

## WVU Occupational Therapy E-News

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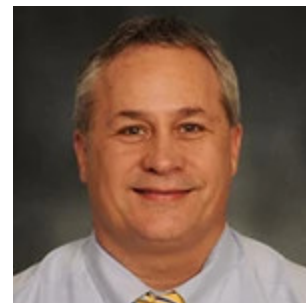
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## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The Fall 2023 semester marked a very exciting time in the 25-year history of occupational therapy education at West Virginia University. Pre-pandemic levels of faculty and student service, combined with innovative, student-centered education and an ever-expanding scholarly agenda, the Division of Occupational Therapy continues to make impactful contributions locally, across the state, and nation.



Division students and faculty were instrumental to the success of the West Virginia Occupational Therapy Association Conference in Charleston, WV, leading eight of the nine presentations on topics across the lifespan and contributing 12 research posters to a successful interactive poster session. In November, the Division hosted its annual Fall Fest continued education event, featuring educational presentations in adult and pediatric tracks and student

research posters. Division faculty also made national presentations at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities Conference in Washington, DC (November 2022) and the American Occupational Therapy Association Mental Health Specialty Conference in Columbus, OH (December 2022).

In the community, students continued to demonstrate their commitment to helping others through numerous community events that included:

- Sixteen students assisted with gross motor/coordination developmental activities as part of the WVU Hockey youth camp.
- Students [Hannah Cait Guschel and Bailey Riggs were featured on WDTV News](#) for their work, along with a group of occupational therapy students as part of the United Way Toy Drive.
- Students and faculty hosted a [Car-Fit event](#) — a community-based educational program that allows older adults to check safety related to how well they ‘fit’ in their personal vehicles.
- Fundraising activities to support student leadership attendance at the AOTA Conference in Kansas City.

In August, the Division was able to resume its traditional picnic, allowing cohorts to interact with one another and with faculty and staff. New to the event was the launch of the occupational therapy cornhole tournament where new and experienced Mountaineer tailgaters



showcased their athletic skills and competitive spirit. Ascending to the tournament final from the 24-team event were the duos of Whitney Coffield/Carly Terlikowski and Sierra McNichol/Lauren Garcia, with the team Coffield and Terlikowski emerging as the inaugural champions.

This edition of our Occupational Therapy E-News features faculty, student, and alumni successes. As we prepare to launch our 25th anniversary activities, culminating at the AOTA 2024 Conference in Orlando, we look forward to sharing great memories while channeling our Mountaineer spirit to reach new heights.

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

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## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

**[MOT Program Director recognized for Interprofessional Collaboration Award](#)**



[Amy Kurowski-Burt, Ed.D., MOT, OTR/L](#), Program Director of the WVU Division of Occupational Therapy master's degree program, has been awarded the 2023 American Occupational Therapy Association (OTA) Interprofessional

Collaboration Award.

At the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED), Dr. Burt provides OT services in the interdisciplinary feeding and swallowing clinic for children aged birth to 18 years old. This clinic provides services to children with complex feeding and swallowing challenges to the entire state of West Virginia. In addition, Dr. Burt mentors Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) interprofessional students through the WVU CED. The LEND program helps to promote interdisciplinary teamwork, develop rural leaders, and encourage change in the medical system while demonstrating values of equitable, inclusive, and integrative community services.

Dr. Burt has been instrumental in several initiatives across the WVU campuses. She is a member of the Interprofessional Education (IPE) Steering Committee within the School of Medicine and a faculty facilitator during the IPE sessions. She will accept her honor at the AOTA Annual Conference in Kansas City, in April 2023.

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## EXPLORE MORE

### **[WVU Division of Occupational Therapy will celebrate 25 years of graduates in 2024](#)**

We will kick off our events at the [2024 AOTA Inspire Conference](#) in Orlando, Florida, and conclude the celebration with a number of events during WVU Homecoming weekend 2024. Hope to see you there!

### **[New simulator puts patients in the driver's seat](#)**

The Division of OT is providing hope to help ease patients back behind the wheel, thanks to a new driving simulator. According to [Jacob Greenfield, MOT, OTR/L, ATRIC, CSRS](#), assistant professor of Occupational Therapy, the new simulator is vital in helping patients become comfortable and confident behind the wheel following an accident or injury. Occupational therapists test patients' driving abilities and reactions in an otherwise controlled environment, allowing patients to increase their confidence and fine tune their skills. For more information on driving rehabilitation services, contact the WVU Physical and Occupational Therapy Clinic at 304-293-3600.

## **Hand & Upper Extremity continuing education opportunity**

We are pleased to announce a continuing education collaboration with the WVU School of Medicine and Doctors Demystify. For over 30 years, Doctors Demystify has been providing both live and self-study courses for OTs and PTs passionate about the upper extremity. By collaborating with local therapists and surgeons, Doctors Demystify strives to provide a broad spectrum of easily accessible, modestly priced, high-quality courses to further stimulate learning and collegiality between hand therapists and hand surgeons. [Learn more.](#)

## **Occupational Therapy program hosts successful handwriting camp**



Early elementary school students spent six evenings last summer developing skills to improve handwriting alongside faculty member and occupational therapist, [Carrie Smith-Bell, OTR/L](#), and more than two dozen occupational therapy student volunteers.

Integrating best-practice techniques, the camp utilized a multi-sensory approach to handwriting. In addition to traditional pencil and paper, the children were able to explore letter formation using paint, scented markers, rice, wood pieces, and shaving cream. Parents reported that their children looked forward to attending and noticed improvements with “accuracy in formations, writing on lines, and better sizing.” The occupational therapy students who participated felt empowered and more confident in their pediatric intervention skills after volunteering at the camp.

## **Go Baby Go service project continues**



The WVU Division of Occupational Therapy, in conjunction with the Division of Physical Therapy, continues the GoBabyGo service project. Cars are customized to the child and possible modifications include seating support, changing activation control from a foot to a hand switch, and steering modifications. The service project is provided by OT students under the supervision of [Carrie Smith-Bell, MOT, OTR/L](#) and [Diana Davis, PhD, MA, OTR/L](#). This service project provides modified cars free to families. Those interested in sponsoring full or partial costs of the modifications are welcome to visit our [crowdfunding page](#).

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# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

As leaders in the field of occupational therapy, WVU OT alumni continue to achieve success and recognition. Please join us in congratulating the alumni who have earned certifications and recognitions recently.

- Recently, WVU OT alumni were recognized for their exceptional patient care throughout the WVU Medicine System. [Evan Pivont Smith, MOT, OTR/L](#), was recognized as the Fairmont Medical Center employee of the month. Three WVU OT alumni received the Cornerstone of Recovery Award including [Erica Smith](#), [Brittany England](#), and [Abby Snitz Clark](#).
- [Meghen Milinovich, MOT, OTR/L, BCP](#), earned Board Certification in Pediatrics in August 2022. Milinovich has pediatric clinical experience in outpatient, school-based, and early intervention settings. Her clinical experiences, along with her personal experience as a mother, have developed her passions in handwriting, feeding, and oral tissue ties/reversal (tongue ties).
- [Jessi Lowman, MOT, OTR/L](#) spoke internationally at RehabWeek in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Along with her colleagues, Lowman presented on the use of body weight support (BWS) during occupational therapy sessions to increase participation in activities of daily living and quality of life.
- After completing over 100 hours of breastfeeding-specific continuing education and 1,000 hands-on hours, [Cara Daubenspeck, OTR/L, IBCLC, CIMI-2](#), was eligible to sit and passed the board exam to become an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. She owns a private practice in Charleston, WV, helping families feed their babies with a holistic approach and meeting their feeding goals.
- Alumnus [Jacob Greenfield, OTD, OTR/L, ATRIC](#), completed his post-professional occupational therapy doctorate from Chatham University. His doctorate capstone explored the impact of interprofessional education on students' self-efficacy related to interprofessional collaboration.
- Building upon her occupational therapy education, alumnus [Jami Myers, MOT, OTR/L](#), has experience and expertise in the field of dementia care and currently serves as a Positive Approach to Care Certified Independent Trainer. During a recent journal club presentation, Myers engaged with recent graduates [Catherine Ishimasa, MOT, OTR/L](#), and [Rachel Carrico, MOT, OTR/L](#). A few months later, Myers, Ishimasa, and Carrico were able to convene during the 2022 Positive Approach to Care Conference.

Know a WVU OT alumnus who should be featured? [Submit nominations via our online form.](#)

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## 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 gatherings 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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