

# CASPER COLLEGE Occupational Therapy Assistant Program FIELDWORK NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

Volume 9, Issue 1



## PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S CORNER

*By Cassady Hoff, MSOT, OTR/L*

The Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program received its 10-year accreditation status through [ACOTE](#) in August 2022, with the next site visit in 2031-2032.

During the accreditation process, the OTA faculty worked tirelessly to develop the program's new mission, philosophy, and curriculum design with the intention of training top-notch occupational therapy assistant practitioners. The spring 2022 newsletter provided you all with the information on these changes. If you would like to receive another copy, please let me know. One year has passed with the implemented curricular changes, and we are seeing excellent outcomes for our students: a 100% rate for the [National Board of Certification for Occupational Therapy Assistants](#), 30 points higher than the national average for scores on the NBCOT exam. That said, we continually reflect on what we need to improve upon following students' Level I and Level II fieldwork rotations. The student evaluation fieldwork forms, the academic fieldwork educator questionnaire, the postgraduate survey, and the employer surveys are reviewed and discussed yearly.

## 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.

Casper College provides equal opportunity in education and employment — [caspercollege.edu/nondiscrimination](http://caspercollege.edu/nondiscrimination).



## FIELDWORK NOTES

*By Missy Neff, MSOT, OTR/L*

### Level I Fieldwork:

For Level I fieldwork, the OTA students complete one week of fieldwork experiences in the clinical setting. 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 delayed, emerging, and nontraditional settings. During the fall semester, each student completes fieldwork experiences in pediatric and mental/behavioral health settings, in both traditional and nontraditional settings.

The spring semester Level I fieldwork dates are scheduled for **April 1-5 and April 22-24, 2024**. Students will complete their spring Level I fieldwork experiences in adult physical disabilities and geriatrics and an additional 16 hours in nontraditional and emerging practice settings. If you are interested in supervising a student for Level I fieldwork, please contact me!

The fall semester Level I fieldwork dates are scheduled for **October 28-November 1, 2024** and **November 18-22, 2024**. 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 Casper College OTA program and your willingness to supervise the OTA 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 [melissa.neff@caspercollege.edu](mailto:melissa.neff@caspercollege.edu).

## FIELDWORK CHANGES

The first change I would like the fieldwork educators to be aware of is the change in my email address. **My new email address** is [melissa.neff@caspercollege.edu](mailto:melissa.neff@caspercollege.edu). Please use this new address to contact me!

The electronic “AOTA Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience” and the “AOTA Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Educator” were implemented for the first time for the 2023 summer semester. The “AOTA Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience” was previously completed in paper format. Some changes were made for the new electronic form. The first change was separating the form into two separate evaluations: “AOTA Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience” and the “AOTA Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Educator.” On the old evaluation form, both sections were included in one form. The second change was condensing some of the areas evaluated by the student. The student completes these forms through Formstack, the same company that the “AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation of the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student” is done through. Students must review the “AOTA Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience” with their fieldwork educators upon completing the fieldwork experience. For fieldwork educators unfamiliar with these new evaluation forms and interested in receiving more information, please contact me at [melissa.neff@caspercollege.edu](mailto:melissa.neff@caspercollege.edu) or by phone at 307-268-2054.

Did you know that the Wyoming State Board of Occupational Therapy will allow occupational therapists and certified occupational therapy assistants to count student supervision toward their continuing education requirements for licensure? Occupational therapists or certified occupational therapy assistants who supervise occupational therapy students or occupational therapy assistant students for Level II fieldwork or supervise doctoral experiential students may receive continuing education credit for student supervision. The fieldwork educator can earn one continuing education credit for every week of student supervision, for a maximum of 12 continuing education credits earned for each bi-annual period. Additional information can be found on the Wyoming State Board of Occupational Therapy’s website at [occupationaltherapy.wyo.gov/rules-statutes](http://occupationaltherapy.wyo.gov/rules-statutes), located under “Current Rules, Chapter 8: Renewal.”

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

The Occupational Therapy/Occupational Therapy Assistant program is accredited by the accreditation council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. ACOTE’s telephone number, c/o AOTA, is 301-652-AOTA, and its web address is [www.acoteonline.org](http://www.acoteonline.org).

## UPCOMING LEVEL I AND LEVEL II FIELDWORK

### Level I Fieldwork Dates Spring 2024:

April 1-5, 2024

April 22-26, 2024

### Level I Fieldwork Dates Fall 2024:

October 28-November 1, 2024

November 18-22, 2024

### Recommended Level II Fieldwork Dates 2024:

May 20-July 12, 2024

July 22-September 13, 2024

## 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: [ota.org/education/fieldwork](http://ota.org/education/fieldwork)

Fieldwork Educators Certificate Workshop: [ota.org/education/fieldwork/fieldwork-educators-certification-workshop](http://ota.org/education/fieldwork/fieldwork-educators-certification-workshop)





## CERTIFICATE UPDATES

By Theresa Robinett, MOT, OTR/L

The past year brought many new opportunities for the courses I teach in the OTA program and our certificate programs. Over the past year, we have worked very diligently to be a resource for the community. The assistive technology, gerontology, and equine-assisted

therapy practicums have all experienced revisions and updates. These revisions and updates allow students to develop a skill set that will support and complement their OTA knowledge.

We have revised our partnership with Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources, or WATR, and extended it to the community. We are now hosting open labs on the second Thursday of each month at Natrona County Public Library, two sessions a semester at the Senior Center, and then as needed in the community with groups like the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. If you are interested in hosting an open lab or session at your facility, please reach out. We can access the WATR loan closet and quickly get devices here. Students are engaging with community members and volunteering their time to problem-solve for hearing and vision deficits. Problem-solving may involve trying devices from WATR or students working directly with the accessibility features built into our smart devices. Our goal moving forward with the WATR partnership is to be more responsive and available. Being more responsive and available has proven to be a win-win. Students get the opportunity to problem-solve and work with real individuals while applying what they are learning in the classroom.

The gerontology practicum has also grown more responsive to the needs of the community and developing students ready to work with older adults. The practicum is also built on community contacts with Wyoming Dementia Care and the Wyoming Center on Aging. Community contacts with Wyoming Dementia Care and the Wyoming Center on Aging allow students to attend support groups, art therapy, and experience music therapy. Guest speakers from the Wyoming Center on Aging have customized sessions we complete to help students develop motivational interviewing skills directed at older adults. We are also looking at understanding aging in its process and will be completing life reviews and self-awareness to work with an aging population. Students completing this practicum will have a unique skill set to work effectively with older adults.

The equine-assisted therapy practicum is offered during the summer semester. This shift has allowed students the flexibility to enjoy the busy and long summer days with Karol Santistevan, MOT, OTR/L, at her clinic Ropes and Roses. Students are still guided by Santistevan into the use of the horse as they have in past years. We know this experience is enriching and sets a foundation for students to move forward in

using the horse as a modality. Students are leaving the practicum with Santistevan, inspiring them to think differently, not just about equine therapy but also in helping create change in clients' lives.

Overall, we are very proud of how the practicums have evolved in the past few years. The certificates continue to build on the successful coursework but allow students the autonomy to build their skills. All of the courses focus on how to help students develop the skills of resourcefulness, problem-solving, and creative thinking. If you have students on fieldwork, I would encourage you to visit with them and ask if they completed the practicums.



## 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                 | Natrona County School        |
| Advancing Abilities             | District #1                  |
| Carbon County School            | Regional West Medical Center |
| District #2                     | Ropes and Roses              |
| Casper Mountain Rehab           | Therapy Services             |
| Casper Orthopedic               | SCL Health St.               |
| Therapy Center                  | Vincent's Healthcare         |
| Child Development Center of     | Sensational Kids             |
| Natrona County                  | Sheridan VA Medical Center   |
| Children's Resource Center Cody | St John's United             |
| Early Intervention Program      | Utah State Hospital          |
| Elite Therapy                   | Westview Health Care Center  |
| Elkhorn Valley                  | Wyoming Behavioral Institute |
| Rehabilitation Hospital         | Wyoming State Hospital       |
| I-Reach 2                       | Yellowstone Boys and         |
| Life Care Center of Casper      | Girls Ranch                  |
| Live Inspired                   |                              |