

Progress Notes

University of Illinois at Chicago
Department of Occupational Therapy
Fall 2019



CREATING TOMORROW'S PRACTICE

A Message from the Department Head

Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, Ph.D.
Professor and Head



**OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY
COLLEGE OF
APPLIED HEALTH
SCIENCES**



It is a pleasure to share with you department updates and recent accomplishments. Our faculty have received new research funding, which will continue to advance our Scholarship of Practice in areas such as fall prevention and prevention of obesity among children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We recently had the honor of hosting the 6th International Institute on Kielhofner's Model of Human Occupation at which over 10 countries were represented. Furthermore, thanks to our donors, we allocated over 40 student travel awards over the past few months to promote students' professional development at conferences including the AOTA Student Conclave and Illinois Occupational Therapy Association Conference. Our faculty as well as students were recipients of prestigious awards and honors. In addition, two of our faculty were recently promoted. As we approach 2020, we are looking forward to the 6th Scholarship of Practice Day planned for March 13, 2020, and continuing progress toward the launching of the entry-level OTD in the fall of 2022.

SCHOLARSHIP OF PRACTICE

Associate professor **Mansha Mirza**, and **Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar** are Co-Principal Investigators on a five-year Disability Research and Rehabilitation Program to study obesity in Latinx children with developmental disabilities. Their project titled “**PODER: Promoting Obesity prevention among children with Developmental Disabilities and families through Engaged Research**,” is funded by the National Institute on Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research. Evidence indicates that there are racial and ethnic disparities among children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and obesity. However, there is extremely limited research on health and obesity among Latinx children with IDD. This is surprising given the large representation of Latinx children in the U.S. population, and the documented rates of obesity among these children and adolescents. We will address this gap in research by conducting three groundbreaking studies to examine health, obesity and health behaviors among children and adolescents with IDD and their maternal caregivers and develop and test an intervention for Latinx children and adolescents with IDD and their families to promote healthy lifestyles. The three studies include:

- 1) Examining factors that contribute to poor health and obesity among Latinx children and adolescents with IDD and how they compare to non-Latinx white children using the National Survey of Children’s Health.
- 2) Collecting and analyzing important baseline information among Latinx children and adolescents with IDD and their families through a two-site cross-sectional study including rigorous data on physical activity, nutrition, height, weight and waist circumference, family environmental factors and cultural practices. Our goals will be to identify the social determinants of obesity, and to establish baseline data for the intervention study.
- 3) Combining and testing the integration of two pilot-tested interventions, one designed for Latinx caregivers of children with IDD and the other designed for Latinx children and youth with IDD and their families. This comprehensive family intervention will include home visits to family caregivers by *promotoras de salud* and family-based group activities from the *Healthy Families* program that demonstrate the impact of physical activity, health education, and providing opportunities for social learning in a culturally tailored way. The investigators will conduct first a one-group pretest-posttest design pilot study, conduct focus groups to determine acceptability and then conduct a small randomized trial with a waitlist control group across two sites.

These studies have important population health implications for promoting culturally tailored practice with Latinx children with intellectual and developmental disabilities experiencing obesity.

MEET NEW FACULTY



Piper Hansen
Clinical assistant professor,
academic fieldwork coordinator

Piper was previously the clinical practice leader and research occupational therapist at Shirley

Ryan AbilityLab. Her interests include advancing the science of fieldwork, improving neurological rehabilitation through the use of knowledge translation models and increasing the use of specific assessments in occupational therapy.



Ryan Thomure
Adjunct clinical instructor
(part-time)

Before joining UIC, Ryan worked as both an occupational therapist and clinical social

worker. He is interested in issues relating to mental health, wellness and community reintegration and is working toward his Doctorate in Occupational Therapy with a focus on these topics at Boston University.

THE UIC-KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET PARTNERSHIP FLOURISHES

The UIC Department of Occupational Therapy has had a longstanding partnership with the Karolinska Institutet (KI) in Stockholm, Sweden. The UIC – KI collaborations that began in the '80s under Gary Kielhofner's leadership remain very active. The outcomes associated with these collaborations are many and include the 2018 Special Issue of the *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy* on participatory research that was co-edited by Eric Asaba of the KI, and professor **Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar**. The UIC-KI student exchange program, which began in 2015, has flourished under the leadership of clinical professor **Kathy Preissner** and KI colleagues Kristina Jesinkey, Helena Brodin, Susanne Guidetti and Karen Gustafson. To date, five UIC MS students have traveled to the KI for Level II fieldwork and five KI students have come to UIC to attend our Introduction to U.S. Occupational Therapy Practice and Theory course which includes classroom experiences as well as experiential learning at a fieldwork site. Overall, the UIC- KI partnership is thriving and our foundation for future collaborative research and educational endeavors is strong.

Recent Research Collaboration

Beginning in January 2020, clinical professor **Liz Peterson** will be joining a KI-based research team led by Lotta Ytterberg of the KI Department of Physical Therapy to undertake a three-year randomized trial that has been funded by the Swedish government. The overall aim of the project is to develop, deliver and evaluate a fall prevention program for ambulatory and non-ambulatory people with multiple sclerosis (MS) who receive care through MS centers in Stockholm. The program will be developed through a collaborative co-design process involving people living with MS and health professionals with expertise in MS care, and will address a variety of fall risk factors and utilize self-management strategies.

Recent Student Exchange Activities

- Tiffany Lin, a recent graduate of the UIC OT MS program and current post-professional UIC OTD student, participated in a student exchange at KI in 2019. During the exchange, Tiffany completed one of her Level II fieldwork experiences.
- Najma Hassan, an OT student at the KI, was recently in Chicago for a five-week student exchange. She participated in the Introduction to U.S. OT Practice and Theories of OT courses. Najma's experiential learning component is at Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital and is led by UIC post-professional OTD student and MS alum Ada Terman.



Kathy Preissner and Najma Hassan

UIC Faculty at KI International Week

In May 2020, **Kathy Preissner** and professor **Joy Hammel** will participate the KI's "International Week." During International Week, OT students, educators and scholars from around the world come together to learn about global health issues with the goal of enhancing inter-professional and international competence. Joy and Kathy will present about their work in the U.S. and will also attend meetings to discuss ways to enhance and further strengthen the UIC/KI partnership.

FACULTY AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS



Clinical professor **Gail Fisher** is the recipient of a UIC Award for Excellence in Teaching. Each year, UIC honors some of its most dedicated and outstanding teachers with the Award for Excellence in Teaching. Only five faculty were selected for this award. The winners are selected by past recipients of the award from nominations made by departments and colleges. When interviewed about what she enjoyed most about teaching at UIC, Gail said, "I appreciate that I have always had opportunities to improve my teaching through trying new approaches, updating course content and adding new learning activities. I am tuned in to my students' perceptions and enjoy witnessing the transformation that occurs when they realize that they are beginning to think like occupational therapists."

Congratulations to associate professor **Susan Magasi**, who was elected to the American Occupational Therapy Foundation Board of Trustees for the term January 2020-December 2022.

Andrea LeFlore, adjunct clinical instructor, and her partners at ReVive Center for Housing and Healing were awarded a grant from the State of Illinois to provide occupational therapy services to individuals and families that have experienced homelessness.

FACULTY PROMOTIONS



Kathy Preissner was promoted to clinical professor.

Kathy's scholarly work is in the areas of: teaching and learning in occupational therapy education/ fieldwork education, and development and testing of self-management programs for

people with multiple sclerosis and caregivers. In addition, she has a particular interest in the history of occupational therapy, especially the early years of the profession.



Mansha Mirza was promoted to associate professor.

Mansha's research seeks to enhance health and social services for low-income, underserved communities, with a focus on immigrant and refugee newcomers. Her

current projects focus on policy and programmatic innovations such as organizational capacity-building, language access trainings, and collaborating with community health workers and peer mentors.

POSTDOC NEWS

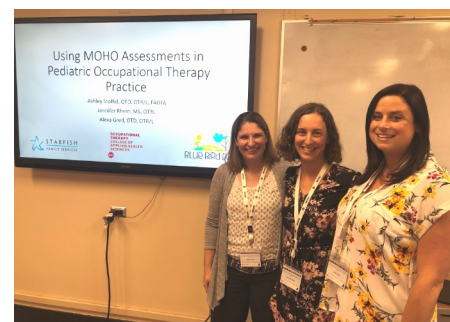
Postdoctoral fellow **Emily Kringle** was accepted to the Center for Large Data Research and Data Sharing in Rehabilitation (CLDR) Visiting Scholar Program. She will work with Dr. James Graham to identify social determinants of physical activity and sedentary behavior outcomes among people with stroke using large datasets.

MOHO INSTITUTE

The 6th International Institute on Kielhofner's Model of Human Occupation, directed by professor **Renee Taylor**, took place at the UIC campus from September 27 to 29. Thirty students and seven faculty members were among the over 140 attendees. About 50 presentations were delivered, which explored the versatility of MOHO across diverse cultures and practice settings.



OT Student recipients of the Kielhofner MOHO Research and Scholarship Award with MOHO co-chairs Renee Taylor and Hector Tsang, professor, Hong Kong Polytechnic University



Ashley Stoffel, Jenn Rhein and Alexa Greif



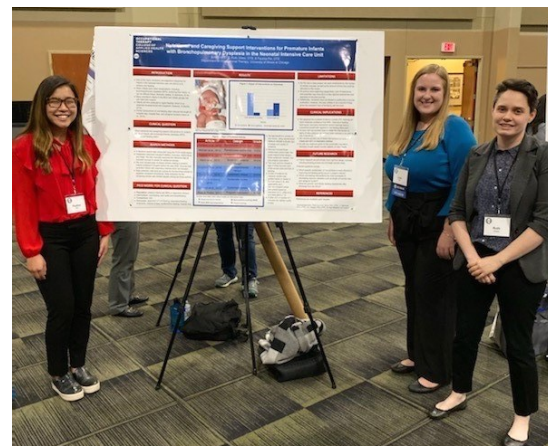
Left to right: Amanda Pineda, Jenny Popova, Emily Kwidzinski, Lisa Lodesky, Paulina Pei and Sydney Warren

ILLINOIS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Approximately 50 first- and second-year MS students attended the 2019 Illinois Occupational Therapy Association Conference in Tinley Park, Illinois, October 4-5. UIC OT faculty, students and UI Health clinicians presented at the conference, including 20 second-year MS OT students who presented their evidence-based practice research projects. Thanks to alumni donors, 25 students received department travel awards to attend the ILOTA Conference.



First- and second-year MS students at the ILOTA Conference



Paulina Pei, Julia Ells and Ruth Glass present their evidence-based practice poster

MS STUDENTS WIN STUDENT CONCLAVE KNOWLEDGE BOWL

A large group of our OT Students attended the AOTA/NBCOT Student Conclave in Chicago. Five of the students participated in a Knowledge Bowl against four other schools and won! The students won reimbursement of the NBCOT exam fee. Students had to answer questions related to MOHO and the Worker Role Interview. In addition, they were given neurological questions that involved stroke, Alzheimer's and ALS.

Johnny Sok, '20 MS OT, was among a few students who won a raffle jackpot prize that consisted of NBCOT study prep material. He also won the NBCOT exam registration fee. Overall, students left feeling very well-prepared by their UIC instructors.



UIC OT Students at the Student Conclave



Knowledge bowl winners (left to right) Paulina Pei, Claire Mercer, Victoria Turnbull, Jessica Prucha and Estefania Garcia Gomez



Jackpot winner Johnny Sok and Barbara Williams, Associate Director, External and Regulatory Affairs - NBCOT

AOTA HILL DAY

Three first-year MS Students, Debbie Patino, Bethany Marshall and Katie Houston, traveled to Washington, D.C. September 23, 2019. They met with the staffers of Dick Durbin, Tammy Duckworth and Sean Casten and spoke about three different bills that AOTA is backing, which were related to health care access and increasing diversity in the OT and COTA student population. The OT Department uses alumni donations to support students attending Capitol Hill Day and other conferences.



Left to right: AOTA President Wendy Hildenbrand, Bethany Marshall, Katie Houston, Debbie Patino and AOTA vice president Debra Young

STUDENT AWARDS

OTD Achievement Award

Andrea LeFlore

MS Achievement Award

Ricardo Ramirez

MS Emerging Leader Award

Sam Boyer

Vivian Villegas

Award for Occupational Therapy Doctoral Education and Research

Elnaz Alimi

Jacqueline Beck

Fall 2019 Lillian Torrance Scholarship Awardees

First year MS

Amie Idicula

Mackenzie Jaekel

Artemis Sefandonakis

Second year MS

Sydney Warren

OTD

Stephen Buskirk

UI HEALTH CLINICIAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Congratulations to Meaghan Smeraglia *on being named the 2019 UI Health Employee of the Year!*

Meaghan, who joined UI Health in 2017, is an Occupational Therapist in our Behavioral Health Unit. Meaghan has a tireless devotion to her patients and genuine interest in our institutional mission of advancing healthcare, promoting healthy equity and developing the next generation of healthcare leaders.

UI Health News

- The UIC OT academic department is fortunate to have a strong partner with the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences Center (UI Health). Two UIC OT alumni are appointed to key leadership roles, including MS alumnus and current OTD student Kay McGee Rudnitsky, who serves as the assistant director of Inpatient Therapy Services for the hospital. One of the latest initiatives is expansion of oncology services, with OT playing a key role within the Breast Care Program Leadership team, Commission on Cancer accreditation team, and Survivorship Council. MS alumnus and current OTD student Rose Duffy was recently promoted to a new role at UI Health: Coordinator of Oncology Rehabilitation Services. OT and PT have embedded in outpatient clinics with providers, conducted several quality studies and quality improvements in partnership with multidisciplinary teams, and contributed to inpatient protocol development to facilitate care transition from inpatient to outpatient settings. In the past year, Rose has coordinated Thriving and Surviving, a specialized Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) specifically for cancer patients, in partnership with Rush University and Wellness House organizations.
- UI Health will be moving to Epic as our electronic health record and information infrastructure upgrade May 9, 2020. Significant training and preparation have been underway with ramp up to come in spring 2019. This will be a tremendous tool to support continued enhancement of the care provided to patients.
- UI Health welcomes Amy Early, OTD, OTR/L, a 2019 UIC alum who joined the behavioral health team in October.

NEW STAFF



Jane Knox
Program assistant

Before joining the OT Department, Jane worked as an office manager and graphic designer for a dance school in Forest Park. She is an animator and illustrator as well as a graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art.

ALUMNI NEWS



Left to right: Jasmine Brown, Shoma Webster, Dr. Winifred Scott and Sina Webster

Former OT department head **Winifred Scott** recently met with the applicants to the Winifred E. Scott Occupational Therapy Scholarship Fund award. The recipient of this award is Ph.D. in disability studies student **Jasmine Brown**, '18 MS OT. Jasmine is studying advocacy and empowerment interventions to support African-American families with children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

6th Annual UIC OT Scholarship of Practice Day

Friday, March 13, 2019, at UIC, 10:15 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Activity and participation: the keys to health outcomes

Editors: Jane Knox, Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar
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