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### Cultivating Leaders in Care: Establishing an Intercollegiate Occupational Therapy Student Leadership Society

Rianna LaFleche

Western New England University, rl594929@wne.edu

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Cultivating Leaders in Care: Establishing an Intercollegiate Occupational Therapy Student  
Leadership Society

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A Doctoral Experiential Capstone Project Final Report  
Presented to the Faculty of Western New England University  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Entry-Level Doctorate  
in  
Occupational Therapy

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by

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July 2024

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By

Rianna LaFleche, OT/s

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APPROVED BY:

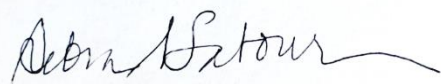


\_\_\_\_\_  
Brittany Adams, OT, OTD, MS, OTR  
Faculty Mentor

7/27/2024

Date

APPROVED BY:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Debra Latour, OT, PP-OTD, M.Ed., OTR  
Doctoral Experiential Coordinator

8/1/2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## **Abstract**

Occupational therapy (OT) students currently do not have access to an inclusive student leadership society. There are student organizations that exist, however they do not provide the opportunity to solely develop leadership skills. These organizations also do not offer the opportunity for intercollegiate collaboration. The purpose of this research project was to develop an inclusive, intercollegiate student leadership society for OT students. Through the distribution of a survey, recruitment of student volunteers, board member meetings to develop the society and a focus group to understand the effectiveness of this organization, an inclusive OT student leadership society has been developed. This can serve as a model for other institutions to develop their own society in other geographic regions.

## **Introduction and Background**

### **Introduction**

Currently, there are approximately 23,436 entry level occupational therapy (OT) students preparing to enter the field as practitioners across the United States (AOTA, 2022). These students serve as the general target population for the development of an intercollegiate OT leadership society. Within Western Massachusetts, surrounding a 15-mile radius of the Springfield area, there are four occupational therapy schools that exist. These include, Western New England University (WNE), American International College (AIC), Springfield College (SC), and Bay Path University (BPU). These four schools served as the primary target population for the establishment of an intercollegiate OT student leadership society.

## **Background**

According to the literature, there are no inclusive student organizations that exist for occupational therapy students focusing primarily on leadership development. While the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) exists, this organization is open to all OT students and acts as a way for students to have a voice in the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). SOTA works to increase the knowledge of OT through professional, educational, community and social activities, however it does not specifically promote student leadership (Simons, 2020). Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE), a student OT honor society, serves to promote research and scholarship among OT students, however is contingent on the academic standing of the student, requiring a GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, and ranking in the top 35% of their class (AOTF, 2022). Therefore, the mission of PTE does not explicitly aim to develop leadership skills. PTE is also not inclusive or accessible to all OT students as it requires a GPA to be accepted into the organization.

A cornerstone pillar of occupational therapy is leadership, and these skills begin to develop at the student level (AOTA, 2020 & Younesi, 2019). Evidence suggests that engaging in leadership roles or social organizations positively influence professional involvement, as well as helps to develop soft skills that employers value (Dunbar, et al, 2018). As students are introduced to these opportunities in academia, their perception of collaboration in the professional setting is more positive (Fan, et al, 2021). With more opportunities to develop leadership skills as students, there will be more confident leaders within the profession of occupational therapy.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Two theoretical frameworks were utilized to inform the planning and purpose for this capstone project. These included the Servant Leadership Model and Social Cognitive Theory. A servant leadership model was used in order to prioritize the needs of students over the needs of the student leader (White, 2022). For example, initiatives were planned and created based on the wants and needs of student volunteers. The second theory used to inform this project was the social cognitive theory. This is a reciprocal interaction between personal factors, the environment and behaviors (Islam, et al., 2023). Students' behaviors are influenced by their environment, therefore they are more likely to take part in a leadership society if they have the personal factors and access to one.

## **Program Evaluation & Design: Logic Model**

The model that this doctoral experiential project used is the Logic Model. The Logic Model is a flexible model for program planning, management and evaluation because it considers the connections between a current problem, available resources, activities and outcomes (McCawley, 2001 & Innovation Network, 2008). Initially the problem being addressed was that no inclusive leadership societies existed for graduate occupational therapy students. Through resources and activities of evidence-based research, content experts, student involvement and leadership initiatives, the outcome of a student leadership society was developed. The Logic Model was beneficial to this project because it has the ability to evaluate the outcomes at different levels to ensure the effectiveness of the program. Through this process, students were able to reach short, intermediate and long-term outcomes. These included gaining more knowledge of leadership and developing the necessary skills. Through lifelong membership

of a leadership society members will maintain these developed skills and continue to be successful leaders as a long-term outcome.

## **Doctoral Experiential Project Overview**

### **Methods**

This design of this capstone project was a qualitative research study. This utilized Google forms for a survey and Zoom for a focus group. The survey consisted of eighteen questions, including demographic, yes or no and open ended questions. The term leadership was also defined for participants and examples were given to define possible leadership opportunities. The survey received twenty-one responses (n=21) and the focus group had three participants (n=3). The sample population included master's and doctoral students from Western New England, Bay Path University, American International College and Springfield College. Any OT student from these schools were able to participate in the survey, however only students that participated in the development of the society were able to partake in the thirteen question focus group at the end of the capstone. The focus group consisted of open ended questions to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the society. To analyze this data, thematic coding was used to identify common trends. A peer also reviewed the survey data and coded it into themes for increased accuracy. The focus group information was reviewed for accuracy using member checking.

### **Experiential Component**

The doctoral experiential capstone project consists of two components; the scholarly and experiential. The experiential component is comprised of planned activities. The student researcher completed professional development courses to further inform this capstone project (Appendix E). These courses included continuing education on leadership and management. The



student researcher completed a course titled “A Mindful Path to Leadership”, earning a Level I leadership badge through the American Occupational Therapy Association. In addition, the student researcher completed courses titled, leading inclusive teams, creating a mentorship program, leading with emotional intelligence, and management foundations, among others to further inform the project. In addition, the student researcher conducted interviews with student leaders of student organizations within occupational therapy and other healthcare professions. Interviews with faculty advisors of student organizations of graduate programs within pharmacy and law were also conducted to further inform the society and initiatives created within the society.

The student researcher held four member meetings where student volunteers collaborated from three different OT schools to create leadership society materials. These materials included a handbook which provides the policies and procedures of the society, a mission and vision statement, executive board member positions, and membership criteria (Appendix B). During these member meetings, students also collaborated to host a leadership event with Sarah Lyon, OTR/L, owner of OT Potential. This event consisted of a podcast viewing from OT Potential titled “OT and Leadership” with special guest Victoria Garcia Wilburn, hosted by Sarah Lyon, OTR/L, the founder of OT Potential. Sarah then joined students for a Q&A session. The goal of this Q&A was to provide students with an opportunity to speak with an OT entrepreneur who is a leader herself, and learn from her experiences and her own personal journey.

### **Scholarly Component**

The scholarly component of this project consisted of an IRB approved survey (see Appendix A: IRB Approval Form), and development of society materials. Initially, the student researcher of this project distributed an eighteen question survey to occupational therapy students

at Western New England University, Bay Path University, American International College and Springfield College. The purpose of this survey was to collect information from current master's and doctoral OT students in Western MA about leadership and leadership opportunities and the ways in which these opportunities support student and practitioner growth. The results from this survey were utilized to further inform the development of the student leadership society. Through collaboration with the student volunteers, a society handbook was created (See Appendix B: OT Student Leadership Society Handbook). A peer mentoring program protocol and a protocol for new graduate mentorship for studying for the board exam was also created (See Appendix C: Peer Mentoring Protocol & Appendix D: New Graduate Mentoring Protocol). At the conclusion of the capstone project, a thirteen question focus group was held to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the society.

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

### **Results**

The findings of this research study reveal that participation in an inclusive student leadership society increased access to leadership opportunities. Students reported that the opportunity to work with others from surrounding institutions positively improved collaboration and networking skills. Through opportunities to collaborate on an intercollegiate level, create materials for an inaugural society, and attend a leadership event, OT students reported their confidence increased and they felt a greater sense of community. The most enjoyable reported aspect of participation in the development of this society was collaboration among students from different institutions and attending the leadership event. Students reported that the most difficult aspect was allocating time to participate in the different facets of the society.

In the initial survey, when asked what the three most important qualities of leadership were, participants responded with “communication, flexibility, empathy, integrity, competence, confidence, passion.” During the focus group, participants were asked this same question and the most evident qualities were “flexibility, empathy, commitment, open mindedness, ambition, initiative, passion.” Students demonstrated growth through participating in the development of society and their perceptions of important qualities of leadership evolved.

There is an evident need for a graduate occupational therapy student leadership society that is solely devoted to developing student leadership based on the results of this capstone project. Students currently do not have access to a society that is inclusive to all students, there are limiting requirements such as grade point averages. An inclusive leadership society would offer students the opportunity to build their leadership skills and confidence as early as the first semester of occupational therapy school. Additionally, this society provided students with increased leadership development and opportunities for intercollegiate collaboration, which is something that is not offered in a typical academic program.

### **Strengths**

One of the strengths of creating this leadership society included the inclusivity of all students regardless of grade point average or the leadership accomplishment they have achieved. This makes the society unique and more accessible to all students seeking to build their leadership skills. Another strength of this project was utilizing a servant leadership approach. This created more inclusivity and collaboration among student leaders. A space was created where students felt comfortable sharing their ideas and materials. A leadership event was created and organized based on the needs of the society members. A third strength of this project is that there is an official handbook created for future societies to create their own chapters. This will

allow the society to become sustainable and grow across the United States, similar to other occupational therapy student organizations.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this project include limited participation from OT schools and a lack of in person participation. Student leaders already have increased time demands dedicated to other organizations and commitments which decreases their time allotment for more leadership development opportunities. This also made scheduling for meeting times difficult as collaborating among three colleges with student leaders, there was limited time all students could be present at the same time.

### **Recommendations**

One recommendation for this project is to continue recruitment of graduate occupational therapy students as well as pre-occupational therapy students. This will increase the awareness and size of the society. Another recommendation is to continue to host leadership events. A leadership event should be hosted in the fall of 2024. This has already been initiated within the project. The third recommendation for this project is to expand the society across institutions in other geographic regions.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Over the course of fourteen weeks, the student has made significant progress in her leadership skills and knowledge related to leadership. The student researcher has learned in greater detail about servant leadership and how to create a society that is based on those needs. The student became more knowledgeable about leadership versus management and how to utilize both properly to effectively lead a student organization. Through hosting events and

meetings, the student gained more confidence in leadership skills and plans to disseminate this work at various conferences.

### **Learning Objectives**

Below are four final learning objectives related to the student's personal and professional growth throughout this project.

*Learning Objective 1: The student will improve management skills by developing operational procedures for a student leadership society.*

The student created a society handbook in collaboration with students from Western New England, Bay Path University, and Springfield College. This increased the student's understanding of policies of procedures of a student organization. The student created an outline for board member positions, election processes, a Google drive to organize all of the society information, and information about membership eligibility and process for acceptance.

*Learning Objective Two: The student will implement self-directed learning through increasing the knowledge base of leadership skills through external sources.*

The student completed professional development to complete this project. This included a course through the American Occupational Therapy Association titled "A Mindful Path to Leadership" consisting of four modules and earning the student researcher a Level I leadership badge. Additional courses that were taken to increase knowledge on this topic included, Communication Skills for Modern Managers, Developing a Mentor Program, Essential Lessons for First Time Managers, How to be a Good Mentee and Mentor, Improving your Leadership Communication, Leading and Motivating People with Different Personalities, Leading Inclusive

Teams, Leading with Emotional Intelligence, Leading with Vision and Management Foundations.

*Learning Objective Three: The student will develop increased self-efficacy through leading a project on a student driven initiative.*

The student researcher increased their self-efficacy through leading this project and collaborating with students from other universities. Through hosting member meetings through Zoom, the student researcher gained confidence in organizing and running a meeting. The student researcher also gained confidence through hosting a leadership event where a Q&A was held. During this event, the student researcher took the initiative to lead this session however students were able to participate and ask their own questions as well.

*Learning Objective Four: The student will increase their engagement in scholarship as evidenced by dissemination of the project.*

The student researcher plans to disseminate this work through presenting this capstone project at professional conferences. This work has been submitted to the Massachusetts Occupational Therapy Association Conference as an oral presentation and to the American Occupational Therapy Association Conference as a student session.

## **Additional Information**

### **E-Portfolio**

To access the student's e-portfolio please use this link: <https://sites.google.com/view/rianna-lafleche-ots/home>

## **Appendices**

Please find additional important information related to this project in the following appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Form

Appendix B: OT Student Leadership Society Handbook

Appendix C: Peer Mentoring Protocol

Appendix D: New Graduate Mentorship Protocol

Appendix E: Professional Development Certificates

Appendix A: IRB Approval Form



Subgroup of the IRB & Human Subjects Committee FWA00010736 Approval Form

Responsible Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Levine \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Project: Cultivating Leaders in Care: Establishing the Occupational Therapy Student Leadership Society Western MA Chapter.

College Proposal Number: \_\_\_ COP-IRB#215

X  This research proposal is exempt under Federal Regulation \_\_\_\_\_ 45 CFR 46.104.d.1.i and d.1.ii

It is deemed acceptable according to the Belmont Principles and the American Psychological Association’s Ethical Guidelines for the Use of Human Participants for a period of one year.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ This research proposal has undergone an expedited review under Federal Regulation \_\_\_\_\_. It is deemed acceptable according to the Belmont Principles and the American Psychological Association’s Ethical Guidelines for the Use of Human Participants for a period of one year.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ This research does not qualify for exemption or expedited review and will need to be reviewed by the entire board.

Signature\_\_ *Mona Levine*

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 4/2024 \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal requests due before \_\_\_ 4/2025 \_\_\_\_\_

& Note: Authority to approve exempt or expedited research originating within the College of Pharmacy.

\* Note: It is your responsibility to notify the IRB of any adverse events that occur during your research. You must also request an additional review before you introduce changes to the proposed protocol. Maintain a copy of your original application, any requested changes, and this signed approval form. You will need to submit these if you apply for a renewal.



## **Appendix B: OT Student Leadership Society Handbook**

Occupational Therapy Student Leadership Society: Western MA Chapter

Handbook

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Created by: Rianna LaFleche, OT/s

Emily Labrie OT/s, Loredana Randazzo, OT/s, Amanda Chaves, OT/s, Allison Toppa, OT/s &  
Alexandria Dotiwalla, OT/s

2024

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**Introduction:** This handbook for the OT Student Leadership Society: Western MA serves as a guide with information and resources to lead a successful chapter. This society was developed based on a servant leadership model. Servant leadership can be defined as a holistic approach where a leader prioritizes the needs of the stakeholders over personal needs (Canavesi & Minelli, 2021). Servant leadership has a positive outcome on organizations and their outcomes. Through this model, policies and procedures can be utilized to lead a successful chapter.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Student OT Leadership Society: Western MA Chapter is to foster and promote the development of leadership skills at the graduate student level to create confident occupational therapy practitioners through hands-on and collaborative learning experiences. The intercollegiate student leadership society values community and service-oriented leadership, prioritizing the needs of others. We aim to provide students with unique opportunities for students to grow as leaders outside of the classroom.

**Vision Statement:** The vision of the Student OT Leadership Society: Western MA Chapter is to create an accessible and inclusive culture of leadership among graduate occupational therapy students. The aim of the society is to foster leadership opportunities and create a sustainable impact for OT students.

## **Executive Board**

*Executive Board:* The executive board (E-Board) is responsible for the society running effectively. The E-Board will host monthly meetings to ensure organization of the society. Monthly E-Board meetings may include planning events that enhance students' leadership development, budgeting, member concerns, etc. The E-Board will consist of the required positions: Co-Chair (3-4) and Treasurer (1) and optional positions of Historian and Leadership Coordinator as the society grows. Executive board members will serve one year terms.

At the start of each academic year, at the first meeting it should be determined which co-chairs will fill each role to have clearly defined positions as the year moves forward.

*Co-Chair:* There will be four co-chairs to split responsibilities; one from each OT school. These schools may include, Western New England University (WNE), Springfield College (SC), BayPath University (BPU) and American International College (AIC). All co-chairs shall attend all meetings and events. The co-chairs will collaborate to ensure the society functions effectively. Below the role of each co-chair is outlined:

### Co-Chair One:

- Responsible for organizing E-Board meeting date/time & sending calendar invite with Zoom link
- Lead co-chair to facilitate meetings
- Responsible for creating meeting agenda for e-board & general member meetings
- Record attendance at all general member meetings & events
- Responsible for organizing peer mentoring program

### Co-Chair Two:

- Lead chair for speaker/event outreach
  - Communicates/collaborates with leadership coordinator if/when position is filled
- Responsible for recording minutes of all e-board meetings
- Responsible for recording minutes of all general member meetings

- Responsible for sending all members a summary email of general member meetings

Co-Chair Three:

- Lead co-chair for organization of letter of recommendation submissions/reviews
- Responsible for assisting the treasurer with grant writing when necessary
- Coordinate fundraising events
- Responsible for advertisement/recruitment/social media presence

Co-Chair Four:

- Lead co-chair for induction ceremony
- Responsible for updating handbook as necessary
- Act as liaison for communication between Pre-OT club/undergraduate students
- Responsible for organizing new grad mentorship program
- Complete any other duties asked of by the faculty advisor

*Treasurer:*

- Must be a student from Western New England University
- Responsible for tracking expenses
- Deposit & disburse funds
- Maintain budget
- Assist with grant funding

*Historian:* This position is optional and can be elected as needed

- Documents events
- Collects photos of events

*Leadership Coordinator:* This position is optional and can be elected as needed

- Organizes events in conjunction with the Co-Chairs
- Outreach to coordinate events

### **Faculty Advisor Role**

- The faculty advisor should be an Occupational Therapist in academia
- The faculty advisor is encouraged to attend all E-Board meetings
- 2 year term that may repeat as needed with no term limit
- Act as a resource for students
- Provide guidance on conflicts/problems
- Identify resources & connections for students in the community

### **Procedures for Elections**

All student board positions will be open for election each academic year. Students interested in holding a board position are able to self-nominate for the position or be nominated by a peer/faculty advisor. Elections will be held for each position the semester prior to the student who is preparing to transition to Level II Fieldwork. This will allow for a training period to occur between the incoming student filling the position and the student preparing to leave for Level II Fieldwork.

1. Elections will be held at an all members meeting to allow for voting.
2. Candidates for the position will speak about their experience and fitness to fill the role for up to 2 minutes
3. Voting will be conducted anonymously through a Google Poll
  - a. Co-Chairs will create Google Poll prior to election and send out prior to the meeting
4. One co-chair and the faculty advisor will collect the number of votes for each position

5. Positions will be announced via the summary email following the meeting.

### **Transition of Leadership Positions**

The elected co-chair from each school will attend a transition meeting with the outgoing co-chairs. Each student should have a formal meeting with their corresponding school co-chair to go over the roles and responsibilities of the position. The incoming student leader filling the position should also be familiar with the handbook policies and procedures.

### **Membership Eligibility Criteria:**

- Students must be an occupational therapy student enrolled in a Masters or Doctoral program
- Students must be in good academic and professional standing
- Students must have made significant leadership contributions to the program or community
  - Significant leadership contributions may include but are not limited to: student organization positions, mentorship roles, advocacy experiences, volunteer work, engaging in professional development, etc.

### **Process for Membership**

- New members will be inducted into the society in the fall of each academic year
- Students may self-nominate or be nominated by a faculty member
- Each student will submit one letter of recommendation from an educator they've worked with at any point in their academic career
- The E-Board will collaborate to review the letter of recommendations of each student
- After review of the letter of recommendation students will be notified of acceptance to the leadership society and receive the letter of recommendation written on their behalf.

## **Meetings**

A monthly meeting should be hosted with all general members. These meetings may be hosted in person, virtually or hybrid. At these meetings the e-board shall update members on upcoming events, provide information on ongoing initiatives, provide any relevant information to members, hear suggestions/concerns from members, etc.

## **Distance Learners & Pre-OT Students**

Distance learners and Pre-OT students should be included in the membership process. Meetings should be held to be inclusive of distance learners, offering a virtual option for meetings/events.

## **Induction Ceremony**

An induction ceremony will be held each academic year. At this ceremony students will be recognized for their membership into the society. Members will receive a certificate and pin with the society logo upon induction. The certificate template can be found in the Google Drive. Board members have the option to get graduation cords for members if members are interested.

Each year the ceremony will be hosted from a different institution (Western New England, BayPath University, Springfield College, etc.).

## **Events**

The society must host one leadership event per semester to maintain active status. All members must attend one event and attendance will be recorded in the Google Drive. Board members should encourage all general members to assist in planning events. The following are examples of events that may be held, however this is not exhaustive list:



- Speakers
- Resume/CV workshop
- Interprofessional networking
- Intraprofessional networking with OT students
- Workshop for transitioning student leaders in student organizations
- Advocacy
- Specialized events/courses of interest to members

## Google Drive

All documentation regarding the society will be kept in a Google Drive that all e-board members and the faculty advisor will have access to. The drive will hold folders for each member to organize documents regarding the society. This will support the yearly transition of leadership for the society.

Google Drive Link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ufBWLsMLLxRha7mEQ\\_mGx757jVMSi38y?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ufBWLsMLLxRha7mEQ_mGx757jVMSi38y?usp=drive_link)

## References

1. Canavesi, A., & Minelli, E. (2022). Servant Leadership: a Systematic Literature Review and Network Analysis. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 34(3), 267–289. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10672-021-09381-3>
2. 2017-2018 Student Occupational Therapy Association Executive Board. (2023). Student occupational therapy association [SOTA] handbook. *Western New England University*. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-ZMC-HzIUH2JrdcMCgPfBbxjao86L-qB9AzdQWPGjxo/edit>

## **Appendix C: Peer Mentoring Protocol**

### **Peer Mentoring Protocol**

#### ***What is Mentorship? (AOTA, 2016)***

- Mentoring is defined as a development driven relationship between two invested individuals.
- A mentor is someone who acts as a role model and is able to provide support to help another individual learn and grow.

#### ***Benefits of Mentorship: (AOTA, 2016)***

##### *For the Mentor:*

- Development of leadership skills
- Opportunity to reflect on personal and/or professional goals
- Exposure to new ideas and innovative thoughts

##### *For the Mentee:*

- Awareness of innovative ideas/thoughts
- Guidance for building self-confidence & development of personal/professional strengths
- Opportunity for development of new skills & strengths
- Increased networking & leadership development

#### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

##### *Of the Mentor:*

- Resource for information, people, places and experiences to enhance mentee's experience and potential for professional development.
- Role Model

- Knowledgeable and experienced guide/advisor that facilitates mutual growth

*Of the Mentee:*

- Able to articulate goals/expectations for mentorship
- Motivated to participate in mentoring relationship & develop new skills
- Open to new experiences

***Peer Mentoring Match Steps:***

1. Faculty advisor will identify a student to lead peer mentor program
2. Send an email to rising OT2 students to identify interested students in becoming a peer mentor for incoming OT1 students in Summer semester, ideally June (2 months before OT1 students enter the program). See Appendix A for a sample email to send to rising OT2 students.
3. Retrieve incoming student emails from Operations Coordinator or Program Director
4. E-mail incoming OT1 students for interest in mentorship during the last week of June. See Appendix B for a sample email to send to incoming OT1 students
5. Form a list of rising OT2 volunteer peer mentors and interested OT1 mentees
6. Email and request incoming OT1 and OT2 students to fill out peer mentorship match form. See Appendix C for a sample email to send to OT1 and OT2 students to fill out the fillable PDF peer mentoring form
7. Lead student will match peer mentors/mentees based on form responses.
8. Students may be matched in groups of 1:2-3 mentor:mentee ratios pending number of interested students.
9. Student leader will send match email to mentor & mentees. See Appendix D for a sample email to send mentor/mentee matches.
10. Student leader will organize meet and greet event in first month of the semester for mentors and mentees to meet

## Appendix A - Email to Current First Year Students (soon to be second year)

---

Hello everyone!

It's time to start planning for our peer mentoring program! I hope those of you involved found it to be helpful to you over this last year. Even if the communication between mentor and mentee dissipates a bit over the year, I think it is really helpful to have a contact person when students begin in the program. As a reminder, the time commitment will remain minimal, but the experience will be priceless :) To start off, I'm looking for some volunteer peer mentors!

Job requirements are as follows:

- Fun
- Friendly
- Honest
- Approachable
- OTD Student :)

As a side note, we have X students coming into the next cohort so if you volunteer you will likely be assigned at least 2 peer mentees. Please only volunteer if you are truly interested and ready to commit to helping a new future OT :)

**Please send me your name by (Date) if you would like to volunteer to be a mentor! (More details to follow for those who volunteer)**

Thank you!

XXX

## Appendix B - Email to Incoming First Year OT Students

---

Hello (School Name) OT Class of XXXX!

The summer semester is going quickly and we are looking forward to the Fall. We're so excited for your arrival!

I facilitate the OTD student Peer Mentoring program, which pairs you with a student advisor from the Class of XXXX. It gives you an opportunity to learn from their experiences, ask them questions, and simply have a familiar face when you come to (School Name) in (Month)! If you are interested in participating in the Peer Mentoring program, please complete the attached form and return it back to me by (Date). I will try to have mentor/mentee pairs complete by (Date) to allow you plenty of time to get to know each other and ask questions before you come to campus.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I will do my best to answer them!

Take care,

XXX

## Appendix C - Peer Mentor/Mentee Questionnaire

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**Peer Mentor/Mentee Questionnaire - a fillable PDF can be found in the Google Drive**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age and birth month (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability ☺

- Are you part of the Distance Learning Program or In Person Learning? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where are you from? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did you receive your undergraduate degree? \_\_\_\_\_
- In which area of study is your degree? \_\_\_\_\_
- Favorite subject in school \_\_\_\_\_
- Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_
- Favorite music: \_\_\_\_\_
- Favorite TV shows or movies: \_\_\_\_\_
- Favorite food: \_\_\_\_\_
- If you could be any animal with a tail, what would you be?: \_\_\_\_\_
- What are you most excited for in this program? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are you most concerned about in this program? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are you looking for out of this mentorship? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Do you prefer communicating over email, text, or in person? \_\_\_\_\_
  - How often would you like to meet? \_\_\_\_\_
- Anything else you'd like to share? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Appendix D: New Graduate Mentorship Protocol**

### **Recent Graduate Mentorship Protocol Outline**

*This protocol serves as an outline to pair alumni occupational therapy (OT) students with recent graduate OT students to guide recent graduates through studying for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) exam. This is a model based off of the academic calendar Western New England uses, however can be adapted to fit the schedule of any institution.*

**Purpose:** The purpose of this mentorship program is to provide OT students preparing to take the NBCOT with additional support from a peer to enhance their success.

**Benefits of participation may include:**

- Support in guiding a study plan
- Suggestions for new study strategies, tools, tips
- Accountability
- Occupational balance
- Guidance in applying for state licensure

**Steps:**

1. Collect the email addresses of alumni from the previous academic year
2. Send an email to alumni OT students in November to identify interested students. See appendix A for an example email to send
3. Send an email to current students preparing to graduate to identify students interested in mentorship in November. See appendix B for an example email to send.
4. Provide mentors and mentees with correct form to fill out and return. See appendix C & D for mentorship forms. Fillable PDF versions can be found in the Google Drive.
5. Lead student identified will match mentors/mentees giving preference to students that attended the same school and plan to work in the same state by December. See appendix E for an example email to send.

6. Lead student will send follow up email around April to mentors & mentees as communication may have dissipated during the capstone process. See Appendix F for an example email to send.



## Appendix A - Sample Email to send to Alumni

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Hello Class of (Year),

I hope everyone is doing well. I am (name) from the class of (year). I am coordinating a new mentorship program between alumni OT students and upcoming graduates that we are starting! The aim of this program is to help new graduates with the process of studying for the NBCOT. As you all know the process of studying for and completing the NBCOT is very stressful and you all were in these shoes just a few short months ago!

The time commitment will be as much or as little as you can offer. I am looking for volunteers interested in helping some future OTs!

Please send me your name by (date) if you would like to volunteer to be a mentor! More information to follow to those who volunteer.

Thank you!

Name

## Appendix B - Email to Upcoming Graduates

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Hello Class of (Year),

As fieldwork comes to a close and we are excited to see you back on campus for the DEx soon! I am reaching out as we are piloting a mentorship program between alumni OT students who have recently studied for, taken, and passed the NBCOT and upcoming graduating OT students that are preparing to study for the NBCOT.

This would involve as much or as little time commitment as you would like between you and your mentor. This would provide you with the opportunity to ask questions about preparing for the exam, learning from their experience and someone to support you that has gone through this process. If you are interested in participating in this program, please complete the attached form.

The pairs will be matched as they come in to give you time to get to know each other over break. The communication may dissipate as you complete the DEx but should begin again as you begin to focus on studying.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Thank you!

Name

## Appendix C - Mentor Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

What OT school are you graduating from? \_\_\_\_\_

What state do you intend to apply for licensure in? \_\_\_\_\_

How many weeks do you intend to study? \_\_\_\_\_

What tools do you intend to use to study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your learning style?

Auditory

Visual

Reading/Writing

Kinesthetic

How frequently would you like to meet with a mentor? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D - Mentee Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

What OT school did you graduate from? \_\_\_\_\_

What state did you apply for licensure in? \_\_\_\_\_

How many weeks did you study? \_\_\_\_\_

What tools did you use to study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your learning style?

Auditory

Visual

Reading/Writing

Kinesthetic

How frequently can you meet with a mentee? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E - Match Email to Mentors/Mentees

---

Hello \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_,

I am emailing you to let you know you have been matched for the mentorship program! I am confident (alumni mentor name) will be able to provide you with extra support and guidance as you navigate taking the board exam. While (student mentee name) won't be taking the exam for another few months, this will give plenty of time to get to know one another and create a plan early!

As a reminder, (alumni mentor name) may be able to support you in any of the following:

- Guiding you in creating your study plan
- Suggesting additional study tools or methods
- Having regular meetings/check ins for accountability
- Guidance in applying for state licensure when you pass!
- Reminders to engage in occupational balance :)

As this is a new program that is being implemented, please let me know if there is any way that I can support this process for you both!

Thank you,

Name

## Appendix F - Follow Up Email to Mentors/Mentees

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Hi \_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_,

As the time comes closer for the exam, you are likely beginning to think more about preparing!

I just wanted to check in and make sure everything is going well or if there is anything I can do to help facilitate this mentorship process!

Thank you,

Name

## **Appendix E: Professional Development Certificates**

Please use this link to access copies of each of the continuing education certificates Rianna received during the completion of this project:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mq3E3qNOq37ZlMfg2ZgIgzGM11Sa859R?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mq3E3qNOq37ZlMfg2ZgIgzGM11Sa859R?usp=drive_link)

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