

WUSOTA

Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association

Message from the President

Washington University Program in Occupational Therapy (WUOT) students are dedicated to furthering their field with advocacy, client-centered practice, research, volunteering and more. I have enjoyed learning from and being inspired by the unique contributions of each student, and want to thank everyone for continually challenging me. The Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association (WUSOTA) is open to all students in the Program who are interested in seeking opportunities for cultural and social experiences, professional development, community service and training.

In the 2015 summer semester, the WUSOTA 2015-2016 Executive Board met to plan and begin executing initiatives for the coming school year. In the fall, we welcomed the first-year students, who have strengthened the organization from the moment they arrived. We are very excited for them to bring new energy and ideas to the Program. This semester, the students participated in a variety of activities including letter-writing campaigns to congressmen to promote policy change, viewing documentaries regarding cultural and societal issues, professional talks on contemporary issues, and making connections with the Missouri Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA). The students also participated in a number of community service activities including Hope Lodge dinners, the Bridge gala and the Naturally Occurring Retirement Committee (NORC) yardwork days.

We were proud to have students represent WUOT at the MOTA annual conference in November by participating in discussions and presenting posters. Thank you to all of the students who have contributed their time and effort to make the events this semester a success. I am looking forward to all of the activities and events the executive board and student body have in store for the spring of 2016!

- **Brianna Beattie, OTD/S'17**
WUSOTA President



Brianna Beattie

Advocacy

The Advocacy Committee organized two fantastic events this semester. The first event was for the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) National School Backpack Awareness Day on Sept. 16. We weighed students' backpacks and had a competition to see which class would have the fewest overweight backpacks. Everyone received a handout on what can be done to make his or her backpack less taxing on a biomechanical level. Congratulations to the winners of the competition – the second-year students with 49 participants and only 29 percent of backpacks weighing more than 10 percent of his or her bodyweight!

Later in the semester, the committee organized a letter writing campaign in which students wrote more than 50 letters. The letters were sent to senators and congressmen and addressed two developing bills: the Reducing Barriers to Learning Act and the Access to Frontline Health Care Act. These bills could help expand the career prospects for current and future occupational therapists (OTs).

Next semester

The Advocacy Committee has a variety of events planned to promote occupational therapy (OT) this spring. In February, we are hosting an Elevator Speech Day to prepare students to educate families, friends, clients and other professionals about OT. To expand on this, we are partnering with the Professional Development Committee to host a series of talks on the role of OTs throughout the semester. The committee will reach out to the community by having OT students assist local Girl and Boy Scout troops obtaining their disability and ability awareness badges. Not to be forgotten, April is OT month. The committee is preparing to deck the OT halls and host an OT spirit week complete with competitions and events.



AOTA's National School Backpack Awareness Day

On Sept. 16, occupational therapy students weighed backpacks and provided safety tips to help students avoid the pain and injury that can come from heavy backpacks and bags. Anne Donnelly, MSOT '15 (right) checks her backpack.

ASD

Our AOTA Assembly of Student Delegates (ASD) delegate, Sam Talisman, OTD/S '17, has been encouraging students to become AOTA members and providing education on why it is important to be a member. He also reached out to the first- and second-year OTD students about joining the ASD Steering Committee next year. Even though AOTA's annual Student Conclave was not conveniently located in our backyard this year, Sam shared his positive experience of traveling to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to attend the event.

Next semester

Sam is looking forward to giving an information session at the upcoming AOTA 96th Annual Conference and Expo, in Chicago, Illinois. In addition, he plans to attend the ASD annual meeting to discuss important issues in the field of OT on a national level.

Community Service

The Community Service Committee has been busy organizing an abundance of events that have allowed the Program to regularly give back to the St. Louis community. One of our first events this year was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 25th Anniversary Signing and Walk in Forest Park on Oct. 3. Students volunteered that day by leading wheelchairs through the museum and the park, guiding low vision attendees, managing set-up and sign-ins and handing out water to walkers. This was a very special event for us which allowed OT students to see the impact the ADA signing has had on individuals and communities.

We also helped the Crown Center stuff envelopes for their mailing campaign and assisted with small art projects.

As fall arrived, we helped set up the Team Activities for Special Kids (TASK) Fall Festival for individuals aged 8-24 with cognitive challenges. Students helped set up the party and facilitate attendee participation in activities including a corn maze, pumpkin carving and other fun games.

Just a few blocks from campus, we held two dinners at the Hope Lodge, an organization that houses individuals who are in town for cancer treatments. Students brought a dish to serve to the residents and stayed to eat and chat with them throughout the meal.

Next semester

As OT students love interacting with the community, the Community Service Committee is cooking up some exciting opportunities for spring, including more Hope Lodge dinners, a potential Hope Lodge Game Night, the PB&Joy Drive, the Walk MS (April), and a Manicure for a Cause event!

ADA 25th Anniversary

Students volunteered at the ADA's 25th Anniversary Signing and Walk in Forest Park on Oct. 3 to show their support for people with disabilities.

Cultural

The Cultural Committee started the semester off with a series of cultural movie nights where students and friends explored different cultural, social and medical issues through films. These included "Still Alice," a drama about a woman recently diagnosed with early onset dementia, and "The Waiting Room," a documentary examining the problems encountered by hospitals as they treat patient populations that are primarily uninsured. The 40 attendants participated in discussions about these topics and how they relate to the medical system and occupational therapy. One second-year student commented that these movie nights are a safe place to discuss what we watched and what we learned in class to help us become better therapists.

The Cultural Committee also hosted a disability awareness lunch where students wore specialized devices that simulated different disabilities such as stroke and age-related impairments while eating. This exploration concluded in a discussion about how therapists can have more empathy and understanding towards our clients.

Next semester

The Cultural Committee will continue their cultural movie night series starting with "Murderball," a documentary chronicling the lives and competitions of men in the U.S. quadriplegic rugby team as they competed in the 2004 Paralympic games in Athens. In April, we will repeat the popular "Beepball" event, where students are instructed in adaptive low vision baseball. Later in the semester, a forum on religion will be held to allow students to question local practitioners of various religions on how their beliefs affect their view of and participation in the health care process.



Dalya Heller, MSOT/S '16, visits with an ADA 25th Anniversary attendee.



Fundraising

This fall, the Fundraising Committee organized a variety of fundraisers. The annual hoodie sweatshirt sale was a success. In addition, the committee introduced new fall items into the mix including moisture wicking quarter zip jackets, soft shell jackets, coffee tumblers and pack-and-go rain pullovers (pictured right). The new fall-themed items were very popular.



Next semester

Keep your eyes open for more exciting fundraisers: tumblers, quarter zip pullovers, food sales and more!

Job Fair

The Job Fair Committee has been working hard all semester to organize the upcoming annual Job Fair. The committee contacted a number of various employers for the event. In addition, we have been reaching out to other occupational therapy, physical therapy, physical therapy assistant, and certified occupational therapy assistant programs in the area to encourage them to attend the free event. We have also been gathering up door prizes for attendees – just one more reason to attend the event this spring!

Next semester

The Job Fair Committee encourages everyone to attend the event on Feb. 25, 2016, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Eric P. Newman Education Center (EPNEC).

Media Relations

The Media Relations Committee has been dusting off our creative writing skills and assembling this fall newsletter. We have also been maintaining the WUSOTA Facebook page with current student news and upcoming events.

Next semester

We will continue to update the WUSOTA Facebook page and provide the OT faculty, staff, students and alumni with the WUSOTA newsletter in the spring.



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'Like' the page and stay up-to-date on current WUSOTA events!



HPSLC

The Health Professional Student Leadership Council (HPSLC) is an organization that works to promote collaboration among students in the health care field. Programs included in HPSLC are Goldfarb School of Nursing, St. Louis College of Pharmacy and the Washington University School of Medicine programs (Audiology/Deaf Education, Medicine, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy). This year's OT co-representatives are Katrina Christopher, MSOT/S '16, Mary Kiolbasa, MSOT/S '16, and Ellen Nunley, MSOT/S '16.

HPSLC hit the ground running this year with lunch talks, a community service day, trivia night and a holiday toy drive. The HPSLC lunch talks were a great opportunity to hear professionals in the field discuss their career and how they strive to collaborate with other professions. It was helpful to start the year learning about each health field, the role they play, and how they see interdisciplinary practice fitting into the future of health care. While it may not be possible to collaborate, it is helpful to hear the value each discipline can bring to the team from real life experience.

Community Service Day is an event where students from all the health care disciplines come together go to various sites in the St. Louis community and visit. Many first-year students worked with Gateway Greening and helped to harvest, weed and maintain community gardens. Other OT students went to the Little Sisters of the Poor site where they assisted in documenting resident life histories and peeling more than 50 bananas to make the largest batch of banana muffins they had ever seen! These events provided the opportunity to learn about the other programs, the settings they can work in, and why students chose their health care field.

Later in the semester, HPSLC hosted a trivia night at iTap where students were assigned to interdisciplinary trivia teams and participated in some friendly health care team competition!

The last event of the season was a holiday toy drive for Raising St. Louis Families held in partnership with Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Toys for children from newborn to age 18 were collected to help spread holiday cheer to our St. Louis community this holiday season.

Next semester

HPSLC is planning on hosting a case study night, which is a valuable opportunity for students to practice working on an interdisciplinary health care team. This event offers a supportive environment in which to work on interdisciplinary communication skills and develop clinical reasoning skills.



WUOT@ MOTA

Three students presented at the 2015 MOTA annual conference: Brie Hussey (above), Felicia Foci and Justin Ryckman (right).



MOTA

As our Missouri Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) student representatives, Felicia Foci, OTD/S '17, and Gloria Sipakati, OTD/S '17, act as liaisons between the students and the MOTA board. Both representatives attend board meetings where they share WUSOTA news and take notes on MOTA board activities.

Felicia and Gloria have also been educating students on the importance of joining state occupational therapy associations before and after graduation. The numerous benefits include networking, continuing educational opportunities, and advocacy for both patients and therapists. Without membership dues, state associations are unable to be present in the state House or Senate when bills relevant to OT are being considered. This can result in OT being forgotten and patients receiving reduced services.

Another important event this semester was the MOTA annual conference held on Nov. 13-14 in Kansas City, Missouri. We were proud to have three students present at the conference. Felicia Foci and Justin Ryckman, OTD/S '17, gave an oral presentation, "Pain Management for Preterm Infants in the NICU: The Role of the Occupational Therapist" and Brie Hussey, OTD/S '16, presented a poster, "Program Evaluation of a Low Vision Self-Management Program."

Next semester

To further emphasize the importance of joining state occupational therapy association, Felicia and Gloria will be spearheading a letter writing campaign for MOTA membership that focuses on encouraging state OTs and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTAs) to join the organization this coming spring.

Professional Development

This fall, the Professional Development Committee hosted lunch talks with speakers involved in a range of areas relevant to occupational therapy. The kickoff event of the semester included a speaker from the Disabled Athletes Sports Association, a nonprofit organization where individuals with physical, visual and hearing impairments can participate in sports and exercise to build self-esteem and community. We learned about looking at the potential of each individual and not defining them by what they do in addition to exciting volunteer opportunities.

Students also had a chance to talk to Mike Dailey from O and P Designs about orthotics and prosthetics. Many students were excited to learn about various types of devices our clients may use.

Finally, we had an amazing opportunity to learn about burn treatment by WUOT Community Practice clinician Jamie Archer, MOT, OTR/L. Jamie spoke to us about different types of burns, assessments and interventions. Attendance for this talk was at an all-time high with more than 90 students.

Next semester

We are collaborating with the Advocacy Committee to provide students with the first ever Occupational Therapy and Sex Education Week. A variety of speakers and students will share their knowledge to provide OT students with information they can use to best help their future clients. We look forward to this week and can't wait to share the details with you!

Social Committee

This fall was filled with several fun events sponsored by the Social Committee. The first event of the year was a scavenger hunt around campus that ended at Llewellyn's, a pub in the Central West End.

The next event was a float trip, which happened to land on a beautiful day. Memories were made as everyone floated down the river with new friends through the gorgeous Missouri Ozarks. First-year students commented on how this event helped them bond with their peers.

Another popular event was the St. Louis Blues hockey game.

The Social Committee hosted a spooktacular Halloween party at Olin dormitory where students showed up in a variety of costumes. Lastly, our Ugly Christmas Sweater Party brought everyone together to celebrate the holidays and the end of the semester.

Next semester

Our annual semi-formal event Theraball is in the works for spring! More information will be available soon.



Students attended a St. Louis Blues hockey game.



Executive Board 2015-2016

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Fundraising	Lindsey Desutter, Chris Enke, Elizabeth Szymke and Arielle Yarbrough
HPSLC	Katrina Christopher, Mary Kiolbasa and Ellen Nunley
Job Fair	Grace Eisenberg and Lindsey Kehlenbrink
Media Relations	Katrina Christopher
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Professional Development	Melissa Brottman and Michelle Voss
Social	Stefanie Fitterer and Lena Menkes

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For any questions regarding the WUSOTA newsletter, please contact Katrina Christopher, media relations committee chair, at k.christopher@wustl.edu.



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