



VCU Department of Occupational Therapy

Greetings from the Chair...

Al Copolillo, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

The next stage of excellence in the Department of OT at VCU is now upon us. We will admit our first cohort of entry level OTD students in June of 2016. Transitioning the entry level master's of science (MSOT) to the doctoral level is an indication of professional growth and development for our Department and the field of occupational therapy overall. In keeping with AOTA's plan and the accreditation commission's requirements, the OTD provides foundational entry-level skills, but also adds advanced training that we believe will build the profession and accelerate our students to new levels of leadership and expertise.

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) requires all entry level OTD programs to:

Develop in-depth experience in one or more of the following areas through completion of a doctoral experiential component: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development.

The doctoral experiential component, referred to as the "doctoral practicum" at VCU, is both an exciting and a challenging aspect of the new entry level OTD. It is exciting in that it provides our Department with the chance to achieve the goals and objectives of the profession as we assist the OT community to advance and be further recognized as outstanding practitioners. It is challenging because it creates an ongoing need for new experiences so that each student can complete the requirements of the degree. The Department views the doctoral practicum as an opportunity to work collaboratively with occupational therapists in the practice community, develop programs that improve occupational performance for people with disabilities, and increase the range of skills and expertise that our graduates carry into the field. To achieve all of this, we must, over a short time period, develop memoranda of agreement with facilities who are willing to work with us to create doctoral practicum experiences and build a team of professional mentors to assist faculty in guiding students through the practicum. We will be reaching out to departments and facilities personally in the coming months and hope you will join us in this next phase of our profession's ongoing growth and development

Al Copolillo, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA
Associate Professor and Chair



WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE OUR ALUMNI?



Esther H. Bucher (M.S., 1988) has been volunteering since July in Duc Pho, a town in Quang Ngai province in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. This three year service commitment is under the auspices of the social service organization of her

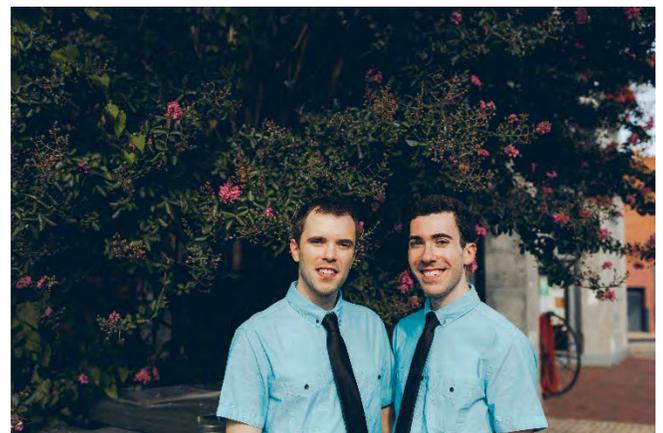
church, the Mennonite Central Committee, and involves providing therapy to individuals and families impacted by Agent Orange. This is a natural extension of Esther's long-standing interests in other cultures and desire to be of service. From 1970-1974 she volunteered in South Vietnam, both during and after the war, and later provided basic health and nutrition for 6 years in rural tribal villages of Kalimantan/Borneo, Indonesia. Esther recently closed her Mechanicsville clinic, Therapeutic Sense Abilities after 10 years of operation, so she could pursue this major new life adventure. She recommends the following article to those interested in what she'll be doing and where she'll be living:

<http://mcc.org/stories/vietnam-mcc-cow-bank-helps-victims-agent-orange>

Charlene Dismaya (M.S., 2010) has left the world of acute care and took a new position in the schools system for the city of Chesapeake, VA this fall. She works at 3 different school levels (elementary, middle and high) with about 32 students ranging in a variety of needs. She says that she loves it, and is especially enjoying integrating music into her work. Charlene's Department Chair is **Dr. Cindy Normandia (OTD, 2010)**!



Kate Nash Roberts (M.S., 2011) holding Kara Elizabeth Roberts born October 15, 2015.



Adam Parsons (M.S. 2010) and Nathan March were married in Richmond, VA on August 1, 2015. Adam also just accepted a therapist position with All About Care, a Medicare-certified home health company that is part of the Care Advantage program and serves the entire Eastern half of Virginia. <http://www.careadvantageinc.com/specialized-care/>

Occupational Therapy Featured in VCU Allied Health Magazine

The interprofessional magazine, *VCU Allied Health*, sent to all School of Allied Health Professions alumni this Fall highlighted a number of OT Department students, faculty and activities. Three of six students quoted about



their hopes for the proposed new allied health building were OT Masters students – Ashley Luchsinger, Allison Lee and Ricky Price. An article on “Finding their voice” quoted faculty member Dr. Jodi Teitelman on student involvement in State legislative advocacy through the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association. Dr. Shelly Lane was honored for her recent retirement and the establishment of a scholarship in her name. Dr. Carole Ivey’s receipt of the VCU Division of Community Engagement’s “Currents of Change Exemplary Partnership in Research Award” for her work with the Children’s Museum of Richmond was

similarly noted. Dr. Stacey Reynolds’ grant award from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation was featured, as was Dr. Dianne Simons’ naming as Fellow by the American Occupational Therapy Association. Finally, several alumni previously mentioned in this Department newsletter were included.

Success on Capitol Hill!

OT Department faculty and the majority of students in the first-year class joined over 600 other OTs to participate in the American Occupational Therapy Association’s Annual legislative advocacy event – Capitol Hill Day. After a thorough briefing by AOTA Federal Affairs staff, everyone enjoyed the glorious pre-Fall weather as they walked to their assigned legislative offices to visit with Senators and Congressional Representatives. Issues of concern were prioritization of rehab research within the National Institutes of Health and enhancing recognition of OT’s value in providing mental health services. Everyone participating agreed this was a FUN way to interact with OTs from all over the country and to lend critical support to the profession of occupational therapy and the clients it serves.

Greetings from VCU Alumni

Did you know that VCU has more than 173,000 alumni? That makes you a member of a proud community of alumni who got their start right here. Dedicated to serving this community, VCU Alumni strengthens the commitment of graduates to their alma mater by supporting alumni and student programs. Through VCU Alumni, you can engage with fellow Rams, stay connected to VCU and save on products and services. Here are a few ways to get involved now.

Save the date for Reunion 2016. Mark your calendar for Reunion, April 15-17, 2016. Reunion provides the perfect opportunity to come back to your alma mater for a weekend of fun and catching up with former classmates, friends and fellow alumni. This year's Reunion offers a number of activities for all alumni to enjoy, including a block party and tours of the MCV Campus, Richmond's top food spots and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Want to schedule a reunion for your class, but don't know how to get in touch with everyone? VCU Alumni offers services that can help you organize a reunion any time you want to get together. Contact **Diane Stout-Brown** (B.S.W.'80/SW), Senior Director of VCU Alumni, at (804) 828-7020 or dstout@vcu.edu. Or, for more details on Reunion 2016, visit vcualumni.org/Events/Reunion.

Celebrate Alumni Month. VCU celebrates alumni during April with a month long celebration that includes a variety of activities, events and programs to help alumni reconnect with one another and with current faculty, staff and students. Alumni Month features a schedule packed with lectures, forums, service projects, receptions, dinners, art exhibits, cultural performances, golf tournaments and other social and spirit activities. Details on Alumni Month will be available in early 2016 at vcualumni.org/Events/Alumni-Month.

Connect with fellow OT alumni. VCU Alumni supports a number of constituent organizations, representing academic, geographic and shared interests. Would you like to add an occupational therapy alumni group to the mix? Creating a shared interest group under the VCU Alumni umbrella is a great way to keep up with fellow alumni who graduated with the same major, no matter where they're located now. If you'd like more information on starting an alumni group specifically for OT graduates, contact **Amy Gray**, Interim Senior Director of Outreach and Engagement, at (804) 828-8191 or acgray@vcu.edu.

Become a member. People join VCU Alumni because they love VCU and want to make it stronger. We are always looking for ways to reward loyalty. VCU Alumni members enjoy special benefits and discounts. Alumni members receive the award-winning alumni magazine, access to online academic and business journals, invitations to signature events and discounts on merchandise at the bookstores, insurance, on-campus gym membership, VCU Athletics events, hotels, rental cars and more. Start receiving all the benefits of membership by joining VCU Alumni today at vcualumni.org/Join.

Stay in touch. Are you getting the latest news and information from VCU Alumni? Register at vcualumni.org to make sure you're receiving the monthly News & Views alumni newsletter and emails about alumni events in your area. You can also follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/vcualumni), Twitter ([@vcualumni](https://twitter.com/vcualumni)) and Instagram (instagram.com/vcualumni).

Go Green

Dear Alumni of the VCU Occupational Therapy Department:

As our alumni population grows, and as the expenses of publishing and mailing printed information increases, we are choosing to expedite the newsletter delivery process and control costs by transitioning our biannual Department newsletter from a print to an electronic version. The newsletter has always, and will continue to be, posted on our Department Website. However, we will no longer mail hard copies but instead will distribute the newsletter by e-mail. This change addresses important sustainability objectives of the Department and the University.

Please help us “go green” by submitting your current e-mail address and other contact information. We’ve made it convenient for you by enclosing a pre-addressed, stamped postcard. All you have to do is tear out this page, fill out the postcard, fold, and drop it in the mail. We will do our best to accommodate those of you who still need to receive a print version of our newsletter, but hope you’ll consider joining us in this effort on behalf of our Department. Your support is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jodi Teitelman

(Fold)

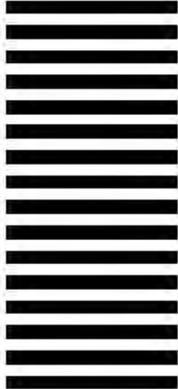
VCU O.T. Department Alumni Profile			
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(Last)	(First)	(Maiden/Middle)	<input type="checkbox"/> VCU <input type="checkbox"/> RPI
Local Address:		Email Address:	
_____		_____	
Where are you working?		Phone Number:	
_____		(H/C):	
_____		(W):	
Have you had anything happen, personally or professionally, that you would like to share?			

May we share this information in the Department Newsletter? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

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Make a Gift

More than 75 percent of students on the MCV Campus receive some type of financial aid to pursue their dreams of a career in the health sciences. We are most grateful for the support of our faculty, alumni, and friends who make it possible for the Department of Occupational Therapy to award student scholarships. Through your support the department can recruit and retain today's most promising students – students who contribute to the vitality of the classroom and are most likely to become tomorrow's preeminent clinical professionals, dedicated educators, and civic leaders.

I am pleased to support the VCU Department of Occupational Therapy!

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Please accept my gift of \$ _____ and direct my gift to fund indicated below.

- Dr. Shelly Lane Student Scholarship – Fund 50478
- Patti A. Maurer Student Scholarship – Fund 70033
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- Kathryn Lawrence Dragas Student Scholarship – Fund 20442
- OT Department Fund – Fund 50265
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Yes! Double or triple my gift. I have a matching gift opportunity through my employer or my spouse's employer. Enclosed is my matching gift form.

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Credit card gifts may also be made online at: <https://www.support.vcu.edu/give/occu>

Please have someone contact me about planned giving.

- I have put the VCU Department of Occupational Therapy in my will.
- I want to learn more about the VCU Department of Occupational Therapy.

Mail completed form to: VCU School of Allied Health Professions, PO Box 843042, Richmond, VA 23286

Thank you for your generosity and loyalty to the Department!

Code: 3093

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U.S. News Ranking

VCU's OT Graduate Program ranked
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