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PROGRAMS IN
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Columbia University MOTivator

We see the need. We meet it. We exceed it!

Dr. Joel Stein, Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine announces Dr. Dawn Nilsen as Program Director of the Programs in Occupational Therapy.



“Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Dr. Dawn Nilsen has accepted the position of Director of the Programs in Occupational Therapy at Columbia University. Dr. Nilsen will also serve as Vice-Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine, and as an Assistant Dean at the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Dr. Nilsen received her BS in Occupational Therapy from NYU, followed by Masters degrees from both New York Medical College and Teachers College. She then received an EdD from Teachers College. Dr. Nilsen joined the full-time faculty in the Columbia OT program in 2011, and now serves as Professor of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine (Occupational Therapy) at CUIMC. She served as the Associate Director of the Programs in OT since 2018, and has been the Interim Director of the program for the past 8 months. Dr. Nilsen’s research involves motor control and recovery after stroke and neurological disorders, and she has published and lectured extensively in this field. She is a highly regarded educator, and brings a wealth of clinical experience and knowledge to the position as well.

On a personal note, I have had the privilege of working with Dr. Nilsen as a research collaborator and in her administrative leadership roles, and can attest to her dedication to the academic mission and as a colleague whom is respected and admired by all who work with her.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Nilsen, and welcoming her to her new role.”

Joel Stein, MD

Simon Baruch Professor and Chair

Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine

Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons

Letter From The Director

Dear CUOT Alumni and Friends,

It is my hope that this letter finds you all well! I want to start by saying that I am honored and privileged to be following in the foot-steps of Drs. Glen Gillen and Janet Falk-Kessler as the Program Director of the Programs in Occupational Therapy. Of course, these are big shoes to fill! With that said, I am grateful that both Glen and Janet remain as members of our faculty, and that both of them have agreed to lend me a “listening ear” whenever needed. I am pleased to announce that Dr. Razan Hamed will be taking over my previous position as Associate Director. I am excited to be partnering with Razan, the directors of our doctoral programs, Drs. Katherine Dimitropoulou and Rochelle Mendonca, the CUOT faculty, and staff as we set our sights on the future.

Amazing things have been happening here at CUOT! This past fall we on-boarded 54 MS students from across the country as well as 6 new Post-Professional OTD students. It is hard to believe that our spring semester is well underway. Also of note, is the fact that this year marks our entry-level MS program’s reaccreditation cycle. With the self-study comes change and change is good. It means we are learning, growing and building on our rich history!

In December, we held our 4th annual *Janet Falk-Kessler Distinguished Lecture and Day of Scholarship*. Our key note speaker, Dr. Amy Lynch, gave a powerful and thought provoking talk on Trauma Informed Care. This event continues to be a wonderful way to honor Dr. Falk-Kessler and her many contributions to the Programs and our profession, and the proceeds from the event continue to help support our Diversity Scholarship.

In January, students and three of our faculty members continued our tradition of participating in a service learning trip to Morocco. They partnered with local health care practitioners and communities for a wonderful collaborative learning experience.

We recently welcomed four new faculty members to our community: Drs. Tyra Banks, Julia Guzmán, Danielle Mahoney and Anna Norweg. They bring with them a wealth of

teaching, clinical and research experience to our community. Their impact is already being felt!

Our faculty continue to be actively engaged in scholarship and their productivity is truly amazing. As a group, over the past two academic years, they have been responsible for: publishing multiple peer-reviewed research publications, textbook chapters, and books; securing both internal and external grant funding; and presenting nationally and internationally on a variety of topics. In addition, several of our faculty were selected to receive awards recognizing their innovation, scholarly achievements, and contributions to the profession.

Likewise, our students are impacting the local community and are actively engaged in scholarship by partnering with faculty through publications, our newly minted Assistive Technology course, the BHWET grant, and more.

As usual, CUOT faculty and students will be well represented at the AOTA conference. Please save Friday, April 21st as the date for our Alumni Reception. We look forward to reconnecting in Kansas City!

All my best,

Dawn M. Nilsen, EdD, OTR, FAOTA

Professor and Director, Programs in Occupational Therapy

Dr. Pat Precin Honored With Award for Excellence in the Advancement of OT



Pat Precin was recognized with the *Award for Excellence in the Advancement of OT ("Pioneer in the Advancement of Behavioral Health")* which will be conferred at AOTA INSPIRE 2023 in Kansas City.

Established in 1973 as the Certificate of Appreciation and renamed in 2015, this award expresses the appreciation of the Association for extraordinary contributions to the advancement of occupational therapy.

[Learn More](#)

BHWET Grant Awarded to Columbia OT

Dr. Patricia Precin and Dr. Phyllis Simon from the Programs in Occupational Therapy were awarded the HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce and Education Training (BHWET) Grant with Dr. Laura Kelly from the Columbia School Of Nursing, for 1.9 million dollars. They will continue to foster this program for the next 3 years of the grant.



The purpose of the BHWET Program for Professionals is to develop and expand experiential training opportunities to improve and grow the behavioral health workforce. The program emphasizes relationships with community-based partners to increase access to quality behavioral health services for all ages and for those in need. Each year eight Occupational Therapy students and eight Psychiatric Doctoral Nurse Practitioner students are selected through a competitive application process and are awarded stipends for their participation in a year-long interprofessional training course designed to improve their clinical readiness to serve individuals with behavioral health challenges and completion of their final DNP intensive and OT clinical behavioral health fieldwork placement.

In the first year, the OT and Nursing students ran a total of 251 trauma treatment groups serving 255 different clients across 1,569 visits. Ten conference presentations and in-services on Trauma Informed Care at international, national, state, and local levels were given. Student grant recipients improved in clinical competency and professional reasoning, interpersonal skills, professional behaviors, cultural critical consciousness, and reflective thinking. Providers remarked an increased awareness of TIC principles and have begun to create related initiatives for staff & clients. The groups received positive feedback from clients who said, "The groups made me feel like a human & a part of something in society like I belonged."

SpOTlight on Faculty

We have a lot of new faces around the halls of the Georgian Building this year, help us welcome new full-time faculty members! Dr. Banks, Dr. Guzmán, Dr. Mahoney, and Dr. Norweg are all experienced educators and talented researchers, and we are delighted that they have joined the CUOT faculty!



Tyra M Banks, EdD,
OTR/L



Julia M Guzman, EdD,
OTD, OTR/L



Danielle Mahoney, OTD,
OTR/L



Anna R. Norweg, PHD,
OTR

Faculty Awards and Achievements

- **Dr. Rochelle Mendonca** received a [2022 NBCOT Innovation and Impact Award](#)
- **Dr. Katherine Dimitropoulou** was inducted into the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, Virginia Apgar Academy of Medical Educators Class of 2022.
- **Dr. Rochelle Mendonca** received the 2022 Innovative Course Design Grant: "Developing and Implementing an Assistive Technology and Modifications Course to Build Skills and Competency in Technology-Based Interventions for Graduate Occupational Therapy Students."
- **Dr. Razan Hamed** received the 2022 Provost Emerging Technology Grant: "Using Virtual Reality to Enhance Students' Empathy and Understanding of DEI Components and Professional Skills."
- **Dr. Pat Precin** in collaboration with Martha Sliwinski of the Programs in PT: Innovative Course Design Grant: Developing Capacity and Digital Modules to Expand Self Compassion and Mindfulness Practice for Health Practitioner Students."
- **Drs. Daniel Geller, Dawn Nilsen, Glen Gillen, Danielle Mahoney,** and CUOT alumni, Carly Goldberg, Josh Kolter, and Lauren Winterbottom partnered with the AOTA Evidence-based Practice Team to conduct two systematic reviews designed to determine the effectiveness of interventions to improve ADL and IADL performance in adults after stroke. The results of these reviews are currently in-press and will be published as a series of research briefs in AJOT.
- **Dr. Daniel Geller** is also co-authoring the AOTA Practice Guidelines for Adults with Stroke update.
- **Dr. Razan Hamed** was also named to the AOTA DEI Committee, helping to advance the efforts of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the national level.
- **Drs. Tyra Banks** and **Razan Hamed** were selected for the Anti-Racism for Medical Education Coalition.
- **Drs. Danielle Mahoney, Razan Hamed, Tyra Banks,** and **Anna Norweg** received funding from the *Office of Faculty Professional Development, Diversity & Inclusion,* and the *VP&S Office for Women and Diverse Faculty* to attend the 2023 AAMC Transforming Conflict into Collaboration Virtual Workshop.
- **Dr. Anna Norweg** was invited to serve on an NIH/NCCIH Exploratory Clinical Trials of Mind and Body Interventions Special Emphasis Panel. Anna also became a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT) and is certified in motivational interviewing.

- **Dr. Glen Gillen** delivered the Jim Hinojosa Memorial Lecture at NYSOTA
- **Drs. Glen Gillen** and **Dawn Nilsen** had their 5th edition of *Stroke Rehabilitation: A Function-Based Approach* translated into Chinese.



CUOT at AOTA Inspire 2023

Kansas City, MO | April 20-23 2023

Click the button below to view the schedule of our faculty presenters at the [AOTA Conference](#) in April. We will update this list with more information as it becomes available.

AOTA Presentation List

SpOTlight on Students



We congratulate CUOT student, **Jennifer Puac** for her acceptance to the 2023-2024 **John Robert Lewis Scholars & Fellows**. Jennifer was also selected to be a part of the Anti-Racist Medical Education Coalition team at CUIMC and will begin DEI initiatives with the Medical Campus this Spring. For more information about the JRL Scholars and Fellows Program, visit their website [here](#).

How Columbia OT Students Are Helping Local Kids with Disabilities

Columbia News covered our MS2 students' Assistive Devices class projects. Led by Dr. Rochelle Mendonca, our Occupational Therapy students learned about the design and construction of affordable assistive devices and built them for children with disabilities from the local community. Click below for more information.



[Read the Full Article](#)

Help CUOT Students by Donating to St. Catherine Challenge



Help our students reach their fundraising goal by donating to the AOTF St. Catherine Challenge. The AOTF St. Catherine Challenge is a national student-led fundraising initiative to support occupational therapy research grants awarded by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation.

[Donate Here](#)



Morocco Trip 2023

In January, 9 students and three of our faculty members continued our tradition of participating in a cultural immersion/service-learning trip to Morocco, where they delivered oral and poster presentations at the 5th Annual International Conference of the Occupational Therapy Association of Morocco. Students also taught Moroccan students from the University of New England the use of cardboard in the construction of adaptive equipment, worked with children with disabilities in Meknes, and experienced an orphanage and nursing home in Kenitra. Cultural occupations of tanning leather, weaving, tiling, tea ceremony, religion, family life, and pottery were explored as well as important heritage sites.

SpOTlight on Alumni



Armineh Babikian was awarded **Columbia University Programs in Occupational Therapy's Distinguished Alumni Award** and the **2022 AOTA International Service Award**.

Established in 2015, this award recognizes occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants who demonstrate a sustained and outstanding commitment to international OT service; promote and advance occupational therapy abroad in regards to occupational health and/or occupational justice in underserved countries to promote a

globally connected community; and provide the incentive to extend international relationships and contributions to address global health issues. To find out more about her service, visit therapistsforarmenia.org

Alumni News?

Send updates (professional or personal!) to Ben Koch at bk2832@cumc.columbia.edu and we will include them in the next newsletter.



Join Our Faculty!

Columbia University's Programs in Occupational Therapy invite applicants for a full-time, 12-month faculty appointment at the Assistant or Associate Professor rank. A clinical focus in musculoskeletal system diseases is preferred. This position encompasses teaching and research in both the entry-level MS occupational therapy and post-professional doctoral programs. Close collaboration with other faculty within the department and with faculty in related departments is expected. Applicants are expected to have or develop a research agenda.

Please contact Dr. Glen Gillen with questions at gg50@cumc.columbia.edu

For my information and to apply, click here:
Apply - <https://apply.interfolio.com/107116>

Support Columbia OT

Alumni donations help support the following areas:

- *Scholarships.*
- *Student support*
- *OT Lab Enhancement*
- *Software for classroom instruction*
- *Janet Falk-Kessler Distinguished Lectureship Fund*
- *The OT Diversity Scholarship Fund*

Future donations can support:

- *Scholarships.* 80% of our students rely on Financial Aid.
- *Any area of practice.* Future gifts can be directed to support individuals who are interested in a specific area of practice.
- *International Program Stipends*
- *Prep Courses for the NBCOT exam*

Any support that alumni and friends of Columbia OT can provide will help enhance our student's experience.

How to Give

<https://www.givenow.columbia.edu>

Search for Occupational Therapy for donation options (Annual Fund, Janet Falk-Kessler Lectureship, etc)

By mail to:

CUMC Office of Development

516 West 168th Street, 3rd Floor

New York, NY 10032

If you are interested in annual giving or major gifts, please contact Dawn Nilsen at dmn12@cumc.columbia.edu

Stay Connected To The Programs!



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