The Occupational Therapy Masters (OTM) program at Georgia State University is officially fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). The graduates from the program are now eligible to sit for the national certification exam for the occupational therapist administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Graduates who successfully pass this exam will become an Occupational Therapist, Registered (OTR). The faculty of the department worked diligently through this process, allowing the department to receive much praise from ACOTE. We hope to continue to strive for high standards to ensure the department reaches its full potential in providing the highest quality education for our students. We thank everyone involved in this process for having faith in our program.
Welcoming the Department of Occupational Therapy in the Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing and Health Professions at Georgia State University. We are excited to start another year of our MOT program, welcome the new faculty and cohort, and share the next issue of our newsletter.

The department has had significant growth over the last few months. We are pleased to announce that the program has received full accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). I would like to thank everyone involved in the process for their assiduous work and dedication. We are continuously working to further develop this program in research as well as academics. The department’s faculty is constantly growing, as we have now welcomed Dr. Yi-An Chen to our team. She has much to offer our program with her extensive knowledge and experience from Taiwan and University of Southern California. The department is also delighted to have

Sang-Heon Lee as a visiting professor from Soonchunhyang University, South Korea. Dr. Carolyn Podolski has continued to develop new relationships with facilities in Georgia as well as many other states in order to provide students with top-notch fieldwork experiences to enhance their education. She has also arranged for students to go to Camp BIAG as a part of their fieldwork to give them hands-on experience working with individuals with traumatic brain injuries. We have officially welcomed our third cohort of students into the program. These bright minds show tremendous potential and we are eager to watch them grow into occupational therapy leaders.

Several faculty members have had remarkable advancement in research. They were invited to present their research posters nationally, as well as internationally, this past year. To highlight a few advancements, Dr. Debi Hinerfeld and I presented our posters on our individual research at the World Federation of Occupational Therapy conference in Cape Town, South Africa. Dr. Yoonjeong Lim spoke about her research at the 9th International Scientific, Medical & Family Conference held by Barth Syndrome Foundation in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Dr. Pey-Shan Wen presented her collaboration project with Kinesiology in Brain and Behavior, Initiative

Maximizing Student Development and Center for the Advancement of Students and Alumni.

This was a notable year at the Georgia Occupational Therapy Association Conference for GSU Occupational Therapy. A number of students and faculty gave outstanding presentations for their research. Professor Carolyn Podolski was honored with the Barbara E. Grant Award of Merit and Dr. Jade Gross was named Chair of Education.

It continues to be an honor to serve as the Inaugural Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at Georgia State University. I wish you all a happy and healthy semester.

Kinsuk Maitra, Ph.D., O.T.R./L., F.A.O.T.A.
The Class of 2018 began their second level of fieldwork, the Class of 2019 started their last didactic semester, and we welcomed in the Class of 2020. In April, our Vice President Hayden George and myself attended the AOTA Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah alongside professors. We had the privilege of speaking with AOTA President Amy Lamb and attending informative presentations.

Our Community Service chair, Alex Anthony, has provided outstanding opportunities for our students. Some of our students had the honor of being camp counselors at Camp Wheel-A-Way (Kyle Pease Foundation), Camp Braveheart, Camp Carpe Diem, and Camp Courage (CHOA). Experiences that will last a lifetime! We recently partnered with Gigi’s Playhouse and were given the opportunity to run a monthly program on fine motor and sensory activities with 5-8 year old children who have Down syndrome. We are incredibly excited! There are a few more upcoming community service events as well including Horizon League Baseball, ‘No Limits Tryathalon’, and the Side-by-Side Club House. Our exceptional Public Relations Chair, Jenn Boner, orchestrated a wonderful social event at the Atlanta Braves game over the summer. The classes got to mix and mingle while watching America’s greatest pastime. Our ASD, Kelly Fitzgerald has done a fantastic job keeping our organization in the know with all things AOTA and updates in the profession. Emma Hearn, treasurer, and Melissa Perkowski, secretary have made sure that everything runs smoothly with budget creation and student body communication respectively.

Three of our students were recently accepted into the GaLEND Program and we could not be more excited to watch their journey (Liz Loncher, Jennie Chambliss, and Jenn Boner)! They are currently in classes that promote the importance of family-centered, interdisciplinary care for people with disabilities. Some of our students have begun to attend the GOTA meetings and we are working to create a partnership with them.

We are excited to announce that we had many of our students present their research at the Georgia Occupational Therapy Association Conference in Jekyll Island. Dr. Debi Hinerfeld hosted a session as well. We all had a wonderful time!

Our fundraising chair, Deb Hagerty, has tirelessly worked on creating our next fundraiser! We are working with Condesa Coffee to host an art show to display the work of local student and adult artists with disabilities. Opening night will be Thursday, November 1 from 6-10pm at the John Wesley Dobbs location. The art will be displayed at both Atlanta locations for a month and 30% of all profits from opening night will be contributed towards SOTA. We cannot wait!

All of our students are outstanding individuals and we are so proud to be a part of this program.
GSU OT Back-to-School Braves Game

In May, the Students Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) organized a back-to-school event where students kicked off the school year by going to an Atlanta Braves baseball game. This event gave new students a chance to meet the previous cohorts while cheering on the braves.

Cause Ball

In February, we held our first annual Masquerade Cause Ball. It was a phenomenal event to benefit the Frazer Center Adult Program and SOTA. The silent auction and donations combined totaled to be $3,803.35, in addition to ticket sales for approximately 140 guests. Everyone danced the night away for a great cause!

We are excited to announce our new SOTA officers!

President: Mariam Sheikh
Vice President: Nathalie Cuestas
Secretary: Caroline Fickling
Treasurer: Brittany Marquis
Student Delegate: Summer Shelton
Community Service: Samantha Price
Fundraising: Noopur Parekh
Public Relations: Morgan Ryder
New Member: Gray Griffies
What made you decide to pursue OT as a career? Who has influenced you most as an OT?

OT is not a popular field in South Korea. However, I knew about OT because of my family background. My little brother has down syndrome, so he went to OT, PT, and ST. I also did volunteer work while in high school at a facility for adults with intellectual disabilities. I found the field of OT to be very interesting and filled with possibilities.

When I did fieldwork in pediatrics, I had a mentor. He was very skilled and also very respectful and caring toward patients and their families, which impressed me.

What made you decide to transition into academia, and what have you enjoyed most about serving on the faculty at Georgia State University?

After I graduated, I went for my masters and was a TA. I enjoyed teaching my students. I also did research during this time. It not only interested me, but it also helped me teach my students better. My teaching experience led me to pursue my Ph.D. The faculty at GSU is very collaborative, and everyone is always trying to help one another. It is like a family environment. The chair also considers our needs and is always trying to advocate for us. This is a very new program, so it is a unique experience to create these courses from scratch.

What are you looking forward to about the future of the OT program?

I am looking forward to transitioning this program to an OTD program. I am enjoying developing the courses for that. It is also helping to expand our research which pleases me. A good balance of teaching and research will lead to a good outcome for our program.

Any advice for students going into the field of OT?

OT is a very complex, holistic field. We care about the psychological needs of the clients as well as their physical needs. I know all of you are very bright. Remember to care for your clients. Knowledge is key, but so is personality. OT is not an individualistic field. You need to collaborate with others and have empathy, cooperation, and respect for your clients. You also need to care for their families.

What are your research interests, and why are you passionate about these topics?

My research mainly focuses on the impact of raising children with rare disorders on the family (family impact). As a sister of a little brother with Down Syndrome, I know the family life is different than that of a typical family. It's not bad though. There are a lot of positive impacts, such as strong family bonds. By watching him and caring for him, I developed many research ideas. I also communicated with my clients' families about their quality of life. They were very thankful that I asked and were happy to know I was focusing my research on this. Their positive feedback motivated me to keep working.

What are your hobbies, interests, and things you like to do in your spare time?

I like doing aerial yoga and kick-boxing classes in my free time. I also love to take walks with my little brother and mom who are visiting me right now.
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:
YI-AN CHEN, PHD, OTR/L

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE OT AS A CAREER? WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU MOST AS AN OT?

I always wanted to work in some health-related field because I love biology and working with people. After I took my university entrance exams in Taiwan, I eventually chose OT as my career path (it is an undergraduate degree there). I loved it, especially everything related to neuroscience. When I saw the cadaver's brain for the first time, I spent hours examining it in lab. That's when I realized I wanted to study the brain. My other passion in the field of OT is hand therapy. I had a mentor in college who influenced me. I did a seminar with him, and that's when I learned a lot about neuroscience. He works super hard and is one of the smartest, most diligent individuals I know. I was fascinated by his knowledge and wanted to be like him. I also did a clinical rotation at a hand therapy center. My clinical supervisor, there was very knowledgeable and very good at observing people and dealing with situations. I also wanted to be like her.

I hope that in the future when this program is mentioned, it is highly credited and known. I want our program to have it's specialty also.

ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS GOING INTO THE FIELD OF OT?

Be passionate! I am super passionate about neuroscience and hand therapy. I strayed for a while but went back to the field I most enjoyed. If you keep the passion, eventually you will end up there. It will take your far and to the top. Also, be open-minded and take time to listen to others.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS, AND WHY ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT THESE TOPICS?

My research interests are neuroscience and hands. I am focusing specifically on patients with stroke and using mobile technology to provide therapy. I am working with a professor at the school of music to combine neuro rehab with music using mobile health technology, focusing on stroke patients' hand function.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES, INTERESTS, AND THINGS YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

My non-working part of life is taken over by my dogs. I have two dogs. I love to play with them, take care of them, and spoil them!
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MARY ALVAREZ

WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL/EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?

I went to UGA for both undergrad and graduate school (Go Dawgs!). I majored in International Affairs, Latin American Studies, and Spanish and got a Master's in Education. I taught high school Spanish briefly, but spent most of my professional career in social work settings, working in early education, emergency assistance, and case management. Once I learned about OT, I fell in love with the field because it combined so many things that I loved about teaching and social work, but with an even more holistic and client-centered approach.

WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST ABOUT THE OT PROGRAM?

One thing I really love about GSU’s OT program is how much exposure the program gives you to different areas of OT practice. All of the faculty have such diverse experiences and areas of expertise, and I’ve loved all the field trips we’ve taken and the guest speakers that have come from different area hospitals and facilities. I’ve also learned so much from the other students in my cohort, since everyone has so many different past experiences and backgrounds.

HAVE YOU HAD A FAVORITE FIELDWORK PLACEMENT?

I would have to say my favorite FW placement so far was at Peachtree Orthopedics. I had never seen OT practiced in an orthopedic setting before and both of my CIs there were great. I learned a lot and really enjoyed getting to see a side of OT that was very different from the other settings I had shadowed and volunteered in.

ANY IDEA ABOUT FUTURE CAREER GOALS?

One of the things I like best about OT is the wide range of settings and populations that you can work with. I think neuro rehab seems fascinating and I’m also interested in pediatrics, but I don’t think I have enough to know exactly what setting I would like to work in yet. I really like learning new things, so I may end up working in one setting for several years, then switching to another to learn more about another side of OT.

ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COHORTS BELOW YOU?

I don’t think I’m a very qualified person to give advice, but one thing that I have really appreciated hearing as a student is about the importance of having occupational balance in your life. It can be so easy to have days when grad school seems to take over your life, so keeping that goal of occupational balance in sight can help you remember to make time for the things in life that give you that balance.

MOST HELPFUL ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED AS A FUTURE OT?

One piece of advice that I have heard consistently is to always make sure that you have a mentor, especially when you are a new practitioner. Given how much learning takes place on the job, I can definitely see why this is so important and plan to look for mentors and jobs that have opportunities to learn from more experienced OTs.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES, INTERESTS, AND FAVORITE THINGS TO DO AROUND ATLANTA?

My daughter, Elena, is almost two, so a lot of my favorite things to do around Atlanta these days involve finding fun parks, playgrounds, and other toddler-friendly activities. I don’t have quite as much time for hobbies as I would like, but I really enjoy anything involving crafts and sewing, and am trying to get back into running and hiking. I love spending time with family and friends and enjoy having people over and trying out new recipes. I also really like learning about other cultures and languages and love to travel, so we’re pretty much always planning our next family trip.
FACULTY MILESTONES

- Dr. Yoonjeong Lim was invited as a speaker at the 9th International Scientific, Medical & Family Conference held by Barth Syndrome Foundation in Clearwater Beach, Florida, from July 16 to 21. She spoke about her research findings from her study, The Impact of Raising Children with Barth Syndrome on the family, and she also presented her study at the interactive poster session.

- Dr. Kinsuk Maitra was a guest lecturer at the University of Absalon in Denmark. His lecture focused on “Human occupation and spatial structure of domestic environments - an Occupational Science Perspective.”

- Dr. Kinsuk Maitra and Dr. Debi Hinerfeld presented posters on their individual research at the World Federation of Occupational Therapy conference in Cape Town, South Africa.
  
  - Dr. Hinerfeld presented her poster “Predictors of Social Change Leadership in Occupational Therapy Students.”
  
  - Dr. Maitra presented his posters “Motor Impairments Associated with Speech and Language Impairments in Children: A Meta-Analyses” and "Home is where everything begins: Design characteristics of home that promotes ADL performance."

- Professor Carolyn Podolski spoke at a Veteran’s Empowerment Board meeting.

- Dr. Pey-Shan Wen presented her collaboration project with Kinesiology, “Effect of vibration training on improving cognitive function in persons with multiple sclerosis,” in Brain and Behavior, Initiative Maximizing Student Development and Center for the Advancement of Students and Alumni on August 1st, 2018.
GEORGIA OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION (GOTA) CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

CAROLYN PODOLSKI RECEIVED BARBARA E. GRANT AWARD OF

Professor Carolyn Podolski, who was kindly nominated by Dr. Jade Gross, was honored with the Barbara E. Grant Award of Merit this year at the GOTA conference. This award is the highest honor an occupational therapist can receive in the state of Georgia. It is awarded to an individual who has made a tremendous global contribution to the profession in areas such as service, leadership, education and advocacy. We are proud of Professor Podolski and her outstanding work!

STUDENTS AND FACULTY GAVE OUTSTANDING PRESENTATIONS

Schonie Lee Hamilton did a poster presentation on “Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare from Conception to Birth.”

Karen McWaters, Peyton Pritchard, Christine Sherwood, and Wei Wang presented their poster “Refugee Crisis in Georgia: How does Occupational Therapy Fit In.”

Karen McWaters, Karlie Moore, Paige Muma, Payton Pritchard, Christine Sherwood, and Hillary Woodall presented their research conducted with Dr. Pey-Shan Wen, “The Effects of Yoga on Pain, Sleep, Mood, and Executive Function in Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury.”

Dr. Hinerfeld presented on "Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics" and also did a poster on "Predicting Social Change Leadership Values in Entry Level Occupational Therapy Practitioners."

Amanda Pitts presented a poster on behalf of her and her research team (Hayat Akmel and Jonathan Cam) “The Impact of Supportive Services on the Quality of Life and Senses of Well-being in Community Dwelling Older Adults.”

DR. JADE GROSS WAS NAMED EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dr. Jade gross was named Education Committee Chair. In this role, she will facilitate communication between educational programs and promote student engagement in GOTA.
Members of the Community Leadership and Legacy Committee serve as voices of the community. They come from a range of organizations throughout Atlanta, including research universities, hospitals, occupational therapy facilities, and various public and private entities. They provide meaningful leadership, support, and direction to the occupational therapy program. This group will meet once a semester to provide valuable guidance and feedback regarding program plans and activities. We appreciate your service to our program!

Sonit Bafna, Ph.D.
Georgia Institute of Technology

Protip Biswas
United Way of Greater Atlanta

Sheila Brock, O.T.R./L.
Emory University Hospital

Shara Brown, M.S.O.T., O.T.R./L.
Grady Memorial Hospital

Andrew Butler, Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Mark Crenshaw, M.T.S.
Georgia State University

Daniel Crimmins, Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Jennifer Fangmann, O.T.R./L.
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Chris Doane, M.S., O.T.R./L.,
F.A.O.T.A
Advanced Rehab Services

Iris Feinberg, Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Amy Glass, Ph.D.
Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta

Lynda Goodfellow, Ed.D.
Georgia State University

Gina Holecek, M.P.H., O.T.R./L.,
C.D.R.S.
Emory Rehabilitation Hospital

Katie Kimball, M.S., O.T.R./L.
Shepherd Center

Nancy Kropf, Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Angela Matthiessen, M.S.O.T., O.T.R./L.
Pediatric Occupational Therapist

Martin Norgaard, Ph.D.
Georgia State University

Susan Orloff, O.T.R./L.
Children's Special Services

Naeha Patel, O.T.R./L.
Pediatric Development Center of Atlanta

Jon A. Sanford, M.Arch.
Georgia Institute of Technology

Melissa Thurlow, M.B.A., O.T.R./L.,
C.H.T.
Peachtree Orthopedics Physical Therapy

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**CLASSROOM EVENTS**

Creating a time line for the history of occupational therapy

Learning how to make splints

Finding center of gravity while in a wheelchair

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**CONNECT WITH US!**

Make sure to "like" our new Facebook page. Connect with fellow students and share your program experiences by using the hashtag #GSUOT on Instagram. Share OT-related resources via our Pinterest page!
OCTOBER 31
Halloween

NOVEMBER 1
Art Show Fundraiser
Condesa Coffee
6pm-10pm

NOVEMBER 14
SOTA meeting
8am-9am

NOVEMBER 19–24
Thanksgiving break

MEET THE FACULTY & STAFF

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