What Makes St. Kate’s Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program Unique?

- Graduates of St. Kate's OTA program benefit from its strong reputation within the medical community, its rich forty year history of “service-competent” curriculum, expert faculty, and strong clinical and community relationships. Graduates are well-rounded from their strong liberal arts and sciences courses that serve as the program’s foundation.

- OTA students benefit from an experiential, hands-on curriculum that is a cohort-based model. Students are able to develop supportive relationships with faculty known for their open-door policy. The program offers rich diversity among its students.

- Students will complete over 700 hours of clinical experience which is integrated into their course work. Students will begin their clinical rotations during their second term of the program. St. Kate’s provides superior clinical and community sites for students including major medical centers throughout the Twin Cities.

- Students benefit from highly-qualified faculty who are experts in the field, remain active in the profession, and are involved with professional organizations such as the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) as well as the Minnesota Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA).

- OTA students will develop strong leadership skills from a number of individualized leadership opportunities, including serving as an OTA Club officer, attending the annual AOTA Conference as the Student Representative, or participation in “OT Day at the Capital” to name a few.

- During the second year of the program, students are provided career coaching for résumé development, interviewing skills and strategies for setting themselves apart from other candidates.

- Pass rates for the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) of St. Kate’s OTA graduates exceed the national averages.

AcaDemic and Advising Connections

- Review the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Professional Behaviors. Talk to your advisor about ways to address skills you would like to improve upon. These will be discussed often with your program advisor and you will receive ongoing feedback from your peers and other faculty in the program.
Meet with your OTA advisor to discuss your academic program and Mapworks Survey results, follow the program guide and course recommendations.

Discuss leadership opportunities within the program as well volunteer experiences to build experience, skills and knowledge of the profession.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Learn about St. Kate’s mission of social justice

- Act on St. Kate’s commitment to justice through service-learning opportunities such as Volunteers in Action, Justice Learning & Outreach trips coordinated by Campus Ministry as well as off-campus student employment such as America Reads as coordinated by Community Work and Learning (CWL). Connect with CWL at the fall Activities Fair.
- Attend the Cornbread and Chili events offered by MIPS. Come to listen and participate in engaging discussions on topics of diversity and inclusion. Chili dinner is always free! Stop in anytime to learn about events happening in MIPS. Contact Coventry Cowens, MIPS Assistant Director (x7866), for the schedule.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Get involved in campus life

- Serve your community at Citizen Katie Day in the fall. Join alumnae and peers in this annual community service activity.
- Attend the Minneapolis campus annual Activities Fair in October. Learn about programs of interest including Access and Success, Career Development, and MIPS. Explore volunteer opportunities open to students.
- Attend the Minneapolis Activities Board (MAB) meetings; participate as your academic and work schedules allow.
- Familiarize yourself with the offices that will support your academics: the Learning Center, Personal Counseling, Career Development, Multicultural and International Programs and Services (MIPS), Campus Ministry, and St. Kate’s Money Management program.
- Check the schedule for weekly yoga and guided meditation classes offered through the Mindfulness Practice program as part of the Holistic Studies Program. All levels of experience are welcome.
- Attend the various community events sponsored by the Student Life Office throughout the year including “Chocolate Day,” “Stress Break Day,” mindfulness meditations, food, massage, and “Popcorn on Tuesdays” to name a few. These are fun opportunities to take a break from your academics and visit with campus community members.

LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

- Apply for on-campus student employment. New students should contact Kathy Czech, Assistant Director of Financial Literacy and Student Employment for assistance at studentemployment@stkate.edu. Start by logging in to KatieCareer and completing your profile. You will need a résumé and cover letter to apply; Ann Ness (x8121), Career Specialist in Career Development (Room 365 Education Building), can help you with this.
- Consider applying for one of many leadership positions on the Minneapolis campus. Possibilities include: Resident Assistant position, Student Life Assistant, Financial Aid Assistant, Admission Assistant, or Information Desk Assistant. Gain valuable transferable skills for your future: communication skills, organization and planning skills, peer counseling skills, and administrative skills. Inquire with the Office of Student Life (x7831), Old Main, Room 227.
- Ask department faculty or staff about opportunities to participate in the Assistantship Mentoring Program (AMP), St. Kate’s innovative work-and-learning experience that pairs students with faculty or staff mentors to serve as a Research or Teaching Assistant or Program Collaborator. Students earn a competitive wage. Fall and spring submission deadlines are posted in the Daily Update on KateWay.

“Social justice is a strong value of our program and applications are embedded in the OTA program. In the fall of first year, we have the students participate in service learning where they are placed at various sites within the community. While they are completing this service learning component, they participate in coursework around social justice and occupational justice.

Angie Grabau, MS, OTR/L, Assistant Professor

Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Extension</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy Heinz, MA, OTR/L, CLCP</td>
<td>x7872</td>
<td>307 OM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alheinz@stkate.edu">alheinz@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah Harris</td>
<td>x7772</td>
<td>317 OM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lharrisr@stkate.edu">lharrisr@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie Grabau, MS, OTR/L</td>
<td>x7769</td>
<td>304 OM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:algrabau@stkate.edu">algrabau@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Wilson-Stucke, OTR/L</td>
<td>x7871</td>
<td>306 OM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rmwilsonstucke@stkate.edu">rmwilsonstucke@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah Harris, MS, OTR/L</td>
<td>x7771</td>
<td>309 OM</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lharris@stkate.edu">lharris@stkate.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions for making connections to your developing career goals.

“Fieldwork experiences constitute an integral part of St. Kate’s OTA education curricula. Through innovative community partnerships, St. Kate’s OTA students have opportunities to develop advocacy, leadership and clinical skills in a variety of practice settings.”

Leah Harris, MS, OTR/L, Instructor

**ACADEMIC AND ADVISING CONNECTIONS**

- Meet at your assigned time in the fall with your academic advisor to review progress in courses, learn what to register for and strengthen your professional skills.
- Review the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program Professional Behaviors Document with your advisor. Identify and discuss ways to improve competencies by the end of your program.
- Maintain a GPA 2.5 or better to maintain progression in the program. Students who earn high academic achievement can be considered for the Jenny Schugel Memorial Scholarship.
- Continue to work on your required professional portfolio. This Portfolio will help illustrate your knowledge, skills, experience and achievements within your program. Preparing your portfolio will help you develop language around your OTA education and how you will share that with prospective employers. Work with your advisor to determine important examples of your skills and knowledge to include.
- Discuss with your advisor opportunities to apply to attend the national AOTA or local MOTA conference.
- Review the National Board for Certification (NBCOT) website (nbcot.org) to become familiar with the board certification process.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

- Attend MAB; build your résumé by taking on a leadership position to develop important skills in program planning, organization and communication.
- Learn important financial management skills. If you have not yet met with St. Kate’s certified financial counselor, make an appointment to meet with her to learn how to develop and live on a budget. Call 1-888-577-2227 and indicate that you are a St. Kate’s student.
- Attend the Honors and Awards celebration in the spring; join your peers in acknowledging the scholarship, research, and other academic achievements of your peers in this important annual event.
- Before graduating, meet with the Minneapolis Financial Aid Team (x7805), Old Main 231, to review your loans and discuss the process for loan consolidation. Make sure you are clear about loan repayment and what your payments will be. Also discuss loan deferment if you plan on continuing your education.
- As you prepare for graduation, celebrate all your connections to the University, including mentoring relationships with faculty and staff, and lifelong friendships with your classmates.
- Become orientated to the Alumnae Association, and learn how to become an active and supportive alumna of the University.

**Two options for Study Abroad Opportunity for OTA**

OSOT 5020/CIL 1500 Community Justice Ecuador (OTA is the CIL 1500): two credits, summer course

OTA students have the opportunity to participate in an international immersion experience where they will explore the cultural influences of health and healthcare delivery. In this experience, students and faculty will interact with local healthcare practitioners to explore issues such as health disparities, marginalization, poverty, and environmental conditions that influence health. Students will work in non-profit agencies serving persons with disabilities alongside national therapists. Students will use tenets of participatory action research to identify projects that are beneficial for their partner sites. Students will also learn about the integration of indigenous health practices with western medicine through locally taught courses.

HLTH 4994: Social Determinants of Health in the Caribbean - An Inter-Professional Experience, four credits, January course. Note: because this is not a required course for OTA, credit earned would apply as elective credit.

OTA majors can also participate in the J-term course. (The course will be offered J-term 2015 and then, every other year. The overarching goal for this course is to develop leaders in healthcare with a sense of social responsibility and required skills to respond to the complex healthcare needs of our increasingly diverse communities. Through cultural immersion, field visits, guided reflection, and seminars, students will gain a global understanding of health and health care delivery so that they can contribute to the creation of more effective and inclusive healthcare practices and systems. The course will take place in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba. In the Dominican Republic, the focus of the learning will be about health care in an under-resourced country, in Haiti we will learn about the impact of international aid on healthcare following a natural disaster, and in Cuba, we will learn about socialized healthcare. In all three countries we will learn how culture, geography, politics, and economics influence how health and healthcare are defined, experienced, and distributed.)
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
❑ Explore the diverse and complex cultures by attending the Reel Lens to Diversity Film Series hosted by MIPS. This once-a-month Tuesday film showing is open to all on campus. Contact Coventry Cowens (x7866), MIPS Assistant Director, for the schedule of films.
❑ Attend the Mindfulness programs sponsored by the Holistic Health Studies Program.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
❑ Develop important leadership skills through serving in a leadership position in the OTA Club, becoming a representative at the national Conference, and participating in OT Day at the Capitol. Many other opportunities are available in Student Life or off-campus involvements.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT
❑ Meet with Ann Ness, Career Specialist (EDUC 365, x8121), early in the year to develop a job search plan; finalize your résumé and practice your interviewing and networking skills. Attend the annual Career Opportunities Fair on the St. Paul campus in October. Identify those employers whom you will be contacting. If your plan is to continue your education, discuss your plans with your academic advisor. If you have not done so, create a LinkedIn account for your job search activities. Ann can help you determine what to include in your LinkedIn profile.
❑ Consider transitioning your professional portfolio into an electronic version. See the eFolio Minnesota website at efoliominnesota.com. Wondering what else to include? Talk to faculty within the department as well as staff in Career Development.
❑ Identify faculty and staff members from whom you will want to request letters of recommendation. Begin this process so that you provide adequate time to your reference writers. Questions? Contact Ann Ness (x8121), Career Specialist in Career Development (365 Education Building) at x8121.

Get Involved in Your Profession
**OT Club:** Activities have included volunteering within the community, fund raising, organizing OT Month, and National Backpack Day, organizing speakers, sponsoring a family for the holidays. Get involved as soon as you can to develop important leadership skills as well as involvement with the OT profession.

**The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)** is the national professional association established in 1917 to represent the interests and concerns of occupational therapy practitioners and students of occupational therapy and to improve the quality of occupational therapy services. See more at aota.org.

**The Minnesota Occupational Therapy Association’s (MAOT)** mission is to enhance the professional development of its members, promote the profession of occupational therapy, and advocate for the provision of occupational therapy services across all practice arenas, populations and geographic locations in Minnesota. MOTA is a member-driven organization. Membership and participation are voluntary, and essential to the ongoing success of the organization. See more at motafunctionfirst.org.

Inter-professional Education (IEP) at St. Kate’s
“We recently had our third ‘OT/OTA Collaborative Lab Day’ with the Masters of Arts in Occupational Therapy (MAOT) students. OTA and MAOT students were placed together in small groups where they worked collaboratively to best help the client (real or simulated) address their indicated goals. In this exercise, our students work as a team, think on their feet, collaborate with each other, prioritize, problem solve and communicate with the clients (and possibly a family member). Our students love working with the MAOT students, feel good that they can perform the hands-on skills that the lab requires, and often are amazed at how much they have already learned.”  
Rachel Wilson-Stucke, OTR/L, Instructor

Professional Skills/Competencies OTA Graduates
The following list identifies the professional skills as noted by the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.
The following are behaviors, attributes, or characteristics that are not explicitly part of a profession’s core knowledge and technical skills, but nevertheless are required for success in that profession. Adapted from the Physical Therapy program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
The quality of professional behavior expected of OTA students is exemplified in the following goal areas:

1. Commitment to learning
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Communication skills
4. Effective use of time and resources
5. Use of constructive feedback
6. Problem solving
7. Professionalism
8. Responsibility
9. Critical thinking
10. Stress management
The Minneapolis Advisory Board (MAB) offers an opportunity for students to develop their leadership and governing skills. This board is run by students, for students. MAB provides activities for students that have a purpose behind the event. The Board comes together to discuss and plan activities that directly coincide with what is going on with students academically; if it is a stressful time for students, MAB will plan something that helps students de-stress. Any student is welcome to be part of MAB, which meets weekly.

PRE-PROFESSIONAL YEAR
ACADEMIC AND ADVISING CONNECTIONS
If you are taking pre-requisite courses prior to applying to this program…

- Begin your connection to the University through the New Student Orientation program.
- Meet with Paul Haugen, Academic Advisor (x7743), if you are starting your first year in the Pre-professional program. Paul will help you plan your liberal arts and sciences courses, and discuss your Mapworks Survey results. If you are applying to OTA, Paul will assist you in identifying selective courses to be taken prior to applying to this professional program.
- Gain valuable volunteer experience in a hospital, nursing home, community center, school, or clinic to become aware of the healthcare environment. Develop a comfort level in dealing with diverse clients and take advantage of the opportunity to develop the strong interpersonal skills this profession demands.
- Work to earn and maintain a strong GPA to be eligible for program admission (2.5 or higher).
- Review the OTA Requirements document that can be found on the department’s website. Make sure you are prepared for the intense nature of this program. Watch and don’t miss the spring deadline to submit your application for being admitted to the OTA program.
- Strengthen your writing skills through the use of the Learning Center resources.
- Explore the Minnesota Occupational Therapy Association (motafunctionfirst.org) and the American Occupational Therapy Association (aota.org) websites. You will be required to become a member of these professional organizations. See yourself as a professional in this career field.

St. Kate’s Resources for Financial Issues and Information:
The following support systems are in place to address students’ questions regarding financing college, budgeting, living expenses, credit card management, loans, insurance, credit scores and more. Check out these resources as soon as possible.

Minneapolis Financial Aid Team: Staff will help you look into options for financing college. Make an appointment with Kendra Reynolds, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, x7804 or Stephanie Link, Financial Aid Counselor, x7805, Old Main 231.

Peer Money Mentors and the St. Kate’s Money Management Program: This program provides financial literacy education and counseling. Contact the Office of Financial Literacy and Student Employment, St. Paul campus, CDC Room 210, x8685.

Confidential financial counseling: For individual counseling on credit card management, improving credit scores, insurance, loan repayment, budgeting, identity theft and much more, contact St. Kate’s certified financial counselor for an appointment, 1.888.577-2227. Indicate that you are a St. Kate’s student for preferred scheduling on-campus.