

Summer 2021 UFOT Newsletter



Letter from the Chair

Dear Colleagues, Alumni, Friends, and Students:

With joy and delight, I am introducing you to our Department's Summer 2021 Progress Notes Newsletter. The University of Florida's Department of Occupational Therapy, a "hopping" place, has recently been recognized by our ACOTE on-site reviewers as a "unified" and "intentional" Department—and I could not agree more!

Let me tell you why...

From the perspective of our *educational programs*, we have just completed our ACOTE site visit to obtain accreditation for our entry-level OTD program. Early news is that the OTD Program is successful in meeting all the ACOTE standards. We are expecting the final report in August 2021

and will keep you all updated on the outcome.

On the *research side*, excitingly, we have restructured the Institute for Mobility, Activity, and Participation (I-MAP) —which was previously known for its driving research. Through strategic planning meetings, collaboration, and teamwork, and as of May 2021, I-MAP is strategically aligned to promote research and scholarship across the domains of mobility, activity, and participation. See the next article for more information on I-Map.

In terms of *faculty and staff*—we are in the process of hiring one tenure track and two clinical faculty members. We are welcoming Dr. Stefanie Bodison, who will be joining our faculty as a tenure track Assistant Professor. We are also on-boarding our newest staff member, Melissa D. Causey Harris. We had a brilliant 2020-2021 academic year—and I encourage you to read about our faculty awards in the newsletter. Likewise, we are also adding another *post-doc and PhD student* to our Department, with 10 PhD students currently enrolled in the Rehabilitation Science Doctoral program.

What a privilege to lead our "unified" and "intentional" Department into another exciting academic year. We know that the activities of this upcoming year will, like all other years' activities— culminate in us reaching (and maybe exceeding) our 2025 vision.

I wish all our UF OT Gator family a "heartly Gooo Gators"— and to all our other OT colleagues, friends, and supporters—I send my very best wishes for a successful academic year!

Sincerely,

Sherrilene Classen, PhD: Professor and Chair
Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Florida



Institute for Mobility, Activity, & Participation

College of Public Health and Health Professions

Welcome to the Institute for Mobility, Activity, and Participation (I-MAP)

Located within the College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida, the [Institute for Mobility, Activity and Participation \(I-MAP\)](#) was formed in 2009 under the leadership of [Dr. Sherrilene Classen](#). The initial focus was on driving-related research. As of 2021, the institute is strategically aligned to promote research and scholarship across the domains of mobility, activity, and participation. I-MAP is currently comprised of three research labs. The I-MAP lab is led by Dr. Justin Mason and the research focus is driving and community mobility. The Youth and Young Adult Empowerment, Leadership, and Learning (YELL) lab is led by Dr. Jessica Kramer and focuses on tools and interventions to empower youth and young adults with developmental disabilities. The Healthy Aging and Functional Ability (HAFA) lab led by Dr. CJ Liu focuses on promoting health and preventing care dependency for older adults.

To discuss collaborative or other opportunities, please contact Dr. Sherrilene Classen at sclassen@phhp.ufl.edu.

UFOT Faculty Updates

New Faculty



**Rebecca A Piazza, OTD, MS,
OTR/L, BCPR
Clinical Assistant Professor**

Dr. Piazza received her clinical doctorate in occupational therapy from Chatham University in 2018. Dr. Piazza specializes in adult inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation and has been a practicing occupational therapist within adult physical dysfunction since graduating from UF



**Anna B Galloway, OTD,
OTR/L, MT-BC
Clinical Assistant Professor**

Dr. Galloway is a licensed and board-certified Occupational Therapist and a board-certified Music Therapist. She has extensive clinical experience working with the cardiac, vascular, pulmonary, and neurological populations.

Faculty Awards



Linda Struckmeyer Outstanding Alumni Washington University

Linda R. Struckmeyer, PhD, OTR/L, Clinical Assistant Professor, was recognized as Washington University's 2021 Program in Occupational Therapy Outstanding Alumna for dedicating her career to educational, leadership and community initiatives in the profession and beyond. As an educator at UF, she helped develop the entry-level OTD including the capstone experience. Her research in the areas of aging in place and home modifications improves the lives of older adults. Her leadership on boards, committees and as a faculty advisor has impacted the profession and inspired future practitioners. She has served the community through her clinical practice, volunteerism and commitment to diverse populations.



Christine Myers Receives Award for Interprofessional Education

Christine Myers, PhD, OTR/L, clinical associate professor and Doctor of Occupational Therapy program director was honored as a Distinguished Scholar Fellow of the National Academies of Practice (NAP) Occupational Therapy Academy in March. She received this award in recognition for her work in interprofessional education and early childhood. NAP's distinguished healthcare practitioners and scholars are elected by their peers to join the only interprofessional group dedicated to supporting affordable, accessible, coordinated quality healthcare for all.

Sherrilene Classen - OTJR Editor in Chief 2015-2021

Sherrilene Classen, PhD, MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA, FGSA, has just completed her 6 year-term as Editor-in-Chief of *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*, the official scientific publication of the American Occupational Therapy Foundation.

The journal has experienced significant success over the past six years. Based on the Journal's performance metrics since 2014, OTJR continues on its successful upward trajectory in all areas of the metrics. The 2020 impact



factor is an all-time high of 1.768. The 5-year impact factor is 2.693. This is a reflection of the efficiency, productivity, diligence, and teamwork of the editorial team members and reviewers.

In reflecting on her term as Editor-in-Chief Dr. Classen states: “Opportunities and success do not just happen—we are all co-creators of high-level success – and as such we must consciously tap into our passions, align that with our purpose, while unleashing talent in people to ensure high-level outcomes!”

We wish the new Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Tim Wolf, much success with his vision for the journal.

UFOT Staff Updates



Welcome!

Melissa Causey Harris joined the OT team in the Administrative Support Assistant II role on June 7, 2021. Ms. Causey Harris received a BA in Economics and a minor in Psychology from the University of North Florida. She brings experiences in customer service, purchase orders, administrative and office management skills.

UFOT PhD Updates

Welcome, Yun-Chan Shin!

Yun-Chan Shin received both BA and MS in occupational therapy from Yonsei University. His prior research experience includes examining cognitive rehabilitation and the lifestyle intervention program in older adults. Yun-Chan is the awardee of the 2021 Grinter Fellowship. He will join Dr. Chiung-ju(CJ) Liu's Healthy Aging and Functional Ability research lab this fall.



PhD Students Make it Work!

PhD students from the Disability, Occupation, and Participation emphasis area have been active in 2021! Carlyn Ellison (left) served as President-Elect of the Beta Upsilon Chapter of Delta Omega (public health honor society), and Sharon Medina represented the department on the PHHP Research Committee student sub-committee. PhD students showcased their work during the PHHP Research Day (Ellison, Fiorella Guerro, Mary

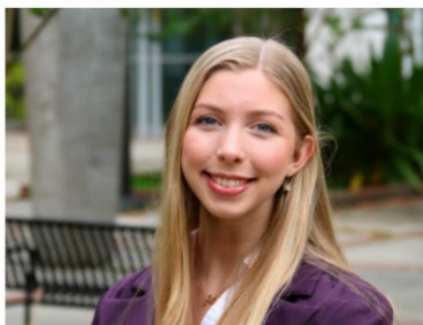


Jeghers, Jaewon Kang, Sharon Mburu, Medina), and internationally at the Asian Conference on Therapeutic Science (Kang) and the Pacific Rim International Conference On Disability & Diversity (Guerrero).

UFOT Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) Receives 2021 Chapter of the Year Award

UF Gator COTAD consists of doctor of occupational therapy (OT) and pre-OT undergraduate students and addresses issues surrounding diversity and inclusion in the field of OT. This honor was the result of their work over the past year, including developing and implementing a Mentorship Program for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), as well as holding multiple events highlighting struggles faced by marginalized groups, supporting the LGBTQIA+ community, presenting a panel discussion entitled “Addressing Racism and Prejudice through the Lens of Occupational Therapy”, and holding workshops on learning medical terms in Spanish, Creole, and American Sign Language.

For the full story, please visit: <https://ot.php.ufl.edu/2021/05/06/gator-cotad-receives-national-chapter-of-the-year-award-for-2021/>



Starting at the top left and progressing clockwise are the COTAD 2020-2021 Board members and faculty advisor: Angelica Rodriguez (President), Bobi Mason (Vice President), Rachel Stacy (Secretary), Abigail Donofrio (PR Director), Consuelo Kreider (Faculty Advisor), Rachel Pohl (Events Director), Gloria Cesar (COTAD liaison, and Lindsy Mathew (Treasurer)

Occupational Therapy Students Receive Scholarships in 2020-2021 Academic Year

The Doctor of Occupational Therapy program recognized multiple students for academic and professional achievement in the 2020-2021 academic year. The Department congratulates the following scholarship award recipients: Natalie Baumgarten (Alice C. Jantzen Fellowship), Kara Senn (Margaret Clare Shoemyen Graduate Fund), Min Song (The Judie Pink-Goldin Award), Tiffany Henderson (Jan Z. Olsen OT Scholarship Fund), Jamie Chavez (Jan Z. Olsen OT Scholarship Fund), Amber Green (Jan Z. Olsen OT Scholarship Fund), Daniela Moreira (Jan Z. Olsen OT Scholarship Fund), Sarah Mairs (The Kay Walker Fund Award), and Rachel Stacy (The Florida Elks Club Scholarship).



UFOT Academic Programs

OTD Students Return to Campus Full-Time after Remote and Hybrid Learning

Over one year following the beginning of the public health emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic, doctor of occupational therapy students are back in the classroom full-time. The Class of 2023 began the program taking classes mostly on Zoom with in-person anatomy labs in the Fall of 2020. By the Spring of 2021, students were offered the option of attending class in-person or via Zoom with neuroanatomy and kinesiology labs in person. This summer, students are back on-campus for all classes, with masks now optional and the physical distancing requirement removed by the end of June. The consensus is that students and faculty are happy to be back and ready to fully engage in campus life. Welcome back, Gator OTs!



2021 OTD Class, our Inaugural Cohort, Embarks on Their Capstone Experience

The Capstone is a 14-week full-time experience with an associated project. A few examples of capstone projects for the class of 2021 includes: a Golf Cart Fit safety event in conjunction with UF Health The Villages Rehab; family training in a NICU; Hands to Love teen camp; UF SmartDriver Rehab with a focus on managing a clinic; and developing home program videos for a hand clinic.

For further information, please reach out to Linda Struckmeyer, Capstone Coordinator, at lstruckmeyer@phhp.ufl.edu.



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 Summer of 2022. 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 their lifespan.

[Apply Now!](#)

Fieldwork Updates

The UFOT's fieldwork program successfully navigated through this past year's challenges with COVID-19. Many fieldwork sites graciously agreed to fieldwork timeline changes, supervising additional students, and conducting site visits on Zoom or by



phone. UF OTD students weathered the many site cancellations and uncertainty with grace and flexibility. The fieldwork program offered many learning opportunities including an online fieldwork educator course attended by over 150 fieldwork participants and an online Speed Dating Event where UFOT students met virtually with clinicians in the field. The fieldwork program also added four new psychosocial Level 1 fieldwork placements for summer 2021.

If you are interested in becoming a fieldwork supervisor, please contact hhorwitz@phhp.ufl.edu.



The Doctor of Occupational Therapy program completed a successful onsite review with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) on July 12-14. Faculty, administrators, students, fieldwork educators, and capstone mentors met with the ACOTE review team to discuss the program. Final accreditation decisions will be made at the next ACOTE meeting on August 6-8, 2021.

UFOT New Grants

STRIDE Phase II Extension: Barriers & Facilitators of People with Disabilities in Accepting & Adopting Autonomous Shared Mobility Services (Project A5)

Dr. Sherrilene Classen of the University of Florida and her team of researchers are assessing how People with Disabilities (PwDs) feel when interacting with autonomous vehicle (AVs) technology. Understanding what helps or limits PwDs to accept AVs is important for accepting such technologies. [Read more](#)

ORH: Promoting Veteran Centric Rural Transportation Options via Automated Shuttle Exposure

Roughly 35.3 percent of Veterans reside in remote or extremely rural locations, where health and community services are hard to reach. Accessible, convenient, acceptable, economical, and flexible transportation is particularly scarce in rural locations. Autonomous shuttles (AS)—promise significant health and societal benefits to people who lack access to adequate transportation; nevertheless, little is known regarding Veterans' experiences with, acceptance of, and adoption of AS technologies.

Similarly, transportation companies have not universally implemented AS transit choices for rural Veterans, and policies are insufficient in providing Veterans with fair access to

AS. This project will expose Veterans, living in rural areas, to AS technology and subsequently collect their pre and post AS experiences. Through collaboration with other transportation service providers and the VA, this study, lead by Dr. Sherrilene Classen and her team (Dr. Justin Mason, Dr. Nichole Stetten, and Isabelle Wandenkolk) will contribute to the understanding and implementation of a Veteran-centric transportation system for optimal societal integration of mobility vulnerable Veterans.

UFOT Faculty Publications

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Hwang, I.-T. *, **Kramer, J. M.**, Cohn, E. S., & Barnes, L. L. (2020). Asian immigrant

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Conferences

UFOT Department Attends 2021 AOTA INSPIRE Conference

The UF OT Department virtually attended the American Occupational Therapy Association INSPIRE Conference in April 2021. Conference events included educational workshops, poster sessions, and spotlight speakers. Several UFOT faculty and students presented virtually on occupational therapy topics spanning the lifespan. Participants had opportunities to engage with speakers, meet other attendees in virtual booths and engage in alumni events. Dr. Christine Myers was honored on the AOTE Roster of Fellows for Exemplary Leadership: Early Childhood and Interprofessional Education and Dr. Jessica Kramer was honored with the AOTF Mid-Career Research Excellence Award.

UF OT Faculty, Postdoc, and PhD Students attend the OT Summit of Scholars

A delegation of two faculty (Drs. Kramer and Liu), a post-doctoral associate, and four PhD students attended the 9th Annual OT Summit of Scholars. The Summit brought together top OT researchers to share research and formulate innovative ideas to advance the field. PhD students Fiorella Guerrero, Benedict Hwangbo, Sharon Mburu, Sharon Medina, and postdoc Dr. Robin Wei presented posters and received mentorship from senior scholars. Dr. Kramer served as a mentor for a parallel event, the 5th Annual AOTA/AOTF Summer Institute for Future Scientists, which identifies entry-level scientists and connects them with mentors in the scientific community.



From left: Fiorella Guerrero, Dr. Jessica Kramer, Sharon Medina, Dr. CJ Liu, Sharon Mburu, and Dr. Robin Wei (not pictured: Benedict Hwangbo)

Clinical Services

Occupational Therapy Specialty Clinic



**Equal Access
Clinic Network**

A Family of Patient-Centered Free Clinics

The Occupational Therapy Equal Access Clinic is a student-run faculty facilitated clinic. The OT EAC board, under the guidance of Dr. Perna Poojary, started the telehealth wing of the clinic. The students ironed out logistical details and provided rehabilitation services to members in the community who did not have access to services due to the pandemic, allowing them to be maximally safe and have an improved quality of life for the clients and caregivers.

Alumni

National Occupational Therapy Month

#OTMONTH

April is National Occupational Therapy Month!

The UF College of PHHP and the Great Department of Occupational Therapy are celebrating by spotlighting OT alumni who invest in the department and the profession as clinical Fieldwork Educators and Capstone Mentors. Thank you!

VIEW UFOT ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS →

Laura Tuck, MOT 2012 and Zach Pindar, MOT 2017

OT PRACTITIONER SPOTLIGHTS

#OTMONTH

Laura Tuck

MOT '12

Zach Pindar

MOT '17

UF

College of Public Health & Health Professions

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

The UF College of PHHP and the Great Department of Occupational Therapy celebrated National Occupational Therapy Month by spotlighting alumni who invest in the department and the profession as clinical fieldwork educators and capstone mentors. Seventeen alumni, ranging from the class of 1999 to the class of 2018, were identified by faculty to share a favorite occupation, a Gator chomp photo, and a personal statement on why they love occupational therapy. Spotlitged Gator OTs represented nine clinical practice areas, four states, two countries, and seventeen different organizations. Alumni bio sketches were showcased throughout the month of April on the [PHHP Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#) and can be found on the [UF Department of Occupational Therapy website](#). #OTMONTH.

Outstanding Alumni for 2021

A headshot of Nicole Tester, a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, smiling.

Outstanding Junior Alumni, Nicole Tester, obtained her PhD in Neuroscience in 2006 and Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) in 2016 from the University of Florida. Her experiences in clinical research led her to pursue her MOT. As a student, she earned national recognition from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation. Upon graduation, Nicole joined UF Health Rehab at the Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases. She currently is a Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Certified Specialist and the Institute’s lead OT for MS. She has a longstanding relationship with UF’s OT Department

Christine Myers, a woman with brown hair, smiling and holding a framed certificate that reads "ROSTER OF FELLOWS Christine Myers, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA". She is standing outdoors in front of a tree.

Outstanding Senior Alumni, Christine Myers, PhD, OTR/L is a clinical associate professor in the University of Florida’s Department of Occupational Therapy and Doctor of Occupational Therapy program director. She currently serves as director of a federally-funded interprofessional training grant for occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology students. She has co-authored multiple book chapters, peer-reviewed articles, and consumer publications in the area of early intervention and early childhood transitions. In recognition of her work in interprofessional education and

through her involvement with their students. This partnership led to MS Foundation funding for the development of community resources for MS. She currently is collaborating with UF OT faculty and students to cultivate student interest in OT research and develop evidence-based interventions for clinic implementation in Parkinson’s Disease. She has been awarded various small grants to help grow the rehab department’s clinic resources.

early childhood, she was honored as a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and Distinguished Scholar Fellow of the National Academies of Practice in Occupational Therapy. Dr. Myers has been actively involved in the AOTA for over 15 years, serving on the Representative Assembly, the leadership team for the Academic Education Special Interest Section, and a reviewer for the American Journal of Occupational Therapy, receiving the Outstanding Reviewer Award in 2021.



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