

Spring 2021 UFOT Newsletter



Letter from the Chair: *Refresh, Reset and Reboot!*

Dear Colleagues:

Exiting 2020 has brought me to the realization that all of us—consciously or unconsciously – has come to hit the “Control- Alt- Delete button” of our work and family lives as we knew it. Indeed the beginning of 2021 has afforded us with an opportunity to *refresh, reset* and *reboot*—personally, professionally, departmentally, and also societally!

Refresh: The year of 2020 delivered a fair number of toxic events, which of course included the pandemic and its effects on our health, safety, and all of our everyday activities; hate crimes; racial injustices; indecent acts of white supremacists; election stress; and the horrific insurrection

of the Capitol on January 6th, of this year. Yet, our faculty, staff, students – and of course our front-line working clinicians, many of them alums of the OT Department— continued to be motivated to tackle this year, in a poised manner. Certainly, I am so impressed by our faculty, staff, and students’ positive outlook, teamwork, sense of cohesion, and “fresh” attitude in dealing with the many challenges to ensure successful outcomes.

Reset: Despite the restrictions (physical distancing, use of PPE and other infection control procedures) still relevant for managing the pandemic, we have welcomed our students back into the classroom—while offering a hyperflex teaching environment with a combined in-class and on-line experience. We are actively involved in the diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives of our college and department—with diversity week being celebrated this month affording a range of activities for engaging our faculty and students. Our presence at AOTA in April will be palpable—and we invite all of our Alums to visit with us in our virtual booth on **Wednesday, April 7, 2021 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm EST** via Zoom.

Indeed we are resetting to create a brighter and more engaging year for all of our constituents!

Reboot: As we are looking forward to completing the Spring semester, we are doing so

with a sense of optimism. Not only is our College undergoing CEPH (Council on Education for Public Health) accreditation, but our Department is in full swing to prepare for the upcoming accreditation of our OTD program. Moreover, we have all three cohorts of the OTD program up and running and we are also launching the revised post-professional Driver Rehabilitation Therapy program in the Fall of 2021. Our fieldwork team has done a terrific job with the successful fieldwork placement of students, and our Year 3 students are starting their Capstone projects at this time. All of our research programs are “re-instituted” while ensuring optimal protection for our participants and research personnel. We continue to be indebted to all of our supporters and stakeholders who contribute richly to the success of our teaching, research, and service programs.

Please take a moment to read about these and many more events in our Spring 2021 newsletter.

Very best wishes,

Sherrilene Classen, PhD, MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA, FGSA
Prof and Chair: UF OT Department



UFOT Alumni Event 2021

April 7, 2021 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Join fellow UF OT Alum with an introduction from Dr. Classen, a UF OT

trivia game with prizes, and breakout rooms with faculty and students. You DO NOT need to be registered for the AOTA INSPIRE Conference to attend, but you DO need to complete the free registration with us below to receive the online meeting link.

Come have some fun with other Gator OTs!

REGISTER NOW!

New Driver Rehabilitation Specialist, Dan Allison



Mr. Dan Allison has joined the Department of Occupational Therapy's SmartDriver Rehab Services, as a certified driver rehabilitation specialist, effective 18 February 2021. Mr. Allison holds a BS in Supervision from Purdue University and an MS in Occupational Therapy (with an emphasis on disabled driver rehabilitation) from Western Michigan University.

Mr. Allison has recently retired from Shepherd Center in Atlanta, where he worked full time as a CDRS in the assistive technology center. Prior to that, he was a research associate at the T.K. Martin Center for Technology and Disability at Mississippi State University, performing driver rehabilitation full time, and also assisted with wheeled mobility evaluations. Dan says: "I am very excited for this opportunity to step out of retirement and pursue my passion of driver rehabilitation with SmartDriver".

Mr. Allison is a proud past president of ADED, a former member of RESNA committee on wheelchair transportation, and maintaining his membership in the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA). In 2019 he was very honored to be named the first "Q'manitarian of the year", from Q'straint, a leading manufacturer of wheelchair securement products.

We are extending a hearty welcome to Dan joining our SmartDriver team!

UF OT Fieldwork Educator Course

The University of Florida's Occupational Therapy Department presented the Fieldwork Educator Workshop Series, *Educating and Shaping the Next Generation of OTs: How to Bridge the Communication Gap between Fieldwork Educators and their OT Students*, in January and February 2021.

This three-part series examined topics such as emotional competence and learning styles, feedback strategies, and the creation of a psychological safe space to discuss difficult topics. Each week, speakers provided evidence-based research and practice implications to facilitate fieldwork educators' continuing competence, followed by a moderated discussion and Q&A with a diverse panel of fieldwork educators. Over 150 participants attended virtually, representing multiple clinical practice settings and geographic locations across 12 states. Dr. Becky Piazza presented on Emotional Competence and Learning Styles, Dr. Edwin Myers presented on The Relationship of the Intentional Relationship Model to OT Fieldwork, Dr. Heidi Horwitz presented on Strategies for Student Feedback, Ms. Armenthis Lester presented on Implicit Bias and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fieldwork Setting, and Ms. Zari Cooper presented on DEI resources. Ms. Sherry-Lynne Bredy moderated the panel discussion.

The committee of Dr. Horwitz, Dr. Piazza, Ms. Bredy, and Ms. Cooper created this workshop to enhance educational opportunities for fieldwork educators and to provide a platform for fieldwork educators to meet and share their experiences.



Left to Right: Zari Cooper, MOT, Heidi Horwitz, MEd, OTD, OTR/L Rebecca Piazza, OTD, MS, OTR/L, BCPR and Sherry-Lynne Bredy, MHSOTRL



UFOT Participates in Diversity Equity and Inclusion Week

March 8-12, 2021 was the College of Public Health and Health Profession's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Week. This week-long series of invited speakers, panels, and workshops were designed to engage all members of the PHHP community. The Department of Occupational Therapy participated in DEI Week with posters, a panel, and a workshop.

Four posters authored by faculty members, students, and a combination of faculty and students were presented on March 10th including:

1. *Heidi Horwitz, OTD, OTR/L, Becky Piazza, OTD, OTR/L, Sherry-Lynne Bredy, MHS, OTR/L & Zari Cooper, MOT, OTR/L: Building Capacity for Inclusive Clinical Experiences Through DEI and Occupational Therapy Education*
2. *Orit Shechtman, PhD, OTR/L, and Christine Myers, PhD, OTR/L: Consciousness Raising Seminar Series on DEI for OTD Students*
3. *John Kramer, PhD, Orit Shechtman, PhD, OTR/L, Perna Poojary, PhD, OTR/L, Christine Myers, PhD, OTR/L, Amber Green, OTS; Velencia Munroe, OTS; Keandra Clayton, OTS; and Tiffany Henderson OTS: Improving DEI content of the OTD curriculum*
4. *Angelica Rodriguez, OTS; Rachel Stacy, OTS; Lindsay Mathew, OTS: Promoting Diversity and Inclusion - Gator COTAD Chapter*

On March 7th, Dr. Consuelo Kreider and Truly Hardemon, MEd, led a workshop focused on Universal Design for Learning with "UDL as an Entry Point for Enacting DEI in the Classroom: Practical Strategies." This workshop will explore classroom strategies, help participants build an understanding of Universal Design for Learning, and disseminate practical strategies that can be applied in the classroom setting.

A panel on outreach and community engagement was held on March 8th. Panelists Erin Ferguson, B.A., Dr. Catherine Striley, Dr. Kim Dunleavy, and Dr. Perna Poojary, led an engaging discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as they relate to engagement with our local communities.

UFOT Faculty Awards

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Jessica Kramer, PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy, has received the American Occupational Therapy Foundation Mid-Career Research Excellence Award. This award recognizes one scholar each year whose research accomplishments contribute to advancing knowledge in the field of occupational therapy and improve practice and health. Dr. Kramer was recognized for her integration of participatory research methodologies with youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities into rigorous, best practice methods for assessment and intervention development and evaluation. Congratulations Dr. Kramer!



Christine Myers, Ph.D., OTR/L, Clinical Associate Professor and Director of the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program in the Department of Occupational Therapy has been elected to receive the Roster of Fellows award from the American Occupational Therapy Association for her exemplary leadership in early childhood and interprofessional education. Dr. Myers will be honored during the AOTA annual conference in April. She has also been awarded the Distinguished Scholar Fellow from the National Academies of Practice in Occupational Therapy. Dr. Myers will be honored during the NAP Annual Meeting and Forum in March.

Position Available

Clinical Lecturer / Clinical Assistant Professor Position

The Institute for Mobility, Activity, and Participation,
Department of Occupational Therapy, College of
Public Health and Health Professions at the

University of Florida, invites applications for a full-time (1.0 FTE), 12-month non-tenure track Clinical Lecturer or Clinical Assistant Professor to serve as a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist. The successful applicant will contribute to the Driver Rehabilitation Therapy program, funded research, and clinical driver evaluations and interventions at UF SmartDriver.

Applicants must have an entry-level professional degree and be licensed/license-eligible as an occupational therapist or other regulated and licensed health care professional in the state of Florida. Master's level degree hire will be appointed at the Clinical Lecturer title while a Ph.D. or equivalent is required for the Clinical Assistant Professor level. Two years of driving rehabilitation experience are essential. Preferred applicants will be a certified driver rehabilitation specialist (CDRS), or a driver rehabilitation specialist eligible to complete the certification examination of the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED), shortly after being hired. 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.



[Learn More](#)

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Learn more about how the UFOT is empowering older adults and advancing independence from the Unstoppable Minds Podcast

UNSTOPPABLE MINDS PODCAST

Empowering Older Adults to Keep their Independence

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[VISIT UNSTOPPABLE MINDS →](#)



Dr. Sherrilene Classen in UF's full-cab driving simulator.

Join the next class: Professional Certificate in Driver Rehabilitation Therapy (DRT)

We are excited to announce that we are currently accepting applications for the Professional Certificate in Driver Rehabilitation Therapy (DRT) for the Fall of 2021. Our 14 credit program consists of 11 credits taken online and a one-week, 3 credit onsite component at the University of Florida, offering the opportunity to obtain hands-on experience from some of the best driver rehabilitation specialists in the country. The DRT program offers an educational experience that focuses on the development of specialized skills, advanced practice behaviors, evidence-based practice, and leadership activities in the area of driver rehabilitation. Graduates of this program are qualified to be entry-level driver rehabilitation therapists working with medically-at-risk drivers through the lifespan.

[Apply Today!](#)



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