



The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy

OJOT Sponsor Profiles

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Department of Occupational Therapy at Western Michigan University

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Sponsor Profile: Department of Occupational Therapy at Western Michigan University



Western Michigan University (WMU), located in Kalamazoo, is a learner-centered, research university, building intellectual inquiry and discovery into undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in a way that fosters knowledge and innovation, and transforms wisdom into action. *U.S. News & World Report* has designated WMU as one of the country's best national universities for 24 consecutive years and has placed it in the top tier of those universities annually since creating the tier five years ago. WMU is one of only 90 universities in the nation with both a medical school and a law school, and has seven degree-granting colleges offering 251 distinct degree programs, with 147 of them at the undergraduate level. The University bolsters teaching and research by sponsoring more than 50 specialized institutes and centers as well as a variety of state, national, and international journals and conferences. Students can choose from more than 90 WMU-operated study abroad programs in some 40 countries and have access to countless more through the University's worldwide linkages with other institutions and organizations.

In 1918, just one year after the founding of the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy, an occupational therapist left Danvers Psychiatric Hospital in Danvers, Massachusetts and came to Kalamazoo to serve as Director of Occupational Therapy at the Kalamazoo State Hospital (KPH). Her name was Marion R. Spear. Soon after, in 1922, Miss Spear founded the Occupational Therapy School at KPH, one of only five such schools in the United States at that time. With only three students in the inaugural class, Miss Spear continued

to lead the development of the school from its location at KPH to a full fledged department at WMU. On her retirement in 1958, she had established a solid foundation for the next generations of faculty and students to forge ahead with the development of the strong department that exists today.

In addition to the rich traditions established throughout the WMU occupational therapy program history, there are significant points of pride that emerge from a collaboration among outstanding students, faculty, alumni, and the professional community. Active research programs include:

- Sensory processing disorders among children with a history of chronic developmental trauma (Dr. Ben Atchison)
- Intrinsic and extrinsic resiliency factors among adopted children with a history of chronic developmental trauma (Dr. Ben Atchison)
- Application of the Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) to determine effectiveness of level I fieldwork student learning and client service outcomes (Dr. Ann Chapleau)
- Reduction of hospital readmission among older adults following home-based preventive intervention approaches (Dr. Carla Chase)
- Preference of learning strategies related to personality style to improve memory among persons with acquired brain injury (Dr. Diane Powers Durette)
- Sensor Technology for Supporting Independence among Cognitively Impaired Elders (Dr. Maureen Mickus)
- Identification of the etiology of food selectivity patterns among persons with autism, impact on the quality of life, and effective treatment protocols (Dr. Michelle Suarez);

- The effectiveness of a treatment protocol to improve co-regulation among opiate addicted mothers and infants with Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) (Dr. Michelle Suarez)
- Innovative and formative curriculum design that emerges from active engagement of faculty in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning communities at WMU, the inclusion of Case Based Learning in course development, and fellowship assignment in the Center for Humanities to help students understand the connection between themselves and other people in the world
- Faculty-led, inter-professional clinical fieldwork among thirteen clinics within the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids sites that are supervised by full time and part time faculty in which all students complete hands-on assessment and treatment of actual clients for both of the required level I fieldwork assignments:
 - The Unified Clinics-Kalamazoo site which includes the Pediatric Clinic, Adult Rehabilitation Clinic, Skills for Living, Work To Work, Center for Disability Services, Finicky Feeders
 - The Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center
 - The Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital
 - Student Occupations for Academic Readiness (SOAR)
 - Hand Rehabilitation Clinic
 - Heartside Chronic Pain Clinic
 - Mel Trotter Ministries
 - Calvin College Interprofessional Clinic
- The Sammons Center for Innovation and Research in Occupation Based Technology, made possible by a generous endowment from Dr. Fred Sammons. The mission of the

center is to provide an opportunity for visionaries to promote progress in occupation through technology by bringing together interprofessional teams that have the interest and expertise to create, design, develop, disseminate, and evaluate specific products to enable better occupation through technology.

- The Brain Research and Interdisciplinary Neuroscience Lab (BRAIN LAB) founded to pursue translational and clinical research using various neuroscience driven methodologies. Its primary membership is comprised of faculty from the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Fine Arts, and Health and Human Services, representing the departments and schools of Psychology, Music, and Occupational Therapy. External partners at McGill and Johns Hopkins universities are also engaged in foundational collaborative work with the lab.
- *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy (OJOT)*, an open source, quarterly, peer reviewed publication launched January 1, 2013, made possible in large part by the generosity of Dr. Barbara Rider, Professor Emeritus and former chair of the department. With a submission to decision period of about 28 days, OJOT has published 79 articles of 162 submitted addressing Applied Research, Topics in Education, Guidelines for Practice and Technological Guidelines, Letter from the Editor, and Occupation and the Artist. Full-text downloads increased from 2,931 in the first year to 54,000 by the April 1, 2015 issue, with an international usage cited in 110 countries outside of the United States.

As the WMU occupational therapy community looks to its Centennial Anniversary in 2022, there will be celebrations of these many points of pride along with expressions of gratitude for the ten decades of leadership, sustained commitment of the faculty, staff, and outstanding students and alumni that have made our program what it is one hundred years later.

Dr. Ben Atchison, professor and chair, is pleased to sponsor the Summer 2015 issue of *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* with special acknowledgement and gratitude to Diane Powers Dirette, Editor-in-Chief, and Allison Fox, Associate Editor, for their extraordinary commitment and skill in leading the team that has led to the success of OJOT.

For more information on WMU's Department of Occupational Therapy, please visit:

<http://wmich.edu/ot>