Why the OTD White Coat Ceremony?

Students of the NSU OTD program have a number of rites of passage through which they learn to “transform” from undergraduates to health professionals. The white coat ceremony is one of those. While traditionally this signals the transition into clinical work, in our program it signals the entry into professional coursework.

- The white coat represents clinical service and care, and the color represents purity and cleanliness.
- The short length represents the status of being student, and reminds our students to be lifelong learners.
- The patch with the caduceus on the left sleeve bears the logo of our program, reminding our students of their commitment to the profession, our program, and our university.
- The donning of the white coat by our faculty represents our investment into the students’ professional preparation. Inviting a family member to assist with this rite, reminds the student of the support and commitment their families are making.
- Accepting the white coat means also accepting the responsibility of entering, as a student, into a community of professionals. It serves as a reminder of our values of professionalism, respect for our clients and peers, integrity, and caring. It is a commitment to improving the lives of others; their wellness and occupational health; and to ensure conditions that promote social and occupational justice so that our clients can live life to the fullest.

Mirtha M. Whaley, PhD, OTR/L
Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE) is a specialized honor society for occupational therapy students enrolled in professional entry-level programs at accredited educational programs across the United States. The objective of the society, as outlined by the founders of PTE, is to contribute to the advancement of occupational therapy through special projects of its members, to provide a basis for relationship among accredited programs of occupational therapy, and to work in cooperation with the aims and ideals of other student occupational therapy organizations. Today, the mission of Pi Theta Epsilon is to promote research and scholarship among occupational therapy students.

Pi Theta Epsilon supports the development of occupational science and the practice of authentic occupational therapy by promoting research and other scholarly activities of its members. In this way, the organization serves not only the profession but also helps to ensure quality health care services for the general public” (The American Occupational Therapy Foundation [AOTF], 2015).

Under the direction of Professor Sheila Longpré, the Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program at Nova Southeastern University – Tampa inducted ten members into its new chapter during the Fall Ceremonies. Students who are in the top 35% of their class and have achieved academic excellence and leadership are invited to apply.

Sheila Longpré, MOT, OTR/L
The doctoral pinning ceremony is a meaningful event that marks the entry of OTD students into the doctoral level of their occupational therapy education at NSU Tampa. On this day, Dr. Gustavo Reinoso (see left) addressed the Class of 2015 by describing the significance of the OTD pin:

“This (OTD) pin symbolizes an important event and has a very special meaning. It signifies your entry into your doctoral transformation. As you get ready to go into your second level II fieldwork experience and then your doctoral residency, you will face some challenges and opportunities: The challenge is that we need to continue to advance the movement towards family and client centeredness while showing the power of meaningful activity and occupation to clients and organizations. The opportunity is that you are strongly prepared to advance the field. Please remember that this pin also means that you are not walking alone and that it signifies your commitment to the profession of occupational therapy and is a reminder that you will always be a part of your alma mater, Nova Southeastern University (NSU).”

Picture below shows top row, left to right are Stephanie Sylvia, My-Lynn Tran, Meghan Granata, Dr. D. McCarthy, Dr. R. Davenport, Dr. A. Paul-Ward, Dr. P. Taylor, Dr. M. Whaley, Kristin McMillen, Ashley Stedman, Dr. R. Carrasco, Dr. G. Reinoso, Dr. M. D’Amico; Bottom row from left to right: Ni He-Strocchio, Hillary Whitacre, Ricardo Demetrius, Chelsea Bryant, Larry Holmes, Hillarie Hough, Shree Patel, Lillian Freeman, and Jamie Williams.
The Class of 2015 went above and beyond expectations with the support of Dr. Carrasco and Dr. Whaley, to ensure they are never forgotten here at the Nova Southeastern University Tampa. The Occupational Science and Wellness classes came together and collaborated on a project—something indeed that leaves a legacy. They created a professional organization — Scholars for the Advancement of Occupational Science, or SAOS — that aims to inspire, promote, and contribute to the study of occupational science within the global community.

In addition, they also launched a brand new scholarly journal, which is considered to be essential to achieve the organization’s mission — Journal for the Advancement of Occupational Science or JAOS. The journal will serve as a platform for contributors from around the world — including current students, recent graduates, occupational therapy practitioners, and professionals from a variety of disciplines — who wish to disseminate research and promote discourse within the fields of occupational science and occupational therapy.

Kristin McMillen, OTD-S & Jamie Williams, OTD-S
Over the past several months members of Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Tampa’s Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) have been busy helping make a positive change in their community. Volunteering with charity organizations and government agencies, they have used their unique skills as occupational therapy students to help those in need. From helping people be safer in their cars, to ensuring that people can have a healthy meal with a good conversation, and many more. SOTA members demonstrated their commitment to the core values of the profession they love.

At the Trinity Café

In October several SOTA members volunteered at Trinity Café, a local charity organization that has been providing meals for the last fourteen years to those who are homeless and hungry. Trinity Café’s goal is to not only provide a hot (and truly delicious) meal to those in need, but also give them a sense of personhood and belonging. Students helped serve meals as well as provide engaging conversation that showed the patrons they were not just another face on the street, but a person who mattered. Through this interaction the students sought to make a positive change in the people they served, and were in turn changed themselves for the better.

CarFit

Changing things for the better is a common theme in occupational therapy, and the students demonstrated this in a very practical way by participating in several CarFit events. Endorsed by the Florida Department of Transportation and developed by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), CarFit seeks to help older adults fit better in their cars. The goal of a CarFit event is to promote safe driving practices, as well as inform
During the events, the students helped inform, demonstrate, and facilitate safe driving practices. These events were not just strictly business; the students as well as the drives enjoyed one another, and shared laughter, as they learned and taught valuable information about being safe on the road.

Other Fundraisers

In addition to these two instances NSU Tampa’s SOTA members have promoted positive change in their community. California Pizza Kitchen and Chick-fil-A also partnered with NSU Tampa SOTA to raise funds through food purchases to send members to state and national occupational therapy conferences. Members also conducted a bake sale on campus to raise money and provide motivation to campus faculty and students at the November institute. They raised over $335 through these fundraisers. Members of NSU Tampa’s SOTA not only enrich the lives of individuals in the community but also animals. To relieve stress during finals week, members volunteered at the local animal shelter and provided quality time to dogs and cats there through play dates and tender loving care. Members of NSU Tampa’s SOTA also volunteered at the Tampa St. Jude Gives Thanks Walk, and a Special Olympics Florida Healthy Community

Through these events the student members show their continuing commitment to not only being focused on their studies, but also promoting positive change and participation in occupation throughout their community. The NSU Tampa SOTA has and will continue to instill a sense of community service, and a dedication to the profession’s ideals, in its dedicated members.

Jonathan Pitts, OTD-S
& Jordan Powers, OTD-S
Congratulations to our students elected to the NSU Tampa 2015 Student Government Association (SGA)!

**President:** Jordan Powers  
**Vice President:** Nicole Bellare  
**Treasurer:** Mimi Love  
**Secretary:** Claudia Solorzano  
**Public Relations Chair:** Sean Byrne  
**Campus Involvement Chair:** Johnathan Pitts  
**OT Senator:** Jaslin Parhar  
**MBA Senator:** Karla Diaz  
**PT Senator:** Brittany Sawford

ABSTRACT: A foundational core course for professional studies, namely Entry-Level Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) and Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) in the College of Health Care Sciences, required a redesign of the medical anatomy course to accomplish a blended face-to-face and online delivery mode. The blended course delivery combines sixteen week, online lecture instruction with periodic, face-to-face (on-ground) kinesthetic (lab based) learning and provides an alternative delivery and structure for post-millennial learners. In preparation for once-monthly or more cadaver lab experience, the course requires students to practice identification of organs, and structures using a virtual dissector (A&P revealed and Anatomy On-line). After completing worksheets which summarize these virtual dissections, the students correlate these studies with follow-up identification on cadavers during once-monthly (or more) institute sessions. Following completion by this cohort, the course instructor collects and evaluates student feedback for further course improvement.
Mariana D’Amico, PhD, OTR/L joins the NSU Tampa Department of Occupational Therapy as Associate Professor. Dr. D’Amico has practiced occupational therapy for over 30 years in a variety of settings such as pediatrics, skilled nursing facilities, home health, and hospital based in-patient and outpatient programs working with people across the lifespan (new born to 107 years old). Her areas of expertise include early intervention, school based practice, low vision, sensory integration, and community mental health. She received her BS in Occupational Therapy from New York University, her MS from Eastern Kentucky University, and her EdD from Spalding University. She has presented on many topics at state, regional, national, and international conferences, and published in several refereed journals, as well as serve on their editorial boards. Leisure activities include painting, gardening, cooking, dancing, and traveling.

Eunice Luyegu, PhD is an expert in instructional design and technology. She obtained her PhD in instructional design and technology from the University of South Alabama and holds a Certificate in Performance Technology from the International Society for Performance Improvement. She has more than ten years of experience in designing learning in higher education. She has also taught undergraduate and graduate courses. Dr. Luyegu is dedicated to enhancing and teaching and learning with instructional strategies. She’s a published scholar and her research interests includes blended learning, eLearning, learning technologies, ePortfolios, and faculty development.
Department Welcomes New Fieldwork Support Coordinator

Erica Burke recently joined the NSU OTD Program as the new Fieldwork Support Coordinator. She comes to us from Fort Riley, Kansas where she was stationed as an active duty soldier for the United States Army. She is still currently serving as a federal reservist. Prior, she was also stationed in Ouijeonbui, South Korea for two years, where she worked as a supply clerk, and transported government equipment throughout the Korean Peninsula. She is currently a full-time college student at the Saint Petersburg College where she is a criminal justice major and planning to move on to law school. She has expressed how happy she is to be apart of the NSU family, and looking forward to excelling in her position with the guidance and support of her remarkable faculty and staff.

Faculty Highlight

Gustavo Reinoso, PhD, OTR/L returned recently from teaching courses on sensory integration in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Madrid, Spain. Through continuing education, professionals achieve expertise in the assessment and intervention strategies for children who present with sensory processing deficits. NSU Tampa OTD students benefit from out international contacts in two ways: They are listening to worldwide developments in the field through guess lecturers and invited speakers who hold regular dialogs with them, but also by exploring together new developments in international fieldwork experiences. OTD students have expressed a solid interest in joining the international occupational therapy community and some have made commitments to completing fieldwork experiences abroad.
Thomas J. Decker, OTD, OTR/L joins NSU Tampa from Advance Therapy Systems, two clinical facilities in Dundalk and Dublin, Ireland, that he co-founded to provide specialized sensory integration treatment, NDT, and COOP approaches for developmental coordination disorders with other frames of references. Prior to that he has provided home health services and worked in Florida and California. Upon his return to Florida Dr. Decker jumped into FOTA leadership by accepting the position of Sensory Integration Special Interest Section of the Practice Standing Committee. He assumes the position of Academic Fieldwork Coordinator in addition to responsibilities in teaching, service and research. Dr. Decker has a post-professional Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions, a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from Saint Ambrose University, and a Bachelor of Science in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. Dr. Decker has published several articles and presented at refereed conferences.

Larry Holmes, OTD-S joined the NSU Tampa entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy program as a Federal Work Student (FWS) on February 9, 2015. He will serve as a lab assistant to the department in which his roles will include assisting professors with lab setup and providing office assistance to the staff. Larry is a former Vice President of the NSU Tampa Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) and a student in the 2015 inaugural class of the OTD Program here at Nova Southeastern University Tampa. He is one of the founding members of the virtual community called Scholars for the Advancement of Occupational Science (SAOS). One of his charges in his current position is to create the shell for the maiden issue of the SAOS’s publication called the Journal for the Advancement of Occupational Science (JAOS), soon to break soon in electronic format. Larry will be on his doctoral residency, graduating in August, 2015. He is looking forward to starting his career as an occupational therapy practitioner in acute care rehab.
Student Accomplishments

End of Fall Semester 2014

The Nova Southeastern University Tampa Regional Campus
Entry-Level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) Program congratulates OTD students for a job well done during the Fall semester.

Chancellor’s List
3.8 G.P.A. or higher

- Carsone, Bryce
- Chernekoff, Rachel
- Demetrius, Ricardo
- Easterling, Kerri
- Edberg, Ashley
- Edrissi, Elham
- Freeman, Lillian
- Fritzscbe, Lydia
- Grampp, Kelsea Rose
- Granada, Cheryl Mae
- Granata, Meghan
- He-Strocchio, Ni
- Holmes, Larry
- Hough, Hillarie
- Imwalle, Rachel
- Johnson, Tara
- Kozee, Nicole
- Malavalli, Sunayana
- McCastle, Anna
- McMillen, Kristin
- Methipara, Emil
- Patel, Shree
- Pitts, Jonathan
- Powers, Jordan
- Rodriguez, Erica
- Rosen, Mara
- Taylor, Shannon
- Unruh, Amanda
- Weldon, Sarah
- Whitacre, Hillary

Dean’s List
3.6 to 3.79 G.P.A.

- Bartels, Kimberly
- Bryant, Chelsea
- Christian, Molly
- Dadez, Megan
- Hayes, Michelle
- Henry, Tasha
- Jamison, Justin
- Key, Crystal
- Lacertosa, Tyler
- Lopez, Jessica
- Malikayil, Rajesh
- Matthew, Nikita
- Meach, Lee
- Parhar, Jaslin
- Pignon, Amanda
- Sargent, Brittaney
- Schuster, Elizabeth
- Sylvia, Stephanie
- Tran, My-Lynn
- Walker, Yazmin