The Tufts-BSOT Launches Occupational Therapy Doctoral (OTD) Program

Many children dream of becoming the President of the United States, an astronaut, or a sports star when they grow up. Ellen Rainville’s childhood dream was a little different. She wanted to be an occupational therapist. “When I was eleven years old, I spent a lot of time with my cousin who was an occupational therapist at the Boston Medical Center [BMC],” says Rainville, a 1976 Tufts-BSOT graduate. “One day, she walked me into a big gymnasium at the hospital but then had to leave unexpectedly.”

As she waited for her cousin to return, Rainville realized that she wasn’t alone. A short distance away, sitting around a large table, were a group of men who had recently suffered spinal cord injuries. “I remember being afraid and running out of the gym and finding my cousin,” Rainville says. “And my cousin said, ‘let’s go ask them what happened.’ So, I did and these men told me these incredible stories and it was then, I think, that I realized that I wanted to be an occupational therapist.”

Today, Rainville, an assistant professor of occupational therapy at Springfield College, is aspiring to be something else—one of the first graduates of Tufts’ new Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program.

The OTD was created in the fall of 2004 with the goal of preparing its students to make an impact on the lives of individuals and groups in the areas of health, functioning, wellness, and quality of life. A crucial component of the program is the idea of leadership, which is present during the application process (e.g., applicants submit a leadership project proposal with their application), in interactions students have with faculty members, in courses such as “Leadership Project Planning” and “Leadership Project Implementation,” and through project work students conduct outside of class.

“The key buzz words [of the OTD program] are ‘assuming leadership roles.’ We want graduates to make a real difference in the areas we have identified,” says Sharan Schwartzberg, professor and chair of the Tufts-BSOT. “I hope that they go out and work in systems where they are informing policy and where they are leading groups in terms of consultation.”

Rainville, whose project addresses the inclusion of students with disabilities in college settings, believes that occupational therapists should have enhanced leadership roles in many different areas. “Occupational therapists, I believe, should be inclusion consultants in public schools and in colleges,” she says. “I think for some reason we, as a profession, are underrepresented working with adolescents and young adults and I’d like to see that change.”

The goal of bringing about broad social change has been on the mind of Schwartzberg since the planning stages of the OTD. To achieve this end, she and faculty from across the university have created a program that is interdisciplinary in nature and will help address the depth and complexity of health, functioning, wellness, and quality of life issues. “We’re reaching out and drawing on the support of the Tufts School of Medicine, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, the School of Engineering, and other departments within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences,” says Schwartzberg. “We expect that our students will take classes in psychology, sociology, biology, and engineering because the problems OTD students will tackle are

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Summer 2005

Last semester was very busy for the Tufts University-Boston School of Occupational Therapy. We had our on-site visit for reaccreditation of our entry-level master's degree program by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE)/American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and have been granted full accreditation for the next ten years. We are very proud to have been acknowledged for so many strengths and no deficiencies. I thank everyone for contributing to making our entry-level program one of nationally recognized excellence.

In addition to the stellar performance of our master’s degree program, I am proud to announce that we have admitted our first two students into the OTD program. You will learn about these very accomplished individuals, Ellen Rainville and Patricia Kennedy, in this newsletter. The program is a post-professional clinical doctorate aimed at continuing our legacy of leadership in occupational therapy worldwide. Our specialty certificate in Hand and Upper Extremity Rehabilitation, under the direction of its founder Janet Curran Brooks, has also been successfully launched with our clinical partners at Massachusetts General Hospital. We are also pleased to report that for the third year our department was represented on the Tufts team that ran the Boston Marathon. This year Eunice Kim, Class of 2005, ran alongside other Tufts runners who helped raise funds as part of the Tufts University President’s Marathon Challenge, which supports medical as well as nutrition research conducted at the university. Our thanks and congratulations to Eunice!

In this issue, you will read stories about our beloved Nancie Greenman, former chair of the Tufts-BSOT and Matthew Dong, an alumnus from the Class of 2000. Both exemplify the talent and forward-thinking nature of individuals associated with our long history of excellence in occupational therapy. Along with our alumni, our faculty and students are engaged in scholarship that makes a difference in the lives of individuals. We continue to emphasize practice that is occupation-based and utilizes sound clinical reasoning, person-environment linkages, ethics, and research evidence.

On a final note, we wish Dr. Olga Baloueff well in her new career endeavors. Olga has decided to leave her work at Tufts to devote time to other areas of interest. We wish her well and will miss her dedication to exceptional teaching, scholarship, and mentorship of students and faculty very much.

Thank you all for your continued support of our program.

Sharan L. Schwartzberg
Professor and Chair

ALUMNI PROFILE

In the Cards
Matthew Dong
M.S., Occupational Therapy, G’00

growing up, Matthew Dong’s role models were larger than life, fought for justice, and called upon an assortment of supernatural powers when things looked grim. These role models sprung to life each day as he turned the pages of his comic books. Dong, a 2000 occupational therapy graduate, marveled not only at the abilities of superheroes like Spiderman and Superman, but was impressed by the persistence they displayed. And while Dong cannot climb walls or move faster than a speeding bullet, he does share the determination of his childhood heroes. This is a quality he displays every day as an occupational therapist at Waverley Place, a McLean Hospital community program in Belmont, Massachusetts, which offers comprehensive, coordinated care and support for adults with chronic psychiatric illnesses.

At Waverley, Dong does everything from running groups with members (which may focus on, for example, money management), to handling new member intake admissions, to taking members bowling or to the movies. He is also the driving force behind a unique business venture, Waverley Card Productions, which provides members of the program with a chance to develop business skills, interact with the community, and express their creativity.

Dong arrived at Waverley Place in 2002, after working at the Pine Street Inn where he was part of a small mental health program within the larger homeless shelter. He stumbled upon the idea for a greeting card company a few months later. “Around Valentine’s Day a few years ago, I had some materials to do stamping and embossing to make cards,” Dong says. “The idea was brought up that maybe we could make some cards, sell them at McLean Hospital, and see how we did. They sold like hotcakes.”

In the wake of this success, Dong decided to take things further and created Waverley Card Productions. Today, the company, which is run out of Waverley
not what matters most—helping people is.

“The goal of the company is to get members involved in an activity that is meaningful and has some sort of an entrepreneurial spin to it,” Dong says. “Because, if a person is looking forward to potentially going out into the workforce, it’s good business practice. They can see an end product and that someone else is getting gratification out of it.”

Dana Holley, program manager at Waverley Place and Dong’s supervisor, adds, “It’s important [the greeting card company] because it helps people to focus their attention, to persist in an activity, and to be productive. When people are being creative, their symptoms are less pronounced and less troublesome.”

A few times a year, in conjunction with holidays like Christmas and Valentine’s Day, Dong and members of the program sell the greeting cards to McLean Hospital staff, patients, and visitors. These sales trips provide members with an opportunity to share their work with a wider audience and practice a variety of different skills. “When we sell the cards, we package them, keep track of who made what so members can get a bit of profit from the sales, and during the day have lunch in the hospital’s cafeteria,” says Dong. “This is a time when I get to observe how the members tolerate people coming up to them, how they handle money management, and how well they tend the cash box. We want people to be as independent as possible and lead productive lives. It’s a slow process sometimes, but when you do see change you go home with a really good feeling.”

Once Dong has a chance to see his clients in a variety of social and vocational contexts, he can then address the areas in which they are struggling. “Some people have some cognitive deficits so you might have to see how you can accommodate them or scale down the tasks so they can feel some success around what they are trying to do,” he says. “Others do well with one step commands, so you have to take this into account when working with a person to create something like a greeting card that involves a lot of steps.”

Dong’s work at Waverley, whether it’s overseeing Waverley Card Productions or taking members on visits to the gym, lets him do what he enjoys most—connect with other people. But before he can forge these connections, Dong first identifies the interests of those he works with. “What I will do during the intake process, if I’m working in this area, is ask people what they like to engage themselves in,” he says. “Do they like music? If so, maybe there’s a free concert somewhere we can go to. If people are interested in working with plants, we have a greenhouse. For some, cooking might be something they are interested in so we might help a member make a basic meal.”

During an interview in his office, Dong recalled the case of a man with schizophrenia he bonded with through their shared love of movies, music, and basketball. As Dong explains it, “He didn’t make any sense and he hadn’t showered for a couple of months. He was a very sick person. But we connected with the things he liked to do before he got ill and that’s a very powerful thing. I took him to see movies, we listened to rap music, and played one-on-one [basketball].”

In time, the bond between the two men grew stronger and Dong was able to convince him to see his doctor. The change that came about was nothing short of extraordinary. “This person went to his psychopharmacologist and got prescribed anti-psychotic drugs and the change was just so dramatic. He got reconnected with his family, and he got into an employment situation. Whenever I’m having a hard day, I think about this experience and how we really did make a difference in someone’s life.”

It’s safe to say that Matthew Dong did much more than make a difference. He helped save a life. Now that sounds like the work of a superhero.

Matthew Dong can be reached at mddong@hotmail.com. To learn more about Waverley Place, visit their website at http://www.mclean.harvard.edu/patient/adult/wp.php or call 617-484-0193.
Occupational therapy's focus has its roots in self-care, work, play, and rest. Throughout the profession's history, occupational therapists engaged clients in forms of bodywork and physical conditioning for the end goal of improvement in these areas. Historically, this process occurred through participation in work and play activities. In the 1960s and 1970s, during the emergence of the medical model, shifts in the profession led to occupational therapists in physical medicine dedicating a majority of treatment time to pure bodywork and biomechanics. It became acceptable, even preferable practice, for occupational therapists to devote treatment sessions to carefully planned exercise with the idea that patients could perform the self-care tasks on their own time. This approach did two things: First, it made occupational therapists in medical settings nearly indistinguishable from physical therapists who also treated patients with physical disabilities. Second, it overlooked the therapeutic benefits of engagement in occupation.

At least two major forces are driving our profession to reexamine this biomechanical, medical model focus. One is the renewed appreciation for occupation as the healing force, not simply the end goal of therapy, stimulated by the creation of the academic discipline of Occupational Science (Pierce, 2003). The other, perhaps more tangible force, is the reality of reimbursement for occupational therapy services.

Reimbursement of health care services has been dominated by managed care since the late 1970s. Within the managed care environment, insurers have rejected the idea that two disciplines could be treating and billing for therapy that on the surface appears redundant. They have asked for documentation on the effectiveness of interventions to justify costs and to define what is done in terms of function (versus grades of strength or degrees of motion). Within today's competitive fiscal climate, physical therapists have begun to reflect on the outcomes of their work in terms of function. They may work with a patient on leg strength, but report that the targeted goal of their work is the client being able to stand at the sink to do dishes. Depending on the client, this activity may be viewed as an aspect of occupational performance, which historically was viewed as occupational therapy's domain.

Occupational therapy is being challenged more than ever before to return to our professional roots. Getting all the stakeholders involved (clients, policy makers, occupational therapists, and insurers) to see that for the client, the “occupation” of standing to wash dishes may actually be the healing and organizing activity has become vital. Strengthening is important, but so is performance in meaningful roles and areas of occupation, which by definition needs to occur in a naturalistic context. We must truly believe, and find effective ways to assert, that occupation is the domain of occupational therapy.

In my role as a lecturer at the Tufts-BSOT, many students who have fieldwork or prior health care experience report that the evaluation and intervention process taught in school is not what they see in “real life.” When the fieldwork educator does not engage in occupation-based practice, this can be confusing to students. They become like offspring in a custody battle, wondering which “parent” to believe: the academic instructor or the “real life” therapist. As Pierce (2003) reflected, “We have prepared our students as best we can with theories … and field experiences we hope will help them integrate this patchwork into effective interventions.” Some students are able to integrate the two influences to function effectively within the “real” setting while holding on to best practice ideals. However, our students should not have to rely only on themselves for this integration. The two “parents” should have a better understanding of each other.

It was this continual conundrum that led me to embark on a collaborative research project with one of our fieldwork sites to examine how current occupational therapy practitioners view “occupation” in their practice. My study aims to explore their unique perspective and experience. My hope is that through gaining a better understanding from those practicing occupational therapy in the “real world” that our theories and practice can really reconnect with respect to being occupation-based.

Janet Curran Brooks teaches courses related to occupational therapy in the area of physical dysfunction at the Tufts-BSOT. She has extensive experience in all aspects of the health care continuum through her involvement in private practice. She coordinates the coursework for the certificate in Hand and Upper Extremity Rehabilitation, which is offered in collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital. Janet can be reached at janet.brooks@tufts.edu.

Nancie Greenman, Former Occupational Therapy Student, Professor, and Chair

There are many ways to uncover the rich history of the Tufts-Boston School of Occupational Therapy. One could, for example, leaf through the stacks of black and white photos that reside in the university’s archives or drop by the school itself, which is located nearby and houses several historical items recently donated by alumni Roselyn Listernick and Elizabeth (Beth) Codman. But to bring words and stories to life more fully set in context, a conversation with Nancie Greenman seems in order. From bright blue uniforms (which she wore as a student) to basket weaving classes (which she took), Greenman, a 1940 graduate and former professor/chair of the program, has witnessed the many changes the school/department has undergone over the past sixty years.

Greenman arrived at the BSOT in the fall of 1937. Prior to matriculating, she didn’t know anything about occupational therapy, but was fortunate enough to have a family member who was active in the field. “My cousin had gone into occupational therapy and seemed to like it,” says Greenman, who also earned a master’s in education from Tufts in 1953. “At the time, I was casting about wondering what to do with myself. I talked with her and I looked into it.” With her interest piqued, Greenman sought out more information, applied to the program, and was admitted soon after.

Current and past occupational therapy students might have a hard time picturing what the program was like when Greenman was a student. For starters, the BSOT was located in the Back Bay of Boston, was not affiliated with Tufts (this came about in 1945), and its students lived in student residencies within the city. The curriculum of the late thirties was different as well, especially compared to that of today’s Tufts-BSOT curriculum which features courses in research, clinical reasoning, health and community systems, administration and management, as well as the foundational sciences of anatomy, neuroanatomy, physiology, and kinesiology. “We had basic courses in biology, anatomy, bacteriology, psychology, and all sorts of arts and crafts,” recalls Greenman. “Some of my classmates were clever with such things [arts and crafts], but I was not and I struggled along with basket weaving, woodworking, and bookbinding.”

After graduating in 1940 (BSOT was a three year program at the time), Greenman took a position at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C. A few months later, the U.S. entered World War II and Greenman found herself helping rehabilitate women who were part of the Navy’s WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) program. “I guess you could say I worked in psychiatry [at St. Elizabeths] until the end of the war,” says Greenman. “I worked with women who were part of the WAVES. These women didn’t go overseas, but some of them couldn’t face life in the Navy and broke down mentally and appeared at our institution.”

When the war ended, Greenman accepted a position as an occupational therapy instructor at the University of Kansas. “At this university [the University of Kansas], a whole new world opened,” says Greenman. “I taught classes in some of the arts and crafts which I had taken at the BSOT and I got to know other faculty members and my social life, as compared to when I was a student, was quite a bit different and more enjoyable.”

The teaching career of Nancie Greenman spanned the next three decades. She spent several years at the University of Kansas and the University at Buffalo (where she founded the school’s occupational therapy program) before returning to the Tufts-BSOT in 1971 as an associate professor and chair. As chair, Greenman helped spearhead the effort that led to the department becoming part of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). “At the time, it occurred to me and many other people in the field, that perhaps we should educate kids at the graduate level,” she says. “Have people come into the field who already had a degree in something, hopefully the biological sciences or psychology, and then teach them what occupational therapy was and what it could do, just as you did when they were undergraduates. I can remember going to the dean of the graduate school and talking about what we were and what we could do and the graduate school accepted us. It was amazingly easy.”

The Tufts-Boston School of Occupational Therapy officially became part of the GSAS in 1978. Greenman stayed on as chair and professor for another year before retiring to Mystic, Connecticut, to pursue volunteer work with organizations like the Mystic Seaport Museum.

Today, Nancie Greenman lives in Salem, Connecticut, and hasn’t been to the Tufts-Boston School of Occupational Therapy in some time. Since she’s been gone, the school has expanded significantly to include a post-professional clinical doctoral degree (OTD) program (see page 1), several certificate programs, additional fieldwork options, and affiliations with colleges and universities in England, Scotland, and Sweden. But for all the changes over the years, one thing has remained constant—the program’s commitment to helping others. “Sharan [Schwartzberg] sent me a catalog [for the Tufts-BSOT] a couple of years ago,” Greenman says. “I can only say that the BSOT is different now and rightly so. But we still work with sick people, adults, and children, and in hospitals and schools for children.”

Nancie Greenman welcomes correspondence from fellow alumni and faculty. She can be reached at P.O. Box 146, Colchester, CT 06415.
ON AND OFF CAMPUS

News

Tufts-BSOT alumni, students, and faculty are active on a variety of fronts. They are defending theses, publishing books and articles, conducting grant-supported work, and leading departmental seminars. The following is a sampling of some of their work over the past year:

Alumni

Alumnus Daniel Craig, G’01, presented three papers at the Neurosciences and Music Conference in Leipzig, Germany, in 2005 which were titled: “An Overview of the Uses of Music to Enhance Human Performance, Function, and Health,” “Meaningfulness of Music as a Function of Emotional Response,” and “Physiological Changes During Chills Induced by Music” (which has also been accepted for publication in the journal Musicae Scientiae). Dan will begin his doctoral studies at Florida State this fall.

Students

Tufts-BSOT class of 2005 entry-level masters students Shauna Gilmore, Annamaria “Midge” Hobbs, and Cameron Judge defended their theses during the spring semester. Gilmore addressed “Collaborative Relationships of Teachers and Occupational Therapists in a School Setting: A Qualitative Analysis.” The title of Hobbs’ work was “The Founding and Development of The Network for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns in Occupational Therapy.” Judge’s thesis focused on the “Management of Daily Life for Five Older Women Living Alone in Senior Housing.” Samantha Wagstaff, a post-professional occupational therapy master’s exchange student from Oxford-Brookes University, defended her thesis during the spring semester as well. Wagstaff’s work was titled: “Supports and Barriers for Exercise Participation Among Well Elders: Implications for Occupational Therapy.”

Faculty and Staff

Dr. Diana Bailey, in collaboration with Dr. Jeanne M. Jackson of the University of Southern California, submitted “The Occupation of Household Financial Management Among Lesbian Couples” to the Journal of Occupational Science and presented their work on this subject at the 3rd Annual Research Conference of the Society for the Study of Occupation, in Warm Springs, Oregon.

Dr. Gary Bedell published an article in NeuroRehabilitation: An Interdisciplinary Journal titled: “Developing a Follow-up Survey Focused on Participation of Children and Youth with Acquired Brain Injuries After Inpatient Rehabilitation.” He also co-authored an article titled: “Social Participation of Children and Youth with Acquired Brain Injuries Discharged From Inpatient Rehabilitation: A Follow-Up Study,” which was published in the journal Brain Injury. His article: “Exploring Parents’ Use of Strategies to Promote Social Participation in School-Age Children with Acquired Brain Injuries,” which he wrote with two colleagues, was published in the May/June 2005 issue of the American Journal of Occupational Therapy. In addition, Dr. Bedell received a grant from the university’s Faculty Research Award Committee (FRAC) to pursue a project titled: “The Child and Adolescent Scale of Participation: Further Testing and Development.” He also was awarded the Bernstein Faculty Fellowship, which is a two-year junior faculty cross-disciplinary research award that provides mentorship, course release time, and a stipend to conduct his research on social participation of children and youth with disabilities. He is conducting this work in collaboration with senior faculty member Dr. Donald Wertlieb of the Tufts Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, and other faculty from the Medford and Boston (Health Sciences) campuses. In addition, Dr. Bedell presented on the topic of functional outcomes for children and youth with disabilities at the 85th Annual American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Conference held in Long Beach, California, in May 2005.

Janet Curran Brooks (see page 4) and Deborah Rochman each led departmental seminars last fall. Brooks outlined her upcoming doctoral research project, “Weaving Together Clinical Reasoning and Occupation in Occupational Therapy Intervention.” Deborah Rochman described her current research project underway with
the Tufts School of Dental Medicine, Craniofacial Pain Center. Rochman’s work addresses “Pain and the Use of the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure in a Facial Pain Population.”

Mary Evenson, academic fieldwork coordinator, presented a paper at the 85th Annual AOTA Conference on “Infusing the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework into Level II Fieldwork: Reflections & Implications.” She also co-led the department’s full day annual workshop on fieldwork supervision with Mary Alicia Barnes, fieldwork coordinator at the Tufts-BSOT.

Dr. Sharon Ray published “The Validity of a Methodology to Describe Mother-Toddler Interactions” with co-author Dr. Linda Tickle-Degnen of Boston University, in the Occupational Therapy Journal of Research. She is working with several colleagues, Diane (Walker) Bleng, June Bunch, and Jan Hollenbeck, who are all graduates of the Tufts-BSOT, on the Massachusetts State Guidelines for School-Based Practice, which is undergoing final revisions before dissemination. In addition, she established the Homelessness Research Network with Kathleen Swenson-Miller of Jefferson University and Georgiana Herzberg of Nova University to coordinate a policy, research, and practice agenda for occupational therapists working with adults, children, and families who are experiencing homelessness. She is collecting data on current practices of occupational therapy practitioners working with this population. The information will be disseminated in a special edition of the journal Occupational Therapy in Healthcare, which will include as its guest editors Dr. Ray, Dr.

Swenson-Miller, and Dr. Herzberg. Dr. Ray also presented at the 85th Annual AOTA Conference with Mary Alicia Barnes. Their workshop, “Addressing the Needs of Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in School-Based Practice,” was well received.

Dr. Sharan Schwartzberg, chair of the department of occupational therapy, served on an AOTA Educational Program Directors panel to discuss the development of doctoral programs in the profession and delivered a presentation titled: “OTD: What’s It All About?” at the Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy’s (MAOT) annual conference. Currently, Schwartzberg is co-editing the tentatively titled book Contemporary Perspectives on Jealousy, Envy, Competition, and Gender (Brunner-Routledge) with Leyla Navaro and is once again co-authoring a text on the Functional Group Model with longtime colleague and co-author Margot Howe. The book’s title is Group Work: Experiencing a Functional Approach (FA Davis). In addition, Dr. Schwartzberg presented at the American Group Psychotherapy Association Conference on enhancing member participation in groups when working with individuals with cognitive impairments. She also presented a poster on the post-professional OTD (clinical doctorate) program and hosted an alumni and affiliates reception at the 85th Annual AOTA Conference.

Scott Trudeau, lecturer, presented a poster at the Gerontological Society of America’s Scientific Meetings, Washington, D.C., titled: “Translating Marital Intimacy into Personal Care: A Challenge for Spouse Caregivers of Persons with Alzheimer’s Disease.”
complex. They involve multiple systems, from individuals to groups to communities to the environment. Thus, through the program, the worlds of many disciplines merge into a systems-centered understanding of health and wellness.”

Another benefit of the program, beyond its interdisciplinary focus, is how students can take what they have learned in class and use it in the present. “One of the reasons I chose to pursue the OTD was to get more informed about occupational therapy,” says Patricia Kennedy, who earned a master’s from the Tufts-BSOT in 1993 and works as an occupational therapist at the Hooks and Berkowitz elementary schools in Chelsea, Massachusetts. “I’ve already learned a lot, much of which I have been able to use in my practice. For example, I took an elective in school-based practice last semester and learned about different types of assessment tools. I was able to use assessments at my school that I hadn’t used before. My Outcomes Measurement and Monitoring course also helped a great deal because I learned how to do program evaluation, which is directly applicable to my work.”

Ellen Rainville adds, “Gary Bedell taught the course I took last spring. He’s brilliant, his work is interesting, and what he taught was very related to what I teach. So, it was immediately helpful to my work.”

To learn more about the Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program and how to apply, go to http://ase.tufts.edu/bsot/ or call 617-627-5720.