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OJOT Sponsor Profiles

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Nancy Vandewiele Milligan, PhD, OTRL, FAOTA

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Sponsor Profile:
Nancy Vandewiele Milligan, PhD, OTRL, FAOTA



Written by Nancy Milligan, Tatjana Savich, and Ben Atchison

The *Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* (OJOT) team is pleased to present the Sponsor Profile of Dr. Nancy Vandewiele Milligan for the Winter 2021 issue. We are most grateful for the generous contribution of Dr. Tatjana Savich, Clinical Assistant Professor and Capstone Coordinator for the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program at the University of Michigan-Flint (UM-Flint), who is the sponsor for this issue.

Reflections by Dr. Tatjana Savich, OJOT Winter 2021 Sponsor

Dr. Savich noted in her sponsoring comments that “It’s been an honor and joy to become part of the UM-Flint doctoral program faculty under the leadership of Dr. Nancy Vandewiele Milligan. I have had the opportunity to observe her leadership skills in action as she navigated the inaugural cohort of students through the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as admitting a second cohort during the most challenging time in recent history. Observing her skills, over the last 5 years, in planning the first OTD program in the state has been incredible! With due diligence, she researched curriculums across the country and collaborated with other established program leaders to put together a unique curriculum plan. Nancy’s leadership and collaboration skills facilitated the unique dual OTD/Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program option. She directs AND collaborates. She delegates, and she trouble shoots with a smile on her face, consistently demonstrating resiliency in the face of adversity. At the center of Michigan’s first OTD program, the faculty, and the students is Dr. Nancy Vandewiele Milligan, our fearless leader!”

In addition to providing information about the program, Dr. Milligan wished to share her reflections about the challenges and opportunities in launching a new OTD program in the midst of a life-threatening pandemic.

Resilience: Rethinking, Reinventing, and Reimagining

UM-Flint admitted our first cohort of students in the [OTD program](#) in Fall 2019. Six months later, we, along with the entire world, were faced with the unimaginable global pandemic.

We were given two class days to transition from a face-to-face curriculum to a completely online format.

Ann Wilcock (1999) reflected on doing, being, and becoming and how the balance of doing and being is central to healthy living and wellness. Wilcock also noted that “becoming” adds to the idea of being, a sense of the future, and holds the notions of transformation and self-actualization.

As we begin a new year and a new semester we reflect on ourselves and what we have been “doing” for the past 10 months. “Doing,” to keep ourselves, families, students, and colleagues healthy and well, and “Being,” which encapsulates being true to ourselves, our individual capacity in all that we do, have been tested beyond that of which we thought we were capable.

As occupational therapists we are resilient in our way of thinking. Throughout our practice we are required to help clients and consumers rethink how routines and habits can be changed or modified to allow one to “do” what is meaningful to them. Our sense of “being” is being reinvented around how we can take on new challenges and learn to do things in a different way or format. We are reimagining how our future will look, accepting that it will be different, and anticipating that it still holds numerous possibilities.

As we move into 2021, we take stock on how things have changed, how our teaching, programs, and practices look different now. Somehow, we are optimistic, excited to see what tomorrow will bring; we are resilient.

Overview of the OTD Program, UM-Flint

The [faculty](#) and staff of UM-Flint strive to be recognized as dedicated leaders, scholars, and occupational therapists who are committed to learning, teaching, scholarship, and service to educate and mentor culturally competent, doctoral prepared, evidence-based occupational therapists to be visionaries and leaders in the profession of occupational therapy in local and global communities.

UM-Flint offers a dual degree option of an OTD and an MBA. Through cross-recognition of courses, this dual program leads to two degrees: the OTD and MBA.

- The dual program complements UM-Flint’s OTD program with world class business knowledge and skills to improve the effectiveness and operational success of vital health organizations.
- The curriculum allows the OTD student or graduate to apply up to 12 specified credits toward both degrees.
- The degrees are independent; each is awarded when completed, with specified credits accepted for the second degree after the first has been awarded.
- MBA program courses are offered in online and on-campus formats.
- The student applies for admission to each degree program independently.

Learn more and apply at go.umflint.edu/otdmba

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References

- Wilcock, A. (1999). Reflections on doing, being, and becoming. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 46, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1630.1999.00174.x>