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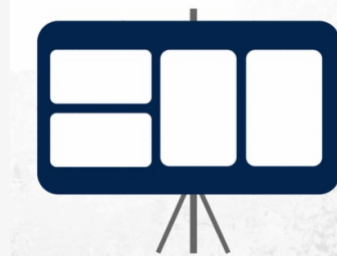
Pi Theta Epsilon

National Honor Society of Occupational Therapy

A program of the American Occupational Therapy Foundation



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Letter from the President



Dear Pi Theta Epsilon Members,

We hope you are all continuing to be safe and well. This global pandemic has challenged us to be creative, innovative, and supportive in times of need. While we are unable to hold events and conduct meetings as usual, we are trying our best to provide the support and information in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

The PTE National Office worked together to virtually host the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) on Tuesday, April 21st. Through all the kinks and forgotten mute buttons, we effectively conducted the meeting with input from over one hundred participants! In a similar fashion, we will be virtually hosting the Faculty Advisors' Workshop in June, date TBD. This workshop is being scheduled based on a survey that was sent to faculty advisors approximately two months ago, asking for times that work best for most.

While untraditional, here at the National Office, through a virtual transition, we officially said goodbye to our wonderful National Secretary of four years, **Rebecca Grondin**, and welcomed our new National Secretary, **Lauren McClung**. We are excited to see the many new and creative ideas she brings to the table to help shape the future of PTE!

During the ABM in April, we briefly discussed the importance of supporting our new graduates and members in their efforts to participate in research and scholarship. We are excited to serve as a platform for you to share your projects and research to help make up for the loss of conference. If you would like to disseminate your project or research through PTE channels, please submit your request through [this form](#). We will be working diligently to assess the quality of the submissions and bring them to our membership in the most effective way.

While the world continues to adjust, I am hopeful for the future. I want to take this space to congratulate the **Occupational Therapy Class of 2020** across the nation who will be unable to walk across that hard-earned stage. I want to thank you for your patience, your perseverance, and your resilience in completing your last projects, thesis, capstones, and final exams under these undeserved and unplanned circumstances. I also thank you for the continued patience, perseverance, and resilience that the coming months will require as you attempt to take your board exams, enter the workforce during a recession, and cancel or postpone life events. You will be a generation of occupational therapists who learned to identify meaningful occupations during a global crisis, when everyone was stuck at home with limited outlet. You will find value in empathizing with your future patients who are miserable from being stuck in a hospital for forty days, or in a rehab facility for three weeks. You will perhaps bring back the true, authentic occupational therapy services our pioneers once envisioned. I am hopeful that we all, along with the rest of the world, will come out stronger, more resilient, and more caring than we may have been prior to this traumatic experience.

Thank you all for your continued support of Pi Theta Epsilon, and I wish you all continued health and safety over the upcoming months.

Gratefully,
Pooja A. Patel, DrOT, OTR/L
National President of Pi Theta Epsilon

Upcoming Faculty Advisors' Workshop

In lieu of the workshop held annually at AOTA conference, we will be hosting an interactive webinar to engage faculty across the country this summer, allowing everyone to recover from this semester of last-minute updates and alterations to coursework and fieldwork. The workshop typically includes a presentation from the National Executive Committee with multiple roundtable discussion questions throughout the presentation. This workshop offers the opportunity for advisors to learn from and problem solve with each other as well as with the National Board. We continue to encourage you to [browse our website](#) under [chapter resources](#) to help provide any pertinent information and reach out to us with any questions.

Help us determine the best time and date for the webinar:

[Submit Your Availability](#)

Annual Business Meeting Recap

We had a grand total of 52 chapters from across the United States for our virtual 2020 Annual Business Meeting! Thank you to all the chapters that attended. Business included communication initiatives (follow us on social media today!), and approval of our 2020 budget. Much of our discussion of new business focused on raising awareness of existing Alumni Benefits and of current chapter resources on our website. One excellent overall suggestion that can potentially alleviate many of the concerns of PTE members, is providing a sense of continuity between outgoing and incoming chapter boards. This could be done in the form of a binder of information passed down, a google drive or otherwise. The National Board will also be exploring how we can improve our new Interchapter Grant Award, which had no applicants this past year. All PTE chapters shared the incredible work they are doing to promote OT scholarship and research – and we were so excited to hear everyone share their wonderful events and ideas. We look forward to hearing more about what activities our **129 PTE Chapters** succeed in this upcoming year – keep us updated and we can't wait

Join the 2021 St. Catherine Challenge



The 2021 St. Catherine's Challenge, the national student driven philanthropic campaign, will once again aim to fully fund an **AOTF Intervention Research Grant**. The 2020 Challenge raised over \$54,000 from 54 schools across the country, a new milestone in the Challenge's history. We hope that the 2021 campaign will again set a new level for participation and help further advance the science of OT. IRGs fill a critical gap in OT research funding by providing financial support for a 1-year, early stage, research study. Over the last seven years AOTF has invested \$1.5 million dollars into early stage research, developing new evidence in the field, elevating the visibility of OT research across health care disciplines and has generated over \$20 million dollars in follow-on funding. But the need for more OT research is vital to strengthen evidence-based practice and improve the delivery of care.

We welcome you to participate in the 2021 Challenge. Be sure to send in your participation form soon. The 2021 Kickoff Call will happen in mid-September, so don't miss your opportunity to be a part of this years success.

We welcome any OT, OTD and OTA program to join us and we hope that all our 2020 schools will participate again.

- [2021 St. Catherine's Challenge Pledge Form](#)
- [2021 St. Catherine's Challenge Donation Form](#)
- [2021 Sample Fundraising Letter](#)

Engage with PTE National Chat on GroupMe

At the 2019 Annual Business Meeting, members asked us to find ways to improve access to the National Board and facilitate ways for members to connect with one another across the country. Since that time, we have explored multiple ideas and platforms. Through various discussions with our members and an initial pilot GroupMe chat with Sage Colleges Gamma Pi Chapter, it was decided that a GroupMe chat can offer value in a distinct way separate from email and our other existing social media outlets. We revisited this chat idea during the 2020 Annual Business Meeting and members agreed that a GroupMe chat would be a valuable addition as another way to improve our connection and communication across PTE members and the National Board.



- We encourage members to use this chat to then connect regionally for their own chats to hopefully improve inter-chapter collaborations.
- We suggest 1-2 delegates per chapter participate to create a more manageable conversation and prevent overwhelming notifications.
- Let us know your chapter and location when you join.

[Join the GroupMe Chat!](#)

Mary J. Bridle Research Award - Information

The MJB First Research Award fosters scholarship and first research efforts within the occupational therapy community. The award provides an opportunity for PTE members to have a research manuscript reviewed by experts in the field and to be considered for publication in *OTJR: Occupation, Participation, and Health*.

This award is a two-part process. If you would like the opportunity to have your manuscript reviewed and potentially published, you must submit a letter of intent by October 1st annually. The letter of

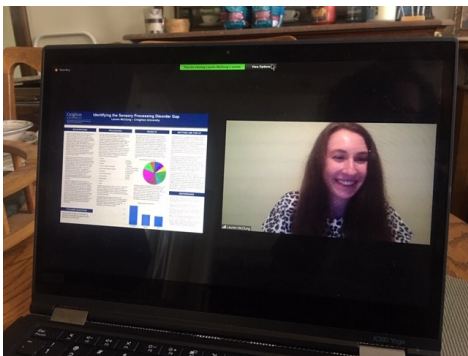
intent does not need to be extravagant. It should include a brief, 2-3 sentence outline of your project and how it relates to occupational therapy. The title of your manuscript, if descriptive enough, is also acceptable. The letter of intent will be reviewed by a third-party expert to determine eligibility for award submission.

Once you receive approval of your letter of intent, you can work on and submit your application by January 31st annually. Application details and necessary paperwork information is [outlined on the website](#). All submitted manuscripts will be reviewed by researchers and experts to identify an award recipient. The awardee may then have the opportunity to potentially publish their manuscript in *OTJR* pending review from the editor-in-chief. Receiving the award does not guarantee a publication.

Please reach out to pte@aotf.org with any further questions or needs for clarification.

PTE University & College Updates

Creighton University

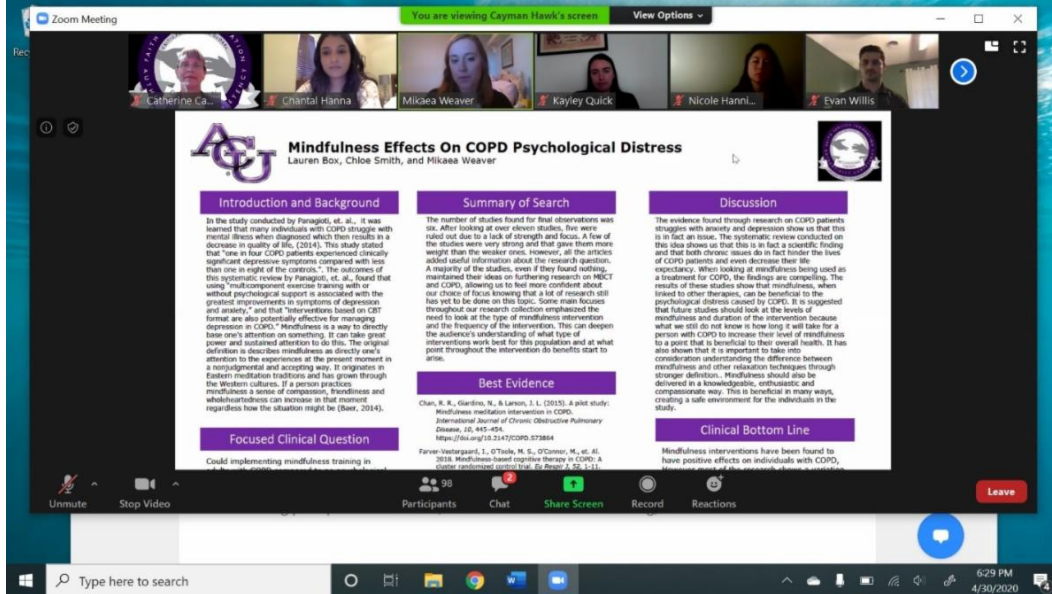


The Alpha Iota Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon at Creighton University did not let social distancing stop them from learning and celebrating their classmates research. Creighton University's 3rd year OTD students typically display their final doctoral component at a poster symposium, where students, faculty, and family/friends came to listen to their scholarly capstone presentations. This year, the symposium was offered via Zoom, and each student was assigned a particular time slot to showcase their hard work. The PTE executive team was able to compile a list of the presenting student's presentation times as well as a short summary of their

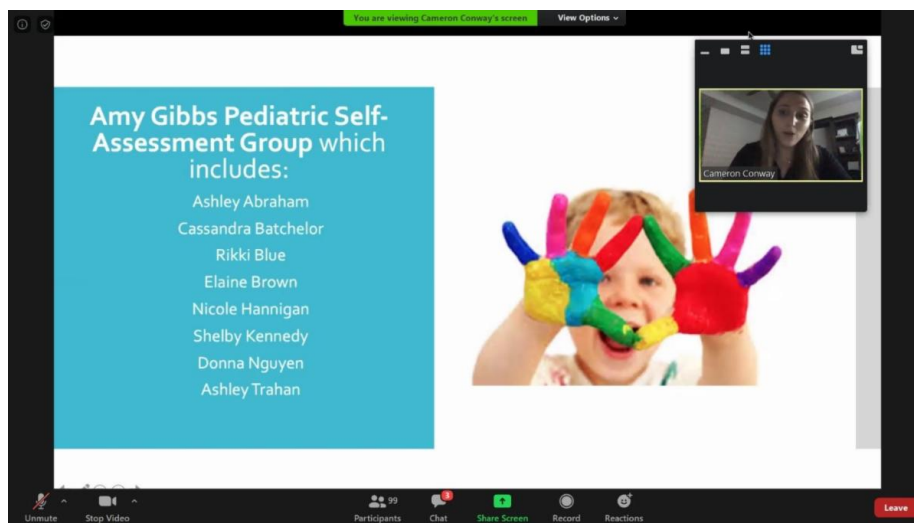
research topic. The PTE students were then able to identify the topics they inquired to learn more about and attend the presentations via Zoom. The event appears to have been a success, with the 3rd years getting the audience they deserved, as well as the PTE students receiving more exposure to various types of research at Creighton University. The example attached is a presentation by Lauren McClung (Zweig), newly elected PTE national secretary, explaining her findings on which settings in the community are most knowledgeable and sensitive to individuals with sensory processing disorders. We appreciated the opportunity to promote scholarship and research as well as cheer on our classmates who have been mentors, friends, TAs, and role models to us while in OT school! The Alpha Iota chapter would also like to congratulate all of the PTE graduates this year and wish them the best of luck in all of their future endeavors!

Abilene Christian University

As all universities transitioned to virtual learning due to the unexpected pandemic, the Delta Omega PTE Chapter at Abilene Christian University transitioned their activities online as well. Our annual Research Day event was transformed into an organized Zoom conference that held over 100 attendees including faculty, students, families, and health professionals from the community of Abilene. At the event the class of 2021 presented their evidence based systematic reviews, and the class of 2020 presented research mentored by ACU's faculty members. Topics included titles such as "*Impacts on Postnatal Mothers During and After a NICU Experience*", "*Constraint Induced Movement Therapy on the Motor Performance of Patients Surviving a Stroke*", "*Reading as an Occupation*", "*Effectiveness of Nerve Gliding Exercises or Splinting on Adults with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome*", "*Upper Extremity Injuries in Collegiate Athletes*", and "*Effectiveness of Sensory Diets for Children with Autism*".



In addition, this year the first Hope A. Hodges Micro Grant Research Award was given. PTE members from the class of 2020 evaluated research project proposals from the upcoming class of 2021. The award was granted to the project being mentored by faculty member Amy Gibbs OTR, and her select group of students. Their research is aimed to discover how different types of assessments can be used for the pediatric setting. Despite all the transitioning and hurdles to overcome in the spring semester, all of our students did a wonderful job persevering and accomplishing their research and we look forward to a day when we can present in person once again.



New York University



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, New York University OT students wanted to show their appreciation for OTs on the front lines by starting the NYU COVID OuTreach Team to spread acts of kindness. Recently inducted NYU Pi Theta Epsilon members Courtney Jacoby and Gabriella Francis, joined by NYU OT Department Chair and PTE lifetime member Kristie Patten Koenig, raised over \$5000 to send lunches to Bellevue hospital, in addition to donating tablets to help patients in isolation stay connected with their families. The NYU COVID OuTreach Team has additional plans to buy lunches for other hospitals throughout NYC.

Sacred Heart University



Addressing “Missing Pieces and Misconceptions about OT”

The Gamma Nu Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon at Sacred Heart University are continuing to engage in scholarly activities while online learning. We are taking advantage of this time to focus on advocating for occupational therapy (OT) and raising awareness for the wide array of clinical settings and clients that we serve. The overarching goal of this project is to make OT a household name among the general public, highlight the significance of our profession, as well as spark interest in future OT students.

Prior members from our chapter completed a small study with the goal of gathering information about the general public’s perception of OT, that reported, “Missing Pieces and Misconceptions about OT.” Some of the identified misconceptions included that OT is only related to injury, OT is only related to self-care, and OT is only involved in job acquisition and maintenance. Many participants in the study simply had no idea what OT was. Based on the misconceptions identified, the current Pi Theta members are reaching out to occupational therapy practitioners and students, asking for video

contributions regarding the OT role in their particular area of interest to be used in an educational and advocacy-related YouTube channel for public access. The videos will specifically address the common misconceptions identified.

University of Texas - Galveston



PTE Nu chapter members working with classmates at St. Vincent's: Julia Bynum (2nd from left), Brittany Horowitz (third from left), and Michelle Nguyen (far right).

In April, the Nu chapter at the University of Texas Medical Branch welcomed seventeen new members from the OTD class of 2022. This will be the Nu chapter's first class of doctorate students. On May 11th, members elected chapter officers, holding the election virtually to abide by school and government guidelines in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter members look forward to their official induction ceremony, which will take place at a later date, and are excited to begin work on scholarly projects.

Despite completing the end of the spring semester with distance learning, Nu chapter members Shelby Rogers, Luz Villalpando, Macy Tralmer, Mady Wehr, Julia Bynum, and Sally Yeung found ways to give back to their community by volunteering with Galveston County Health District. Volunteers called potential COVID-19 patients to monitor their symptoms, inform them on county resources, and provide support to those who were isolated during recovery. A few Nu chapter members also gave their time to help paint the UTMB student run clinic, St. Vincent's. St. Vincent's offers free health and therapy services to people in the Galveston community, and is currently being updated and renovated to better meet community needs.

Dominican University



The Impact of Sensory Health on Academic Success in College

By: Esther Galo, Melanie Johnson, Chastity Kiely, & Magdalena Yastion

Advisor: Dr. Catherine Cavaliere, PhD, OTR
Gamma Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon
Dominican College, Orangeburg, NY

The notion of Sensory Health (Cavaliere, 2019) was recently introduced to undergraduate students in the Re-Charge Program at Dominican College by Dr. Catherine Cavaliere and PTE students Chasity Kiely and Magdalena Yastion. The Re-Charge Program is a mandatory 10-week program for undergraduate

students on academic probation. A variety of areas are targeted throughout this time frame in an effort to retain students identified as being in jeopardy of expulsion. Utilizing an occupational therapy

perspective, four scheduled, one and a half hour segments were dedicated to educate the students on their sensory health and how it has the potential to support their academic performance. Students were introduced to their sensory profile by completing *The Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile* (Brown & Dunn, 2002) and provided with strategies to maximize and balance their sensory needs in relation to their academic responsibilities. Through a series of hands-on activities, students were exposed to a variety of techniques to enhance their individualistic sensory patterns. By increasing their sensory awareness, the power was put in their hands to cultivate their environment and surroundings to maximize their fullest potential.

Sensory health can be defined as the awareness, understanding and response to our bodies' sensory needs in context, as well as having an awareness and understanding of how this influences our choices and habits in life (C. Cavaliere, personal communication, February 4, 2020). This awareness has the potential to optimize what is within our surroundings to benefit us most by highlighting supports and barriers within our environment. The way in which we experience our world, through all of our senses, impacts us each on a very individualistic level. Therefore, when a person experiences even small sensory challenges it can significantly impact their life in multiple dimensions. In contemporary society, more students are entering college with identified learning or sensory challenges. Simeonsson et al. (2003) claims that approximately 15% of the typical population is affected by different levels of atypical sensory processing patterns (as cited by Ben-Avi et al., 2011). Furthermore, universal measures are not incorporated in many academic sites that account for learning differences in those that process sensory information differently and this can impact occupational choices later in life (Kuriyan et al., 2012).

To effectively learn, students must be able to receive, interpret and react appropriately to a variety of sensations while filtering out the irrelevant stimuli both from their environment and from their bodies. Difficulty anywhere along the continuum of sensory processing posits academic challenges (Critz et al., 2015). Our sensory processing patterns impact our behavior and cognition, both of which are vital in academic success (Chang et al., 2016). Khaliq, Alam, Vaney and Singh (2010) suggest that poor academic performance is the outcome or the "symptom" of what is manifesting beneath the surface. There is a process that students go through in order to successfully identify stimuli, and this pattern mirrors stages of sensory processing: noticing, interpreting, and reacting to sensory information (Dunn, 2001). Khaliq et al., (2010) explain the three stages on how to process information in order to have a successful academic performance. The first stage is input, which is processing information through auditory or visual senses; the second stage is integration, which stands for interpreting, categorizing, sequencing or relating information to previous learning; and the third stage is output, which is a linguistic or muscle action response. When students have a deficit or difficulty within one of these stages, it creates a gap between their ability and their academic performance (Khaliq et al., 2010). However, it is not just the processing and integration of information that allows for optimal learning. Students must also be able to manage their internal state in response to the learning environment. Self-regulation refers to behavioral and automatic processes that enable students to adapt to a classroom environment through appropriate regulation of their behavioral and emotional responses regarding sensory stimuli (Roley et al., 2020). Inability to do so can impair attention, memory, problem solving, organization, and executive function (Pfeiffer, Frolek Clark, & Arbesman, 2018).

The classroom environment presents numerous challenges to all students but especially those with sensory challenges, which often times, go unidentified. Sensory interpretation and integration require that we combine information based on previous experiences and subsequent learning, together with the new information being detected and collected by each of our senses. Let's take into consideration the multitude of sensation that requires reception, integration and responses in the classroom environment. In a typical 50-minute block of instruction, each individual system (auditory, visual, tactile, vestibular, olfactory, gustatory) is inundated with information that it must sense, detect and filter through, in order to successfully retain and integrate the new information being presented. While students are auditorily "tuning in" to teacher instruction and input from others, they must successfully "tune out" background noise. While this is taking place, information is also being received via the visual system. Whether it is a text being read in a book, a presentation given through a PowerPoint or something that has "caught our eye", the classroom environment demands this attention. As students write and/or type notes in conjunction to listening to their lecture and following on the smartboard, additional information is being received kinesthetically. While not all senses are equally being bombarded (vestibular, gustatory, olfactory), to some individuals the opposite can be said. Our ability to detect, receive, filter, interpret and integrate sensory information is as varied as our DNA. In addition, the body's sensory systems need to identify cues that their body is giving in order to maintain an optimal arousal level for learning.

Knowledge of how to interpret and respond to our bodies' internal cues, and how it can improve overall academic performance, is marginalized and not available to the general student population. Mainstream materials on educational success do not cover sensory processing, which lies at the base of higher cognitive functions. By educating students on Sensory Health, they can be empowered with

the ability to adapt and respond to sensation within their environment and themselves, providing them with tools to support their academic success.

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