

# WUSOTA

Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association

## Message from the President

The Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association (WUSOTA) executive board kicked off this spring with a ton of great events and fundraiser sales! Our student body participated in various events: several letter-writing campaigns, a Valentine’s Day party at Biddle House, a screening of “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth,” an entrepreneurship lunch talk, and much more. The student body and faculty/staff also participated in a friendly penny wars competition to help fundraise for the St. Catherine Challenge, which encourages occupational therapy (OT) programs to raise money for the American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF). We are also thankful for the participation of the entire student body! Executive board positions have transitioned to a new group of students, and I am excited to see their contributions to the organization in the coming year.



**Brendan Cook**

Unfortunately, most of our spring events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic; many were our large annual events such as Theraball, the Therapy Career Fair, Occupational Therapy Scholarship Day and Commencement. I would like to take this time to reiterate my appreciation for my classmates, outgoing WUSOTA executive board members, and the Class of 2020. French novelist Marcel Proust once said, “Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” As the WUSOTA president, and as your classmate, it has been an honor to walk within these halls and work with you. You all are examples of what WashU OT really is about—an achieving

community that is committed in making each other the best occupational therapists and people that they can be. I will truly miss you all, and I thank you again for all that you have done for this program. I wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavors.

**- Brendan Cook, OTD/S '21**  
WUSOTA President

## Message from the Vice President

First, I would like to say thank you to the 2019-2020 WUSOTA general body for electing me as the vice president of the organization and entrusting me with the 2020-2021 presidency. Second, I would like to congratulate the Class of 2020. Although the ramifications of COVID-19 have presented us with many challenges, this time has also reminded us of the importance of adaptation and community. I am so proud to be a part of a community that has risen to the occasion while continuing to value the importance of health, wellness and connection. Whether in person or virtually, I do not doubt that the hard-working members of WUSOTA will continue to develop meaningful and impactful programming for the 2020-2021 WUSOTA calendar year.



**Chelsia Bradley**

**- Chelsia Bradley, OTD/S '22**  
WUSOTA Vice President

## Advocacy

This semester, the Advocacy Committee hosted a lunch talk with American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee (AOTPAC) Region IV Director Brent Braveman, where he discussed the importance of advocating within and for OT. The committee also held a letter-writing campaign in which more than 40 students sent letters to Congress to advocate for increased diversity among health-care professionals (S.1755/H.R.3208) and for accessible and inclusive emergency/disaster supports for older adults and individuals with disabilities (S.2747/H.R.3637). The Advocacy Committee members organized an opportunity for seven students to talk about OT at a career fair in the St. Louis area. April was National OT Month, and the Advocacy Committee is currently working to celebrate our profession virtually, provide mental wellness activities for students, and come together as a community even while apart. We want to thank you all for a great semester and congratulations to the new committee chairs, Rebecca Johnson and Bree Woods!

## ASD

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Assembly of Student Delegates (ASD) Committee had to cancel plans and events for the semester. The ASD representatives worked hard at the beginning of the semester to award travel allowances to WUSOTA students to attend the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Annual Conference & Expo in Boston, Mass. Sadly, the conference, the conference debrief, and the AOTPAC event that the ASD representatives had planned for the later part of the spring semester were canceled. April was National OT Month, and the ASD representatives took part in virtual AOTA sessions to learn more about the impact of COVID-19 on OT practice. Congratulations to Olivia DePaul and Annamayil Manohar, the ASD representatives for the 2020-2021 school year!

## Community Service

The Community Service Committee started the year strong volunteering alongside our physical therapy (PT) colleagues at the Tri My Best Triathlon on the Danforth campus. More than 40 PT and OT volunteers turned out at this first event of the school year, which was a blast! We had a busy fall semester coordinating opportunities to volunteer with local walks and 5Ks (Stampede for Stroke, American Parkinson Disease Association Optimism Walk) as well as with local organizations such as Disabled Athlete Sports Association and LifeBridge Partnership.

We had more plans for large-scale volunteer opportunities in spring 2020. We rallied students to volunteer for Night to Shine in February and put on our second annual Valentine's Game Night and Cookie Decorating at the Biddle Housing Opportunities Center downtown. We had a Hope Lodge Dinner in the works for early April, but in light of the pandemic, we instead shifted our focus to encouraging students to get involved in various community needs and looking ahead to the upcoming school year!

**Students volunteering at the Tri My Best Triathlon on the Danforth campus.**



## Career Fair

The Career Fair Committee worked hard this semester to finalize details for the 15th annual Therapy Career Fair, scheduled to take place on April 2, 2020 in the Eric P. Newman Center. Unfortunately, the fair was canceled due to university policy changes in response to COVID-19. Twenty-one vendors were committed to attend before the cancellation, and students from 20 occupational therapy, occupational therapy assistant, physical therapy, physical therapy assistant and speech-language pathology programs from the St. Louis area and surrounding regions were invited to attend. In lieu of the fair, the committee co-chairs put together a handout with information from 10 vendors who allowed us to share their information with those planning to attend. This document was sent to students on the day originally scheduled for the fair.

## Cultural

The Cultural Committee had a great year filled with fun and informative events regarding St. Louis culture and graduate school life. Even before the year began, the committee chairs added a box to the professional development unit (PDU) grid for cultural activities to encourage students to engage with the community and receive credit for learning more about working with diverse populations as an occupational therapist. To kick off the school year and welcome the first-year students, we hosted a culture-shock panel, which allowed students to ask questions about adjusting to graduate school and living in St. Louis and to receive answers from a diverse panel of second-year students.

In November, the Cultural Committee organized a field trip to the Griot (pronounced Gree-Oh) Museum of Black History

in St. Louis. For Thanksgiving, the Cultural Committee created a newsletter containing resources, such as podcasts and articles, about indigenous people's history and emailed them to students to enjoy over Thanksgiving break. To celebrate Black History Month, the Cultural Committee hosted a screening of the film "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth," served cupcakes from the local bakery SweetArt, and hosted a talk from a St. Louis Police Department Officer.

Throughout the year, the Cultural Committee sent out monthly newsletters highlighting cultural events happening in St. Louis and compiled a list of local businesses to partner with for future WUSOTA events. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold our remaining events. We had planned on tabling during April for mental health awareness to provide students with resources and activities to promote mental health. Finally, the Cultural Committee planned to collaborate with the Social Committee for Theraball and help create inclusive and positive messaging props for the photo booth.

## Fundraising

This semester, the Fundraising Committee held two apparel sales. They also sold various items throughout the semester, such as stickers and plastic tumblers. They are thankful to everyone who supported them and made their fundraisers a success. Leah, Mario and Heather would like to welcome the new fundraising chairs, Danielle and Alejandra!

## Media Relations

The Media Relations Committee debuted “WUSOTA Member Spotlight” this semester. This weekly feature highlights a current WUSOTA member by sharing information about their background and interests, as well as fun facts about them. We were looking forward to keeping you all up to speed on events this semester, but we unfortunately saw many cancellations this spring. We want to thank all of our committee members for their hard work this year and welcome Jacob Sturtevant as the new Media Relations Committee Chair! Congratulations to the graduating Class of 2020!

## MOTA

In Spring 2020, Elan Reisner and Joshua Zalk of the WUSOTA Missouri Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) Committee were hard at work supporting student participation at the annual MOTA Hill Day on March 4. Preparatory activities included meetings with the MOTA Legislative Task Force and participating in MOTA conference calls. This helped us determine the state legislation that we would primarily focus on addressing during MOTA Hill Day. Fortunately, it went on as scheduled this year after being cancelled last year due to weather. The students from the MSOT '20 and OTD '21 classes took a bus to Jefferson City to advocate on state issues that could directly affect the OT profession. Our first order of business was to spread the word on what OT is throughout the Missouri State Capitol, particularly how it differs from PT. Our participants were fortunate enough to speak to the aids of Missouri State Senators Jill Schupp, Bill Eigel, Jamilah Nasheed and Scott Sifton, as well as Missouri State Representatives Steven Roberts and Gina Mitten. Elan and Joshua would like to thank all of the 2019-20 MOTA Committee for their hard work and enthusiasm in learning about state policy throughout the school year. Elan and Joshua eagerly welcome Audrey Peppin, Monica Fishbein and Allie Wetzel to the MOTA Committee for the 2020-21 school year!

## Professional Development

The Professional Development Committee would like to thank students for attending lunch talks throughout the semester. We hosted three lunch talks in February. First, we welcomed recent WashU OT alumna Katie Holt, who gave a talk on “Sex: The Other

Bed Mobility.” This popular talk was recorded for those who were unable to attend. We also co-hosted a fieldwork lunch talk with Pi Theta Epsilon. At this event, students were able to learn more about different fieldwork settings from second- and third-year students. At end of February, Dr. Brittany Conners shared her experiences as a black woman, OT and entrepreneur in honor of Black History/ Black Futures Month. Unfortunately, with the semester cut short, we were unable to hold the rest of the planned talks. We hope you all are staying safe, healthy and well as best you can. Thank you for a great semester!

## St. Catherine Challenge

This school year, the St. Catherine Challenge Committee hosted events to raise funds for OT research. The committee hosted letter-writing campaigns, held our annual penny wars and debuted the box and blocks competition! Thank you to everyone who planned, facilitated and attended these events! WashU raised \$1,971.03 throughout the year to help fund an AOTF intervention research grant. The St. Catherine Challenge Committee is grateful to everyone who planned and participated in events and looks forward to next year’s challenge!

## Social Committee

This past semester, the Social Committee planned various events but was unfortunately only able to host one due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Night at the City Museum event in downtown St. Louis was still a big hit. Students enjoyed channeling their inner child as they explored the museum. Next, we had planned for the third annual “WUSOTA Idol” at Tom’s Bar and Grill in partnership with the Guatemala Service Trip team. However, due to the unprecedented times, we were unable to host this popular event. Finally, the committee had planned an amazing Theraball event at the Schlafly Taproom downtown. We were very disappointed that COVID-19 impacted this highly anticipated event. Nonetheless, the Social Committee would like to thank everyone for a great year and for all of their support and attendance at events over the course of the past two semesters. The committee chair had a great time serving as the representative of the Social Committee and looks forward to the amazing events the new chair is already planning.

Students attending MOTA Hill Day on March 4.





The 2019-2020 WUSOTA officers hosted a general body meeting via Zoom on April 23. They had 127 participants, and nominees for offices and chair positions pre-recorded speeches to share via PowerPoint. The election was held, and the results are below.

Congratulations to the 2020-2021 WUSOTA Executive Board! We look forward to seeing what you have in store for the organization.

## 2020-2021 Executive Board

- President ..... Chelsia Bradley
- Vice President ..... TBD
- Treasurer ..... Emily Prins
- Secretary ..... Stephanie Judycki
- Advocacy ..... Rebecca Johnson and Breonna Woods
- ASD ..... Olivia DePaul and Annamayil Manohar
- Career Fair ..... Katherine Perkins and Abigail Self
- Community Service ..... Ashley Flynn and HannahMarie Klute
- Cultural ..... Makayla Todd and Katie Storey
- Fundraising ..... Alejandra Gutierrez and Danielle Pollard
- Media Relations ..... Jacob Sturtevant
- MOTA Representatives ..... Monica Fishbein, Audrey Peppin and Allison Wetzel
- Professional Development ..Jacki Johnson and Emily Kryska
- St. Catherine
- Challenge Representatives..... TBD
- Social.....Audrey Trebelhorn

## 2019-2020 Executive Board

- President .....Brendan Cook
- Vice President .....Chelsia Bradley
- Treasurer .....Ali Uchdorf
- Secretary .....Hannah Schmid
- Advocacy .....Liz Whitaker and Amanda Wolski
- ASD .....Judy Lee and Rachel Teslow
- Career Fair .....Eliza Hendrix, Shivanti Kariyawasam and Bridget Regan
- Community Service .....Emily Gough, Leora Radman and Katie Walbrun
- Cultural.....Rose Greenblatt and Annie Wright
- Fundraising .....Leah Botkin, Heather Neal and Mario Millsap
- Media Relations .....Laura Boden and Sammy Paton
- MOTA Representatives .....Elan Reisner and Josh Zalk
- Professional Development .Katie Chin, Jessica Ivy and Esther Jeon
- St. Catherine
- Challenge Representatives..... Allison Frank, Rachel Rindner and Anneliese Schlesinger
- Social.....Kelsey Lawrence and Carlo Pinpin

## Advisors to Executive Board

- Student Activities Coordinator..... Lauren Milton, OTD, OTR/L
- Design and Layout ..... Michele Berhorst

For any questions regarding the WUSOTA newsletter, please contact Michele Berhorst, media/marketing administrator, at [berhorstm@wustl.edu](mailto:berhorstm@wustl.edu).

