at breaking down a task or a life skill and teaching step by step how to do it," adds Dallas. "It is our hope that through practical experiences such as this one, students realize the amazing scope of career opportunities that are available in the community beyond a hospital or rehabilitation setting."

READ MORE AT OUTLOOK.WUSTL.EDU.

Alumni News

Occupational Therapy Graduate is a Hall of Famer

Susan M. Tucker, MSOT '00, OTR/L, was inducted into Washington University's Sports Hall of Fame in February 2012. Tucker is a clinical specialist in the Program in Occupational Therapy. Her clinical interests focus on wheelchair seating mobility and health and wellness.



Susan M. Tucker

In her college sports career, Tucker was a two-year starting point guard for the women's basketball team and starting shortstop on the softball team during its inaugural season in 2000. She was a member of three straight NCAA Division III National Championship teams from 1998-2000, including back-to-back 30-0 seasons in 1999 and 2000. A two-time, second-team all-UAA selection, Tucker guided the Bears to three UAA Championships — a 42-1 record — and ranks second in the university's history in three-point field goal percentage (.404).

Tucker is certified as an Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) and is a member of the WUOT Community Practice Group, where she provides assistive technology and wheelchair seating assessments as well as in-home occupational therapy evaluation and treatment for adults with physical, neurological and cognitive disabilities and/or chronic illness. She is pursuing a post-professional doctoral degree (OTD) with the Program in Occupational Therapy and is a research assistant in the labs of **M. Carolyn Baum, PhD**, and **Susan L. Stark, PhD**.

Destination: Ukraine

A chance viewing of a television story about an Eastern European orphanage prompted **Emily A. Wallace, OTD '10**, to head to Ukraine after graduating from Washington University.

"I was overwhelmed by the sights of children with disabilities wasting away in cribs," Wallace says. "It was at that moment that I knew the knowledge and skills I gained through the OT program could be used to bring light to these dark corners of the world."

Wallace serves as senior fellow for international disability programming for Indiana-based Helmer Global Initiatives. She also serves as administrator of rehabilitation programming for the foundation's "Mission to Ukraine," which provides rehabilitative and educational care to those with special needs living in the impoverished Zhytomyr region of Ukraine. She has a challenging role in a country where occupational therapy is not a recognized profession.



Emily A. Wallace

"Most children with disabilities here are never given the opportunity to succeed in meaningful activities," she says. "My job is to use my knowledge and skills to build a framework of care that is patient-centered, evidence-based and occupationally focused. My family and Washington University helped plant the seeds of ingenuity and practicality that have since grown into a spirit of courage that empowers me to stand up for human dignity."

EMILY WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! HER EMAIL ADDRESS IS EMILYALICEWALLACE@GMAIL.COM.

Student News

Emerging Leaders

Three students from the Program in Occupational Therapy were selected to participate in the prestigious Emerging Leaders Program of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). Students chosen include: **Mallory Hensley Duncan, OTD '11**, **Cresencia J. Burhans, OTD '12**, and **Catherine R. Hoyt OTD '10**.



Emerging leaders (left to right): Mallory Hensley Duncan, Cresencia J. Burhans and Catherine R. Hoyt

The Emerging Leaders Program is designed to foster leadership within the field of occupational therapy. The 2012 program kicked off with a two-day leadership training course at AOTA headquarters in Bethesda, Md., in January 2012. A formal mentorship period of 12 months is now under way, during which participants will complete a service learning project and receive ongoing leadership training and mentorship. Participants also get involved with service opportunities that match their leadership goals.

The Program in Occupational Therapy has had a number of graduates selected for the Emerging Leaders Program in recent years.

Emerging Leaders 2010: William E. Janes, OTD '11, Lesley Addison, OTD '10, Janelle Sullivan, OTD '10, and Theresa Carlson, OTD '08.

Emerging Leaders 2011: Ashley Brock, MSOT '10, Rachel Dargatz, OTD '10, Jessica Sweeney, OTD '06, Jaclyn Tarloff, MSOT '10, Rosalie Thede, MSOT '11, and Kimberly Walker, OTD '06. Also selected in 2011 was Ganesh M. Babulal, MOT, University of Minnesota, and currently in the Washington University PhD program.

Health in Our Community

A dozen occupational therapy students volunteered for Washington University School of Medicine's Health Happening Health and Wellness Fair earlier this year. The health fair, sponsored by the university's Wellness Council, served as an opportunity for faculty and staff at the school to learn about health issues and participate in a wide variety of free health screenings. Occupational therapy students offered grip-strength screenings and tips on how to properly pack and carry bags for daily use. They also discussed self-management tools to encourage participants to take action on the health information they received while at the fair.

"Students are always pleasantly surprised by the large attendance and interactive nature of this event," says **Duana C. Russell-Thomas, MSOT '97, OTR/L**, community practice manager and coordinator of the occupational therapy student volunteers. "They often engage in planning and are able to apply what they learn in classes. The fair encourages them to think about individual and population health, which is a mission of the medical school."



Cori S. Zarem (left), a third-year OTD student, checks the grip strength of Adam C. Pearson, a recent graduate of the OTD program, at the Health Happening Health and Wellness Fair at the Eric P. Newman Education Center. More than 40 vendors were on hand to provide health and wellness information and screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, lung function and blood glucose levels.



2012 Pi Theta Epsilon Inductees: Congratulations to the 26 newest members of the Pi Theta Epsilon student honor society! The society recognizes and encourages superior scholarship and service among occupational therapy students.

Let Us Hear From You!

In this edition of *O.T. Link*, we debut a new design focused on providing you with more information about our acclaimed Program in Occupational Therapy as well as updates on student and alumni activities.

We are delighted that we are, again, ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among the best occupational therapy programs in the United States. In upcoming issues, we will showcase some of the exciting research going on in our labs and the faculty who remain so dedicated to our students.

In 2018, the Program in Occupational Therapy celebrates its 100th year. The spirit of engagement remains as vibrant today among our students as it did when our program was founded. As we move into our 94th year, we want to hear from you, our alumni. What are you doing now, what do you remember about your time in the Program, and what are your reflections about the field of occupational therapy today?

SEND YOUR COMMENTS, ALONG WITH ANY DIGITAL PHOTOS, TO [WUOTINFO@WUSM.WUSTL.EDU](mailto:wuotinfo@wusm.wustl.edu).

We're Going Green!

Help us conserve! If you prefer receiving your *O.T. Link* electronically, please send your email address to wuotinfo@wusm.wustl.edu.



4444 Forest Park Ave., home of the Program in Occupational Therapy

Test Your Knowledge!

Did you know...

◆ ... the first students in Washington University's Program began classes on Dec. 2, 1918, making it the first program offered west of the Mississippi River.

◆ ... originally called the St. Louis Training School for Reconstruction Aides, the program was located on the main campus of Washington University in the School of Fine Arts building.

◆ ... the first class of 12 women completed their course of instruction in May 1919.

Want to know more interesting history? Please visit beckerexhibits.wustl.edu/mowihsp/health/OTstl.htm.

Upcoming Events

April 23, 2012

OT Scholarship Day

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

PDU's available

For directions, please visit
epnec.wustl.edu/Default.aspx.

*For information, please call (314) 286-1600
or (800) 279-3229.*

April 26-28, 2012

AOTA 92nd Annual Conference & Expo

Indianapolis, IN

**[www.aota.org/ConfandEvents/
2012Conference.aspx](http://www.aota.org/ConfandEvents/2012Conference.aspx)**

*You are invited to the Program in Occupational
Therapy Alumni Reception on April 28, 7–9 p.m.
at the JW Marriott. Please RSVP to [wuotinfo@
wusm.wustl.edu](mailto:wuotinfo@wusm.wustl.edu).*

May 18, 2012

Commencement

Please check ot.wustl.edu for updates

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