

MAV SpOTlight



The last few months have been a busy time at the CMU OT Program. Adrian Silva '26 earned both the Student Mav Award and OT Program Scholarship, recognition that reflects his contribution to the program and CMU Student Government. We welcomed our first members to the Kappa Delta Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon, the national honor society for occupational therapy. Lastly, new leadership was elected to our Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA).

Summer brings new milestones for the classes of 2025, 2026, and 2027. The class of 2026 begins their level II fieldwork placements, putting the last 18 months of coursework into practice. The class of 2027 is starting research projects and level I fieldwork placements in adult rehabilitation settings. Finally, the class of 2025 has joined the workforce, with graduates employed in clinics and hospitals across the country.

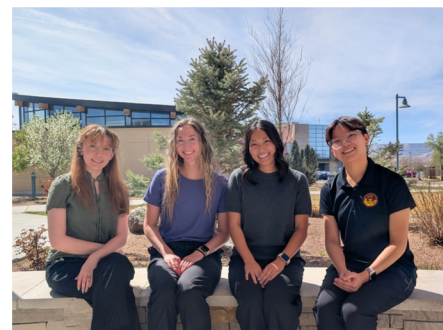
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Grace Volkert '26 Shares Her Experience Attending AOTA

I had the opportunity to attend the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Conference this year in California as the AOTA student representative for Colorado Mesa University. Attending the conference alongside ten of my classmates was an incredible experience and gave us the chance to connect with occupational therapy practitioners, researchers, and students

from across the country. One of my favorite parts of the conference was attending sessions ranging from de-escalation training for police officers, to NBCOT preparation, to OT's role in burn and wound care. It was inspiring to see the wide variety of settings that occupational therapists impact and be surrounded by passionate practitioners. The conference also helped me realize how much lifelong learning is involved in being an occupational therapist. I left the conference feeling motivated and excited about the future of the profession, as well as more confident in the many opportunities available within occupational therapy. Fundraising efforts throughout the past year, along with support from the CMU Student Government, played a huge role in making this trip possible for our cohort. Through fundraising events and presenting our request for support, we were able to greatly reduce the financial burden for students attending the conference. This opportunity allowed us to represent Colorado Mesa University at a national conference and support classmates who presented research. I am very grateful for the experience and hope to attend future AOTA conferences as I continue my journey in occupational therapy.



Project SEARCH Collaboration

By Kelsey Millican and Aileen Valerio

This spring, we took OCCU 542: Practice & Theory for Populations with Professor Ann Leonard. As part of this course, we partnered with a community-based program called Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is a transition-to-work program for individuals ages 18–21 and is a collaboration between School District 51 and Community Hospital.

Participants in the program, referred to as interns, have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD/DD). The goal of this 9-month program is to support interns in securing competitive employment following graduation by completing three structured internships within various departments at Community Hospital.

Our main assignment was to complete a needs assessment with our community partner and to develop a program to help meet any needs we discovered. The needs that we identified for the

program were a lack of transferable skills such as soft skills, work advocacy, and personal hygiene. We developed three workstations that targeted these areas, and the interns rotated through each station. As facilitators, we graded and adapted the activities to meet each individual's specific needs. To support sustainability, we created workplace stations designed for future use and compiled a binder with all materials and resources for ongoing curriculum implementation. The feedback we received from Project SEARCH staff and interns was both constructive and positive.

The OT program taught us about the occupational therapy process and how to create and build a program to address the needs of individuals, groups, and populations. We will use the skills we addressed and the feedback we received to incorporate into future individual and group programs.

Welcome Dr. Ivy Price, PhD, OTR/L



Dr. Ivy Price was born and raised in Northern California and earned her bachelor's degree in kinesiology from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. While working as an aide in an outpatient hand therapy clinic during undergrad, she discovered her passion for occupational therapy. She later moved to New York City to attend Columbia University, where she earned her MSOT in 2020. She practiced in outpatient pediatrics in Nashville, Tennessee, before pursuing her PhD in Anatomical Sciences Education at the University of Florida. Over the past four years, she has focused on teaching in the anatomy lab, performing donor dissections, and conducting educational research. In her free time, Ivy loves spending quality time with her husband and two orange cats, taking barre classes, and being outside. She is excited to begin this new journey on the Western Slope!

Take a Peak into our Classroom

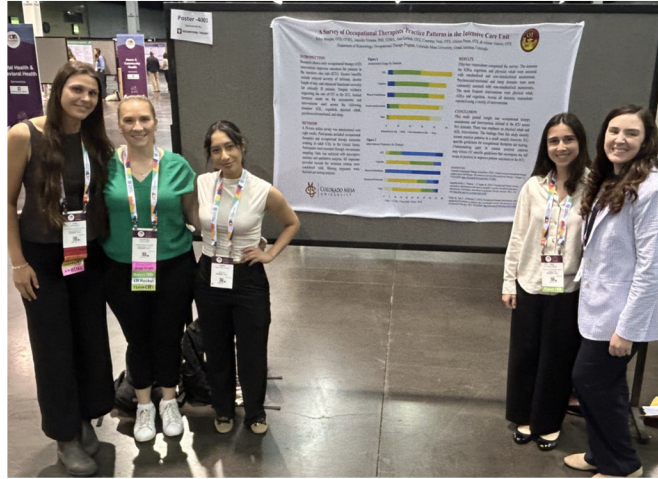
Our program has many guest lectures throughout the program. Two notable ones include learning about wheelchairs and prosthetics. NuMotion came in to speak to us about different types of wheelchairs and mobility devices. They brought in many different wheelchairs and powerchairs for us to look at and even try out. After that, a local physical therapist came in with one of her patients who is in a powerchair. She taught us about all the components of proper seating and positioning, as well as how to evaluate the patient. This evaluation is important to make a recommendation for the right fit when a patient needs adjustments to their wheelchair or needs a new wheelchair. It was interesting to see how much goes into ensuring the right fit and positioning.

Later in the semester, a prosthetist from the VA came to visit and educate us on different prosthetics. He brought in a body-powered upper extremity prosthetic that we were able to try out. This gave great insight into how someone with an upper extremity amputation can still function, and how difficult it can be to learn how to operate the prosthetic. We also learned about efficient lower body dressing techniques with a prosthetic leg. Lastly, we were also able to try out a myoelectric prosthesis. This device works off of the electrical impulses of the patient's muscle. We learned how to place the leads to get proper electrical input, and learned to operate this device.

This class inspired me to look further into how occupational therapy can fit into the world of seating and prosthetics, and I have learned that this is an area I could see myself working in in the future!

Ren Kincaid, Class of 2026





Mangan Research Group Presents at AOTA

By Ana Gorlach, Courtney Neal, Ally Payne, & Aileen Valerio

Throughout the program, we spent three semesters investigating the current practice patterns of occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) in the ICU under the mentorship of Dr. Riley Mangan. Despite evidence supporting the role of OT in the ICU, there is limited literature on OT implementation. To better understand this problem, we conducted a survey examining the assessment usage and intervention frequency of OTPs in the ICU. The key findings of this research revealed that ADLs, cognition, and physical rehabilitation were assessed using a combination of standardized and non-standardized assessments. Psychosocial/emotional and sleep were more commonly assessed with non-standardized assessments. The most common intervention domains were physical rehabilitation followed by ADLs and cognition. We hope the findings from this study help to inform the

development of OT specific guidelines in the ICU. Our research group had the opportunity to represent the CMU MSOT program by presenting our research poster at AOTA Inspire 2026 in April in Anaheim, California. During this experience, we met many OTPs who currently work in the ICU and could speak about the importance of this study. We were initially nervous to present, given that we were students and the first from our program to present at a national conference. However, as the session went on, we could feel ourselves becoming more confident in the impact of our research, as well as our own knowledge and abilities in the world of OT. Presenting at AOTA Inspire 2026 emphasized the power of disseminating research, and the benefits of collaborating with practitioners and students with varying levels of expertise and experience.

Thank you for reading!



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