

CHAIR'S LETTER

Greetings from North Dakota,

I am honored to share with you all that we graduated our first cohort of Occupational Therapy Doctorate students at both the Grand Forks and Casper campuses in May! You can see photos of both classes decked out in their regalia later in this newsletter. We are very proud of them and everything they accomplished during the past three years. These individuals took a leap of faith with us: understanding at the time of admission that we were not yet accredited, being sent home in March of 2020 for an extended spring break that lasted through the summer, studying with classmates who were spread out virtually across several states, and learning to pivot when technology hit a glitch. This class learned the importance of flexibility, self-advocacy, patience, and adaptability. They persevered and did amazing work! Their capstone projects were innovative and worked to meet community needs; these projects will be posted by the end of the summer on the UND Scholarly Commons website if you would like to look at their great work. We appreciate everyone who came virtually to the oral comprehensive sessions and had over 250 students, alumni, faculty, and guests present. It was a busy day and I wanted to make clones of myself so I could be in every room to listen to all the students' presentations.

In the last newsletter I shared that our onsite visit last fall went very well. In January we received official notification that the UND OTD program was officially accredited for seven years, with no areas of noncompliance. I am very proud of our faculty and staff, and to say that the past few years have been challenging is an understatement. North Dakota and Wyoming are fortunate to have such a dedicated group of individuals who are committed to making the best educational experiences for students. It is important to extend a huge thank you to all of them for their hard work and dedication in making the accreditation process smooth!

We have a new faculty member at the Grand Forks site, Rhonda Roed. You can read her biography later in this newsletter also. She joined us in January and is working with community partners

in the area to develop fieldwork experiences, predominantly in the area of mental functions. She is currently collaborating with LaGrave Place in Grand Forks, N.D., in expanding occupational therapy services. She worked with LaGrave when she was working at Altru Health System, so she has definitely hit the ground running. It has been exciting and fun to see her ideas and focus in developing programming and learning opportunities for students. Stay tuned for more information about her work.



Each year at this time, I reflect on our program, graduates, alumni, and fieldwork educators. This year is the 40th year I have been in practice as an occupational therapist and academic. It is exciting to see the progress of our profession. When I first graduated, we were working hard as a profession to become licensed and it took a lot of work to get states to recognize our services. We have broadened our understanding of occupation and what that means for the quality of life for the people we serve. We continue to develop new and innovative programs, serving populations as well as individual clients and I am excited about what the future holds for our profession.

I am very grateful for each of you and how you support our program. We have a robust endowment for scholarships, we have a strong network of fieldwork educators, and we have people who encourage future students to explore the profession and our program. Thank you for your support of our program and our students.

I am excited about the future of our program and our graduates!

Best,

Janet Jedlicka, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA
Chair and Professor
Department of Occupational Therapy

RHIHUB FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Hello, everyone! I am McKenzie Peterson, a member of the first cohort of doctoral students who just finished my final semester of the program. I spent my last semester completing my doctoral experiential placement (DEP) by collaborating with my faculty advisor Dr. Sarah Nielsen and the UND Center for Rural Health learning about the research process. I was drawn to the University of North Dakota because of its strong commitment to the betterment of rural communities. This commitment has guided my focus throughout my time in the program.

For my DEP project I investigated the relationship between ancillary health providers and the health needs of rural communities. A key resource that I want to share with my OT colleagues is the Rural Health Information Hub (RHIhub). The RHIhub is a federally-funded information center that provides resources, offers ways to connect with fellow practitioners, and has funding opportunities to support rural practice. It has a wealth of information on topics related to rural and population health, including for practicing OTs. A few features for occupational therapists to be aware of include free, up-to-date resources regarding rural healthcare and available grants for a variety of topics and states. The grants available change regularly and cover a wide range of topics, from the aging in place grant “AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program Replacement Opportunity” to loan repayment in various states.

For the visual learners, there are fantastic, interactive data explorers that can help you visualize key factors or issues, such as health disparities, across the United States and in individual states. All-in-all, the RHIhub is a great resource that has free and accessible information regarding many important rural health topics.

Check it out at ruralhealthinfo.org



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: RHONDA ROED

New faculty member in the Department of Occupational Therapy Rhonda Roed was born and raised in Devils Lake, N.D. She has been married to Dr. Jamie Roed for 27 years and has two grown children: Zachary, 25, and Hallie, 22. Rhonda enjoys walking, playing with her dogs, reading, hiking, biking, attending UND sporting events in the winter, and savoring lake time in the summer.



Rhonda attended Lake Region State College in Devils Lake for one year before transferring to the University of North Dakota where she earned a BS in OT in 1993 and a Master of Occupational Therapy degree in OT in 2011. She is currently enrolled in the post-professional OTD program at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minn., with an anticipated graduation date of May 2024.

Rhonda was employed at Altru Health System for 28 years as an OT. She has extensive knowledge in multiple scopes of practice to include acute care, inpatient/outpatient rehabilitation, home care, and community-based programs. She is certified as a lymphedema therapist and is an Assistive Technology Practitioner. Rhonda also served in leadership for seven years at Altru Health System. For two years, she was a supervisor in the Physical Medicine and Therapy Services Department, and for five years she was manager of Inpatient Rehabilitation, Inpatient Therapy, Behavioral Health Therapy, Intensive Outpatient Therapy, Inpatient Orthopedics, and the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Outpatient clinic.

Rhonda has served on and led many committees and project working groups and has experience with program development, fieldwork coordination, and oversight experience for OT, OTA, and nursing students/faculty. Plus, she frequently enjoyed being a presenter/guest lecturer at UND, promoting the occupational therapy profession.

Rhonda was hired in January 2022 in the OT Department as a full-time faculty member and is responsible for providing effective learning experiences for students with diverse interests, abilities, and expectations. In this role, Rhonda will work on program development and supervision of students in community-based settings, develop partnerships with community agencies to develop level I and level II fieldwork experiences in emerging areas of practice, and provide supervision for students placed at these sites when needed.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

TIANA POLITE-BROWN

Recent OT alumna Tiana Polite-Brown sat down with us recently to chat about her young career, living in Oklahoma, and her memories of UND.

How did you become interested in OT?

I became interested in OT while working in the hospital as a rehab technician and had to assist the occupational therapist with patient care. I learned how essential ADLs and our role in discharge planning were to patients and the organization. My decision to move forward and apply to UND's program came as I flew back to Grand Forks and had the privilege of sitting next to an alumnus of the program during that flight.

Where are you practicing now, and how did you come to that setting?

Currently, I am employed at a military treatment facility in southern Oklahoma. I primarily treat active-duty military members for upper extremity injuries. I mostly see conditions like lateral and medial epicondylitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, upper extremity nerve impingement, entrapment syndromes, burns, and post-op wrist and hands. I am currently working with the IOP behavioral health to start conducting groups with the military members. I can make referrals and order labs and imaging without going through a primary care provider. It challenges and excites me that I can expand the boundaries of the occupational therapy scope of practice.

What do you remember about your time in the OT Department at UND?

My time in the UND OT program from 2016 to 2019 was impactful. I made so many positive memories and relationships from those three

years. The UND OT program not only taught me the foundation of occupational therapy but gave me the drive to want to do more within the profession. That's one of the reasons why I went for my OTD—to hopefully one day return the same gift of education that UND professors, faculty, and staff provided me. North Dakota makes a transient individual feel the “homegrown” love and acceptance.



What do you most enjoy about OT as a profession?

I enjoy the versatility of the profession. The OT profession allows you to be as fluid or specific across the healthcare spectrum as you choose. A therapist can be as specific as working in an outpatient setting as a CHT or an inpatient behavioral therapist in the a.m. and a long-term transitional care therapist in the p.m.

What else are you doing in Oklahoma—or anywhere?

While working full-time at the military treatment facility, I am slowly building my business Dynamic Occupational Therapy Services (DOTS), LLC. DOTS is a mobile occupational therapy service that provides traditional and non-traditional treatment, including lymphedema, sensory integration, upper extremity rehabilitation, and educational opportunities. I am also currently doing some lymphedema therapy consulting and working on lectures and speaking engagements promoting occupational therapy and interdisciplinary approaches to patient care.

CLASS OF 2022



GRAND FORKS

2022 Doctor of Occupational Therapy graduates in Grand Forks.

CASPER

2022 Doctor of Occupational Therapy graduates in Casper.



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OT PROGRAM GIVEN **UND FOUNDERS DAY AWARDS**

UND Founders Day, celebrating the history of the university, is held every February to celebrate the university's birthday and recognize the accomplishments of members of the university community. This year, two members of our Department of Occupational Therapy were recognized.

Scinda (Cindy) Janssen, associate professor of OT, received the UND Award for Excellence in Online Course Development & Innovative Teaching Strategies. In addition, Cindy received the UND Award for Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Research and Creative Activity with several of her UND School of Medicine & Health Sciences colleagues.

Likewise, Jane Loscheider, assistant professor of OT, received the UND Foundation/McDermott Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate or Professional Teaching.

Congratulations to our colleagues on their recognition of excellence in consistently providing a high-quality instructional environment for students!



2022 FOUNDERS DAY

Department of OT faculty Cindy Janssen (center) at the 2022 Founders Day banquet with UND President Andrew Armacost (left) and UND Provost Eric Link (right).