THEN & NOW

CLASS OF 1975

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

CLASS OF 2011

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Greetings From the New Chair

On behalf of the faculty and students, and as the new chair, I welcome you to Occupational Therapy’s 2011-12 Fall/Winter newsletter. As the beginning of my first semester comes to an end, I am astounded by our Occupational Therapy Department. I have been able to work with our faculty and encourage the growth and development among them, as well as our students, to further achieve academic excellence. The amount of research achieved by the faculty members is remarkable and accentuates their involvement in the profession of occupational therapy.

We are getting accustomed to our new building – Academic Health Center 3 – and using its state-of-the-art STAR (Simulation, Teaching and Research) Center to provide students with a hands-on experience necessary before they begin their careers as evidence-based occupational therapists. This edition of our newsletter highlights our new building, our faculty’s milestones, and spotlights successful alumni and club officers. I hope you enjoy our department’s latest news and activities as we continue to make our occupation the best. There is a sense of renovation and optimism as we begin another semester strong and united. It is with great pleasure that student editor Veronica Vasquez and I introduce this semester’s NOTEWORTHY.

Our Building

The College of Nursing & Health Sciences officially moved into its new home at Academic Health Center 3 (AHC3) on the Modesto Maidique Campus in February 2010. It is the first green, LEED-certified structure in FIU’s history, earning its Silver Certification for exceptional sustainability in design, construction and operation.

Our state-of-the-art building provides the education necessary to prepare the next generation of culturally competent entry level practitioners to provide evidence-based services to the community.

Our AHC3 building is one of the most innovative, technologically advanced healthcare teaching facilities in the region. The two-wing structure encompasses 115,000 square feet of space and houses interactive skills laboratories; extensive computer suites; specialized training, evaluation and study areas; ample lecture classrooms; and a dedicated research floor.

It serves and equips all of our students with the skills needed to function and become leaders in today’s complex healthcare environment.
If this is your first year, WELCOME to FIU’s Occupational Therapy master’s program! You have chosen the wonderful profession of occupational therapy and we could not be more excited to share our knowledge and experiences both in and out of the classroom. I know that it seems like all of a sudden the readings and assignments are piling on, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Don’t think about how much more you have to go, instead enjoy the first year by focusing on how much you can achieve in learning. Semesters will go by fast, concepts will slowly but surely tie in together, and you will be able to master theories, frames of reference, evaluations and treatment for our clients. Until then, enjoy meeting your new classmates who will turn into lifetime friends, doing scavenger hunts, learning about the history of our profession and most importantly HAVING FUN!!!

If you are a Year 2 student, congratulations and WELCOME BACK! This summer was one to remember as the class of 2012 embarked on their first month-long fieldwork at various hospitals and clinics. Although waking up extra early in the morning was a hassle, we happily wore our OT polos and khakis to embrace our new challenge of being out in the field. Many have shared their experiences and their enthusiasm of being a part of the rehabilitation team. I know it’s strenuous with our eight classes at the moment, but let’s enjoy these last two semesters of classes because it’ll be over before we know it! WE CAN DO IT!!!

If you are alumni, how does it feel? You have officially graduated and been out in the work force – something that our current students are looking forward to. You have finished your college journey and have moved on to real-life patients, clinical settings, and applying theories learned in the program. Where are you now? Doing research? What population are you working with? Let us know so that we can stay in touch! E-mail us at FIUOTMasters@gmail.com in order for us to stay updated and the chance to be featured in our Alumni Spotlight section!
Our remarkable new building enhances the interdisciplinary approach of Florida International University’s Academic Health Sciences Center. At its educational core is our exclusive Simulation Teaching And Research Center, a.k.a., STAR Center. This center offers students and faculty one of the most technologically ground-breaking, advanced healthcare teaching and research facilities in the region. The STAR Center is a simulated hub of modern day identification of healthcare.

Our occupational therapy students practice hands-on simulations to prepare themselves to face real clinical settings effectively and comprehensively. The STAR Center consists of high-quality teaching labs and simulation labs that give students “real world” experiences. These labs provide students with abundant opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and prepare graduates to successfully integrate their practice into today’s technologically driven healthcare system, as well as encourage advanced research in healthcare practice and delivery.

The extraordinary capabilities of the CNHS STAR Center provides students with a translational approach from class to simulated clinic opportunities that were unimaginable just a couple of decades ago. Our faculty is committed to giving our students the resources they need on their path to becoming skilled healthcare professionals by working together as a team to improve the continuum of care for all.

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## Paying it Forward

I am a proud alumna of Florida International University and returned to teach as an adjunct faculty member in the fall of 2011. I have also been educating students in the field of pediatrics, which is one of my passions. I also recognize the mission of community outreach at FIU. I am pleased that I can give back to FIU by providing educational opportunities in the classroom to our future OT alumni and providing hands-on clinical educational experiences.

**A little about me:** I am currently a registered and licensed occupational therapist in the state of Florida. I am the director of Kinetic Kids Therapy Services in Miami, FL. Kinetic Kids is a service provider that provides one-on-one and group therapy services to children with special needs in their homes, school-based settings and in our clinic locations.

My education consists of an undergraduate degree from Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania with a certification in therapeutic recreation and a minor in gerontology. I received my Master of Science degree in Occupational Therapy from FIU with an emphasis in pediatrics. I also received my SIPT certification in spring of 2010 and have participated in the level I intensive mentorship program through the SPD Network in the spring of 2009 under the direction of Dr. Lucy Miller. I hope my contribution as an adjunct provides a good foundation for our students as they move into their careers.

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“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”
- Mahatma Gandhi
Alumni Spotlight

Genevieve Anderson

I graduated in December 2010 and began studying to take the NBCOT exam. I studied like a machine, determined to only have to experience this part of my journey once. During the numerous weeks of studying, I began to experience the demand that existed for my chosen profession. I anxiously attended the 2010 Annual AOTA Conference and handed out my resumes to staffing companies. I decided not to entertain any possible job offers until I had taken the exam. I would not be participating in interviews until the license to practice was safely in my pocket. Then Miami Children’s Hospital (MCH) called.

I was invited to tour the West Kendall Outpatient Center. I had no expectations, which may have contributed to the amazement I experienced upon entering the clinic. I was introduced to the rehabilitation manager who gave me a tour of the department. After I returned from the tour, studying took on a whole new meaning to me, for now I had experienced true motivation to succeed.

I sat for the NBCOT exam at the end of January and was a nervous wreck until I received the results. When I finally saw my passing score appear on the NBCOT web page (after obsessively refreshing the page all morning), it was as though my life had begun. I was able to accept the job offer at MCH and I began working there the following week. Nothing has been the same since.

For the past year I have had the extraordinary experience of working at MCH. I practice with a team of clinicians who make me proud to be among them every day and who strive to be at the top of their fields by keeping up with, and participating in, the newest forms of treatment and research. As a result, everyone is constantly evolving and being caught up in that evolution is a thrill that cannot be described in writing.

I have also had the exceptional experience of being exposed to a specialty early in my career. A pediatric hand therapist is currently training me and I am hopeful that I will eventually work my way towards becoming a pediatric hand specialist myself. I continue to treat children with developmental disabilities, and every moment of my time with these children is incredibly rewarding.

I now proudly look back on the days of building tile trivets, studying the physics behind biomechanics, and role-playing mental health scenarios. I cannot express my gratitude enough to all the professors at FIU for taking the time to teach me. It was they who recommended me to MCH and they are the reason I have the opportunities that I do.

The investment in my education was well worth it as I now have the tools to be successful and accomplished in my professional career. I am officially an FIU OT alum and I could not be happier.

“Everything will be OK in the end. If it’s not OK then it’s not the end.”

-Anonymous
Our innovative and prestigious faculty members continuously garner accolades through many publications, grants, presentations and awards. This section is devoted to highlighting our faculty and adjunct professors and their efforts.

**Publications**


**Presentations**


McCarthy, D.P (2011) “Travel Training to Increase Senior Mobility.” Gerontological Society of America's 64th Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA.

McCarthy, D.P. (2011) “Caregiver Perceptions of the Effects of Cognitive Decline on the Driving Abilities of People with Memory Disorder.” Accepted for poster presentation at the Gerontological Society of America’s 64th Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA.


**Grants**

McCarthy, D.P. Transportation Needs of Residents of the City of Sweetwater. (Student Project) Funded by the Miami Dade Alliance for Aging. $600. August 2010-April 2011.

Paul-Ward, A.R. Implementing the OTKE to Improve Student Certification Outcomes. FIU Technology Fee Grant $9,000; 2010-2012.

Paul-Ward, A.R. Received $389,967 in 2010-2011 and $224,797 for 2011-2012 HRSA Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students.

**Other**

Dr. Dennis McCarthy is a member of the Leadership Committee: American Society on Aging Network on Environment, Services and Technology for Maximizing Independence (NEST). He is also an expert Panel Member for Development of a Cost-Effective Model of Travel Training. National Center for Senior Transportation, February 2010.

Dr. Elise Bloch holds the positions of Executive Officer Region 7, OT Forum and the Secretary of Family Advisory Council, Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.

Dr. Kinsuk Maitra received the Research Scholar Initiative Award, American Journal of Occupational Therapy, AOTA, 2011.

Professor Jennifer Gober received the Dr. Gail Ann Hills Award for Scholarship in Occupational Therapy UM NSU CARD Outstanding Clinician Award. She is the director of Kinetic Kids which was awarded one of Business Leaders Magazine Top 300 Businesses of the South. She sits on the Occupational Therapy boards at Florida International University and Barry University.

**Save the Date**

Alumni, please keep these dates in your calendar for 2012:

**March 3:** Engaging the Low Vision Community through Education, Research, & Service
8 AM to 4:30 PM at The Miami Lighthouse (CEUs Available)
Contact Teresita Cueto at 786-362-7529

**April 3:** Research Symposium
6 PM at Nova Southeastern University

**April 12:** Occupational Therapy Alumni Reunion
Special Presentation by Frank Kronenberg (CEUs Available)

**April 26-29:** AOTA 2012 Annual Conference and Expo Indianapolis, IN
Meet Your 2011-12 Officers

Pi Theta Epsilon
Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE) was designed to recognize outstanding academic achievements and scholastic excellence of occupational therapy students.

It is a national honor society in which all student members are required to maintain a 3.5 GPA in order to stay in good standing with PTE.

Our goals are to add to the expansion and advancement of the OT profession through research development, special academic events, community projects, as well as developing relationships with other therapy professions such as physical and speech therapy, and within our own profession across universities.

Student Occupational Therapy Association
The Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) consists of all students in the Graduate Occupational Therapy Program.

This organization seeks to increase campus and community awareness of the occupational therapy profession.

Through a combination of community service activities, special projects and general meetings, SOTA provides a forum where students enrolled in the OT program at FIU may augment their coursework by interacting with patient populations, other OT professionals and peer networks.

To join SOTA, please contact fiusotapresident@gmail.com for more information.
Making a *Difference*

FIU Alumni Fund is an appeal to all alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents, and friends to support and prepare healthcare profession students to become providers and leaders in the delivery of high quality, accessible, and culturally competent care within a highly technological and global environment.

**Become a Donor**

Gifts of any size are most welcome! All gifts are tax deductible. Mail completed form to:

Florida International University  
Department of Occupational Therapy  
11200 S.W. 8th Street AHC3 - 442A  
Miami, FL 33199

Or make a donation through our website at [OT.FIU.EDU](http://OT.FIU.EDU)

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We welcome your interest in our Occupational Therapy faculty, staff, and students. We are committed to education and practice within our student body, as well as the community. We support evidence-based practice in order to promote scholarship and excellence in our future healthcare profession in occupational therapy.

**Teaching Opportunities at FIU OT**

The OT department has faculty position(s) available. Please consult FIU websites for possible vacancies. Also, the department is interested in hearing from you if you would like to teach a course or two in our program to hone your teaching skills. A number of alumni are currently teaching in our program and they value the experiences. If you would like to teach, we would love to hear from you.

To inquire about future teaching possibilities, contact Dr. Kinsuk Maitra at kmaitra@fiu.edu.

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