

## 57 Years of OT Professionalism

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Department at UND opened its doors in 1954 to prepare educated men and women to meet the needs of society as entry-level occupational therapists possessing competence, integrity and compassion. The OT Department curriculum is grounded in the belief that purposeful activity (occupation), including its interpersonal and environmental components, may be used to prevent and remediate dysfunction and elicit maximum adaptation. Each year, the OT department educates a maximum of 108 professional students on the Grand Forks campus, and 36 professional students on the Casper, Wyoming campus. The on-line transitional master's program serves 12-15 students annually, the majority of whom are practicing clinicians seeking advanced education.

After establishing the occupational therapy major on the UND campus in 1954, the OT Department was accredited in 1956, and is pleased to have maintained full accreditation since that time. The department was originally housed in the College of Human Resource Development, and joined the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS), with its outstanding academic and administrative support, in 1994. The Casper, Wyoming satellite program was opened in 1993, in response to a critical shortage of professional therapists in that state, the needs of non-traditional and site-bound students, and the absence of OT education in Wyoming's higher education institutions. The Wyoming program allows the OT Department to assist in fulfilling strategic planning initiatives for the SMHS by providing highly trained medical professionals in the region and the nation through a fully-accredited mirror program.

The field of occupational therapy has seen many changes over the years. One of the strongest initiatives in OT has been a move away from viewing clients from a deficit focus addressed by craft and activity and toward an occupation emphasis centered in an individual's daily environments. This shift has solidified the occupational therapist as a highly-trained medical professional, and an important member of the healthcare team. Emerging OT areas are following trends in healthcare toward client-centered treatment emphasizing aging-in-place programs, and a resurgence of highly trained professionals for expanded services in mental health settings. Demographic imperatives point directly to a need for services addressing both pediatric and geriatric populations. The OT profession has also recognized a need for more diverse practice settings, motivated largely by a movement toward community-based healthcare and a shift away from the medical model. One strength of the OT Program, as indicated by post-graduation surveys, is the depth and breadth of training that the Department has developed into the curriculum, reflective of healthcare trends. Graduates feel the education they receive allows them to confidently move into entry-level roles in a variety of professional settings.

Evidence-based practice serves as a foundational tenant of both the profession and the UND Program, with students developing graduate scholarly activity in collaboration with OT faculty to contribute to the body of evidence through research and best

## UND Faculty 2011

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- Deb Hanson, Ph.D., OTR/L**  
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- Anne Haskins, Ph.D., OTR/L**  
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- Cindy Janssen, M.S., OTR/L**  
Assistant Professor
- Janet Jedlicka, Ph.D., OTR/L**  
Associate Professor, Department Chair
- Breann Lamborn, M.P.A.**  
Assistant Professor, Professional Coordinator – Wyoming Site
- Mandy Meyer, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor (jointly with Anatomy/Cell Biology)
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- Sonia Zimmerman, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA**  
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### Department Vision Statement

All people will be engaged in meaningful occupations supporting health and wellness.

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## Chair's letter

Greetings from chilly Grand Forks! We are excited to be starting a new endeavor with a twice annual newsletter to our alumni and friends of the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of North Dakota. It is amazing how fast time goes and how each year we say "when it slows down we will..." but it never seems to slow down! That is a good problem, it means we are working hard, growing our students as professionals and growing ourselves as professionals, and helping keep occupational therapy in the focus as a vital profession that meets the needs of the citizens of North Dakota and Wyoming.



In the past year faculty have focused on our department self-study, a process that involves critically evaluating the program and how we are meeting the standards of an nationally accredited occupational therapy education program. It has been a great deal of hard work, but through these efforts we have come together, revised our mission to reflect the growth of the occupational therapy profession, and strengthened each of the courses and how the courses work collectively to help better prepare our graduates for practice in diverse settings. We anticipate the onsite visit to be late fall of 2011! We have included an article in this issue that explains the unique threads we have identified in our curriculum that we incorporate daily in our classes to build strong occupational therapy professionals.

The other piece of exciting news is our ability to award additional departmental scholarships to students enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Program. As many of you know, Dr. Amy Lind passed away last year; she was gracious in remembering us in her estate by establishing scholarships for occupational therapy students at UND. We are in the process of raising additional funds for that scholarship so it can be permanently endowed and have ongoing resources to support students in pursuing their OT education. Additionally, one of our alumni, Maggie Leshner, endowed a scholarship for students in honor of her parents Matt and Katrin Hjalmarson. This was a first for our department! I am personally very excited about the opportunities for continued growth in the area of scholarship development and would encourage each of you to consider supporting scholarships through the UND Alumni office.

As I reflect on the growth and changes of our department I am grateful for the support of graduates and others in providing fieldwork opportunities, guest lectures, and financial donations for the benefit of our students. The OT faculty and staff in Grand Forks, ND and Casper, WY are the best I have worked with! Our goal is to continue to provide high quality education so as to meet the needs of our students, and ultimately the clients and communities we serve. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to let us know what additional information you would like to see in upcoming newsletters.

Janet Jedlicka  
Chair and Associate Professor  
Occupational Therapy

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork education plays an important role in the academic OT curriculum as the transition point where students apply the knowledge learned in the classroom to practice and pass from the role of student to that of practitioner! Through experience in fieldwork, students gain the knowledge, skills and aptitudes to realistically evaluate practice choices and discover how the practice of occupational therapy contributes to the wider scope of healthcare. The University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Department is fortunate to have a strong legacy with regard to fieldwork education as many talented practitioners have worked with our students over the past 57 years. With more than 170 fieldwork sites to choose from spanning 14 states, students have had opportunity to engage in a variety of learning experiences!

Consistent with national accreditation standards, UND offers both Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences. The goal of Level I fieldwork is to introduce students to the fieldwork experience, and to develop a basic comfort level with and understanding of the needs of clients. Experiences are designed to enrich academic coursework through directed observation and supervised participation in the occupational therapy intervention process. Block assignments of one week periods provide OT students with exposure to pediatric and adult populations within education, medical, psychosocial and physical rehabilitative settings. Students are usually placed in settings that are located within an 8 hour drive from either the Grand Forks, ND or Casper, Wyoming campus. These learning opportunities are typically regarded by students as the highlight of their student experience and they return to campus with a new enthusiasm for learning!

The goal of level II fieldwork is to develop competent, entry-level generalist occupational therapists and includes a more in-depth experience for students as they deliver occupational therapy services to clients in a 12 week time period. The focus of the learning includes the delivery of client-centered and occupation-based treatment which is grounded in research evidence, as well as administration and management of occupational therapy services. Most level II students are supervised following a 1:1 supervision model but occasionally a group model is followed where one supervisor is responsible for two or more students. Although most fieldwork occurs in role established placements, (where students are directly supervised by an OTR and learn from following the example modeled by the therapist), role-exploring and role-emerging placements are also being developed. In role-exploring and role emerging placements, students are supervised by an on-site non-occupational therapist, but an off-site therapist acts as a supporter, mentor and guide for processing the potential role of occupational therapy in the setting. To meet accreditation standards, the off-site supervisor must be a registered occupational therapist with at least 3 years of professional experience and provide supervision a minimum of 8 hours per week. Students at these sites work collaboratively with the designated on-site supervisor and their designated off-site supervisor to create and establish the occupational therapy role within the setting.

The OT Department is always interested in developing more fieldwork sites and particularly those where the role of the occupational therapists is extended to non-traditional practice settings! In addition to a comprehensive fieldwork manual for fieldwork educators, other resources to support fieldwork educators in their teaching role are provided in advance of the student's learning experience and throughout the course of the



level II student experience. Resources are provided to assist fieldwork sites in the development of learning objectives and assignments, a weekly evaluation process, learning contracts for extenuating circumstances, as well as coaching and mentoring regarding individual student learning challenges. Please check out

the resources available for fieldwork educators on our website at [www.ot.und.edu](http://www.ot.und.edu); just follow the fieldwork link to the left for more information. If you are a practicing therapist with at least one year of experience we are interested in hearing from you and exploring the potential for student fieldwork placement at your site!

## UND Student Occupational Therapy Association



Energized for the profession of occupational therapy best describes the students participating in the University of North Dakota (UND) Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). The SOTA excels at providing service to its community, providing funding for local, state and national organizations that promote the health and well-being of people, organizing educational sessions for fellow occupational therapy students and practitioners, supporting the psychosocial well-being of occupational therapy students, and promoting the visibility of the occupational therapy profession. The UND SOTA is a student-driven organization comprised of membership locations in Casper, WY and Grand Forks, ND. Presently, the student membership of SOTA exceeds 100 members and each member has ample opportunity to play a vital role in the success and leadership of the organization.

Exemplifying their altruism, SOTA members regularly volunteer; providing service and funding to a diverse number of community-based organizations is a primary goal of the SOTA. For example SOTA members have raised and donated money to purchase durable medical equipment for families in need, support awareness of domestic violence, donate time to revitalizing local communities, and provide nourishment for those in need. SOTA members have participated in activities with various community agencies and organizations including the Alzheimer's Association, Diabetes Association, Relay for Life, North Dakota School for the Blind, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association, Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics, and many others.

SOTA members are also passionate about advocacy for the profession of occupational therapy and ensuring that all people have access to needed occupational therapy services. Annually,

the SOTA sponsors UND occupational therapy student delegates' attendance at the annual national conference of the American Occupational Therapy Association to support leadership development in our future alumni and promote growth within the profession of occupational therapy. Additionally, SOTA sponsors participation of students in the annual AOTA Student Conclave, as well as involvement by and funding for AOTA's Political Action Committee.

SOTA members embrace the concept of building the evidence and knowledge base of occupation and therapeutic approaches in enhancing human potential. The members organize and develop annual educational workshops, in-services, and training. A diverse slate of guest speakers provide students with information on topics ranging from Special Olympics to international service in Ghana, Africa, as well as hippotherapy, assistive technology for farmers and ranchers, cultural diversity, mental health, and advanced practice topics.

Networking is another great function of this strong student membership organization. The UND SOTA creates opportunities for students to interact and have fun during social events such as potluck lunches, bowling extravaganzas, pumpkin carving and costume contests, and float decorating in the UND Homecoming Parade.

The UND SOTA embodies the nature and value of giving service in the occupational therapy profession. The UND SOTA wishes to thank all past and present members for their dedication and enthusiasm in growing a valuable and recognized organization that has promoted the viability of the occupational therapy profession and access for all people to receive needed occupational therapy services.

# UND OT Curriculum Design

## Overview

The UND OT curriculum is based on a liberal arts foundation, with course work designed to address the cognitive, psychosocial, and sensory-motor needs of clients and the impact of cultural, social and physical aspects of the environment on the client's adaptive process. Students are encouraged to engage in a self-reflective process regarding their strengths and vulnerabilities in various practice environments as they assume active responsibility for their learning. As students transition into the role of the professional occupational therapist, the educator services as a role model and mentor encouraging high ethical standards, active participation in community service and creative involvement in scholarly pursuits.

## Curriculum Design

The curriculum design is influenced by a number of factors including the 2006 Standards for an accredited education program for the occupational therapist, and the mission statements of the University of North Dakota, School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Department of Occupational Therapy, as well as the occupational adaptation model of occupational therapy.

The curriculum design reflects the mission of the University of North Dakota and the School of Medicine and Health Sciences to serve the public through teaching and preparation of highly skilled entry-level occupational therapists, scholarly and creative activity and service in the development of sequenced learning experiences designed to produce an entry-level occupational therapist who is able to initiate, maintain and manage occupational therapy services to meet the needs of society. The exemplars of self-reflection, client-centeredness and occupation-centered practice driven by research evidence, as well as skills for lifelong learning and ethical and effective leadership reflect the mission of the Occupational Therapy Program.

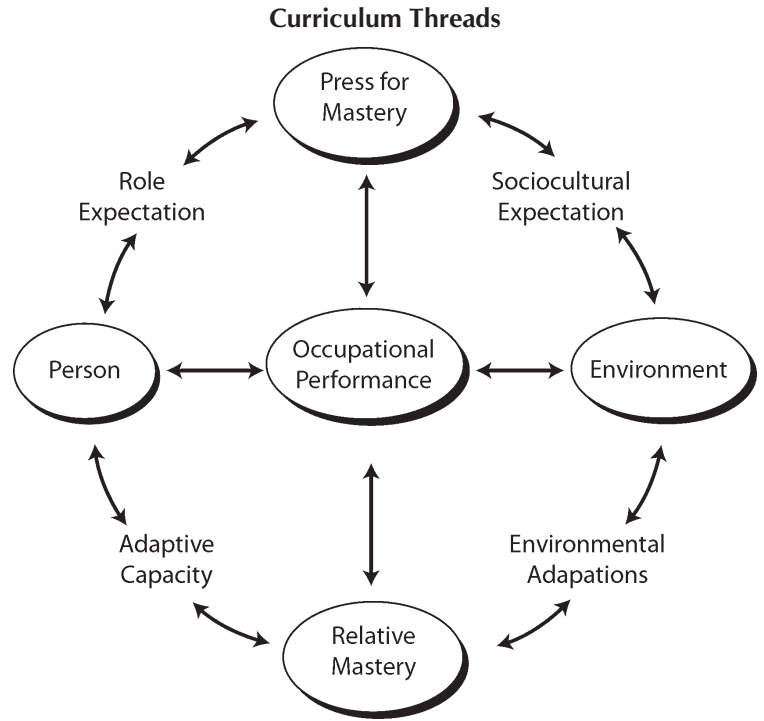
The model of occupational adaptation's influence on the curriculum design is presented in the following discussion of occupational adaptation, skill development, and adaptation and role transition. A graphic presentation of the curriculum model and associated curriculum threads follows.

### Occupational Adaptation

Occupational adaptation is a process that allows each person to master and respond adaptively to the various occupational challenges that are encountered in the course of a lifetime. A developmental process is presumed where occupation readiness skills in the person subsystems (sensory, cognitive, and psychosocial) set the stage for interaction in the environmental contexts of work, play, and leisure (Schkade & McClung, 2001). The intent of the Occupational Therapy Program is to develop students capable of assisting individuals to both assume the roles appropriate to their developmental position and to adapt to the challenges inherently present at each point in the developmental process with the common goal of competence in occupational functioning.

### Skills Development

Occupational readiness in the UND OT curriculum begins in the first semester of the program when the students are enrolled in anatomy and group experience. Both courses present foundational information that helps to ground the student's knowledge in occupational therapy. Other examples of courses with occupational readiness components include neuroscience, medical sciences, administration, research, assistive technology and muscle function. The theory and practice courses present occupational readiness in combination with



occupational activities where the students are provided opportunity to 'try on' skills related to the role of the therapist, adding the element of therapeutic context (environment) to learning.

The curriculum presents coursework in a sequence addressing occupational development of infants and young children in the second semester of the curriculum, moving to children, adolescents and young adults in the third semester and then to adult and aging populations in the fourth and fifth semesters. Multiple factors influencing the developmental process are simultaneously considered within each course including the physical, emotional, social, cultural and environmental factors that impact individual development.

The Level I/II Fieldworks provide the student ample opportunities to integrate knowledge and actively experience the role of the therapist in the practice setting and further develop occupational competence. Throughout the occupational therapy curriculum, the student is expected to take responsibility for learning. This is particularly evident when the student chooses a graduate track to pursue. At the graduate, the student is expected to integrate clinical experiences with academic knowledge as would be expected of the reflective practitioner.

### Adaptation and Role Transition

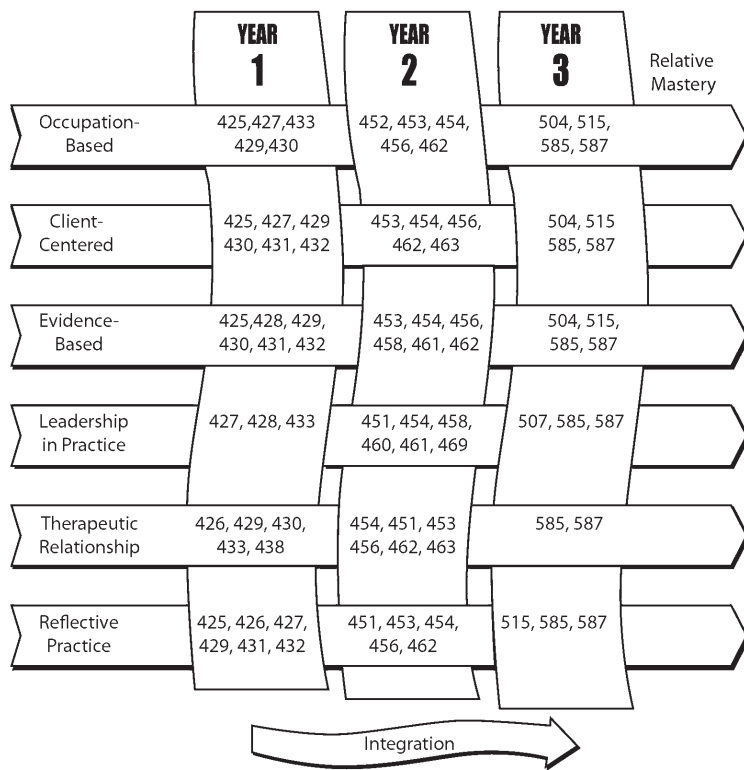
Students enter the Occupational Therapy Program as active learners with demonstrated academic achievement and through engagement in occupational learning activities are regularly challenged toward personal, academic and professional growth.

The role of the educator is to provide learning activities that are representative of the role expectations of professional practice as an occupational therapist. Adjustments in learning activities may be made by the educator in response to the students' mastery of the subject. Examples include substituting discussion for lecture or using a small group learning activity to reinforce student learning and increase student engagement.

The role of the student is to evaluate engagement, participation level, and mastery of course/subject content. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for learning and become the



## Curriculum Design with Curriculum Thread



agent of change in relation to acquisition of professional knowledge. For example, the student may evaluate a preferred method of learning and determine the need for a change in study habits or class participation in order to master course expectations.

The process of student reflection on learning is ongoing and reinforced throughout the curriculum both in required course work and in the student evaluations which occur each semester. Thus, students become reflective practitioners who take responsibility for and actively seek to meet professional learning needs in practice.

### Summary

The UND Occupational Therapy Program emphasizes occupational skills development across the lifespan with multiple opportunities for students to experience/ appreciate the impact of contextual factors on adaptive processes and role transition. Students are expected to acquire the tools to not only assist clients with adaptive processes across the lifespan but also to enable client participation in valued occupations. Through the course of their education, students are expected to develop the knowledge, skills and adaptive capacity needed to address occupational challenges inherent to the role of occupational therapist and the reflective skills needed to sustain life-long learning.

### Curriculum Threads

The UND Occupational Therapy Program has identified the following listing of core curricular threads represented throughout the curriculum and recognized as exceptional qualities of the Program as demonstrated by its graduates.

The first set of curricular threads describes three elements of practice recognized as vital to contemporary occupational therapy practice. The graduate is prepared for practice in a wide variety of practice settings including pediatrics, adult rehabilitation, mental health, community and emerging practice areas.

- **Client-centered practice** – The therapist holds “a philosophy of service committed to respect for and partnership with people receiving services, emphasizing the individual recipient of service and a focus on developing, restoring, or adapting the individual’s skills and organizing and using assistance available in natural supports from family and friends” (Crepeau, Cohn, & Shell, 2009, p. 1155).
- **Occupation-based practice** – The therapist’s intervention planning supports engagement in personal and valued occupations when the occupational therapist and client “collaboratively select and design activities that have specific relevance or meaning to the client and support the client’s interests, needs, health and participation in daily life” (Crepeau, Cohn, & Shell, 2009, p. 1162)
- **Evidence-based practice** – Therapists are prepared to “use... research study findings, client values and practitioner expertise during clinical reasoning to support the process of making wise practice decisions” (Crepeau, Cohn, & Shell, 2009, p. 1158).

The second set of curricular threads represents unique areas of emphasis specific to the UND Occupational Therapy Program. Graduates recognize the importance of therapeutic relationships and therapeutic use of self in practice, use the reflective process to enhance their practice, and are prepared to assume leadership positions early in their careers.

- **Therapeutic Relationship** – Therapists are well-prepared to use “collaborative and client-centered approaches, emphasize caring and empathy, and demonstrate clinical reasoning and use of narrative” in the course of client-therapist relationships to forward successful interaction in therapy (Taylor, 2008, p.14).
- **Reflective practitioners** – The therapist regularly employs the reflective process to benefit everyday practice, as well as to assess continuing competency needs and plans for future learning. Reflection is a “tool in analyzing thoughts and actions that assists practitioners to justify interventions and gives practitioners the ability to learn from experience” (Sladyk, Jacobs, & MacRae, 2010, p. 622); but also a “process of listening to both the verbal and emotional content of a speaker and verbalizing both the feelings and attitudes sensed behind the spoken words to the speaker (Davis, 2006)” (Sladyk, Jacobs, & MacRae, 2010, p. 622).
- **Leadership in practice** – The therapist enters occupational therapy practice with confidence and prepared to serve in a leadership capacity including “the ability to engage and influence others to facilitate and embrace meaningful change through careful consideration of individual and societal contexts in the embodiment of a shared vision” (Sladyk, Jacobs, & MacRae, 2010, p. 618).

### References

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practices. The Program places strong emphasis on OT theory, research and communication skills to add support to scholarly and professional efforts. Over the years, the Program has been lengthened to meet changing essentials and to reflect revisions to national educational and practice standards. These revisions have largely been the result of national concerns over accountability in healthcare and consumer expectations of evidence in support of treatment decisions. Changes in relevant federal programs, Medicare for example, have created an essential need for highly trained professionals who not only possess the best of clinical knowledge but also leadership and management skills to weather shifting dynamics in the profession.

The educational preparation of occupational therapy practitioners has been further reinforced by a national mandate toward accreditation of academic programs at the master's level. The UND OT Department made the transition to graduate-level curriculum in 2001, at both the Grand Forks and Wyoming programs. The transitional master's program (tMOT) was added in 2004 to meet the needs of practicing clinicians who have previously graduated from baccalaureate programs and wish to remain ahead of advancing industry trends.

An additional strength of the OT program continues to be the emphasis placed on fieldwork curriculum in pediatrics, psychosocial aspects, and physical disability. Students complete a series of week-long Level I fieldworks during their first and second years, with Level II fieldworks in the summer before graduate curriculum begins, and in the final semester of their studies. In addition, students are offered the opportunity to develop mentoring relationships with practicing clinicians through the community experience and fieldwork Level II electives. These courses assist students in designing their own learning objectives and negotiating these experiences with a faculty member and a practicing therapist. These fieldwork and elective studies, in addition to the cooperative education program, help the Department maintain ties with area clinicians who are necessary for the development of qualified professionals. The faculty are focusing on development of research relationships with area therapists to support the need for evidence in occupational therapy practice decisions.

The faculty has long been one of the most important aspects of the success of the OT department, comprised of talented educators who work diligently to provide education that stays abreast of health care changes, best practices, and prepares strong entry level practitioners for all areas of practice. It is important to note that the faculty is now comprised of 11 full-time faculty members and a number of committed adjunct faculty members at the Grand Forks and Casper, Wyoming campuses. The talents, skills, and accomplishments of the faculty are recognized by the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the University, local and regional communities and national associations.

The Department has also benefited from consistent leadership, having had only four department chairs throughout its history, resulting in stable and visionary administration. Ms. Althea Ashton began her time as Department Chair starting January 1955 and retired as Mrs. Althea Harman in December 1956. She was followed by Dr. Amy Lind, who was selected as Chair in 1956 and retired in June 1981. Ms. Sue McIntyre joined the faculty in 1967 and became Chair in 1981. Sue retired in 2005, following the creation of the Wyoming program and the shift to master's level curriculum. The Department is currently chaired by Dr. Janet

Jedlicka, who was initially appointed Interim Chair when Sue McIntyre left in June, 2005. Dr. Jedlicka now leads the Department, having been appointed Chair in February, 2006.

Students continue to be strongly encouraged to participate in personal and professional development through leadership and community service, and volunteerism. Both the Grand Forks and Casper campuses house a Student Occupational Therapy Association, which supports education, advocacy, and social activities promoting occupational therapy. In addition selected students from the Grand Forks campus who are in the top 35% of the class are invited to participate in the Kappa Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon. This national OT honor society focuses on recognizing and encouraging scholastic excellence and contributing to the advancement of the profession through scholarly activities

At the Wyoming satellite, student involvement in professional activities has resulted in a 100% membership rate in the Wyoming Occupational Therapy Association and a large percentage of students also are members of AOTA. OT Club initiatives have resulted in the development of the Program-sponsored OT Month mini-conference in Wyoming, now in its 5th year. At this event, local clinicians are invited to speak on their experiences and expertise in emerging practice areas.

Additionally, the OT Department is also very proud of our alumni, who have worked diligently to make a difference in the day-to-day lives of the people they serve in providing up-to-date occupational therapy services to their clients, developing programs, and opening their own businesses. In addition, a number of individuals have pursued advanced education and pursued education and research opportunities in areas across the nation. UND OT graduates hold key leadership positions in professional organizations.

The Occupational Therapy Department is currently in its 57th year educating future OT professionals. Over the years, the medical industry has seen extensive changes in patient care, funding, documentation, evidence based practice and a wide array of medical advances. The opportunities for learning and development presented through research, fieldwork experiences and student-designed curriculum like the cooperative experience, help the Department to train highly qualified graduates who are identified by employers as the standard for entry-level therapists. The Department has had a wonderful history and the commitment of the University and the SMHS, as well as committed alumni, has ensured a strong foundation to build the next generations of therapists.



# Pi Theta Epsilon, Kappa Chapter



**P**i Theta Epsilon (PTE) is a specialized honor society recognizing and encouraging superior scholarship among occupational therapy students and alumni. The mission of PTE is “to support the development of occupational sciences and the practice of authentic occupational therapy by promoting research and other scholarly activities by its members. In this way, the organization services not only the profession, but helps to insure quality health care services for the general public.”

The purposes of PTE are to: 1) recognize and encourage scholastic excellence, 2) contribute to the advance of OT through scholarly activities, such as research development, continuing education, and information exchange between student and alumni members; and 3) provide a means for students enrolled in accredited OT programs to exchange information and collaborate regarding scholarly activity. Students are invited to apply for membership in the spring of Year I following review of academic performance (top 35% of the class with GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale) in OT courses, scholarly written work, and a written statement of the student’s reason and desire to join PTE.

The University of North Dakota’s Kappa Chapter members are active participants of the university community and count among their achievements an on-going journal club, in-service presentations, contributions to the Scroll & Pen Newsletter, AOTA Annual Conference attendance, and co-sponsorship of the Annual ND OT Student Conference, as well as service projects such as Backpack Awareness for local school students and WIC participants, and evidence-based research reviews for area therapists.

Kappa Chapter engages in fundraising projects to support the Ruth Peterson Memorial Scholarship, awarded annually to a second-year UND OT student. The fund is managed by the American Occupational Therapy Foundations. Donations are welcomed. The current Kappa Chapter President is Kelli Atkinson; Vice President is Amy Jo Jenson, Secretary is Diana Heuttl, and Treasurer is Allison Kalb. Faculty Advisement is provided by Sonia Zimmerman, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA.



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Kari Kerr (Prevention and Education Program Coordinator, Community Violence Intervention Center), Darlene Czapiewski (OT Administrative Assistant), Jan Stube (OT Associate Professor) and Gail Bass (OT Associate Professor). The event was a blanket-making service project by faculty, staff and CVIC. Six blankets were made and donated.