Dear Alumni and Friends of the Division,

As you probably know July 1st marks the start of my transition into retirement. I anticipate this will include alteration of some occupations and many new ones. Anticipation of leaving triggers memories of all the faculty members and students who shared my time in the Division of Occupational Therapy, and then the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. When I joined the faculty in fall of 1985, the curriculum was one of only 11 entry-level master programs. It was also uniquely focused on treating the whole person by enabling occupational engagement. The power of being occupation-centered was illustrated in my first few years. I met an undergraduate who had cerebral palsy. Her muscle tone fluctuated, making head control difficult so head support was needed. She had received physical therapy for years with little change. However, when she was given an augmented communication device and a head stick, her head control improved. The possibility of being able to communicate more efficiently gave head control more meaning than the righting reflex the physical therapist had elicited in treatment sessions!

I have loved being paid to learn new things and engage in discussion of new ideas through an ever-evolving (and occasionally overhauled) curriculum. None of these changes were brought about by one or two people, it was the combined effort of colleagues who are also lifelong learners. It is impossible not to be a learner when students are full of questions. I’m in the process of reading selected chapters of the entry-level textbook, Willard and Spackman’s Occupational Therapy. The original textbook was published in 1947 with a new edition released every six to eight years. The sequence of changes also reflects the evolution of knowledge that has informed practice.

Eleven years ago we built our retirement home, so I hope to stay involved with the community of occupational therapists, and I plan to volunteer in some way that will allow me time to hang out with young children.

I know with Nancy Bagatell taking on the role of director the quality of the education UNC offers occupational therapy and occupational science students will remain high. I’m grateful for her commitment to the mission of the division, to train outstanding occupational therapists and occupational scientists.

Brian Boyd, PhD, Appointed DAHS Associate Chair for Research

The Department of Allied Health Sciences (DAHS) has appointed Brian A. Boyd, PhD, as Associate Chair for Research, effective February 1, 2017. In this role, Boyd will lead the department’s Office of Research, whose researchers generate knowledge, prepare scientists, and build evidence-based interventions for health, well-being, and social participation.

Boyd came to the UNC system as a post-doctoral fellow in 2005 at the UNC School of Medicine, and he currently is an Associate Professor in the department’s Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. He joined the faculty in August 2009. Prior to joining UNC-CH, Boyd completed his PhD in special education from the University of Florida in 2005 and his master’s degree in special education from the University of Virginia in 2002. He earned a bachelor of science from the College of William & Mary in 1997.

Boyd’s research interests primarily center on children with autism, including the development and evaluation of evidence-based practices for children with autism as well as understanding their repetitive and inflexible patterns of behavior. He is also interested in research examining underserved communities and children who are at risk for adverse developmental outcomes.

The DAHS Office of Research, established in 2010, supports faculty, doctoral students, and post-doctoral researchers across the department’s seven disciplines, two programs, and one center. The office supports researchers through grant submissions, methodological consultations, courses in research methods, and promotion of research, among other initiatives.

“in this role, I look forward to engaging researchers within the DAHS, and colleagues across the University to find innovative ways to further develop our department’s research capacity,” Boyd said. “My goal is to support and to grow the wealth of talent and expertise already found within the DAHS.”

Over the years, Boyd has worked as a practitioner of interdisciplinary team science and has developed a strong understanding of grant mechanisms and agencies. Boyd brings collaborative connections as an investigator at the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, as a fellow at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, and as a colleague at the UNC School of Education, to this role.

Dr. Stephen R. Hooper, DAHS associate dean and chair noted, “I am extremely excited about Brian assuming this important role in our department. I look forward to his guidance for ongoing development of our Office of Research. I also look forward to future endeavors to promote research collaborations within our department and with other university and community partners.”
2017 Mitchell Symposium Features Joy Hammel, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Alumni, students, and friends of the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy gathered Thursday, February 9, 2017 for the division’s annual Mitchell Symposium featuring Joy Hammel, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA. Hammel is a professor of occupational therapy and disability studies and is the Wade/Meyer Endowed Chair in Occupational Therapy in the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Her research focuses on assessing, documenting, and creating innovative interventions and systems-change initiatives related to community living and participation with people with disabilities and within disability communities.

“I’ve much wanted to visit your program; you have a similar philosophy to us at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and I’m also honored to be a part of the Marlys Mitchell Symposium,” Hammel said.

Hammel worked with Mitchell shortly after becoming an occupational therapist and counts her as a mentor.

“When I was a brand spanking new OT [Mitchell] took me under her wing,” she said. “I’m honored to be here tonight in her memory.”

Hammel’s public lecture, titled “Why can’t rehab be more like that?! Visioning participation-focused assessment and programing from the insider perspective of people with disabilities,” is online for viewing.

During her visit, Hammel held meetings with students and faculty to engage in scholarly discussions regarding research and practice. She also gave a talk to faculty and doctoral students titled “You say occupation, I say participation in context: Is there a difference and what are the implications for OT practice and research?”

Hammel is currently co-principal investigator on a National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) center grant, researching the Americans with Disabilities Act Participation Action Research Consortium (ADA-PARC).

The Mitchell Symposium in Occupational Science is named in honor and memory of Marlys Mitchell, PhD, the founder of the master’s program in occupational therapy at UNC-Chapel Hill, and her husband, Earl, a great supporter of Marlys’ work (and of occupational therapy). Symposium scholars deliver a public lecture and participate in talks, discussions, and meetings with faculty, students, and researchers from throughout Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy and the Department of Allied Health Sciences. Initiated in 2011, the symposium has been made possible through generous gifts from friends and alumni of the division.

NCOTA – Advocacy Day

NCOTA Advocacy Day provided (professional and student) members an opportunity to advocate on behalf of our profession, meet legislators, attend committee meetings and network with fellow occupational therapists interested in advocacy work. Members met with legislators to share the impact of occupational therapy services as well as to discuss HB 208, a bill that would amend NC General Statute Right to Choose Services of Certain Providers to insert occupational therapists as a new subsection in the long list of health care providers already listed in the statute.
Occupational Therapy Graduate Provides Insight for Inclusive Play Structures for Children in the Greensboro Community

Meg Harris, MS, OTR/L, lead occupational therapist with Guilford County Public Schools, served as a consultant on a community project in Greensboro, North Carolina, to provide an inclusive play structure for all children within the accessible children’s area of a local park. Harris’ work is featured in several news outlets. Harris’ work in occupational therapy focuses on the ability of people to engage with, respond to, and act upon his or her environment in meaningful ways. Her work focuses primarily children and the way in which they interact with their surroundings through play.

She believes that providing opportunities for play for children of all abilities, especially those with significant physical disabilities as well as those who have much different responses to the sensory environment (sight, sound, touch, movement, etc.) is crucial to increasing the inclusivity and accessibility of play spaces.

“I am hopeful that this will truly feel like an inclusive space for those children and their parents,” Harris said, “as well as provide an opportunity for all children in the playground to play together.”

Some elements of the space that are designed to ensure physical accessibility, such as the torque of the installation which brings portions of the wall physically closer to children who may not be able to move their own bodies very easily. There are many elements of the wall which provide ways for people to satisfy sensory cravings through interaction with auditory, visual, and tactile components. As she celebrates this accomplishment, Harris reflected on her time spent in the occupational therapy program at UNC-Chapel Hill.

“I believe the UNC OSOT program taught me how to ask the right questions,” Harris said. “In this light, I employed the principles of universal design, which I first learned of in my program, to this project. Having an umbrella of universal design, both in terms of physical attributes as well as sensory attributes, really helped the entire sensory space team ask the right questions, too.” Harris graduated from the program in 2008.

Centennial Celebration Group at AOTA

The 2017 AOTA Annual Conference and Centennial Celebration was held in Philadelphia, Pa. from March 30, 2017 to April 2, 2017. The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. is celebrating 100 years of the occupational therapy profession.

In celebration of the centennial, second-year Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy students at UNC-Chapel Hill coordinated a collection of stories from Occupational Therapy practitioners, students, and clients who received occupational therapy services. Participants were asked to write one or two words on what occupational therapy meant to them and their submissions are published online at https://otcentennialcelebration.web.unc.edu/. A number of submissions were selected to be featured in a photo book, which will be donated to the division for years to come.
Commencement 2017

Four doctoral students in the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy were hooded on the second Saturday in May. Caroline Harkins McCarty, Chetna Sethi, Adrienne Firth Miao graduated on May 13, 2017 upon revision and submission of their dissertations, while Khalilah Robinon Johnson graduated in December, 2016. The students’ dissertations are listed below.

**Caroline Harkins McCarty** - *Coming Home: Family routines and sense of belonging in older child adoption*

**Chetna Sethi** - *Parental Decision-Making Processes: Historical and socio-cultural influences on everyday parenting occupations*

**Adrienne Firth Miao** - *Family Occupation: A study in negotiated participation*

**Khalilah Robinson Johnson** – *Daily Life Participation in a Residential Facility for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities: An institutional ethnography*

Faculty of the OSOT department, Brian Boyd, Ruth Humphry, and Nancy Bagatell, serve as students’ advisors. Boyd is the advisor of McCarty and Sethi, Humphry is Miao’s advisor, and Bagatell is Johnson’s advisor.

Gerrard Hall, where commencement was held.

Masters in occupational therapy students celebrated commencement at the end of April.

Faculty members Antoine Bailliard, Brian Boyd, and Ruth Humphry