On the Shoulders of Giants

In the grand Occupational Therapy Building at Colorado State University, on the historic oak-lined Oval, is a gallery of former heads of the Department of Occupational Therapy (CSU-OT). It’s an impressive gallery! Pictured there is Helen Rea, the first Director in 1946. There is also Marjorie Ball, who next led the department for 21 years, followed by Mary Garfield, and Alice Jantzen, who promoted academic occupational therapy in her 1973 Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture. There is Elnora (Ellie) Gilfoyle, another Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecturer who was also president of the American Occupational Therapy Association and dean of the College of Applied Human Sciences. There is Peggy Short DeGraff, former editor of the Occupational Therapy Journal of Research, and (though not yet pictured), Jodie Hanzlik. During Jodie’s 10 years, CSU-OT was recognized as:

- A top 10 program nationally by US News & World Report;
- A Program of Excellence by the state of Colorado; and
- A Program of Research and Scholarly Excellence by Colorado State University.

Let me of course also mention other advocates of the department such as Wanda Mayberry, Louise Wendt White, Jeffrey Gliner, and Karen Spencer who kept things growing as acting department heads during times of transition.

Engraved in the marble not far from the historic Oval is, fittingly, this famous quote of Sir Isaac Newton’s: “If I have seen further than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.” Clearly, I now stand on the shoulders of giants! In the hopes of seeing further, I’ve been mining the wisdom that underlies CSU-OT’s 60-plus years of excellence.

That wisdom is best revealed through the department’s core organizational values. Recently, faculty and staff identified seven core values that explain why CSU-OT has been – and remains – such a great place to study, work and grow. Those values are collaboration, excellence, honesty, innovation, respect, service, and vision.

Guided by these values, plus the personal missions of each faculty and staff member, we also developed a new mission for the department.

That mission is for CSU-OT to be a magnet that attracts and grows future leaders of occupational therapy in the state, nation, and world through exemplary integrated programs of education, research, and community outreach and service that meet real-world occupational needs.

To achieve this mission, we are building on previous successes in integrating student learning with exemplary programs of research and community outreach and service (page 3). We are also embarking on promising new initiatives (pages 4-6), including:

(See Shoulders on Page 3)
New Faces

An experienced researcher, William Gavin, Ph.D., was recently appointed to a research position within the department. In this role he holds a faculty appointment as associate professor and supports faculty in their research, outreach, and service efforts. He also serves as the director of the Brainwaves Research Laboratory.

Since receiving his doctorate degree in Experimental Psychology at the University of Miami, he has been conducting research on a variety of topics related to child development. His early research focused primarily on speech and language development in infants and toddlers. More recently, in collaboration with Patricia Davies, he has developed a program of research on sensory processing and cognitive development in children and adolescents utilizing electroencephalography (EEG) and event-related potentials (ERPs) methodologies.

Barb Hooper, Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA is an assistant professor in the department. Her primary research and scholarship interests focus on transformative education. Within this context, her scholarship has addressed the elements of subject-centered teaching, transformative learning as a basis for faculty development, the relationship between teaching and the evolution of knowledge in occupational therapy, occupational therapy curriculum, and the relationship between teaching and faculty biographical experiences.

Hooper was named to the Roster of Fellows at the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) for her work in transformative graduate education. Currently she is director of the Center for Occupational Therapy Education @ CSU. Other projects include her work on the AOTA Model Curriculum Committee and AOTA Fieldwork Educator Credentialing Committee.

Hooper received her degree in occupational therapy from the Medical College of Georgia, and her master’s degree in occupational therapy from Western Michigan University. She completed her doctoral degree in Higher Education, Adult & Lifelong Learning at Michigan State University.

Debi Krogh-Michna graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration/Finance from Regis University in 2001. Krogh-Michna came to Colorado State in July 2008 and is the administrative assistant for the fieldwork education unit of the OT department. She advises students and schedules Level I and Level II fieldwork placements; manages records including electronic assessments, database, and RamCT; and initiates and processes contracts with fieldwork sites.

Wendy Wood became an occupational therapist in 1975. While first drawn to working with children, Wood gravitated to adult rehabilitation and soon thereafter, practice with frail elders. Wood returned to school and earned a master’s degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Southern California in 1988, followed by a Ph.D. in Occupational Science in 1995. Her doctoral dissertation examined relationships among environmental opportunities for occupation and the psychological well-being of zoo chimpanzees. Wood joined the faculty in the Division of Occupational Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1995. Her program of research transitioned to the study of environmental influences on the everyday quality of life of people with dementia. From 2005-2008, Wood was an associate professor in Occupational Therapy and a research associate professor in Geriatrics at the University of New Mexico, as well as a part-time occupational therapist at Presbyterian Home Health Services in Albuquerque, N.M. Wood has served as an associate editor of the American Journal of Occupational Therapy since 2004. She has authored more than 40 articles and chapters in refereed publications, and has extensively presented her work at scientific meetings nationally and internationally.
Service Learning Project Benefits Professor and Students

When Dan Rudolph contacted the Occupational Therapy Department at Colorado State University early in the spring semester, he was looking for solutions. As a professor of mathematics, Rudolph needed strategies to help him teach his mathematics course despite effects from a slowly progressing motor neuron disease. Effective teaching, according to Rudolph, requires a classroom environment where the teacher can connect directly with students, closely monitor their learning, and adjust the teaching-learning process as needed. When the pieces are in place, Rudolph describes his teaching as “relaxed and fun – teaching about stuff I love and working with people who want to learn.”

Two second-year occupational therapy students teamed up with Rudolph to find a way for him to teach his course more effectively. The students were participating in a class service-learning project closely supported by Assistant Professor Karen Atler. The Technology Resource Center also played a key role.

The student team met with Rudolph and observed him in his classroom to understand his teaching-related activities, teaching style, and contextual factors such as classroom layout and resources. They also learned about his capabilities, preferences, and priorities – all essential in shaping OT services.

Observation revealed that Rudolph was struggling to manage multiple teaching activities while in the classroom. Of particular concern was the amount of time and energy it took to use the whiteboard, a task that required one arm to write and one arm to support and stabilize. As a result, he could not hold his lecture notes and he lost valuable eye contact with his students.

The OT student team quickly focused on how to capitalize on Rudolph’s strengths while compensating for limitations. This led to an exploration of different types of assistive technologies resulting in the selection of a tablet computer. This small, lightweight device completely replaced the whiteboard for Rudolph. With the tablet computer resting on his lap, he can sit at the front of the classroom facing his students. He uses a stylus to write on the computer “tablet.” His handwritten words and formulas are then projected from the tablet onto a large screen at the front of the classroom for students to read. A significant advantage of the tablet computer for his students is the capacity for Rudolph to save everything written during class and electronically post these notes for students.

Before the end of the semester, Rudolph had reclaimed his role as a skilled teacher. He reported a significant decrease in stress for himself and his students. Once again, teaching had become fun! The OT students similarly benefited from this experience and the opportunity to conduct systematic OT assessment, planning, intervention, and outcome measurement. Directly helping an accomplished faculty member perform a valued and essential role was a powerful form of learning. Rudolph proved to be not only a teacher of mathematics, but also an extraordinary teacher of occupational therapy.

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Brain Activity Study Examines Neurodevelopmental Disorders

The Brainwaves Research Laboratory, directed by Patti Davies and Bill Gavin, has several ongoing research projects funded by the National Institutes of Health and Wallace Research Foundation. Data from 60 children and 30 adults in the Reliability of Cognitive ERPs in Children and Adults study are being analyzed to determine if measures of brain activity relate to performance on everyday tasks that require attention and are reliable in children and adults. This information has clinical application related to understanding mechanisms underlying neurodevelopmental disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Asperger’s Syndrome and may potentially help guide intervention strategies.

Two other studies are investigating sensory processing in children with and without disorders. The goal is to determine if measures of brain activity or of behavioral performance (cognitive and motor assessments) best distinguish between children with sensory processing disorder (SPD) and those without disorders. In addition, these projects are examining which measures may be more valid and reliable to use in treatment effectiveness studies. Through funding from the Department of Occupational Therapy, Davies and Gavin are also expanding their data collection to include children with ADHD and high functioning autism/Asperger’s syndrome to determine if the measures that are being used can distinguish children with ADHD, Asperger’s and SPD.

Universal Design Strategies to be Implemented in Campus Courses

The Center for Community Partnerships, in close collaboration with the Assistive Technology Resource Center and Occupational Therapy Department faculty, has been awarded $1,029,787 from the U.S. Department of Education to implement ACCESS II: Persistence in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities project. With Cathy Schelly as the principal investigator and Patti Davies as the co-principal investigator, ACCESS II will build on preliminary, successful implementation and dissemination of universal design for learning (UDL) principles and strategies for creating inclusive classroom instruction and accessible course materials central to UDL. Through ACCESS II, a student self-advocacy initiative will also be implemented to enhance UDL effectiveness. ACCESS II research activities will measure student outcomes and perceptions before, during, and after UDL implementation in targeted gateway courses at Colorado State.

New Stroke Intervention Methods Being Developed

Under the direction of Matt Malcolm, the NeuroRehabilitation Research Laboratory (NRRL) is currently developing and evaluating novel interventions for individuals who have sustained a stroke. Additionally, NRRL is examining some of the mechanisms that underlie stroke recovery – for example, neurophysiological changes that occur during rehabilitation. Current projects in NRRL include:

Save the Date:
1st Annual Institute of the Center for Occupational Therapy Education @ CSU
Designing Graduate Courses for Transformative Learning
June 12-15, 2009
New Initiatives

Introducing the Center for Occupational Therapy Education @ CSU

The Center for Occupational Therapy Education @ CSU’s mission is to promote excellence in teaching effectiveness, curriculum design, and educational research in order to graduate therapists who enhance the well-being of all people by maximizing their participation in everyday activity. Under the direction of Barb Hooper, the Center will address two broad areas of concern: educational research and faculty development. The educational research arm of the Center will develop and research a model for teaching, learning, and curriculum development that is situated in occupational therapy educational practice and conduct studies of educational practices in the profession. The faculty development arm of the Center will sponsor institutes and provide resources to promote theory-driven and evidenced-based educational practices in order to graduate therapists who meet the occupational needs of society.

To learn more about the center’s first annual institute, Designing Graduate Courses for Transformative Learning, June 12-15, 2009, visit our website at http://www.cote.cahs.colostate.edu.

Department Collaborates with the Namaqua Center

The Department of Occupational Therapy is partnering with the Namaqua Center on their recently awarded $76,900 grant from the Colorado Health Foundation. The Namaqua Center is part of Larimer County’s network of mental health service providers and has a specific focus on meeting the needs of children who have severe emotional and behavioral challenges. Namaqua’s services include comprehensive mental health treatment, residential and day treatment, special education, outpatient services and coordinated primary health, oral health, and vision care.

A portion of the Colorado Health Foundation grant will support OT faculty and student involvement in the design and construction of new play environments and play activities for the children at Namaqua. Newly developed play environments and activities will then be used by Colorado State OT students and Namaqua staff to engage children in a variety of developmentally appropriate play activities that foster physical, social, and emotional development, provide opportunities for success, and support each child’s recovery from severe abuse, neglect, or trauma. Karen Spencer is the faculty coordinator for the grant.

• rTMS as an Adjunct to Constraint-induced Therapy: a randomized controlled trial. This trial is evaluating the therapeutic efficacy of repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) in combination with constraint-induced movement therapy.

• Examining Parameters of Constraint-Induced Therapy. This multicenter clinical trial with the University of Florida and University of South Carolina is evaluating new methods for delivering constraint induced movement therapy to individuals post-stroke.

• Remote In-home Client Monitoring. This interdisciplinary project between Colorado State’s Department of Occupational Therapy and the School of Biomedical Engineering is developing the technology and procedures for remotely monitoring activity patterns in individuals with stroke.

Save the Date:
8th Annual Research Symposium
Translating Research to Practice
April 29, 2009
NEW START: Colorado State OT and Wounded Warriors

Colorado State University’s Department of Occupational Therapy has received $7,000 to support the feasibility phase of the NEW START project. Cathy Schelly and Karen Spencer are the faculty coordinators. NEW START, as planned, will assist former U.S. military personnel who are returning to their home communities after sustaining life-changing injuries during military service in Iraq, Afghanistan, or other parts of the world. The anticipated NEW START partners include Colorado State University’s Office of Outreach and Strategic Partnerships as well as the local communities where former military personnel are working to rebuild their lives. NEW START would extend the Department of Occupational Therapy’s 20-plus years of nationally recognized outreach related to the design, implementation, and evaluation of community-based services. These services have resulted in employment and positive community living outcomes for many individuals who have complex needs associated with brain injury, mental illness, trauma, or other life-altering conditions. The ultimate goal of NEW START is to return individuals with significant injuries to the economic and social fabric of their own communities while also building community capacity to meet the ongoing needs of these residents.

Innovative Project Partners with City and School District

The Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) has recently been awarded $314,848 from the U.S. Department of Education to implement the Passport Project. This innovative project is a partnership with the City of Fort Collins Adaptive Recreation Opportunities (ARO) Program and the Poudre School District in Fort Collins, Colo. With Cathy Schelly as the principal investigator and Renee Lee, the ARO director, as the co-principal investigator, the purpose of the project is to provide a venue for transitioning youth with disabilities to participate in recreational and community activities. These activities provide real-world experiences and develop skills in preparation for high school graduation, continued education and/or employment, and adult life. Occupational therapy students, as well as Colorado State students from a variety of majors and specialty areas, will have opportunities to work closely with youth with disabilities, as Travel Guides who mentor each ‘traveler’ as they gain experience and develop critical life skills.
Faculty In Print


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Alumni Help Send Students to National Conference

This past year 12 Colorado State University Occupational Therapy students attended the national American Occupational Therapy Association annual conference in Long Beach, CA. Among the fundraisers undertaken, by far the most assistance was received from the generous support of alumni who donated through a phone-a-thon. Thanks to each of you who gave! These donations covered the majority of the conference fees.

Everyday in Long Beach was jam packed with attending workshops, research presentations and poster sessions, exploring the expo, and networking with fellow occupational therapy practitioners and students. Some of the most valuable aspects of the conference were hearing the questions and comments of practitioners which gave us a feel for current practice issues, sensing the enthusiasm everyone has for our profession, and getting to see the 50 year members walk into the welcome ceremony together. Some of us even made a pact to return to the conference in our 50th year of membership! Upon returning to campus, we were all involved in making presentations to our classmates who were unable to attend.

We hope to turn this experience into a Colorado State University tradition, helping future students “live life to its fullest” at OT conferences to come. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to have gone to such an enlightening event, particularly while still students. We appreciate all who attended events and contributed funds including the SLiCE office, Cold Stone Creamery, and AmeriCorps. We especially wish to give a special thanks to our alumni whose donations made this trip possible!

– First and Second Year CSU Occupational Therapy students