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**UF** | Department of Occupational Therapy  
COLLEGE of PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

## UFOT Progress Notes *Fall 2020*

### Message from the Chair



**2020 has been the year of the unthinkable.** COVID 19 has taken the lives of more than 194,000 U.S. citizens as of this writing. Racial injustice was brought into every American home as we watched in horror the killing of George Floyd. And the effect of climate change is front and center as

millions of acres burn in the Western United States. These occurrences are affording us with an opportunity to pause, reflect and make meaning. The question then is not why this is happening—but the burning question must be: what can we do to be part of a sustainable solution where we are living in greater coherence with ourselves, one another and the planet.

Here at UFOT, we are working through our challenges while remaining vigilant in our pursuit of social and environmental justice. Our annual faculty and staff retreat focused entirely on #BlackLivesMatter and included topics on Implicit Bias, The Black Experience on our UF Campus, the History of White Privilege, and Recruitment, Retention, and Inclusive Practices. This retreat was the right step, in the right direction, at the right time. You can see my video to UF OTD students on #BlackLivesMatter by [clicking here](#).

As we are traversing these challenges, we remain hopeful for the future as we continue our academic work and contribute to the Greater Good. I am deeply grateful to my UFOT colleagues, our alumni, students, advisory board and stakeholders – who motivate us to stay resilient, focused and creative, amidst trialing times. However, this year also brought forth many successes for the OT department—and I would like to highlight a few of our accomplishments:

- UFOT's [US News and World Report rankings](#) have increased from #17 to #10 among all universities in the USA; from #10 to #4 for all public universities in the USA
- [Publications](#): 10 faculty, 32 publications, publishing in journals with an Impact Factor 1.03-11.5
- MOT Program: 100% pass rate in the NBCOT2020 exam
- [Driver Rehabilitation Therapy Program](#) graduated its first cohort of entry level DRT in Dec 2019
- [OTD Students](#): Largest intake of OTD students in the last decade: 10 students in the combined BHS-OTD program, 50 students in the Entry-Level OTD program, total of 60 students.
- [SmartDriver Rehabilitation Services](#) (Open Tuesday and Thursday): Provided 70 evaluations/interventions in 7 months to clients in North Central Florida.
- UFOT quadrupled [grant funding](#) since 2016
- [RSD program](#): The OT Department is sponsoring 10 Disability, Occupation, Participation Science PhD students who are currently enrolled in the RSD program – the highest number in the last decade!
- [Sandra Edwards Colloquium](#) — More than 100 Participants attended in 2020, AND we are going Virtual in 2021. The colloquium will be held on February 3, 2021 and the theme will be Aging in Place. The Keynote Speaker for this virtual conference will be Dr. Susan Stark.
- [Continuing Education](#) - More than 4000 registrations for our free CE courses during the Pandemic.

As we celebrate our achievements, we are humbled by the trials that our colleagues and our country are enduring. As this year continues, we remain hopeful that we will all get through this time stronger and more determined to contribute to the Greater Good.

Best regards,

**Sherrilene Classen, PhD, MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA, FGSA**  
**Professor and Chair: Department of Occupational Therapy**

Director: UF Institute for Mobility, Activity and Participation

Director: UF SmartDriver Rehab Service

Editor-in-Chief: OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health

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# UFOT Welcomes OTD Class of 2023



The Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program welcomed the Class of 2023 and BHS-OTD Class of 2024 to the new school year during orientation on August 18th and 19th. The new classes represent the largest number of new students to enter the OTD program yet, with sixty students from across the state of Florida and approximately half of new students coming from UF. Due to the pandemic, orientation was online using the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

Dr. Christine Myers, program director, led day one, which included guest speakers from the faculty, Financial Aid, and the Office of Advancement. The program's second-year students, led by Orientation Committee co-chairs Emily Buck and Samone Cowart, organized and facilitated the second day with student organization presentations and a student panel. Students will enter the program with most classes online, except for their neuroscience lab, which will be held in-person one day a week for the first half of the semester.

## UFOT Occupational Therapy Scientists Awarded Six Federal Grants

**Dr. Sherrilene Classen** was awarded a Field Initiated Research Project (NIDILRR 90IFRE0035) through the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research to study the **Driving Performance of People with Parkinson's Disease via Autonomous Vehicles** for 09/01/2020-08/30/2023. The goal of this efficacy study is to improve the driving performance of drivers with Parkinson's via the use of in-vehicle technologies.

Also, the NIH, specifically the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), awarded **Dr. Sherrilene Classen and Dr. Nicole Ennis** with a R-21 (1 R21 DA048067-01A1) to study **Medical Marijuana Use and Driving Performance: A Test of Psychomotor Functioning in Adults 50 and Older** from 09/30/2020-08/30/2022. The goal of this study is to assess the effect of medical marijuana on response time, attention, and executive functions in older adults 50 years and older.







**Dr. Zheng Wang** received an R-21 award from the National Institute on Aging. Her project is titled **Cerebellar and basal ganglia contributions to neuromotor decline in adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**. The goal of this project is to evaluate neuromotor decline and anatomical cerebellar and basal-ganglia changes in aging adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These studies will provide foundational knowledge on the pathophysiological mechanisms of aging in ASD.

**Dr. Jessica Kramer** and small business collaborator, Ablelink Smart Living Technologies, received continued support from NIH to build a clinically robust PEDI-PRO Assessment Software to address the market gap in patient reported outcome measures accessible to youth with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) (R42HD090772).

Dr. Kramer and her collaborators also received two COVID-19 related Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards. The first project will apply a framework developed at the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence to analyze mental health service needs of people with IDD and their families pre- and post-during COVID-19, collected by the Center for START Services (CSS) network (EA-15364). The second project, in partnership with Temple University, will prepare research teams to engage with individuals with IDD during public health emergencies and disasters (EAIN-00109).



[Learn More](#)

## Faculty Achievements

**UFOT faculty** have persevered through COVID-19, social distancing, Zoom meetings, and continue to contribute to the Greater Good. Here are a few recent faculty achievements that you will be hearing more about in the Winter Issue of Progress Notes:



**Dr. Jamie Pomeranz:**

- Promoted to Clinical Professor
- Appointed: Program Director of the Social and Behavioral Science Concentration, PhD Program in Public Health



**Dr. Emily Pugh:**

- Received her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Chatham University in Spring 2020



**Dr. Zheng Wang:**

- Dean's Citation Award: 2020



**Dr. Orit Shechtman:**

- OT Alumna 2020

# Dr. Winter received the 2020 ADED Scholar Award

Sandra Winter, PhD, OTR/L received the 2020 Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED) Scholar Award. This award is presented annually to members who have made outstanding scholarly achievements in the area of driver evaluation, education, research, and/or engineering.

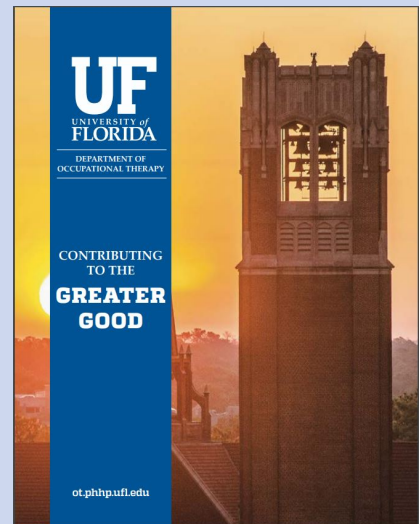
Dr. Winter is a Research Assistant Scientist in the Department of Occupational Therapy, College of Public Health and Health Professions, University of Florida. She is also an affiliated investigator with the Gainesville Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center. She has a long-term history of scholarly work in driving and community mobility, particularly in vulnerable and medically-at-risk populations.



## 2019-2020 Issue of UFOT's GreaterGood Magazine

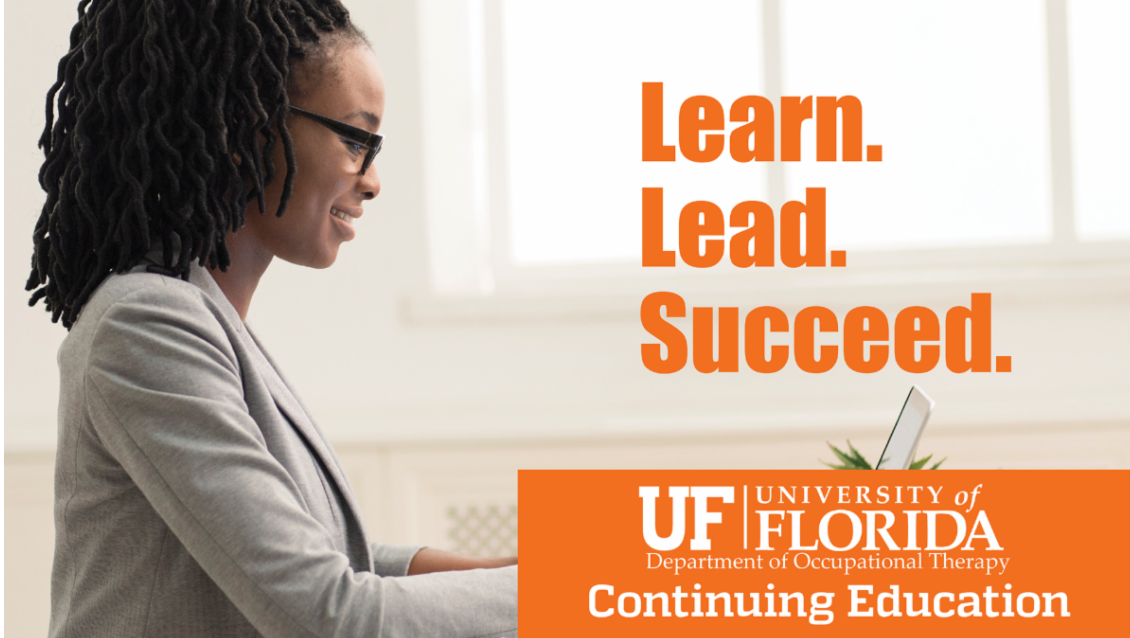
2019-2020 was a seminal year for UFOT. The size of our faculty tripled. Our grant funding tripled. We attracted the best and the brightest students. And our rankings went from #17 to #10 among all universities in the USA and from #10 to #4 for all public universities in the USA. Want to know more? Read our 2019-2020 Greater Good Magazine!

[Read More](#)



## Continuing Education





**Learn.  
Lead.  
Succeed.**

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
FLORIDA  
Department of Occupational Therapy  
**Continuing Education**

Since April 2020, UFOT has given away more than 4000 individual occupational therapy continuing education courses to contribute to the Greater Good. On October 1st, keep your eyes open for a big announcement about our Continuing Education Program as we take it to the next level. **Stay tuned!**

## Introducing Tom Goodwin

### Director of Advancement for PHHP



Dear PHHP Family,

I'm Tom Goodwin, a Double Gator, and the new Director of Advancement for the College of Public Health and Health Professions. I'll share a bit about myself in a moment but, before I do, there's something more important.

Thank you — each and every one of you — for being part of the PHHP community. You all are so very important and your work matters so very much. I'm not a health care or public health professional, but my life and family have been touched by your industry, and I care a great deal about your work. That's true, whether you're in the field, a researcher, or a PHHP graduate or friend who simply has a love for promoting health.

[Read more.....](#)

## Alumni Spotlight: Elise Caton



### UF occupational therapy alumna, Elise Caton, MOT, OTR/L

graduated from the first masters in occupational therapy class in 2003. Since then, she has charted a path to become a successful small business owner and expert in pediatric occupational therapy. After working for private clinics for six years, Caton began the process of starting her own private practice in the Gainesville area. Through word of mouth and relationships throughout the community, the practice grew quickly. As a pediatric occupational therapist who specialized in sensory integration (SI), Caton recognized the need for a clinic that would provide families with comprehensive assessment and intervention from an SI perspective.

Caton's clinic, Lamp Post Therapy, quickly outgrew its original space, and Caton moved to a new space with five therapy rooms in 2017. With the move came an increase in team members, including the addition of a speech-language pathologist. To date, Lamp Post Therapy has provided services to over 500 families and has branched out to provide services to adult clients. In addition to her busy schedule, Caton supports the UF occupational therapy program by serving on the Fieldwork/Capstone Advisory Board, mentoring students as a fieldwork educator, and participating as a guest speaker.

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## UFOT Positions Available

Here at UFOT, we are growing every day! And we need more bright, talented and innovative faculty to help us go higher! We have two positions currently posted on the UF system that are listed below and we will have other positions opening up soon.

Join us! And help us achieve our mission to contribute to the Greater Good!

**Clinical Assistant /  
Associate Professor  
Department of**





# Occupational Therapy

The Department of Occupational Therapy, College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida, invites applications for two full-time (1.0 FTE), 12-month non-tenure track Clinical Assistant or Associate Professor positions.

The successful applicant will serve as faculty for the Occupational Therapy Doctorate degree program, with primary responsibilities in teaching, and secondary responsibilities in research, and service activities as assigned.

Applicants must have a relevant doctoral degree and be licensed/license-eligible as an occupational therapist in the state of Florida. Experience in teaching in an occupational therapy program is preferred.

**Apply now!**



# Driver Rehabilitation Specialist

The University of Florida, invites applications for a part-time (20 hrs per week), Driver Rehabilitation Specialist. The successful applicant will conduct driver rehabilitation assessments and interventions and participate in funded research.

## Requirements:

- Minimum of an entry-level professional degree.
- Licensed/license-eligible as an occupational therapist or other regulated and licensed health care professional, in the state of Florida.
- Two years of driving rehabilitation experience is essential.
- Preferred applicants will be a certified driver rehabilitation specialist (CDRS).

**Apply Now!**

The University of Florida's Department of Occupational Therapy seeks to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as a reflection of our commitment to serve the diverse people of

Florida, to maintain the excellence of the University, and to offer our students richly varied disciplines, perspectives, and ways of knowing and learning. The Department of Occupational Therapy is especially interested in candidates who can contribute to the diversity and excellence of the academic community through their teaching, research, and/or service.



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