



CSUDH

Occupational Therapy

**SUMMER  
2020**



**DR. SHERYL RYAN**

Congratulations Dr. Sheryl Ryan for your publication on Occupational Ideation and Participation Among Middle School Students in a College-Going Culture!

Over the summer I was honored to have an article published in the Journal of Occupational Science (citation below). As the qualitative research professor, it is important to me to inform my teaching by conducting and publishing research. The article built off of a qualitative study conducted by students I advised at a previous institution. The study focused on the experiences of middle school students who were part of a college-going culture program in South Los Angeles. The majority of students in the study will be first-generation college students. The research team sought to understand the impact of the program from the students' perspectives. I used the findings to further describe occupation, particularly among young adolescents who experience disproportionate barriers to educational attainment due to living in a low-income and minoritized area of the city. We found a reciprocal relationship between present and future occupations. This means that the students' future hopes informed their present activities, and they were aware that their present activities could determine their future opportunities. While the relationship between present and future occupational engagement has been described in occupational science before, it is particularly relevant to underscore the importance of opportunities for youth to engage in a variety of occupation-based activities as a basis for their future academic and career development. Ways to support youth in underserved communities having equitable access to opportunities include supporting social policies for resource redistribution and active involvement in supporting organizations providing activities and programs to youth. This can include occupational therapist consultation or advisory board involvement.

-Dr. Sheryl Ryan

## Speaker Series

C15 SOTA executive board members, Jasmine Okamoto and Kathy Nguyen, worked hard to uniquely bring us different OT learning experiences that go beyond our classrooms. Together with SOTA faculty advisors Dr. Kitching and Dr. Swiatek, they brought together a full line-up of guest speakers for SOTA's Speaker Series in the summer! Our students had the opportunity to learn from four different guest speakers, all sharing with us their unique passions and contributions in the occupational therapy field.

Our first guest speaker was Dr. Elizabeth Ching. Dr. Ching opened up the event with a reading of the introduction to her book, "Next 10 Exits: Reflections on Race and Resilience in Vallejo, California." Dr. Ching then led the students in an interactive discussion about Diversity and Inclusion, mental health, and the critical current events surrounding racial injustice and its relation to occupational therapy practice. Dr. Diane Tom, our next speaker, shared with students her experience in pediatrics and assistive technology services. During this session, students had the opportunity to learn about and see videos of unique assistive technology for the first time! Dr. Jason Tse shed light into his occupational therapy experiences working in the oncology department. Dr. Tse gave expanded students' perspectives in the different facets of occupational therapy practice by sharing his personal narratives, photos, and videos of what his work entails. Lastly, the Summer Speaker Series wrapped up with our final guest speaker, Amber Ramseyer, who spoke about her yoga program for kids with special needs. Amber affirmed students of their unique interests and inspired students that there's always a way to combine your personal hobbies and special interests into the occupational therapy profession.

We are incredibly grateful for all of our guest speakers for taking the time out to speak with our students! The speakers allowed our students to further explore the unique areas and opportunities that the field of occupational therapy entails. And lastly, thank you to Jasmine for starting off the speaker series for SOTA!

## Launch of the new logo

The Cohort 15 SOTA Executive Board spent months of discussing and preparing for the launch of the new SOTA logo. Embedded in the logo is the phrase, "Grow where you are planted," which the C15 Executive Board felt aptly depicts the feeling shared amongst our students. This phrase references our students' resiliency and ideals as future practitioners of occupational therapy. This year, students have been encouraged to explore beyond their comfort zone to flourish in the classroom and discover new possibilities for occupational therapy. In the face of new challenges, our students have continued to demonstrate resilience and have managed to ground ourselves and sprout once more, learning and growing through the year's journey. As future practitioners, we hope to encourage the same sentiment with the clients that we work with -- uplifting them and finding ways for them to attain autonomy, make choices, and find new opportunities to participate fully in their lives. Finally, for the profession as a whole, we feel like this phrase represents our ability to be grounded in our founding beliefs and principles which guide our efforts to sprout into different spaces where occupational therapy is needed and advocate for the continued advancement of our profession.

Thank you again, to Jasmine Okamoto, Elisabeth Lawson, Elena Bovetti, Kathy Nguyen, Micaella Salunga & Kelsey Santos, for the creation of this logo.



## PTE Induction Ceremony

This year's annual Pi Theta Epsilon (PTE) Induction Ceremony was held on Thursday, August 6th. Due to the current pandemic, the annual event was held entirely online through Zoom. The ceremony recognized and celebrated the scholastic achievements of cohort 16's PTE members. Students, faculty, and loved ones were welcomed to join the memorable event. Cohort 15's PTE presidents, Adrian Navarro and Kallie Miller, hosted the ceremony. The ceremony started off with inspirational words from both of PTE's current advisors, Dr. Terry Peralta and Dr. Sheryl Ryan. Dr. Terry Peralta highlighted the ongoing tradition of the Induction Ceremony as she presented ceremony photos from prior years, as well as photos of some of the organization's notable past events. She also discussed the significance of inclusion, which is a defining feature of both PTE and occupational therapy (OT) as a whole. PTE welcomes all students, regardless of membership, to join its events, workshops, and programs. Dr. Sheryl Ryan shared an inspiring story from her time as a school-based therapist, in which she realized that moments of learning may occur at times we least expect it. While lecture-based education is significant in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to be a well-informed practitioner, organizations like PTE allow for education beyond that of a classroom setting. Teresa Lam and I (Shanna Massachi), cohort 16's PTE presidents, introduced ourselves and the rest of the newly elected board. We discussed our desire to continue already established events and introduce new events and programs to enrich the experience of all cohort 16 students. New members were then invited to participate in a word cloud poll, in which we were asked to share specific subfields within the very holistic profession of OT that we would be interested in learning more about in the coming year.

Cohort 15's board took the time to define the meaning of each Greek word within PTE's name. Defined as "advancement in occupational therapy", PTE encourages students and alumni to play a vital role in the continuous progression of the OT field. Next, cohort 15's board reviewed the three purposes of PTE, which include recognizing and encouraging scholastic excellence, contributing to the advancement of the field, and providing a platform for students to collaborate. Following that, each incoming member was introduced and invited to share their journey in deciding to pursue OT. Students were then given the opportunity to don their pins and recite the PTE pledge alongside current and honorary members. Finally, Kallie Miller shared closing remarks as she described the meaning behind a photo of candles presented to the audience. The light of the candles represents the power and warmth of knowledge as students and alumni spread their knowledge with others. After thanking everyone for coming, new members took a group screenshot to remember the joyous event. -Shanna Massachi





## Experiencing a Natural State of Joy & Flow

Borrowing from the words of Jill Bolte Taylor in her book, *My Stroke of Insight*\*, I went on a journey this August that truly connected me with my own natural state of joy. I was not alone on this journey, I went with a fellow MSOT graduate and friend who quickly became like a sister, a relationship that can only be forged when you face constant unknowns together for 10 days- where you will sleep that night, if you filled up enough water to get you to the next water source, and if you'll run into wildlife or unfavorable weather during your strenuous hikes. That all makes it sound unenjoyable, but I guarantee the High Sierra Trail was anything but. It was a much needed and enjoyed backpacking trip, it allowed me the opportunity to witness the most beautiful, remote viewpoints and was a physical challenge that strengthened my body and mind- inspiring positive and creative thoughts as well as facing and overcoming fears. Though I'm still working to desensitize my fear of heights, summiting and descending Mt. Whitney- which, as the highest mountain in the contiguous 48 states, stands at 14,508' elevation- was a big (mountain-sized) step forward. There were tears but there were far more smiles and laughs along the way. After a challenging 2020, this trip provided a momentary disconnect from all the happenings in the world, an opportunity to live moment-to-moment and experience pure, simple joy in a natural setting. \*A book that was optional reading for Adult semester, and one that I highly recommend reading! - Elysia Aguero

I never could have predicted how much I needed this particular antidote at this time, in the midst of 2020. Every day on the High Sierra Trail was a steady state of flow. It was one foot in front of another. A stop at a stream to filter water. Thoughts of the next camp to recharge, refuel, rest, and start again the next day. Packing and unpacking our whole shelter and supplies and placing them on our backs every morning, then unloading everything again at night. We took in the wilderness as it opened up vast landscapes with snow-capped granite spires, verdant alpine meadows, aspen groves and giant trees, endured 100+ degree weather and freezing temperatures. We soaked in the coldest lakes at 10,500' and the warmest alpine lake I've ever been in at 8,500' and in the hot springs below that healed my injured knee (natural contrast baths highly recommended!) I jumped in freezing water and said, "You've never felt so alive in your life," and Elysia laughed as I sucked air into my lungs while my limbs felt like they were on fire by a thousand ice needles. Out there, everything else melts away. Nature has always been my panacea, one silver lining of this upended time. We summited Mt. Whitney on August 12th underneath the watchful gaze of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, during the peak of the Perseid meteor shower. From the top we witnessed an unforgettable sunrise, the culmination of one of the most humbling and powerful experiences of our lives, marking the dawn of our next chapter as newly minted OT's! \*\*Note: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, measures were taken to minimize viral spread. Both of us quarantined and had COVID tests performed ahead of time. On the trail, we discovered that our neck gaiters functioned as neck warmers, sun protection, headbands, and most importantly, as face masks! -Robin Nguyen



# Graduation Banquet C14

Students, family, friends and faculty came together to celebrate C14's completion of their Master's in Occupational Therapy on Saturday, May 30th 2020 at 6 PM. It was the first ever Zoom graduation banquet amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging faculty and student representatives to get a little creative with making an interactive, fun, and inclusive virtual celebration. The hour and a half virtual banquet began with a welcome message from department chair Dr. Terry Peralta and was then kicked off by the emcee and C14 student Regina Sarnicola. The agenda consisted of messages from President Thomas A Parham, Provost Michael Spagna and Dean Claudia Peyton speaking to the Class of 2020 and their achievements. In true C14 style, an online Kahoot game was played, consisting of questions such as "Who cooked us breakfast every morning our last semester" to "What year did the CSUDH OT program originate" with the first and second place winners receiving gift cards. Students got teary-eyed as a video message from various faculty members was played for the students, enabling them to hear from all their professors and faculty who had gotten to know C14 over the course of their two and a half years with the program. Both Dr. Heather Kitching and Dr. Peralta also took a few minutes to speak to the students and families, congratulating them on their achievement, providing advice for the future and sharing any last insights for their bright careers to come.

Then it was C14's turn to talk to their classmates and friends! Section representatives Christopher Chuateco, Tiffany Lui and Loree Pham all spoke to the attendees, with inside jokes for their classmates, words of inspiration and encouragement for the future of C14. Leading up to the banquet, students had a chance to recognize one another by nominating classmates for various awards, which were then announced to the attendees. These awards included: Academic Excellence, Creativity and Community Service, Leadership and Professionalism, Most Inspirational, Spirit of Generosity and a Transformative Club Leaders Award. Dr. Kitching announced the recipients of the Fieldwork Recognition Award, with the winners having been nominated by their Fieldwork educators for their excellent performance throughout their clinical rotation.

Finally, the moment everyone had been waiting for, as the name of each C14 student was read along with a photo of them displayed on the screen. Mics were muted, but anyone watching the zoom video screens could see the celebrations and the cheering of families and friends as their loved one's names were called and the smiles of the C14 students relishing their moment. After the final name was called, Dr. Peralta announced it was time for the donning of the sashes. In unison, C14 donned their sashes with the assistance of their loved ones that helped make this achievement possible. Along with many tears of happiness, everyone then grabbed glasses of champagne and toasted one another in the presence of their classmates, faculty, family, and friends. With mics finally unmuted, everyone could hear the celebrations taking place in honor of C14. Following the celebrations, students were able to go into breakout rooms consisting of their section mates to celebrate a bit more intimately before continuing on their celebration with family and friends who were present in person.

Despite the inability to celebrate together as a class, the

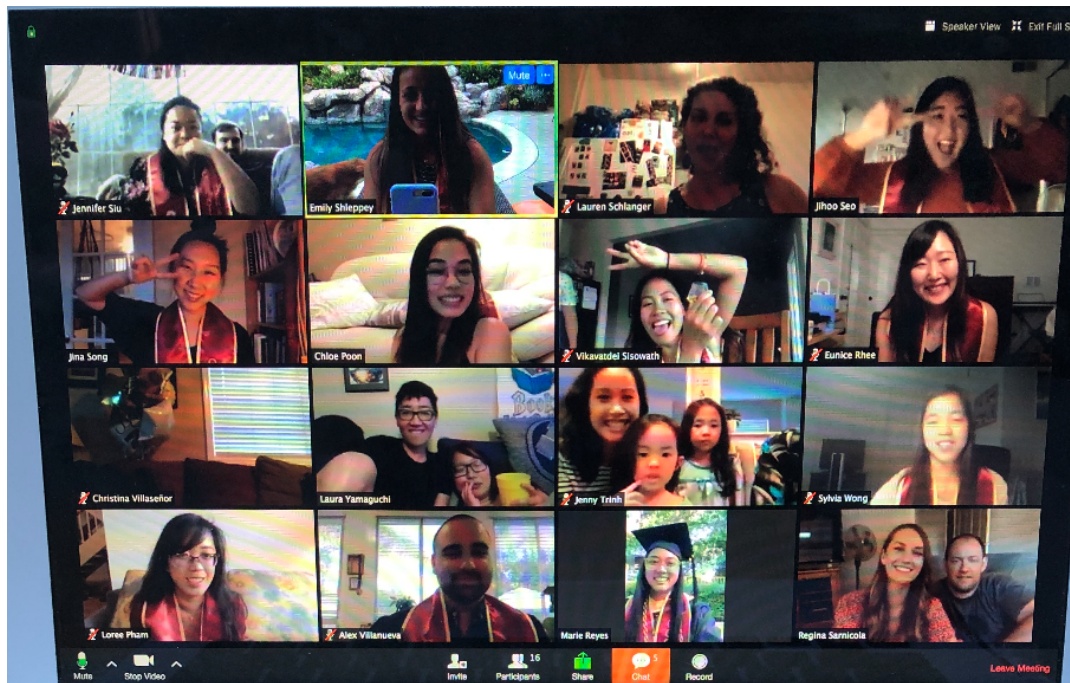


# Graduation Banquet C14

Despite the inability to celebrate together as a class, the first virtual banquet was a success and, in some ways, even better as family and friends who wouldn't have been able to attend had the chance to dial in and watch their loved one become a graduate. C14 student Lisa Nguyen said, "I am glad that we were able to see each other to celebrate the finish of our masters! Although it wasn't the celebration, we had all expected, it was memorable." Leslie Sisowath added, "Virtual graduation was so fun! It was so well organized, and I was so glad our loved ones were able to join on zoom. I am so proud of my cohort, and I am grateful we were able to celebrate in such a fun way. Congratulations C14! And a huge thank you to our amazing faculty." The banquet was a memorable way to celebrate a memorable life changing two years for the C14 students in an unorthodox way. We thank all those who were involved in making our celebration special for all of us.



# Graduation Banquet C14



MacBook Air

