

WVU Occupational Therapy E-News

WVU School of Medicine <swheeler@hsc.wvu.edu>

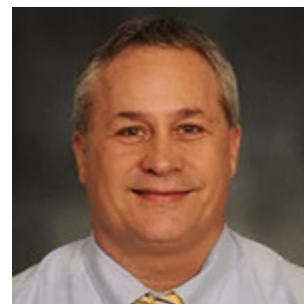
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To: Woods, SueAnn <SMULDREW@hsc.wvu.edu>



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The past year has been unlike any other in the nearly 25 years of occupational therapy education at West Virginia University. The COVID-19 pandemic created numerous challenges as the University and our clinical partners adjusted policies and procedures to create safe environments. Faculty and students transitioned lectures to a virtual format, and labs were delivered with an adherence to the use of personal protective equipment, physical distancing, and enhanced sanitization efforts. Cohorts were divided into “pods” with pre-assigned seating arrangements and smaller class sizes. Many of our clinical partners modified service delivery, including increased use of telehealth approaches.



Despite such changes to our instructional delivery, along with quarantines and changes to the course sequence, the Master of Occupational Therapy Program continued uninterrupted. The 2021 MOT class graduated on schedule and was able to experience a unique on-campus graduation ceremony at Mountaineer Field.



The tradition of the MOT pinning ceremony also continued in a virtual format for the second consecutive year. The ceremony included dedication of the white coats by each student, a keynote address by Cole Sydnor and Charisma

Jamison, and a visit by the WVU Mountaineer.

As part of the many changes expected in the upcoming year, the Division anticipates a few retirements among faculty. Announcements will be made in the coming months. We've been blessed to have such experienced, dedicated faculty through the years – some of whom have been with the MOT Program since its inception. While they will be difficult to replace, our retiring faculty are also outstanding mentors, a characteristic that we'll benefit from as we welcome new faculty members to continue our traditions and success.

While the University moves closer to resuming pre-pandemic operations in the fall, the 2021-2022 academic year for the OT program will continue to pivot based on public health guidance. We have a number of new and exciting programs and initiatives to share:

- The launch of the entry-level [OTD](#) Program to complement the existing MOT Program. The first OTD cohort began classes on May 17, 2021.
- The addition of three new faculty positions.
- A newly renovated occupational therapy lab slated for completion this summer.
- A new curriculum utilizing enhanced team teaching.
- [Continued expansion of occupational therapy services](#) in the PT/OT Faculty Practice Clinic.
- The Division of Occupational Therapy's first graduate teaching assistant position.
- [Continued growth of federal and state funding for research, service, and educational projects](#). Occupational therapy faculty currently serve as principal investigators for projects with total funding exceeding \$1 million.

*[Steven Wheeler](#), Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, CBIS
Professor & Chairman*

NEWS & NOTES

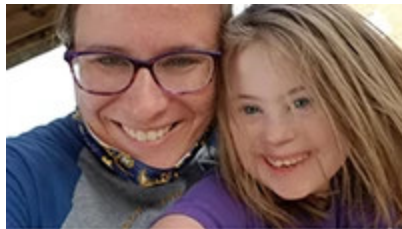
Burt honored for excellence in teaching

The WVU Division of Occupational Therapy is proud to have been awarded yet another teaching award among its faculty members. In April 2021, [Dr. Amy Kurowski-Burt](#) was inducted into the WVU Health

Sciences Academy for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Dr. Burt is the [prior award winner](#) of two School of Medicine Distinguished Teacher Awards. [Read more.](#)



Alumna takes on Down Syndrome Network leadership role



Combining her education in occupational therapy with her personal role as a mother of a child with Down syndrome, Ashley Orndorff has become an influential leader in West Virginia. As the Executive Director of the [Down Syndrome Network of West Virginia](#) (DSNWV), Orndorff (Haynes), a 2009 graduate of the WVU occupational therapy program, works to connect families with the resources and supports needed to improve quality of life. [Read more.](#)

OT provides adaptive cars to aid children with disabilities



“Go Baby Go” is a national program that provides modified, ride-on cars to young children with disabilities. The Centers for Excellence in Disabilities partnered with the WVU Division of Occupational Therapy to give five of these fun cars to children at no cost! Utilizing adapted ride-on cars allows children between with significant mobility impairment a means of mobility to explore their world. [Read more.](#)

Student partners with alums to assist at vaccination clinic



While completing her final level-2 fieldwork, WVU OT student Taylor Deuley assisted her clinical instructor Samantha Bates, OTR/L, at the [WVU Medicine Camden Clark Medical Center](#) vaccination clinic. Bates is a 2010 alumna of the WVU Division of Occupational Therapy. According to Missy Covert, OTR/L, administrator of Camden Clark Medical Center Vaccination Clinic and Director of Rehabilitation, “Taylor worked extra hours to help 450-plus community members and employees while working in one of three vaccine clinics” on Feb. 12, 2021. Covert is also an alumna of the WVU Division of Occupational Therapy. [Read more.](#)

Whitney contributes to ‘The Healer’s Burden’ book launch

[Dr. Rondalyn Whitney](#), associate professor of occupational therapy, was a featured contributor during “The Healer’s Burden: Stories and Poems of Professional Grief” book launch. The book delves into the emotional burden of health care practitioners. Using principles of narrative medicine, the editors include thoughtful questions and writing prompts. [Read more.](#)



OT students collaborate on interprofessional education videos

Interprofessional education is more than just finding your place – it’s about understanding each other’s roles to provide the best possible patient care and research. The [WVU Office of Interprofessional Education](#) incorporates Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) competencies of values and ethics, roles and responsibilities, communication, and teamwork to train students to perform effectively in different team roles. Each semester, WVU health sciences students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of [educational experiences](#). The IPE program created collaborations with students from occupational therapy, physical therapy, music therapy, pharmacy, nursing, dental hygiene and journalism. These students combined each individual discipline’s strengths to create content for elementary, middle and high school students on a variety of health-related topics. [Read more.](#)

CONNECT WITH US

A renewed commitment to alumni relations and outreach is among the many goals of the Division’s strategic plan. Current initiatives include a virtual happy hour, Division-sponsored continuing education, a quarterly newsletter and annual report and AOTA Conference social events. Those interested in participating can contact [SueAnn Woods](#).

All alumni, friends, faculty, fieldwork supervisors and current students are invited to our informal virtual happy hour gathering on the first Thursday of every month. If you have not participated in one of our prior events, please register using [our convenient online form](#).

For more information on the WVU Division of Occupational Therapy, visit our [website](#), follow us on [Facebook](#) or send us an [email](#). We look forward to hearing from you. Let’s go, Mountaineers!

STAY CONNECTED

Support Occupational Therapy

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