



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1 / ISSUE 1

OUR MISSION

The PNWU School of Occupational Therapy is committed to delivering graduate programs of distinction and preparing occupational therapists as leaders, scholars, and change agents who deliver occupation-based services that promote the health and wellbeing of rural and medically underserved communities throughout the Northwest and beyond.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the PNWU School of Occupational Therapy (SOT) newsletter. In this issue we invite you to learn about the developing Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) program, get to know the SOT faculty and staff, and learn how you can get involved and support the SOT.

About the MSOT Curriculum

The MSOT program is a two-year, residential program consisting of four semesters of didactic learning followed by two semesters of full-time academic fieldwork education experiences (clinical rotations). In addition to preparing expert clinicians for current practice, the MSOT program emphasizes community engagement, service learning, and preparation for non-traditional practice settings. To find out more, visit: <https://www.pnwu.edu/academics/school-of-occupational-therapy/>

What does it mean to be a *developing* program?

Every new entry-level occupational therapy degree program must follow a series of steps to achieve their initial accreditation through the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). The initial accreditation process consists of three basic steps.

First, a program must submit an application for Candidacy, which describes how the program will meet the ACOTE standards and ultimately achieve accreditation. A program may enroll their initial cohort after they have been granted candidacy status. Second, once the program admits students, they must then submit a self-study, which details how the program is meeting the required ACOTE standards. Third, ACOTE reviews the self-study packet and then schedules an onsite visit to verify that the program is indeed delivering the curriculum as stated and is meeting the required standards. ACOTE renders the final decision about accreditation prior to the graduation date of the initial cohort.

MSOT Accreditation Timeline

Initial self-study report due	July 1, 2024
Onsite ACOTE visit	Feb-March 2025
Accreditation decision	April 2025
Students graduate	August 2025

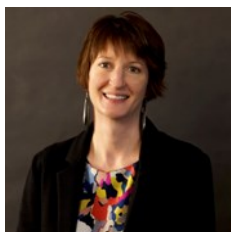
What does the PNWU SOT mean for community health?

PNWU's five-state region (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska) has lower access to occupational therapy services than the national average. Service gaps affect clients of all ages. Starting with the graduates from the inaugural class (August 2025), our graduates will make an impact in the communities in which they live and work by serving rural and medically underserved communities in central Washington and beyond!



OUR TEAM

Curious to know more about the faculty and staff of the SOT? Read the bios below to get to know more about us. We are currently hiring for additional positions, and welcome inquiries from interested clinicians and educators. For more information on how to apply to be part of the SOT team, visit our employment openings at: <https://www.pnwu.edu/job-opportunities/>.



Dr. Fritz received her M.S. in Occupational Therapy from Winston Salem State University and her Ph.D. in Occupational Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Wayne State University Institute of Gerontology. Dr. Fritz has been a clinician since 2007 and has worked with a range of clinical populations. She has been an academic researcher and faculty member since 2013. Her research focuses on health promotion and chronic condition prevention and management. Her work has been funded by multiple foundations as well as the National Institutes of Health and she has been the Principal or Co-Investigator on research awards totaling over \$6,000,000. Her current clinical interest is in community-based preventative occupational therapy for older adults. She is a certified Health Coach.

Dr. Flick received her Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from the University of South Alabama in 2007 and her Doctor of Philosophy in Health Science at Nova Southeastern University with an emphasis in Global Health, August 2022. Dr. Flick has been a clinician since 2008 working across the lifespan in community mental, outpatient, and acute care settings. Dr. Flick is certified as an AOTA Fieldwork Educator, Level I Provider Sequential-Oral-Sensory (SOS) Feeding Approach, Nurturing Parenting Program trainer, DIRFloortime® provider, Therapeutic Listening provider, facilitator for Community Action Poverty Simulations, and Mental Health First Aid USA. Internationally, she has served as a clinical education developer and member of the Academic Advisory Committee for the first-ever bachelor's degree level OT and PT program in Haiti offered by FSRL at the Episcopal University in Leogane, Haiti.



Dr. Imamshah received his Masters of Occupational Therapy and his post-professional Doctorate of Occupational Therapy from the University of Puget Sound. Dr. Imamshah has been a clinician since 2011 and has worked primarily with young to older adults in inpatient, long-term, and outpatient settings. Dr. Imamshah is a Certified Stroke Rehabilitation Specialist, Certified Health Coach, a Certified Kinesio Taping® Practitioner, and is a USA Weightlifting Sports Performance Coach. Dr. Imamshah's research focuses on promoting health and well-being, reducing health disparities, and increasing health equity among rural and medically underserved populations. This work includes developing, implementing, and evaluating theoretically-informed, culturally-appropriate, and occupation-based health promotion programs integrated into occupational therapy services.

Dr. Nakamura received his entry-level Masters of Occupational Therapy and his post-professional Doctorate of Occupational Therapy from the University of Puget Sound. Dr. Nakamura has been a clinician since 1999 and has worked with a range of clinical populations, primarily in acute care cardiopulmonary rehabilitation. He has served on the DEI Board for the Academy of Communication in Healthcare, is a certified CarFit® Event Coordinator, and is a Credentialed Leader in Academia by the American Occupational Therapy Association. Dr. Nakamura's research focuses on the application of adult learning theory in client education, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to reduce health disparities. Dr. Nakamura's current work focuses on the application of technology in education, particularly the use of optical motion capture systems to analyze body mechanics for injury prevention.

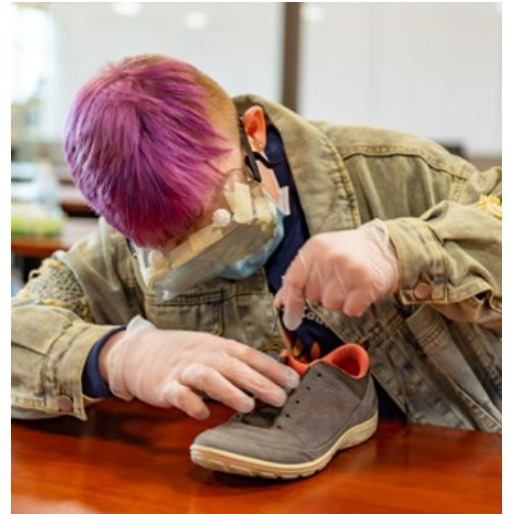


Ms. Carrillo received her Bachelor of Science in Business – Healthcare Management from Western Governors University in 2022. She has been with Pacific Northwest University since 2018, previously with the Interprofessional Practice and Education department. Prior to 2018, Ms. Carrillo worked for The Memorial Foundation and was the laboratory director at the American Red Cross in Yakima. Ms. Carrillo served as a Navy Hospital Corpsman from 1977 to 1983 and then 2 years in the Navy Reserves. She received an Honorable Discharge at the rank of Petty Officer 1st Class in 1985.

News and Noteworthy

It has been a busy year for the PNWU SOT faculty and staff. In addition to developing the school, the SOT has been busy sharing our expertise in the community and inspiring young people to become occupational therapists. Below are just a few highlights from the last year.

Earlier this year the SOT faculty and staff hosted students from West Valley Innovation Center who visited PNWU to learn about health sciences careers. The SOT team developed a relay race, which provided the students an opportunity to experience what it would be like to live with a certain deficit (e.g., sensory loss, or low vision) and how an occupational therapist could help someone with those conditions.



Dr. Jami Flick led a workshop titled, *Human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and occupational injustice: A call to action* with six colleagues at the annual American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) conference and expo in March.

In June, Dr. Heather Fritz traveled to Nyborg Copenhagen to deliver the keynote address at the annual Danish Occupational Therapy Association conference. Dr. Fritz has traveled to Denmark regularly for nearly a decade presenting on occupational therapy's role in habit formation and chronic condition prevention and management.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Partnerships are critical to the SOT’s success, and perhaps no more so than the partnerships we make with those who support our students through their generous donations. PNWU’s mission is to recruit students from rural and medically underserved communities in the Northwest, provide them an excellent education, and support their return as healthcare practitioners in rural and medically underserved areas. Many of our students struggle financially while on their journey to become an occupational therapist. The curriculum is rigorous, which means most students are unable to work during the 2-year course of study. Scholarships are an important part of how we recruit students from rural and medically underserved areas and support their return to areas in need.

In this holiday season, we ask you to consider donating to the SOT scholarship fund. Every gift makes an impact as 100% of funds raised go directly to students in need.

Ways to Give

To donate to the SOT, you can follow the link below, to the main PNWU giving page. Once on the giving page, select “School of Occupational Therapy Scholarship Fund” from the *Designation* drop down menu to ensure your gift goes to supporting future occupational therapists.

<https://www.pnwu.edu/about/offices-departments/development/giving/>

If you prefer to donate using a check, please mail the check to the address below and make the check payable to “Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences”. However, please note that you must write “School of Occupational Therapy Scholarship Fund” somewhere on the check for it to be credited to the SOT scholarship fund.

Development Office

Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences

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Inside this issue:

Our Mission	1
About the MSOT Curriculum	1
What does it mean to be a developing program?	1
What does the PNWU SOT mean for community health?	1
Our Team	2
News and Noteworthy	3
How to Get Involved	4
Ways to Give	4