When Sarah Gales needs information from the Web, she does what everybody else does—she logs on and browses. The technology she uses, though, is a little different. A program called JAWS reads whatever is on the screen for her in a rapid dictation that to most ears would sound like gibberish.

After a six-year academic career at Colorado State, Gales, who has been blind since birth, knows her way around the Internet as well as she knows the assistive technology available at locations throughout campus. On some days, accompanied by Ricky, her handsome yellow Labrador, she’ll sit in the Electronic Information Center in Morgan Library and cruise the Web while the JAWS speech synthesizer chatters away. The keyboard she uses looks like any other, with the exception of a long, narrow strip at the front that uses “refreshable Braille”—small columns about the size of pencil tips that pop up from the keyboard and spell out whatever text is on the screen. Eighty cells across the strip can display 80 continuously changing characters to read new text.

Gales, who was born in Santa Cruz, California, came to Colorado State to study equine science. She holds a bachelor’s in that concentration and is enrolled in the agricultural extension education masters program. Currently Sarah is finishing up her master’s thesis and beginning her career search.

The Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC), part of the OT Department, has been behind the computer adaptations for Sarah. “The ATRC has contributed greatly to my academic success. Having a disability means finding different ways to accomplish tasks and using AT is one of those many ways,” said Gales.

“The ATRC meets all of the AT needs of the campus at large,” said Marla Roll, M.S., OTR, Director. “The center is known for its free services to students with disabilities, offering needs assessments, information and training on a wide range of specialized, assistive resources available on campus.” What may not be as well known is that the center provides AT-based consultation and education to Colorado State faculty and staff to support students and employees with disabilities.

The ATRC also serves as a training ground for CSU OT students. Marla lectures and teaches AT labs in a number of OT classes and as well regularly takes fieldwork students. “The ATRC is an asset to the OT Department and CSU,” said Dr. Jodie Hanzlik, Department Head. “It strengthens the OT program and the work and educational experience for students, faculty and staff throughout the university. Just as importantly, it also helps to train future OTs to effectively utilize AT.”
Welcome to the annual newsletter of the Occupational Therapy Department. I am pleased to tell you about the department's many accomplishments in this edition. We are particularly proud to share with you ACOTE's accreditation summary review of our program.

Program Strengths:

- The Dean of the College of Applied Human Sciences is commended for her consistent support and high regard for this program. Her collaborative work with the department head and faculty has created an environment which has facilitated the continuing success of this highly acclaimed program.

- The department head is an exemplary leader who has been instrumental in the creation of a highly productive community of scholars in the occupational therapy program as well as guiding the development of a highly innovative and contemporary curriculum. She is well respected and valued by the university administration, her colleagues, students, and the professional community.

- The faculty are gifted educators and scholars who have made a major impact on the professional development of their students as well as the local, national, and international professional community. They have created, as a team, a curriculum of distinction which is infused with a dynamic, collaborative teaching and learning environment designed to prepare students for roles as practitioners, leaders, and researchers. The university has recognized the outstanding scholarly contributions of the department by designating it a Program of Research and Scholarly Excellence, one of only a few programs having the distinction at the institution.

- The department head and faculty are congratulated for the highly competitive Program of Excellence Award awarded by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education which, with its substantial financial grant, promises to further enhance the teaching and learning environment, particularly in the area of technology and internet-based teaching and learning.

- The fieldwork coordinators are recognized for their collaborative approach with fieldwork educators who view each of them as immediately responsive to their needs as supervisors and the needs of the fieldwork students. They each demonstrate a high degree of commitment to ensure a wide range of learning opportunities through many high quality level two fieldwork placements, including diverse national and international settings.

- The fieldwork educators are recognized for their continuous commitment to this program by providing significant learning opportunities to students in spite of increasing demands of the clinical environment on their time and energy.

- Recent graduates clearly demonstrate the ability to proactively and critically evaluate potential employment settings based on their personal and professional philosophy, thus making effective and meaningful decisions about their career paths. They are self-assured in being able to integrate theory and philosophy with practice.

- The students enthusiastically embrace the tenets of contemporary occupational therapy theory and philosophy and are able to articulate and act on these ideas in both their academic and fieldwork activities. They possess exceptional potential for development as clinicians, scholars, and leaders in the field.

- The three special centers within the department, including the Assistive Technology Resource Center, the Center for Community Participation, and the Assessment of Motor and Process Skills Project (AMPS), have provided an outstanding community service as well as a significant opportunity for collaborative learning among faculty and students. The research outcomes generated from these programs have been shared with the professional community on a national and international venue as well, providing significant contributions to the profession as a whole.

- The resources of the library clearly support graduate level education as students have direct access to an expansive collection of related literature as well as electronic accessibility through a highly responsive interlibrary acquisition service that ensures efficient delivery of needed periodicals, books, and other reference materials.
Suggestions:

- Students are provided opportunities for observing various assistive technology devices. It is suggested that this experience would be enhanced with inclusion of more hands-on experiences and problem solving applications.

- While the program has ample fieldwork sites available, the phasing out of the undergraduate program has resulted in fewer numbers of students. It is suggested that the department review and archive contracts that have not been selected by students for affiliations in recent years. This may reduce the need for frequent contract renewals and thus provide increasing opportunity to enhance the current effort to collaborate with fieldwork educators.

In response to the suggestions, the OT Department has made the following changes:

- Five classes have infused a module of assistive technology into the course content. Additionally, a web-CT based module on assistive technology is being developed for students to access as of Spring 2003.

- The Fieldwork Coordinator has developed a system for phasing out fieldwork sites that was implemented Spring 2002. Efforts to collaborate more frequently with fieldwork educators have been initiated through web-based technology.

I look forward to sharing news about our department in upcoming issues. Remember to visit our website at www.caahs.colostate.edu/OT or stop by to see us when you can. We all hope to see and hear from you soon.

Sincerely, on Behalf of the Faculty, Staff, and Students,

Jodie Reddit
PhD, OTR, FAOTA
Professor and Head

RECOGNITION

Dr. Anita Bundy, OTR, former professor, co-edited Sensory Integration: Theory and Practice (F. A. Davis, 2002) with S. Lane and E. Murray. Anita now collaborates with the department as an affiliate faculty. She is consulting on a number of OT research projects.

Ms. Barbara Borg, M.A., OTR, professor, co-authored Psychosocial Occupational Therapy: Core for Occupation-Based Practice (Slack, Inc. 2001) with Mary Anne Bruce. Barbara teaches the psychosocial courses within the CSU curriculum and mentors students interested in working with people with mental disabilities.

Ms. Patty Stutz-Tanenbaum, M.S., OTR, Fieldwork Coordinator, was awarded the College of Applied Human Science’s Advising Excellence Award in the Spring 2002. Patty has organized training sessions in January and March for the new AOTA student FW evaluation. Call 970-491-6254 for information.

Dr. Lucy Miller, OTR, affiliate faculty, presented the keynote address, Evidence-Based OT Practice, at the state OT Conference. Contact Lucy at lucymiller@frii.com if you are interested in assisting her to collect data for a new assessment.
NEW AGREEMENT PAVES THE WAY FOR JAPANESE EXCHANGE

Dr. Peter Nichols, CSU Provost, and Dr. Shozo Nakamura of Yamagata Prefectural University, Japan, sign an exchange agreement.

The OT Departments of CSU and Yamagata Prefectural University of Health Science (YPUHS) in Yamagata, Japan signed an agreement recognizing their official academic relationship in a ceremony Spring 2002 at CSU. It is hoped that the agreement will pave the way for student and faculty visits between the two countries, building new research relationships and friendships as well as mutually enhancing our understanding of each other’s culture. Mr. Manabu Sasaki, OTR, recently completed a sabbatical in the OT Department at CSU. His research compared the OT educational programs between CSU and YPUHS.

ALUMNI CORNER

Jamie Morris, OTR, (1999) has been working on the Acute Brain Injury Unit at Mediplex Specialty Hospital in Thornton, CO for 2.5 years.

Lorie Blades, OTR, (2000) works at an Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital in Missoula, Montana. Lorie recently became engaged and will be married in August.

Tara Carlson (Decklever), OTR, (2000) is working as a pediatric OT at the Denver Children’s Hospital.

Elizabeth Crowder, OTR, (2000) has just been hired full-time on the Rehab Unit at Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs. Elizabeth currently volunteers as a sidewalkers at Pikes Peak Therapeutic Riding Center.

Amy King, OTR, (2000) has been working at Howard Head Sports Medicine Center and Vail Valley Medical Center in hand therapy. Amy also works for 2 home health agencies in Summit County and Leadville, Colorado.

Denell Powers, OTR, (2000) works at the Children’s Hospital Outpatient Clinic in Littleton, Colorado. She works with children who have SI dysfunction, feeding difficulties and developmental delays.

Do you have news that you would like to share with fellow students and faculty members? Send us an e-mail at ball@cahs.colostate.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE OT DEPARTMENT’S 1ST ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The 1st Annual OT Research Symposium was held Spring 2002. Research posters were submitted by all graduate and undergraduate students. The posters were judged by OTRs from the community, as well as by the CSU OT faculty. They were rated on their general appearance, accuracy of information, methodology used to investigate the research, and the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data presented. Long Qi, M.D., received the Graduate First Place Research Award for his poster, “The Effect of Intervention on Playfulness in Children with Sensory Modulation Dysfunction.” Dr. Anita Bundy served as his major advisor. April Fuller and Camilla Thomaz received the Undergraduate First Place Research Award for their poster, “Occupational Therapy with the Homeless.” Dr. Patti Davies served as their major advisor. In addition, many of the posters received Honorable Mention. Those posters will be displayed at the Colorado OT Association Annual Conference.

Dr. Claudia Osborn was the invited Keynote Speaker for the Symposium. Dr. Osborn’s book “Over My Head: A Doctor’s Own Story of Head Injury From the Inside Looking Out,” tells what it is like to live with a brain injury and gives her perceptions of the life-long rehabilitation process. Dr. Osborn’s humorous presentation on this very serious subject was an inspiration to all who attended.

Culminating the day-long event was a book-signing by Dr. Osborn and a reception designed to celebrate and honor the important research being completed by students and faculty in the OT Department.
1.6 Million Program of Excellence Grant Supports Student Learning through Technology

We are excited to report that the OT Department is home to a brand new “virtual” laptop computer lab. Under the direction of Karen Spencer, Ph.D., OTR, the lab has become an integral part of the learning experience for our students. The computers operate off a wireless network in the OT building. The laptops, loaded with multimedia software, provide students with many new and interesting learning opportunities.

Craig Spooner, M.S., the departmental tech coordinator, has worked diligently to create exciting new avenues to support instruction within the program. Craig has consulted closely with faculty in order to improve student access to technology such as digitized video, computer-based bulletin boards and chat rooms.

In addition to the technology enhancements, other program improvements and innovations will be funded through our grant over the next four years. We have 2 current projects that will be completed in Summer 2003. The Adaptive Garden, which will be located on the south side of the building, will serve as a showcase for the community. Features such as raised beds and vertical wall plantings will enable older adults and people with disabilities to explore adaptations that work for them. OT students will assess and provide recommendations to clients or agencies interested in the concept of adaptive gardening.

The first floor classrooms will be transformed into state-of-the-art laboratory space that will address the health care needs for the 21st century within a universal design framework. Come visit next fall to see all of our changes!

Occupational Therapy Fund Drive

Yes, I’d like to support the continued excellence of the Occupational Therapy Department!

Name: ______________________________________ E-mail address: ____________________________

Address: ___________________________________ Phone: _______________________________

☐ This gift is from me. ☐ This gift is from my spouse and me. Spouse’s name: ___________________

Please apply my/our gift:

☐ OT Renovation Fund (44733)

☐ Wanda Mayberry Scholarship Fund (51515)

Payment Options:

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Send payment to: Colorado State University Foundation, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Collins, CO 80522-1870

51515/H0309
“Community Readiness and Rehabilitation Services in Rural Areas for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injuries” is a research project that examines health care services in local communities for persons with traumatic brain injury. Pat Sample, Ph.D., is the project director. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has funded this project over a three year period for $150,000. Project staff are interviewing health care service providers in rural Colorado and Wyoming communities to determine how “ready” the communities are to assist persons with TBI as they seek to access services to re-enter their home towns. Previous research has shown that persons with TBI in rural areas are at high risk for unemployment, lack of support services, and inappropriate placement in nursing homes. This project seeks to work with communities through phone interviews and on-site focus groups so that they can identify, coordinate, and improve their systems of care for persons with TBI.

Three OT graduate students, Andrea Buus, Heather Freitag, and Danielle Harad, are serving as research assistants on this project in order to partially fulfill their program research requirements. All students participate in faculty research projects over their four semesters on campus.

All work and no play is no way to live. For most of us, having fun in our social lives helps to make work more interesting and enjoyable, and helps us to maintain balanced lifestyles. But for many individuals with disabilities, being able to participate in recreational activities—or even having a social life—is quite challenging. As a result, their lives may be completely about going to work and going home, with the result being loneliness and isolation.

The OT Department’s Center for Community Participation (CCP) was awarded a three year $315,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, to address the support needs of individuals with disabilities who want to participate in recreational activities. Through this innovative project, entitled Recreation Works, CCP in partnership with the City of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation Department (Adaptive Recreation Opportunities Program) work together to connect OT students and other CSU students with individuals with disabilities. The students provide support and encouragement as individuals with disabilities participate in recreational activities. Cathy Schelly, M.S., OTR, Director of CCP is the principal investigator.
Due to New Start support, Cody Pore is off to a great year.

The New Start Program at the Center for Community Participation (CCP) is assisting many elementary, junior high and high school students with acquired brain injuries as they transition into new grade levels this school year. A part of the Occupational Therapy Department, CCP’s New Start Program has received funding from the U. S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs in the amount of $626,727 to provide consultation services in regional school districts, all to promote successful educational experiences for students with acquired brain injuries (ABI). With the support and guidance provided by New Start staff, students with ABI, their teachers, and their parents are coming together to put in place the accommodations, adaptations and support strategies that will allow them to do well in school. Cathy Schelly, M.S., OTR, Director of CCP is the principal investigator.

Cody Pore of Wellington is one such student. Cody sustained his injury as a preshooler in a pedestrian-auto accident. Cody not only graduated to junior high this year, but also moved to a new community and school district. Cody’s new school is Wellington Junior High where the New Start staff has worked closely with Cody, his family and school personnel to create a climate that has supported Cody’s educational needs. Through teamwork, Cody is off to a “new start” and a great year.

Graduate student assists Dr. Patti Davies, right, connect the electric cap to the computer.

“One day I went to get my brainwaves measured. It was the most scientific thing I ever did. It was cool!”

This is a typical comment Dr. Patti Davies has received from the youth and young adults who have participated in her research project, “Cognitive Event-Related Potentials and Brain Maturation Participants”, funded by National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research in the amount of $410,695. At the completion of the project, data will be collected on over 200 participants, 7 to 25 years of age, in order to examine the relationship of changes or growth of the brain structures with the development of complex thinking skills (i.e., problem solving and remembering several things at the same time). The goal of this research project is to provide a better understanding of the underlying brain mechanisms that account for the tremendous increase in thinking skills that occurs from childhood to young adulthood. In the past year, Dr. Davies and OT graduate students and colleagues working in her lab have collected data on over 127 youth and young adults. Dr. Davies is still looking for volunteers. She will continue gathering data from more children within each age group. For more information visit the project’s web site at http://brainwaves.colostate.edu.
Brenda Merritt, M.S., OTR will soon be graduating with an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Education and Human Resources with an emphasis in OT. Anne Fisher, Ph.D., OTR, serves as Brenda’s major advisor. Her dissertation research will explore the predictive validity of the Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS). More specifically Brenda will study whether the AMPS can assist in predicting the level of care that one likely needs to live in the community.

Brenda’s program of study has been tailored to match her interests and long term goals. “The coursework is rigorous and very challenging. It is aimed to produce critical thinkers. The teaching assistant opportunities in the OT Department have enhanced my teaching skills. I feel like the program has addressed my individual academic goals and learning styles,” said Merritt. Brenda’s long term goal is to teach and conduct research in a university setting.

For further information regarding the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. contact Dr. Pat Sample at (970) 491-1996 or sample@cahs.colostate.edu.

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