

# CASPER COLLEGE

## Occupational Therapy Assistant Program

# FIELDWORK NEWSLETTER

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## OTA PROGRAM — MISSION

The mission of the Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant program is to provide an environment that encourages students of diverse learning styles, ages, and backgrounds an opportunity to gain mastery over their education at the associate level through the progression of academic and experiential learning opportunities. Each semester, students gain greater confidence, cultivate critical thinking, and demonstrate enriched professionalism essential to work as a generalist occupational therapy assistant. Through the learning opportunities, students will view themselves and their clients as holistic, occupational beings and appreciate the importance of occupation-based activities to improve the lives of those they encounter. By the end of the program, students are invested in the importance of lifelong learning and stewardship of the occupational therapy profession, populations served, and their communities.

## OTA PROGRAM — PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of the OTA program that humans are self-directed, adaptive, and holistic occupational beings. Students enter the program with unique and diverse life experiences, seeking further understanding of themselves, others, and the world in which they live. Occupational engagement is central and critical to promoting health and wellness for self, populations, and communities. The promotion and sustainability of the profession rely on the stewardship of occupational therapy practitioners, both current and upcoming. The definition of stewardship to the Casper College OTA program is the act of advocacy for self and others, ethical practice, team building and collaboration, lifelong dedication, and managing the care of others to which we are entrusted. Stewardship is gained following Bloom's taxonomy, Schkade and Shultz's occupational adaptation model and Erikson's stages of psychosocial development.

Bloom's taxonomy progresses students' critical thinking skills from basic knowledge to generalist practitioners, emphasizing psychosocial theory and the importance of occupation-based practice. In the view of the OTA program's curriculum, learning is the active development of knowledge through academic and experiential learning opportunities, which occurs through engagement, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Progression through the program begins with cultivating knowledge and comprehension, advancing toward application and



analysis, followed by synthesis and evaluation, and ending with in vivo fieldwork experience. At the conclusion of the program, students will have mastered the ability to make informed decisions with sound judgment necessary for generalist clinical practice.

The Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant program utilizes occupational adaptation to guide and develop students into their new professional role as occupational therapy assistants. Upon entry into the program, students encounter new academic, occupational, and environmental challenges. The curriculum and cultural environment of the program encourage active engagement, mastery of academic skills, cultivation of professionalism, and self-advancement. Through student engagement with meaningful learning opportunities, students develop adaptation and mastery over these challenges. The academic environment is designed to challenge and support the diverse learning styles, ages, and backgrounds of students.

Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory is used to support and progress students from trust to ego integrity. The OTA program understands that students come from diverse life experiences with unique learning styles and different ages and backgrounds. However, most students will still follow the psychosocial stages throughout their academic career as this is a new and challenging experience. As stated in the occupational adaptation model above and in support of Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, the program creates a supportive and trusting environment by understanding that students learn differently and handle challenging situations in diverse ways. The OTA program understands this and helps students develop their autonomy through the progression of the program. This transformation of personal and professional growth is guided by following and mastering Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. Graduates will demonstrate professional identity as occupational therapy assistants and a sense of integrity regarding their role and stewardship in the profession and communities served.



## OTA PROGRAM — OUTCOMES

The Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program will graduate students who:

1. Demonstrate adaptation and mastery over academic challenges by successfully completing their education at the associate level to earn their Associate of Science degree in occupational therapy assistant.
2. Demonstrate the mastery of academic and experiential learning and apply this knowledge to successfully pass the National Board of Certification of Occupational Therapy exam.
3. Demonstrate professionalism and lifelong learning by obtaining and maintaining licensure in the state of Wyoming and/or their chosen state of practice.
4. Demonstrate integrity and professionalism while following the American Occupational Therapy Association's Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics, which is essential to work as a generalist occupational therapy assistant.
5. Appreciate and implement evidence-based practice through client-centered, occupation-based activities when serving the needs of a person, population, and community.
6. Are self-directed, adaptive, and holistic generalist practitioners.
7. Are lifelong learners and demonstrate stewardship to the occupational therapy profession, populations served, and their communities.

## CURRICULUM DESIGN OVERVIEW

In the view of the Casper College OTA Program, learning is the mastery of knowledge through a supportive and challenging environment and academic and experiential learning, thereby cultivating critical thinking and professionalism. The Casper College OTA Program's curriculum is guided by Bloom's taxonomy from simple to complex, along with Schkade and Schultz's occupational adaptation model to provide a challenging and supportive learning environment. The learning environment is unique by providing students with direct access to a therapy gym, assistive technology lab, occupations lab, kitchen classroom, private study rooms, outdoor learning space, library resources, and technology. The OTA program faculty also utilize Erik Erickson's psychosocial stages of development to guide and develop each student's transition towards an entry-level generalist practitioner. The classes are intentionally sequenced to develop mastery over entry-level occupational therapy skills. The faculty teaches through a variety of approaches intended to actively engage individuals and integrate occupational therapy knowledge through active discussions, hands-on simulation, role-playing, community engagement, active self-reflection, critical thinking, and evaluation.

The CC OTA program is six consecutive semesters in length with a total of 78 credit hours. The fall semester is considered a curricular Level I semester. Students apply to the OTA program during this fall semester. Upon being accepted into the OTA program, the students start the official program in the spring semester. The initial spring semester OTA classes are curricular Level I and Level II. The curricular levels continue until completion of the OTA program.

Although the OTA program is not a distance-education program, we believe in utilizing the learning management system Moodle to enhance delivery options for diversified learning needs. Thus, some courses are available completely online, hybrid or face-to-face to meet the occupational adaptation learning needs of students.

## FIELDWORK EDUCATOR RESOURCES:

*Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Website:*  
[caspercollege.edu/program/occupational-therapy-assistant](http://caspercollege.edu/program/occupational-therapy-assistant).

*Casper College OTA Program Fieldwork Newsletter:*  
[caspercollege.edu/program/occupational-therapy-assistant](http://caspercollege.edu/program/occupational-therapy-assistant).

*American Occupational Therapy Association Fieldwork Education Resources:*  
[aota.org/education-careers/fieldwork.aspx](http://aota.org/education-careers/fieldwork.aspx).

*Fieldwork Educators Certificate Workshop:*  
[aota.org/Education-Careers/Fieldwork/Workshop.aspx](http://aota.org/Education-Careers/Fieldwork/Workshop.aspx).

## CASPER COLLEGE OTA CLUB HIGHLIGHTS

The Casper College OTA Club is used in conjunction with academics to encourage students to develop their stewardship skills, empathy, and integrity for creating a better community.

- Developed and created a sensory room in the Goodstein Foundation Library. In 2019, the Casper College Goodstein Foundation Library received an Innovations Grant to create a sensory room in the library. We're happy to announce that the project, completed in collaboration with students from Casper College's Occupational Therapy Assistant Club, OTA Program Director Cassady Hoff MSOT, OTR/L, and Librarian Beth Floyd, was recently finished and is ready for student and community use! The intent of the sensory room in the library was to create a safe room that will allow college students with sensory sensitivities to regulate their emotions and needs in a college environment for academic success to complete their homework and study. The OTA students spent time choosing the right location, a space that would benefit the student with the sensitivity need and ensure it would not disrupt other students in the library. The location was also chosen based on its easy access for students with disabilities and communication needs. Next, the occupational therapy assistant student researched and collaborated with Hoff. The room color, the set-up of the desks, calming interventions, weighted blankets, noise-canceling headphones, and lights were carefully selected to allow the college students to have their own choice of tools and equipment that would be beneficial to their own specific needs. This room is beneficial to help those that may have anxiety, attention deficit challenges, auditory challenges, or just high-stress levels. The room is definitely an attribute for Casper College so that recruiters will be able to verbalize to potential students that the college has a study room to help students with and without disabilities be able to decompress and increase their academic success and improve their mental health well-being, in a college environment. This new room shows that the faculty and staff here at Casper College want CC students

to succeed. Through collaborative efforts, the college will find ways to put its students' needs first. The room is available for student and community use by walk-ins and can be booked on the library's website, [caspercollege.edu/library](http://caspercollege.edu/library), using the "Book A Study Room" link!

- Purchased a log swing and a wood table with a game of checkers painted on it to encourage stress management for college students. The table is located in the rose garden in the middle of Liesinger Hall.
- Created COVID-19-friendly packets for Wyoming Medical Center/Banner Health to provide to clients in the COVID wing.
- Purchased and donated an activity board for Wyoming Medical Center/Banner Health for Alzheimer's and dementia clients.
- Donated monetary support and supplies to Reach 4A Star Riding Academy to help with the costs associated with the horses. A cornhole board was built by an OTA student and donated to Reach 4A Star Riding Academy as well.
- Six robotic therapeutic cats were purchased and donated to various locations within Casper.
- Bi-weekly Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources labs were held to help educate and support seniors in assistive technology to improve their quality of life. The labs were available around the state of Wyoming. Tuesday's lab was on campus, and Thursday's lab was held via Zoom.
- Monetary support was provided to 2021 OTA program graduates for National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy study materials.
- Held a fundraiser to help fund the OTA students' trip to the national conference or received study materials for the NBCOT exam.
- Handcrafted cards were distributed to various local businesses for the holidays.



## FIELDWORK CHANGES

Navigating fieldwork through the pandemic the past year and a half has been challenging! We are so very fortunate to have such amazing fieldwork educators and fieldwork sites who have been supportive of the program and worked with us through these challenges. Thank you!

Regarding COVID-19, the program has made some changes regarding community experience fieldwork to navigate these challenges. For community experience, first-year OTA students in the past have traditionally completed 40 hours of observation in a variety of clinical settings, including pediatrics, mental health, adult physical disabilities, geriatrics, and developmentally delayed. Due to COVID-19, these observations for the first-year students are now completed through the ICE Learning Center through the use of ICE videos.

The ICE videos were developed by Jan Davis, MS, OTR/L, and there are over 200 videos of actual therapists working with actual clients. The videos address a variety of diagnoses, settings, including acute care hospitals, outpatient therapy, home health, etc., and treatment interventions.

Students are assigned specific videos to watch and then complete guided reflection questions and assignments. These questions and assignments are specifically designed to guide each student's observation skills through the treatment session. The reflection questions also require students to research diagnoses, the symptoms of the diagnosis, safety considerations, causes and risk factors of each diagnosis, etc. The students are also required to research various treatment interventions and tools specific to the diagnosis, such as adaptive equipment and/ or assistive technology available.

Upon completing the assigned community experience observations and assignments, the students participate in the fieldwork integration. The instructor and students further discuss observations, additional treatment considerations, identify the OT/OTA role in each setting, and answer any additional questions the students may have about the observations.

A wonderful benefit of the use of the ICE videos is that the students have the opportunity to rewind and review the session as many times as they would like, as well as the ability to access the videos at times that work best with the student's schedule. Although the ICE videos cannot replace observations in the clinical setting, the students have identified how beneficial the adapted community experience fieldwork has been in increasing their understanding of the occupational therapy profession, the role of the OTA in each setting, and increased their observation skills.

In the spring semester, the students continue their observations with the ICE videos and have opportunities to hear from guest speakers who share their personal experiences with occupational therapy. The students also complete the KORU Mindfulness training to not only assist with

managing stress throughout the OTA program as a student but also to use this information for future client interactions.

Please let me know if you have questions about the community experience or are interested in learning more about how the fieldwork experience has been modified. Additional information regarding the ICE Learning Center can be found at: [icelearningcenter.com](http://icelearningcenter.com).

For Level I fieldwork, the students complete one-week fieldwork experiences in the clinical setting. During the fall semester, each student completes fieldwork experiences in pediatric and mental/behavioral health settings, in both traditional and nontraditional settings. During the spring semester, the students complete one-week fieldwork experiences in adult physical disabilities and geriatric settings, with an additional 16 hours completed in developmentally, emerging and nontraditional settings. The new Level I Fieldwork Evaluation form has been implemented for four semesters and provides increased feedback to the students to better prepare the OTA students for Level II fieldwork.

The electronic American Occupational Therapy Association's Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student was implemented for the first time for the 2021 summer semester. Although there were a few minor hiccups initially when implementing the form, the overall response to the use of the electronic form has been positive! For fieldwork educators who have not used the electronic form, training information is available through the academic fieldwork coordinator and AOTA at [aota.org/Education-Careers/Fieldwork/performance-evaluations.aspx](http://aota.org/Education-Careers/Fieldwork/performance-evaluations.aspx). If you are interested in this information, please contact Missy Neff at [mneff@caspercollege.edu](mailto:mneff@caspercollege.edu) or phone at 307-268-2054.

Thank you again for your continued support of the Casper College OTA Program!





## FIELDWORK NOTES

*By Missy Neff, MSOT, OTR/L*

### Spring 2022:

Level I fieldworks for the spring semester are scheduled for March 7-11 and April 18-22, 2022. Students will complete Level I fieldwork rotations in adult physical disability and geriatric settings. The OTA student will also complete 16 hours of Level I fieldwork in

developmentally delayed, emerging, and nontraditional settings.

### Fall 2022:

The fall semester Level I fieldwork dates are scheduled for October 24-28 and November 14-18, 2022. Students will complete their fall Level I fieldwork rotations in pediatrics and mental/ behavioral health settings. If you are interested in supervising a student for Level I fieldwork, please contact me.

We appreciate your continued support of the OTA Program and your willingness to supervise our students. As a fieldwork educator, if there are any questions or additional fieldwork resources we can help with, please contact me, Missy Neff, academic fieldwork coordinator, by phone at 307-268-2054 or by email at: [mneff@caspercollege.edu](mailto:mneff@caspercollege.edu).



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

*By Cassidy Hoff, MSOT, OTR/L*

The Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program has its on-site reaccreditation with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education in May. The faculty has been working hard on incorporating new ACOTE standards into all aspects of the program.

Through this process, the faculty identified the need to update the mission, philosophy, program outcomes, and curriculum design of the OTA program to accurately represent the values, beliefs and teaching methodology of the faculty and adapt to the student trends in education.

The OTA faculty believe that these changes will help grow and develop knowledgeable and ethical occupational therapy assistants that will help further the profession within the state of Wyoming and surrounding states.

## UPCOMING LEVEL I AND LEVEL II FIELDWORK

### Level I Fieldwork Dates Spring 2022:

March 7-11, 2022

April 18-22, 2022

### Level I Fieldwork Dates Fall 2022:

October 24-28, 2022

November 14-18, 2022

### Recommended 2022 Level II Fieldwork Dates:

May 23-July 15, 2022

July 25-September 16, 2022



The Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. The AOTA's phone number and website are 301-652-AOTA (2682), [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org).

## CERTIFICATE UPDATES

In the past few years at the OTA program, certificate practicums have proven to be the most challenging and the most rewarding in many different ways. Due to COVID, I feel much more creative with distance learning and how to make courses work in many different ways. We are able to offer courses in-person with video conferencing as an option for students who live outside of Casper. This has helped to really change the dynamic in some of our practicum courses.

The assistive technology practicum continues to support our relationship with Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources. Over the past year, students have hosted labs in person and on zoom to support the Tech2Connect Program by providing training and creating instructional videos for seniors in the state of Wyoming. We were able to do two open labs at the Casper Senior Center this fall, and they were a great success. We are looking forward to doing this again in the spring. Also, over the past year, I have been lucky enough to work with the Wyoming Center on Aging to provide occupational therapy perspective and input to their Wyoming Dementia Together program. We meet bi-weekly to present and support caregivers in the state of Wyoming. This opportunity has opened many doors for our gerontology students. We offer guest speakers from the Wyoming Center on Aging and Wyoming Dementia Care.

Karol Sanstestevan has continued to offer the Equine Assisted Therapy practicum. Karol accepts students every summer, allowing students many opportunities and flexibility to schedule lab times as Reach 4A Star Riding Academy has many events throughout the summer. We are so lucky that our students have the opportunity to learn through this unique and nontraditional setting.

All in all, the past year has brought many opportunities and new experiences for the students in the COTA program and certificate courses. I am thankful for the challenges the past year has brought, as it has pushed me to communicate better and be more creative with how technology can be used.



## THANK YOU!

We would like to thank the following Level I and Level II fieldwork sites and fieldwork educators for their continued support of the Casper College OTA Program. WE APPRECIATE YOU!!!

Advance Therapy	Elkhorn Valley
Advancing Abilities	Rehabilitation Hospital
Albany County School District #1	I-Reach 2
ARC of Natrona County	Marcus Daly
Campbell County Health	Rehabilitation Services
CAMP Hippo	Natrona County School District
Casper Orthopedic Therapy Center	Physical Therapy Center
Cheyenne Regional	of Wyoming
Medical Center	Rocky Mountain Therapy
Child Development Center of	Ropes and Roses
Natrona County	Therapy Services
Children's Resource Center Cody	Sensational Kids
Children's Therapy Place	Utah State Hospital
Early Intervention Program	Wyoming Behavioral Institute
Elite Therapy	Wyoming State Hospital

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