



# The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy

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OJOT Sponsor Profiles

Occupational Therapy

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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**  
**A Bold Future for Occupational Therapy at WMU**



We are grateful to Dr. Nancy Hock, Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at Western Michigan University (WMU) and Managing Editor of the *Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* (OJOT), for sponsoring the Spring 2022 issue of OJOT. Dr. Hock authored this profile in honor of the program's upcoming celebration of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Milestones**

Founded in 1922, the Occupational Therapy Program at WMU is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July of 2022. Throughout its history, the program has been a leader and innovator in the field. Significant milestones include the following:

- **1922** – Ms. Marion R. Spear founds the program with an initial enrollment of two students. The program is the first non-teaching degree at WMU.
- **1939** – The program receives full accreditation from the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association in collaboration with the American Occupational Therapy Association.
- **1944** – The program offers a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy.
- **1953** – The department develops one of the first occupational therapy graduate programs in the country.
- **2004** – The Barbara Rider Colloquium is established to bring scholars, clinicians, educators, and students together for an annual workshop focused on evidence-based practices.
- **2010** – The program receives a 10-year accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education.
- **2012** – The program launches OJOT, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal published quarterly. This journal now garners more than 150,000 downloads annually.
- **2014** – The Sammons Center for Innovation and Research in Occupation Based Technology is established by a generous endowment from Dr. Fred Sammons. The Sammons Center provides funding for creative and effective projects that enable people to engage and participate in everyday occupation.
- **2020** – The program launches the Clinical Doctorate of Occupational Therapy (OTD) replacing the highly-respected entry-level master's degree program.
- **2022** – The program welcomes its first cohort of students to the Occupational Therapy Assistant Bachelor's of Science Program.

Today, the program has eleven full-time faculty, an enrollment of more than 150 students, and is consistently ranked among the top 50 programs nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*. WMU established the second doctorate of occupational therapy program in the State of Michigan, enrolling the first class in 2020. The department boasts a 99% pass rate for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.

As we embark on the next 100 years of occupational therapy at WMU, the department is committed to a bold future of educating future clinicians, researchers, educators, and leaders in the field. This is of even greater importance as we continue to face societal challenges related to the current and emerging pandemics, an ever-changing health care reimbursement environment, and the need for evidence-based practice.

### **Faculty Research**

In order to achieve our bold future, faculty are engaged in **active research programs** that include:

- A 3-year federally-funded interprofessional workforce development program studying training interventions focused on opioid prevention. (*Dr. Ann Chapleau*)
- A large archival research project, digitizing historical patient records at a state psychiatric hospital, creating an oral history collection, and studying mental health outcomes prior to the introduction of psychotropics. (*Dr. Ann Chapleau*)
- A multi-year WMU Resiliency Grant supporting the evaluation of the impact of the WMU Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center on creating resilience for children who have experienced abuse and neglect and developing and testing Caregiver Co-Regulation Coaching, a virtual treatment for families of children with severe regulations challenges. (*Dr. Michelle Suarez*)
- Investigation of sensory processing in children who have experienced trauma. (*Dr. Michelle Suarez*)
- Instrument standardization including inter-rater reliability and validity for hand strength and home safety assessments. (*Dr. Debra Lindstrom*)
- Examining the effectiveness of interprofessional approaches to health and human services. (*Dr. Debra Lindstrom*)
- The use of technology to improve the quality of life of high-risk elders through the use of a virtual reality program to reduce stress and hypertension with older community-dwelling African Americans. (*Dr. Maureen Mickus*)
- The service delivery process of seating and mobility equipment to provide advocacy for best practices and access to appropriate equipment at the state and federal level. (*Dr. Cara Masselink*)
- Assessment of the application of hand assessment tools to support future research activity to create new normative data for grip and pinch strength. (*Dr. Nancy Hock*)
- Examination of hand strength necessary to perform functional tasks. (*Dr. Nancy Hock*)
- A focus on reducing and preventing falls through individual behavior and culture change. (*Dr. Steven Eberth*)
- Community Based Participatory Research approach to examine behavior change regarding the teaching of life skills with vulnerable populations. (*Dr. Steven Eberth*)

## **Faculty-Led Level I Fieldwork**

Western Michigan University's Occupational Therapy Program has a bold presence in the community by offering Level I clinical fieldwork opportunities, which are supported by core faculty, including Sara Clark, Berit Miller, Holly Grieves, and Tracy Young. Additional part-time faculty members also support the success of the clinic model. All students complete hands-on assessments and interventions with clients who are underserved in local communities. These clinics are available in both the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo locations, and include:

- The Southwest Michigan WMU Children's Trauma Assessment Center
- The Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital
- Student Occupations for Academic Readiness (SOAR)
- The WMU Unified Clinics, which include the Pediatric Clinic, Adult Rehabilitation Clinic, Work to Work Program, and The Center for Disability Services
- Hand Rehabilitation Clinic
- Calvin College Interprofessional Clinic
- Adult Neuro Clinic of Grand Rapids
- Bethany Christian Services Children's Trauma Clinic

A significant point of pride includes OJOT, which has been made possible by the ongoing generosity of Dr. Barbara Rider, Professor and Chair Emeritus, and Dr. Fred Sammons. Founded in 2012, OJOT has provided occupational therapists in 206 countries with open access to peer-reviewed, high-quality publications related to Applied Research, Topics in Education, Guidelines for Practice, Technological Guidelines, Letter from the Editor, and Occupation and the Artist. Full-text downloads have increased from 2,931 in its first year to 154,000 in 2021, resulting in over 760,000 full-text downloads as of this Spring 2022 issue. Subscribe, for free, at [www.ojot.org](http://www.ojot.org).

None of these accomplishments would be possible without a history of decades of strong leadership, committed faculty and staff, outstanding students and alumni, and community partners that have supported the program for the last 100 years.

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## **The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

**Go to <https://wmich.edu/ot/100> to learn more about the activities planned for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and to register for education sessions and fellowship with faculty, students, and fellow alumni.**