



# Fall 2024 Newsletter



DEPARTMENT OF  
**OCCUPATIONAL  
THERAPY**

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2024 OTAC  
Conference

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... and more!

## Recap of the OTAC Conference

The 2024 Annual Conference of the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC) was held in Pasadena, CA, November 7-10. CSUDH occupational therapy was well-represented:

- OTAC Conference Committee-Registration Coordinator: Laura Deary
- CFOT Honored Lecturer: Heather Kitching
- Session presentations by faculty: Tracy Becerra-Culqui, Paul Penoliar, and Baily Zubel
- Session presentations by alumnae: Candace Chatman, Angela Frame, and Elvy Fuentes
- Poster presentations:
  - Alejandro Gutierrez, Kyle Riley, Karen Arrendondo, and Joanna Redman
  - Jordan Bellamy, Elizabeth Kearney, and Stephanie Flores
  - Vanessa Rodriguez, Bryan Ha, Luke Waldschmitt, and Gabriel Yabut
  - Neena Dosanjh, Daniela Garcia, Bria Newman, and Nancy Perla
  - Tracy Nguyen, Alyanna Paulino, Giselle Santos, and Yan-hua Huang

Read more about conference and all the activities, including the alumni party, in this Fall newsletter!

"I took my mom, Roxanne Wright, OTR/L, to the 2024 Annual OTAC Conference this year. We stayed nearby and planned all of our sessions together to gather as much information as possible. It felt so heartwarming to be able to introduce her to my academic mentors and show her the impact that she made on me and the legacy she is leading. We both learned valuable information that will help our career paths, her in school-based OT, and me as a student. I hope that this becomes a new tradition between the two of us."

-Elisa Wright, OTD C1





# OTAC 48th Annual Conference

PASADENA, CA

November 7-10, 2024



## A Student's Perspective

"Attending the 2024 OTAC conference provided the opportunity to engage with other students and OTAC delegates and expand our learning. Going to the sessions illuminated many avenues and opportunities the OT profession has to offer and provided the OTAC student representatives ideas for future OTAC Day-in-the-Life or Town Hall events. Some session highlights and topics we hope to incorporate in our future events include:

- Sexuality and Sex as an Occupation
- The OT Lens: Leaders in Breast Cancer Rehab
- The OTD Capstone Journey: A Panel Discussion

It was great to see the many CSUDH students who attended and some who presented their research posters.

The theme of this year's conference was "Amplifying Occupational Therapy's Why!" and the dedication and commitment seen by all who attended underscored our profession's values. Inspired by this conference, the CSUDH student delegates are excited and looking forward to planning events in the near future.

The Alumni Reception was a lot fun with generations of Dominguez Hill's graduates showing up to connect and share their experiences with current students, offering us further support for our future careers."

-Zoe Manoguerra, MSOT C20





# OTAC 48th Annual Conference





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# Student Poster Presentations

Three MSOT student qualitative research teams presented their posters at the annual OTAC conference on November 9th. They took the risk of submitting an abstract for a poster presentation, got accepted, and then disseminated their research findings. Kudos to our amazing student researchers!



Vanessa Rodriguez, Bryan Ha, Gabriel Yabut, and Luke Waldschmitt: *Is Business Booming? A Narrative Study of the Journey of OT Business Owners*



Alejandro Gutierrez, Joanne Redelman, Kyle Riley, and Karen Arredondo (not pictured): *Context of Latino Healthcare*



Bria Newman, Nancy Perla, Daniela Garcia, and Neena Dosanjh: *Cultural Expression and Implications for Occupational Therapy*

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## A Note From Dr. Ryan



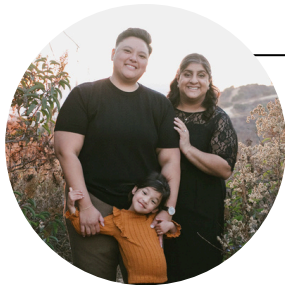
"On October 9th, I had the opportunity to be a presenter on the OTAC DEIOJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Occupational Justice) Special Topics Forum: *Building Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Educational Spaces* panel. Panelists all shared initiatives and ways our departments are implementing practices to keep growing toward inclusiveness and equity.

It was encouraging to hear what is going on at other programs and represent CSUDH OT by sharing about our JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Advisory Group, the decision

to keep the MSOT program alongside the new OTD program, and monthly Thursday full department meetings.

I appreciated the similarities in the ways we were all approaching inclusion in our programs, including examining case studies for reinforcement of harmful stereotypes, encouraging the use of real versus fabricated case studies, making land acknowledgments visible, and providing mindfulness curriculum in Level I Fieldwork. I hope our department can continue to share, lead, and learn like this in the future."





# Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Jennifer Taosuvanna

OTD Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor



I am honored to serve as the new OTD Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). As a proud alumnus of the CSUDH Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Program (Cohort 6), my career has been centered on advancing occupational therapy practice, particularly in the acute care setting.

After graduating in 2012, I began my career at Adventist Health Glendale, a 500-bed hospital in the Los Angeles area. I quickly immersed myself in neurological and cardiac care, earning my NEURO-IFRAH certification in 2014.

In 2015, I became the case managing occupational therapist on the cardiac intervention units, where I developed an occupational therapy protocol for post-operative cardiac patients. I worked closely with interdisciplinary teams to advocate for the profession's critical role in cardiac recovery, focusing on improving quality of life and outcomes post-discharge.



My scholarly interests include occupational therapy's impact on cardiac and stroke patients, as well as broader acute care settings. I am particularly focused on developing evidence-based protocols that enhance rehabilitation and recovery for these populations. My work in acute care also extends to improving early intervention and outcomes for patients recovering from neurological conditions, especially stroke, where occupational therapy plays a pivotal role in optimizing function and independence. In addition to my work with cardiac and stroke patients, my scholarly interests include research on the older adult population and the LGBTQ+ community.

In 2017, I began guest lecturing in OTR 512 (Human Anatomy) alongside Dr. Mary Medina, which ignited my passion for teaching. This led to the development of an acute care elective course in 2019, designed to give

students practical skills and confidence before fieldwork.

In 2024, I achieved a personal milestone by completing my Occupational Therapy Doctorate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which solidified my commitment to furthering scholarship in occupational therapy.

On a personal note, I started my family in 2021 and welcomed my daughter that same year. Balancing my career with motherhood has been both a challenge and a source of inspiration, reinforcing my dedication to creating a nurturing and supportive learning environment for students.

As a faculty member, I take immense pride in my CSUDH roots and remain committed to fostering the growth of the OTD program. I look forward to supporting future students and contributing to the evolution of our profession.





TORO CENTER DR.

## MEET OUR NEWEST FACULTY

# Dr. Joseph Juse

*I am looking forward to joining the CSUDH OT Department family and being a part of the OT students' academic journey. For as long as I can remember at Adventist Health Glendale, I have helped coordinate our OT/OTA student fieldwork placements, as well as support our hospital volunteers in gaining experience and insight regarding our various allied health professions (PT/OT/ST/Nursing). I have learned that I thrive on supporting our future clinicians, continue to be energized when connecting and collaborating with colleagues, and am thankful to learn and grow from the many leaders of our OT profession. My family is a great treasure, and I love the sense of being part of a family within all my roles personally and professionally. Whenever I have the opportunity, I enjoy cooking and baking, reading a good book, and the outdoor activities of hiking and skiing. I love a good hike, walking, talking, and taking in all the beautiful sights with others. I am very grateful for this opportunity to teach at CSUDH, and look forward to meeting the faculty, instructors, and all the students.*

**Go Toros!**



Dr. Juse is an occupational therapist with over 30 years of clinical and managerial experience. His clinical practice has been extensively with the adult and geriatric populations in physical disabilities and rehabilitation settings, with specific focus on neurological rehabilitation, orthopedic clinical practice and administration/management.

He has had clinical and administrative roles in hospital based acute rehabilitation units, skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation centers.

Currently, Dr. Juse is the Rehabilitation Supervisor at Adventist Health Glendale, working with a dynamic team of interdisciplinary clinicians in the Inpatient Acute Rehabilitation Unit and Outpatient Neurological Services. A proud member of state and national professional organizations, he

is an active committee member of the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC), previously part of the Political Action Committee, and currently the co-chair of OTAC's Annual Conference Committee.

As an occupational therapist, leader, and lifelong learner, it is a pleasure to collaborate and enhance engagement in the education of our future occupational therapy clinicians.

**Welcome Dr. Juse!**



## CSU TRUSTEES' AWARD WINNER

"This past September, I had the honor to be named as one of the recipients for the 2024-2025 CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement and be recognized as a William Randolph Hearst Foundation Scholar. The CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement stands as the most prestigious scholarship in the CSU system, recognizing only one student from each of the 23 CSU campuses who demonstrates superior

academic performance, personal accomplishments, exemplary community service, and has overcome adversity.

I remember receiving the phone call five months ago that I had been nominated. I couldn't believe the news; I was speechless. It wasn't until this past September when it finally registered with me. I had the great pleasure of meeting the CSU Chancellor, Trustees, University Presidents, and other scholars. I am forever

grateful for receiving this scholarship.

Special thank you to President Dr. Parham for nominating me to represent CSUDH. My sincerest gratitude to Dr. Kitching and Dr. Moy for their support and joining me at the ceremony to celebrate this recognition."

-Gabriella Amaya, MSOT C19







## OTR 595 Advanced Practice in Sensory Integration

The OTR 595 course for Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI) was held on July 20th and September 7th for MSOT C19 and OTD C1 students. We were fortunate to collaborate with Dr. Annie Baltazar-Mori on this course.

We started each session at her clinic, playSense, with equipment exploration, safety checks, and a lecture on the ASI Fidelity Measures. The course continued for the rest of the day on campus and offered the OT students an opportunity to learn about the items from *Observations*

*Based on Sensory Integration Theory* and application to practice. Students also learned about patterns of sensory integration dysfunction. There were opportunities to practice writing ASI goals and treatment plans based on a case scenario.

I believe the students would say the highlight of the course was to be able to experience Dr. Baltazar-Mori's clinic and the vast array of equipment available for treatment!

-Dr. Faith Moy



## Promoting Healthier Habits

As occupational therapists, we are most often tasked with helping clients after they have experienced a traumatic disruption in their lives—a stroke, a mental health condition, an autistic child, a diagnosis of diabetes.

Our students get extensive training focused on rehabilitation. But the doctoral students are also learning about prevention in their courses focused on Person, Environment, Occupation and Health Promotion for various populations.

In OTR 754, the course for older adults, the students had the opportunity to experience a real-life situation involving the development of a health-promotion program for the older adults at the Carson Community Center Senior Program. Students created and administered a survey to gather information for their needs assessment. The survey asked about the seniors' habits and routines revolving around natural movement, eating and cooking, social participation, and their "sense of purpose."



Based on the results of their survey, the students then designed educational flyers, buttons, and interventions to support behavioral changes for a better quality of life. These included a card writing/exchange to promote kindness and thoughtfulness; a challenging but fun team-building game to promote social participation; discussions about foods and

food preparation to promote healthier eating and cooking habits; and a natural movement dance activity to Just Dance. By participating in the various interventions, the seniors earned tickets for a fun giveaway run by the students. Overall, it seemed like an enjoyable experience for the seniors and a great learning experience for the students.

- Dr. Gina Phelps

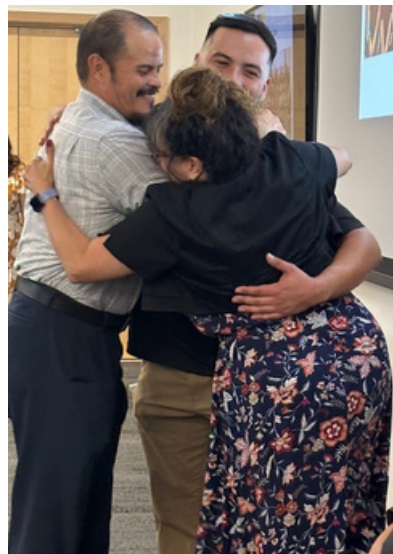






# MSOT C19 PINNING CEREMONY

AUGUST 6, 2024







OTD C2  
RED SHIRT  
CEREMONY

AUGUST 26, 2024





# OTD INAUGURAL C1 PINNING CEREMONY

On December 12, 2024, California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) Department of Occupational Therapy celebrated a significant milestone with the inaugural OTD Pinning Ceremony for its first doctoral cohort. This event marked the completion of the students' didactic coursework and their transition to Level II fieldwork.

The Pinning Ceremony, a tradition originating in the MSOT program, symbolizes the students' progress and readiness for the next phase of their professional development. The OTD students, having successfully completed their rigorous academic curriculum, were honored in the presence of faculty, family members and loved ones.



As the newly appointed OTD Program Coordinator, I had the privilege of sharing this momentous occasion with Cohort 1, faculty and guests. The ceremony not only celebrated the cohort's academic achievements but also acknowledged their dedication and hard work in preparation for this critical transition in their doctoral program.

The Department of Occupational Therapy extends its best wishes to Cohort 1 as they embark on their Level II fieldwork journey!

-Jennifer Taosuvanna, OTD, OTRL  
OTD Program Coordinator



# Welcoming New SOTA Chairs



New SOTA Chairs for the upcoming 2024- 2025 academic year were announced at the beginning of the fall semester!

**Orientation chair:** Erin Kim

**Yearbook/Historian chairs:** Krysten Pacamara, Zoe Manoguerra, Domo Soriano, and Stephanie Fortunato

**Social Media/Publicity chairs:** Breck Burwell and Gloria Lu

**Volunteer/Outreach chairs:** Chris Carroll

**Fundraising chair:** Flora Chen

**Snack chairs:** Kat Nguyen and Jasmine Ho

***Congratulations to our new team!***

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# SOTA E-Board and Chairs Hangout



9/27: SOTA E-Board and newly appointed Chairs spent time getting to know one another with a small outing at Bowlero. Bowling rookies and veterans alike were able to enjoy a fun Friday night after a long week of classes!



## Cooling Down

After the activity, a few members went out for ice cream to cool down from the night's fiery competition.

It was a fun night that brought members across varying sections and cohorts closer together!



# HALLOWEEN MOVIE NIGHT



10/15: We kicked off fall festivities with a Halloween Movie Night premiering a classic spooky favorite, "Halloweentown", on the Loker Student Union Lawn! Students from all sections gathered for a late night picnic on the lawn with plenty of sweet treats, cheesy nachos, and steaming hot champurrado to go around.



A few of our movie night goers. We hope you had fun! (:





# Members Only Karaoke Night



11/15: SOTA hosted their first member-only event with a karaoke night at EKO Lounge located at The Source OC! From throwback tunes to the latest hits, everyone enjoyed singing along to the words flashing across the screen.

Members sang their hearts out and enjoyed a night exploring the bustling outdoor mall complex before preparing for the end of semester presentations, projects, and finals. Good luck wrapping up the Fall 2024 semester!

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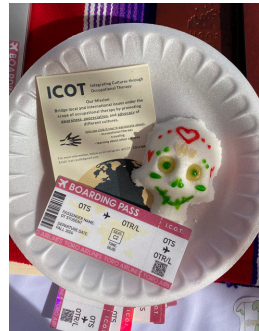


# ICOT FALL EVENTS



## SUGAR SKULLS EVENT

November 6, 2024



## Parol Making Workshop

December 5, 2024





# PI THETA EPSILON



Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE) Gamma Gamma Chapter had a successful Arts and Crafts Night fundraiser, with over \$150 raised for the AOTA St. Catherine's Challenge! This challenge is a student-led initiative that supports occupational therapy research grants awarded by the AOTF.

Those who attended the fundraiser enjoyed a variety of crafts including crochet, bracelet-making, and painting! It was an enjoyable and relaxing way for students from various cohorts to mingle and get to know each other. The C20/C2 E-Board looks forward to future events; come join us!



## AOTA ASD REP

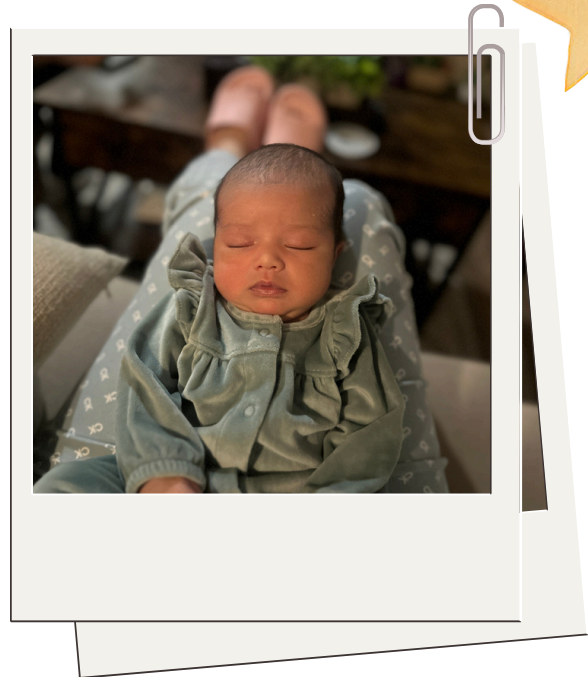
This fall, I had the opportunity to represent our program with the AOTA Assembly of Student Delegates. With my fellow CSUDH delegate, I attended AOTA Hill Day in Washington D.C. to support our profession and advocate on three issues that directly impact occupational therapy practice. Discussing such issues with congressional leaders taught me the importance of advocacy on all levels, and inspired me to keep up with relevant legislation. This was also an opportunity for me to make connections with other OT students from different programs across the nation. I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity and the support that I've received; looking forward to future advocacy opportunities!

-Larissa Bolanos, MSOT C20

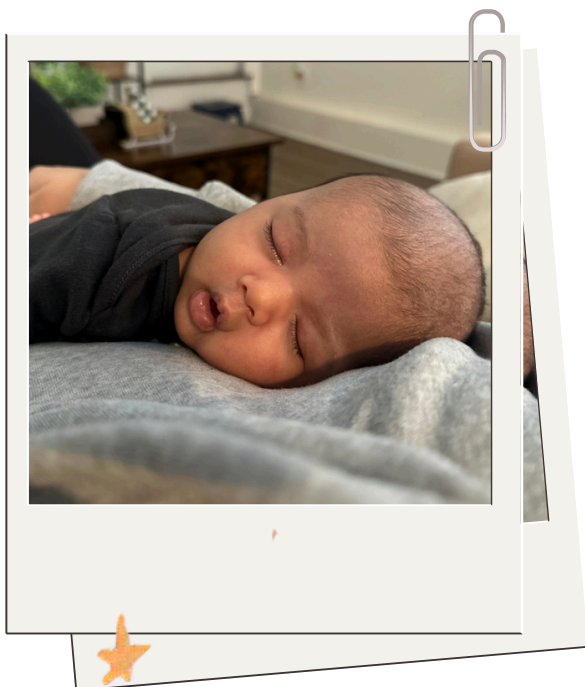




# BABY



Congratulations Jessica Vo from C19 on welcoming her precious baby girl!





# CHHSN Student Success Center Open House



Our occupational therapy department had the great honor of being invited to participate in the College of Health, Human Services & Nursing's Student Success Center Open House held on September 3, 2024.

A big thank you to our MSOT C20

representatives, Emily Chang and Vivian Du, for speaking about the profession and the lived-experience of being a full-time, graduate student in OT. It was a great afternoon to be proud of CSUDH, CHHSN and our community of support! Let's all keep growing together!

I am an undergrad student entering my senior year and majoring in Child Development. I also work as a substitute assistant teacher, gaining hands-on experience with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Before my experience working with children, I worked in the warehouse industry, concessions at the Long Beach Convention Center, and was even a dog walker and sitter. I've enjoyed my past jobs as it is where I met a few friends, got to enjoy free events/food during my lunch, and got to know pets with unique personalities such as corgis and dachshunds.

I know a little about Occupational Therapy and have gained more insight through professors who have introduced OT concepts in class while designing lesson plans for children.



## STUDENT ASSISTANT SPOTLIGHT

This sparked my interest in OT as a potential career path along with social work. I am now gaining more insight into OT and other fields, and I am excited to continue learning more.

-Jennifer "Jenny" Aguilar