



GREAT IDEAS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

GREAT LEADERS



Making a difference in human-helping professions since 1885



DEPARTMENTAL CONTACT



Katherine M. Post, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

Chair

413 748 3581

kpost@spfldcol.edu

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE HAS BEEN
A LEADER IN PROVIDING A BROAD AND BALANCED EDUCATIONAL
EXPERIENCE. HUMANICS, THE PHILOSOPHY THAT HAS INSPIRED
SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE FROM ITS BEGINNING, CALLS FOR
EDUCATING THE WHOLE PERSON—SPIRIT, MIND, AND BODY—
FOR LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE TO OTHERS.



GRADUATE PROGRAM IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

THE HUMAN BODY is an amazingly complex machine. Performing even the simplest and most mundane of tasks requires the precise and skillful coordination of countless separate systems of the body. Most of us take for granted things like being able to tie our shoes, wash our hair, drive a car, or operate a computer. Yet if we pause to think about the number of separate cognitive and physical elements and actions that go into each of these activities, we begin to realize how intricate and complicated each of them is. People aren't born with basic skills, and acquiring them takes years of development, training, and learning.

Disabilities can rob people of their basic skills, leaving them unable to perform the essential tasks of independent living. For these people, the occupational therapist can make all the difference and help them regain control of their lives.

Occupational therapists (OTs) work with individuals who have conditions that are mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling, helping them to develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills. Occupational therapists help clients to improve their basic motor functions and reasoning abilities,

and to compensate for permanent loss of function with the ultimate goal of helping clients have independent, productive, and satisfying lives.

Occupational therapists assist clients in performing activities of all types, ranging from using a computer to caring for daily personal needs. Using a number of different techniques and technologies, they help people to increase and improve strength and dexterity, visual acuity, the ability to discern patterns, and hand-eye coordination. For instance, a client with short-term memory loss might be encouraged to make lists to aid recall, while a person with coordination problems might be assigned specific exercises. Occupational therapists may also use computer programs to help clients improve decision-making, abstract-reasoning, problem-solving, and perceptual skills, as well as memory, sequencing, and coordination—all of which are important for independent living.

Therapists instruct those with long-term disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, or muscular dystrophy, in the use of adaptive equipment, including wheelchairs, splints, and aids for eating and dressing. They develop computer-aided adaptive equipment, allowing clients with severe limitations

to communicate better and control various aspects of their environment. OTs also collaborate with employers to modify work environments to accommodate individuals whose ability to function at work has been impaired.

Occupational therapists may work exclusively with individuals in a particular age group or people with particular disabilities. In schools, for example, they evaluate children's abilities, recommend and provide therapy, modify classroom equipment, and help children participate as fully as possible in school programs and activities. Occupational therapy also helps older persons lead more productive, active, and independent lives through a variety of methods, including the use of adaptive equipment. Occupational therapists in mental-health settings treat individuals who are mentally ill, mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed, helping them to engage in and cope with the activities of daily life.

CAREER OUTLOOK

Many OTs work in hospitals. Other major employers are offices of health practitioners, public and private educational services, and nursing care facilities. Some OTs are employed by home health care services, assisted living facilities, outpatient care centers, physicians offices, individual and family services, community care facilities for the elderly, and government agencies. Some are self-employed in private practice, seeing clients referred by physicians, other health professionals, or health care agencies.

Employment of occupational therapists is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through 2014. The demand for occupational therapists should

continue to rise as a result of growth in the number of individuals with disabilities or limited function who require therapy services. The baby-boom generation's movement into middle age, a period when the incidence of heart attack and stroke increases, will spur the demand for therapeutic services. Growth in the population seventy-five years and older—an age group that suffers from high incidences of disabling conditions—also will increase the demand for therapeutic services. In addition, medical advances now enable more patients with critical problems to survive—patients who ultimately may need extensive therapy. Hospitals will continue to employ a large number of occupational therapists to provide services to acutely ill patients. Hospitals also will need occupational therapists to staff their outpatient rehabilitation programs. Employment growth in schools will result from the expansion of the school-age population and extended services for disabled students. Therapists will be needed to help children with disabilities prepare to enter special education programs.

Losing one's ability to function is obviously disheartening, and rehabilitation is difficult, often frustrating, work. Besides compassion, OTs must have tremendous amounts of patience and strong interpersonal skills to inspire trust and encourage their clients. Ingenuity and imagination in adapting activities and devices to individual needs are essential. Fully encompassing its Humanics philosophy, Springfield College's Occupational Therapy program emphasizes that health and learning are best gained through an approach that unifies spirit, mind, and body. The typical Springfield College-trained occupational therapist displays the clinical competence, the unique empathy, and the strong interpersonal skills necessary to be

“My professors provided the support I needed. They show concern for their students, as well as their academic and professional growth. The instructors were always available for not only any questions I had, but also for personal and moral support. They really cared about me as a whole person, and these living examples allowed me to become a compassionate therapist. Caring for a whole person—that is what occupational therapy and Springfield College are all about.”

Eunjin Kim G'08

Program: Occupational Therapy—School of Health Sciences & Rehabilitation Studies

Place of Employment: University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital, Birmingham, Ala.

effective with clients, families, and health care professionals alike.

Our graduates have worked in schools, universities, government agencies, hospitals, rehab centers, and community-based settings all over the United States and Canada. They have published articles in professional journals such as *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, presented at state and national conferences, and have enrolled in doctoral programs at universities from Florida to California.

THE PROGRAM

The Occupational Therapy Program at Springfield College has been fully accredited as an entry-level master's degree program since 1991. It offers both graduate and undergraduate entry points.

Springfield College chose to become only the eighteenth school in the U.S. to offer an entry-level master's program because we believe the additional knowledge and experience provided by master's level training enrich what practitioners can offer, both to their clients and to the profession. The profession apparently agrees: as of 2007, a master's degree or higher has become the minimum educational requirement for occupational therapists entering the field.

MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE (M.S.)

Students in the Occupational Therapy Program are required to successfully complete 85 semester hours of graduate study to become eligible to take the National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy examination. Generally, this program requires five semesters on campus including one summer, followed by six months of fieldwork. A full-time track takes twenty-eight months to complete.

Although most students follow our two-and-a-half-year curriculum plan, some choose to take three, four, or up to five years to complete the program. We offer a variety of flexible options in the pacing and sequence of courses to allow students to continue to fulfill work and family obligations while enrolled in the program. Part-time study in OT is possible until the start of fieldwork requirements, which are full-time assignments.

IN THE CLASSROOM

A multidisciplinary academic approach, combined with exceptional fieldwork experiences, set the foundation for our graduates' future success. The core academics and fieldwork will prepare the student to:

- evaluate function/dysfunction, synthesize plans, implement treatments/interventions, and plan discharge services
- consult and communicate effectively with clients, their families, and health-care personnel
- analyze research, apply modern management techniques, and utilize standard reimbursement practices to maintain, improve, and develop effective occupational therapy practitioners

Courses include: Clinical Human Anatomy; Neuroscience; OT Fundamentals; Fundamentals of Research; Performance, Dysfunction, and Adaptation in Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence, and Adults (I, II, III, & IV); and OT and Older Persons.

Springfield College offers graduate programs in a wide variety of other professions including art therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant studies, psychology, and rehabilitation counseling. This provides many opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other students and faculty. Occupational therapy students at Springfield College have the distinct advantage of taking lab courses with physical therapy, athletic training, applied exercise science, and communication disorders students.



IN THE FIELD

The fieldwork phase of the program includes two successive full-time, three-month, 480-hour internships spent working in the field under the direction of experienced therapists. These hands-on collaborative activities facilitate the learning not only of essential technical and clinical skills and critical problem-solving techniques, but also the development of leadership skills and self-confidence, and discovery of their professional identity. The more than 400 fieldwork sites affiliated with the Springfield College Occupational Therapy Department extend across the country and offer a wide range of experiences with people with differing disabilities and conditions, with different treatment approaches, and in various practice settings. Students work with a fieldwork coordinator to arrange fieldwork placements that help students meet their professional goals.

At least a quarter of our students choose to complete a third internship after finishing their required internships. For some, it has boosted their confidence about entering clinical practice, particularly if they had little work experience before the program. For others, it has provided a chance to explore another practice area as they decide what kind of work to pursue. And it has helped many students get a foot in the door in a more specialized—and competitive—area of practice. For all students, it has provided more opportunities to learn new skills and network for jobs.

ACCREDITATION

Our entry-level master's program in Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., 4720 Montgomery Lane, P. O. Box 31220, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220; (301) 652-2682; www.aota.org

CERTIFICATION

Graduates are eligible to sit for the national certification examination required to practice occupational therapy, offered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, 12 South Summit Avenue, Suite 100, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-4150; (301) 990-7979; www.nbcot.org

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Springfield College selects its graduate students on the basis of leadership potential, character, intellectual ability, and academic standing. For admission with full graduate standing, a candidate must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale). Applicants who do not meet the GPA requirements will only be considered for probationary admission. Foreign students whose native language is not English must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Applicants must submit transcripts, references, a resume, completed prerequisite and experience worksheets, and a strong statement of personal and professional objectives. Applicants must also have observed, volunteered, or worked in an occupational therapy setting prior to application. Additional experience working with people in an educational or health care setting, especially in the capacity of full-time employment, is also strongly valued. Reference to these experiences will strengthen the applicant's personal statement. One letter of reference from an occupational therapist is also strongly recommended. Acceptance into the program requires that students complete the following prerequisite courses with a minimum of a 3.00 GPA:

- Physical sciences, which must include:
 - Anatomy and Physiology with labs, taken within the last four years (6-8 semester hours)
- One elective physical science:
 - physics, chemistry, or kinesiology with a lab is strongly recommended (3 semester hours)
- Social Sciences, which must include:
 - Introduction to Sociology (3 semester hours)
 - Introduction to Psychology (3 semester hours)
 - Abnormal Psychology (3 semester hours)
 - One elective social science—Developmental Psychology is strongly recommended (3 semester hours)
- English, including one composition course (6 semester hours)
- Introduction to Statistics (3 semester hours)

Applicants who have completed some coursework in another accredited OT program may inquire about our advanced standing option, which allows the transfer and/or waiver of up to 18 semester hours of required coursework based on a portfolio and transcript review.

FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM

In addition to our entry-level master's degree program, Springfield College offers undergraduate admission to the five-and-a-half year program, which allows students to complete a master's degree in occupational therapy and a Bachelor of Science degree in health sciences. Students enter the professional phase of their program as seniors, joining the entry-level graduate students in their graduate courses.

FACILITIES

Springfield College's graduate-level programs in Occupational Therapy are enhanced by the first-class facilities found on campus. The Allied Health Sciences Center is home to the Occupational Therapy program's entire laboratory and teaching space. It's equipped with a state-of-the-art human anatomy and neuroscience laboratory including computer stations, anatomical models, and facilities for dissection. The OT lab includes a wide variety of equipment for functional skills training, including an adapted bathroom and kitchen, splinting materials and tools, pediatric therapy equipment, wheelchairs, adaptive computer hardware and software, and assistive technology.

Babson Library offers:

- a rich collection of print and digital materials that support our graduate programs
- information and research support available seven days a week via e-mail, chat, toll-free phone, or in person
- access to over thirty-five databases and over 10,000 full-text e-journals
- subject-specialist librarians who consult with students and work closely with faculty to provide research support for class assignments, research projects, and thesis/dissertation research
- a variety of reading and study areas and computer labs

FACULTY

The advantage of being a small New England college is that our teachers really get to know their students: what interests them, what their goals are, what their strengths are, and what they need to work on. Their personal mission is to help students do their best and get where they want to go. The Occupational Therapy Department features six full-time faculty members, all with advanced training and substantial experience across a broad spectrum of practice areas including pediatrics and geriatrics, mental health settings, and clients with substance abuse disorders. Their significant involvement in local, regional, and national organizations gives students access to a wide variety of professional resources and networking opportunities as they enter the profession. Students receive individualized assistance and advising with academic issues and decisions, research development, and fieldwork placement.

ACADEMIC STANDING AND FINANCIAL AID

Graduate students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative average in graduate-level coursework. Full-time students are expected to complete 18 credit hours per academic year. Academic reviews are conducted each semester. Students accepted to a graduate program on a probationary basis may apply for a federal Stafford Loan during this initial probationary semester of study. Students placed on or continued on probation as a result of their graduate academic record at the College are not eligible for College or federal financial assistance, including student loans. For more information, please write or call:

Springfield College
Office of Financial Aid
263 Alden Street
Springfield, MA 01109-3797
413 748 3108



FOUNDED IN 1885, Springfield College is known worldwide as the Birthplace of Basketball® and for the guiding principles of its Humanics philosophy—educating students in spirit, mind, and body for leadership in service to others. Springfield College, with its foundation of academic excellence and rich athletic heritage, prepares students with real-world leadership skills for tomorrow’s careers that transform lives and communities. A range of undergraduate and graduate degree programs are offered in fields of health sciences, human and social services, sport management and movement studies, education, business, and the arts and sciences. Doctoral programs are in physical education, physical therapy, and Psychology. The College is ranked in the 2011 edition of “America’s Best Colleges” in the top tier of “Best Regional Universities—North Region” by U.S.News Media Group, and is designated a premier Leadership Development Center by the YMCA of the USA. More than 5,000 traditional, nontraditional, and international students study at its main campus in Springfield, Massachusetts, and at its School of Human Services campuses at locations throughout the United States.



Springfield College Office of Graduate Admissions

263 Alden Street, Springfield, MA 01109-3797

Tel (413) 748-3225 TTY (413) 748-3383

Learn more about our graduate programs at:

www.springfieldcollege.edu