



**GRADUATE COUNCIL, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, AND  
BOARD OF REGENTS APPROVAL SIGNATURES  
for Proposed New Program**

Title of Program: Master's of Occupational Therapy

Date Approved by Graduate Council: April 19, 2007

**SIGNATURES**

Approved:

*Lynn Hall*

Lynn Hall, Ph.D., Chair  
Graduate Council

4-19-07

Date

*Faye Vowell*

Faye Vowell, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for  
Academic Affairs

5-3-07

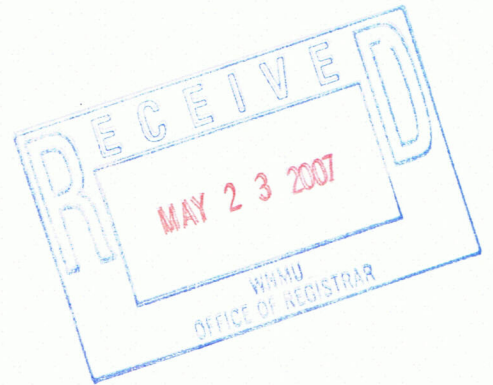
Date

*Tony P. Trujillo*

Tony Trujillo, President, WNMU Board of Regents

5-3-07

Date



Proposal for Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to  
Master's in Occupational Therapy Bridge Program

Prepared and submitted by  
Claudia Leonard, MBA, OT/L  
Assistant Professor and Academic Fieldwork Coordinator  
Allied Health Programs  
School of Health Science and Human Performance  
Western New Mexico University

## **Executive Summary**

### **Proposal for Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to Master's in Occupational Therapy Bridge Program**

This proposed degree addresses the New Mexico Higher Education Strategic Priorities and Goals, as defined in 2006, in the following ways:

#### **Strategic Priority 1: Increase student access and success.**

By offering an on-line and weekend format program, students will have greater access. Because 65% of the Occupational Therapy Assistant students at Western New Mexico University are Hispanic, 32 % Caucasian, and 3% Asian American or Pacific Islanders, according to our biannual report of 2006, minority participation will likely be high. The only other graduate occupational therapy program in the state is located in Albuquerque at the University of New Mexico. The current Master's program is only offered in traditional face-to-face class format. Access for students in the southern regions of the state is limited and usually due to family and economic factors prohibitive. The proposed program would offer a viable alternative for the working Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) to complete an advanced degree.

#### **Strategic Priority 2: Innovate to meet current and future educational needs efficiently.**

This program prevents duplication of services within the region as it would be one of only fifteen in the nation (AOTA, 2007) that caters specifically to COTAs seeking to advance their skills to Master's entry level Occupational Therapist. Of those programs designed for COTAs currently, only two are located in the western region of the United States (Minneapolis, MN and Dallas, TX). Additionally, collaborations with the other Occupational Therapy Assistant Program in the state, at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell, have begun and are integral to the planning and development of this program.

#### **Strategic Priority 3: Provide programs and services integral to state and regional economic needs.**

Whereas, Western New Mexico University serves as leader in health care delivery with its current School of Health Sciences and Human Performance offering multiple degree programs, economic needs for health care in the southern portion of the state continue to grow and vacancies in Occupational Therapist (OT) positions continue to exist. The number of COTA's being produced in the state with two programs is exceeding the number of OTs. Graduates from both COTA programs are leaving the state for positions in Arizona, Texas, Utah, Colorado, and other states that have the needed supervising therapists, required by licensure and reimbursement standards, which New Mexico lacks. Offering a non-traditional Master's program within our state would draw in students from west Texas, Arizona, Colorado and other states, thereby contributing to our economy.

#### **Strategic Priority 4: Position New Mexico Higher Education to be ranked in the upper echelon by improving national rankings.**

A marketing and outreach plan could effectively be conducted to recruit students from all of the western states within the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) affiliation. This would be the only program of its kind within WICHE. This program could also

help to strengthen the offerings of the New Mexico Learning Network in the service occupations arena. Corporate Scholarships exist now from companies such as RehabCare and Genesis Rehabilitation as incentives for graduate education and post graduate employment. Grant funded options for graduate education in Occupational Therapy are being employed by the University of New Mexico and would be further explored for this graduate program when it becomes adopted.

### **Board of Regents and NMAC 5.2 (2005) Requirements**

In accordance with the WNMU Board of Regent Handbook, Chapter VII.1, and New Mexico Post-Secondary Education requirements for approval of new graduate programs, this proposal will address the following areas:

- Purpose of the Program and Mission of the Proposing Institution
- Justification of the Program
  - Evidence of need
  - Proof of lack of duplication
  - Intention of inter-institutional collaboration and cooperation
- Clientele and projected enrollment
- Institutional readiness for the program
- Tentative Program Outline
- Projected cost of the program
- Quality of the program
- Assessment of operations and impact
- Administrative responsibility
- Letters of support

### **Purpose of the Program and Mission of the Proposing Institution**

Meeting the competencies of the Master's entry-level occupational therapists, as defined by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) 2006, and providing New Mexico and the southwest region with contemporary, compassionate therapists who will excel in the rapidly changing and dynamic health and human service delivery systems will fulfill the purposes of the program.

### **Mission Statement**

The WNMU Occupational Therapy Program provides quality education to bridge the skills of the Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to Master's level entry Occupational Therapist. We recognize and strive to enhance our students' unique cultural, physical, social, emotional and intellectual situations. Emphasis is placed on rural and regional healthcare and an appreciation of life long learning with evidence-based skills for the art and practice of occupational therapy in current and future healthcare environments. Competent, culturally aware, and contemporary occupational therapists is the goal.

*The Occupational Therapy Program seeks to implement its mission by:*

- Emphasizing the critical study of occupation within the person, environment and occupational domains of the occupational therapy process
- Utilizing current technology and innovative formats for delivery, which incorporate the virtual context and allows our students to maintain a personal context with work and family life while pursuing advancing education
- Addressing the cognitive, affective and performance domain in all course work
- Providing a supportive learning environment for all learners, recognizing diversity in students and individual learning styles promotes inclusion of the cultural context
- Providing excellence in teaching
- Maintaining the highest ethical and fiscal integrity
- Coordinating educational efforts with other University departments, fieldwork sites, and other higher education institutions, businesses, and agencies to enhance the educational process for Occupational Therapy students and Occupational Therapy Practitioners in the area
- Recognizing the potential for human growth and development thereby addressing the social and temporal contexts of our students
- Maximizing the student skills based on the concept that the student is a unified whole and that learning is based on the sum total individual experience reflecting the student's personal, cultural, and spiritual context
- Committing itself to the on-going program evaluation process showing our investment in the physical, social and educational contexts of students
- Challenging the development of analytical and critical thinking skills, leadership and vision needed to foster entry level professional education
- Creating an educational environment that acknowledges individual responsibility for learning while allowing for exploration

### **Relationship of the Program to the Institutional Mission**

The Occupational Therapy Program clearly addresses the institutional mission in the following ways:

- Providing a Master's degree in an allied health field shows increasing access to all level of education
- Focusing on teaching excellence
- Recognizing and supporting the diverse needs of our student population
- Producing affordable and accessible education
- Being a leader in the area of technology to support student learning
- Involving University departments, community agencies, and area businesses in the Program

The relationship of the Program to the WNMU mission is highlighted in the chart on the next page.

## WNMU Mission

Western New Mexico University serves the people of the State of New Mexico and its surrounding areas as a comprehensive, regional, rural, public, coeducational university. Its student body is diverse in age, culture, language, and ethnic background. Teacher education continues to provide the basic foundation of WNMU's programs. That focus has broadened to include a range of **certificate, associate, baccalaureate**, and several graduate programs which also meet the needs of students in **allied health**, arts, and sciences, business, and vocational education. All undergraduate degree programs include a strong comprehensive general education requirement.

**Excellence in teaching** is a preeminent goal at Western New Mexico University. The University encourages the exchange of ideas; fosters the **cultural, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social growth of students**; nurtures a lasting appreciation of learning; encourages increased relationships with people of **diverse backgrounds**; and furthers an appreciation for the benefits and opportunities derived from community involvement. WNMU, through **advanced technology and telecommunications**, creates opportunities for its students, the faculty and staff, and the communities it serves to participate more fully in educational efforts which provide access to information and outreach to the global community.

WNMU recognizes as a strength the multilingual, multicultural population of the region and state and accepts the responsibility to be particularly mindful and supportive of the unique opportunities afforded by this diversity. The University aspires to promote increased access to all levels of education and to help people cooperation. The University is committed to help preserve and enhance **the rich cultural heritage of the region** it serves and to broaden its student diversity by reaching out to students from other states and nations.

WNMU values the contributions of its faculty, staff, and students and is committed to their **professional growth and personal enrichment**. Faculty and staff encourage student success by providing quality educational opportunities that are affordable and accessible. The University supports innovative and scholarly work, promotes integrity and equity in its dealings with people, actively pursues accreditation agencies, and seeks continual improvement of institutional management practices and processes.

WNMU works diligently to maintain **fiscal and ethical integrity** in its activities, to provide for the future educational needs of the people of Southwestern New Mexico, and to build a collaborative relationship with its constituents. The University addresses the educational, cultural, community, and economic development needs of the region through its library, museum, gallery, fine arts center theater, and through **supportive partnerships with community and educational organizations, business**, industry, and local governments.

## OTA Program Mission

The WNMU Occupational Therapy Program provides quality education to bridge the skills of the Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to Master's level entry Occupational Therapist. We recognize and strive to enhance our students' unique cultural, physical, social, spiritual, emotional and intellectual situations. Emphasis is placed on rural and regional healthcare and an appreciation of life long learning with evidence based skills for the art and practice of occupational therapy in current and future healthcare environments.

The Occupational Therapy Program seeks to implement its mission by:

Emphasizing the critical study of occupation within the person, environment and occupational domains of the occupational therapy process

Utilizing current technology and innovative formats for delivery, which incorporate the virtual context and allows our students to maintain a personal context with work and family life while pursuing advancing education

Addressing the cognitive, affective and performance domain in all course work

Providing a supportive learning environment for all learners, recognizing diversity in students and individual learning styles for inclusion of personal and cultural context

Providing excellence in teaching

Maintaining the highest ethical and fiscal integrity

Coordinating educational efforts with other University departments, fieldwork sites, and other higher education institutions, businesses, and agencies to enhance the educational process for Occupational

Therapy students and Occupational Therapy Practitioners in the area

Recognizing the potential for human growth and development thereby addressing the social and temporal contexts of our students

Maximizing the student skills based on the concept that the student is a unified whole and that learning is based on the sum total individual experience reflecting the student's personal, cultural, and spiritual context

Committing itself to the on-going program evaluation process showing our investment in the physical, social and educational contexts of students

Challenging the development of analytical and critical thinking skills, leadership and vision needed to foster entry level professional education

Creating an educational environment that acknowledges individual responsibility for learning while allowing for exploration.

## **Justification of the Program**

### **Evidence of need**

A preliminary needs assessment was completed in fall of 2006 (Leonard) that surveyed employers. Highlights of results are as follows

- Method: 110 surveys were mailed out. A total response of 32 was received for a 29% return rate.
- Employer's responses showed a need for more therapists with 75% of respondents noting an opening for an OTR in the past year.
- 41% had an opening for more than 12 months while 28% took 3-12 months to fill a vacancy.
- In the past two years 75% of sites have tried to recruit a therapist.
- Interest in supporting a program was noted by 94% of respondents.
- Results of employer surveys showed vacancy rates for OT positions despite a graduate program already existing in the state.

Potential student surveying was also done with complications in the data collection process limiting responses significantly between past graduates of WNMU and ENMU. Still, a broad analysis showed

- 88% of the respondents (n=45) indicated some degree, varying from somewhat to definitely, of interest in getting a MOT degree.
- A preference for a distance education format was definitely favored by 75% with another 11% stating at least some distance education would be needed. Internet and computer delivery was favored by 93% over correspondence and mail in delivery.
- 64% would expect to work full time, 6% would not plan on work and the remaining 28% would expect to work some variation of part time hours.

Realizing that state and national trends of the need for occupational therapists will impact potential enrollment, the following data is provided:

- The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that nationwide employment is projected to increase 27% or more for OTs between 2004 and 2014.
- US News and World Report listed OT as one of the top 25 professions for 2007 with employment "growth much faster than average".
- The population of New Mexico (MSN Encarta, 2007) is 1,928,384 based on a 2005 estimate. Conservative estimates project 10% growth for the next five years.
- Realizing the current ratio of Occupational Therapists to Occupational Therapy Assistants is 3:1 and that the New Mexico Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners identifies 884 practitioners licensed as of January 2007, the per capita estimation of occupational therapists at present is roughly 1 per 2,000 people.
- Projections would indicate the need for at least 198 more therapists in the next five years just for NM. This does not account for surrounding states projected growth.
- The maximum capacity of graduates from the University of New Mexico is 30 per year; therefore we are not producing enough occupational therapists to meet projected demands.

### **Proof of Lack of Duplication**

A listing of programs, according to the American Occupational Therapy Association (2007), shows only fourteen programs nationwide that focus on COTA to MOT matriculation. Of these fourteen, two are located in the western United States. One is in Minneapolis, MN the other is in Dallas, TX. While there are other Master's in Occupational Therapy programs within the WICHE affiliations, none of them are specifically geared to advance the skills of the COTA in an expedient manner. None of the WICHE programs offer on-line or weekend format programs, whereas, this program will be offered through both mediums to allow students to continue to work and promote quality of life within their current living environments.

A summary of ACOTE accreditation annual data sheets (2006) indicates only nine programs out of 126 MOT programs that have more than 50% of their curriculum available through distance education. Distance education as defined by the US Department of Education is "an educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and students"

Clearly, this program would be innovative in its delivery and targeted population to make it unique within the state and region.

### **Intention of Inter-institutional Collaboration and Cooperation**

While obtaining the preliminary needs assessment data, conversations were begun with ENMU-Roswell regarding partnerships for this program. WNMU and ENMU OTA Programs have a history of collaboratively working together for fieldwork purposes and OTA promotion in the state. To the extent it will be feasible, inter-institutional collaboration will continue in the development of this curriculum. At the New Mexico Occupational Therapy State Association meeting (2007) ENMU OTA faculty acknowledged their intention to cooperate and work creatively with WNMU for the benefit of COTAs throughout the region. In 2006, ENMU faculty approached UNM regarding the development of a COTA to MOT program with a response that UNM had no such intention of offering a curriculum of this type. Therefore, this program will not be competing with the only other graduate program in the state.

### Clientele and projected enrollment

Designed with the COTA in mind, this program will have a targeted clientele. According to the New Mexico Board of Occupational Therapy, there are 224 COTAs currently (2007) licensed in the state. Because of WNMU's ability to offer in-state tuition to eastern Arizona, El Paso, TX, and to offer a select number of tuition waivers for Colorado residents, this program offers an opportunity to recruit in these markets as well. The only MOT programs offered in Arizona are private schools with much higher tuition costs than WNMU.

Relying on calculated projections, obtained with the help of WNMU graduate records and the universities' assessment coordinator, the following enrollment numbers could be estimated over the course of the first five years:

2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013	
Fall	20	Fall	34	Fall	48	Fall	69	Fall	90
Spring	16	Spring	28	Spring	38	Spring	55	Spring	72
Summer	16	Summer	28	Summer	38	Summer	55	Summer	72

Realizing that not all students will be full time (FT) the following table highlights expected enrollment in part time (PT) and FT numbers. The rate of returning students is based on the departments' retention average for its selective enrollment current OTA program.

2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013	
FT/PT		New FT/PT		New FT/PT		New FT/PT		New FT/PT	
Fall	10/10	Fall	10/10	Fall	10/10	Fall	15/15	Fall	15/15
Spring	8/8	Spring	8/8	Spring	8/8	Spring	12/12	Spring	12/12
Summer	8/8	Summer	8/8	Summer	8/8	Summer	12/12	Summer	12/12
		Returning FT/PT		Returning FT/PT		Returning FT/PT		Returning FT/PT	
		Fall	7/6	Fall	7/6	Fall	7/6	Fall	12/11
		Spring	7/6	Spring	7/6	Spring	7/6	Spring	12/11
		Summer	7/6	Summer	7/6	Summer	7/6	Summer	12/11

The following table provides projected credit hours generated by the program:

2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
(student credit hours=SCH) FT SCH= # x 9.5 PT SCH= #x 4				
Total SCH=291	Total SCH=510	Total SCH=654	Total SCH=800	Total SCH=900+ Estimated total SCH 5 year period= 3200

If the program were accepted by 2008, it would require one year of admitting students on a developing program status with an application letter and fee to ACOTE no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>, prior to a fall start (ACOTE, 2007). “A program receiving Developing Program Status must admit students within 2 years of the enrollment date indicated in the Letter of intent or reapply for Developing Program Status” (ACOTE, 2007). While awaiting initial review, “the program may admit its first class of students and proceed to the second step of the process”. The second step of the process is the self-study and accreditation visit.

Given the strong history of the OTA program at WNMU, and the fact that the previous accreditation visit passed with the maximum 10-year renewal and no deficiencies, the WNMU OT Program is confident that ACOTE accreditation could be obtained in order to allow graduates to successfully sit for the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapy.

### **Institutional readiness for the program**

Having operated for over ten years now, the OTA program has a depth of laboratory equipment and supplies, plus resources in book and multimedia formats, which will be utilized for the OT program as well. In the area of assessment and evaluation tools the department may need to expand its materials for the depth and breadth needed for the OT level. The OTA and Rehabilitation program has put forth a capital project “wish list” for the current university fundraising campaign that includes a mobile laboratory. This “OT on the Go” unit would make it possible to offer laboratory courses in locations mutually beneficial to students and communities in rural areas. A possible scenario is that rather than having weekend format courses offered in Silver City, they be offered in Las Cruces, Deming, or Alamogordo. The mobile unit would allow the faculty to haul materials and supplies, such as wheelchairs and walking devices, needed to facilitate instruction and experiences for the students. Partnerships with areas school districts, clinics and nursing homes would make it possible for true environmental context learning. Since many clinics and schools do not offer weekend services, another option is their space could be available for student/teacher interaction. The recent employer survey resulted in nine clinic sites offering their services.

The teaching faculty for a Master’s level program needs to include doctoral level faculty. ACOTE (2007) mandates that “the program director must have a minimum of 6 years experience in the field of occupational therapy, including practice as an occupational therapist, administrative or supervisory experience, and at least 2 years of experience in full-time academic appointment with teaching responsibilities”. Furthermore, ACOTE requires that all full time faculties must hold a minimum of a master’s degree. “By July 2012, the majority of full-time faculty must hold a doctoral degree”. Faculty are required to be licensed or credentialed occupational therapists. At this time three of the three full time faculties in the OTA program possess master’s degrees. One will be completing a doctoral degree within the 2007 academic year. Additional faculty would, therefore, be required but this could be instituted in a phased in approach to reach the 2012 deadline. The current Administrative Assistant for the department works for the OTA and Rehabilitation programs plus the newly added Kinesiology, Athletic Training and Wellness Programs. This may require an analysis of duties consistent with the institutional practice to ensure that sufficient clerical support exists.

In terms of technological assistance, the university has a web-based platform Web-CT that all current OTA faculty use at this time. The same platform would be used for distance courses. Enhancement will likely be required to keep current with e-learning options. Being a part of the NM Learning Network, using the assistance of the library and multimedia services staff will certainly assist the department as it expands its offerings. The OTA program has a history of previously offering a distance program to Gallup for two years. The Rehabilitation bachelors’ degree is available on-line already. Lessons learned from these experiences and collaborations with the Social Work and Nursing Programs within the School of Health Sciences and Human Performance will further contribute to the success of this program.

As a result of the on-line nature of this program, classroom space needs will be minimal. Occasional space may be needed for laboratory weekends depending on the development of alternative site options as mentioned previously. Additional space may be needed for faculty

offices. However, given the current plans to move the nursing program back to the Juan Chacon Building after the latest bond election passed, there will be sufficient space in Watts Hall for these offices in the near future.

Lastly, in the area of library and other academic support resources, the OTA department has a breadth of material related to the profession. Journals, books, videos and DVD's currently exist. Electronic reserves and electronic databases allow off-campus students' access for many of the materials needed for this program. Obviously, these will need to continue to expand and stay current as they do now to meet accreditation requirements; however, the overlap of resources makes this additional program quite cost effective. The Academic Support Center on campus is available to all students by phone and for any local students drop in access. Satellite campuses of WNNU in Deming, Gallup, and Truth or Consequences would be logical resources for students in these areas. By partnering with ENMU-Roswell, their resources would also be available to all students.

### Tentative Program Outline

An application for admission to the OT Program must be completed separately from WNMU graduate admission. A maximum of 20 students per year are admitted in the first three years then 30 students per year in the following years. This will allow for the development of fieldwork contracts and clinical sites to be cultivated. Applications are accepted year round with admission occurring in the fall only.

Curriculum-on-line and weekend college format- **57 Total Credits**

<b>Fall -1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>	<b>Spring- 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>		
OCTH 500-Occupations	3	OCTH 503-Occupational Performance and Mental Health(includes FW1)	5
OCTH 501-Theory I	3	OCTH 505-Theory II	3
OCTH 502-Applied Neuroscience	3	OCTH504-Research I	3
	9		11
<b>Summer-3<sup>rd</sup> Semester</b>			
OCTH 510 Level I Fieldwork	2		
OCTH 511 Leadership and Management	3		
	5		
<b>Fall-4<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	<b>Spring 5<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>		
OCTH 600-Assessments and Evaluation Tools	2	OCTH 604-Occupational Performance for Adults and Geriatrics (includes FW1)	5
OCTH 603-Emerging Practice	3	OCTH 605-Evidence Based Practice	2
OCTH 601- Occupational Performance for Infants, Children and Adolescents(includes FW1)	5	OCTH 606-Research II	3
	10		10
<b>Summer-6<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	6	<b>Fall 7<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>	6
OCTH 610-Level II A		OCTH 611-Level II B	

Courses are provided in a lock step sequence. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher for all required courses. If a student receives a "C" in any course they may re-take the course one time. Any student receiving 2 or more "C's" or 1 "D" in a semester will be automatically withdrawn from the program. All courses must be completed within five years of the initial start of the program. Students may attend on a part time or full time basis.

### Projected cost of the program

The following table gives an estimate of Full-time equivalent faculty needed to support the program. It is based on the current ratio of 13:1 faculty per student in the WNMU OTA program and the previously identified enrollment numbers and course loads per faculty. In other words, 1 FTE faculty is equal to 234 SCH. Calculating graduate faculty at a 9 credit load.

Year 1 FTE 1.24	Year 2 FTE 2.18	Year 3 FTE 2.79	Year 4 FTE 3.41	Year 5 FTE 3.8
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Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Cost of Faculty based on CUPA figures available at this time

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Faculty Salaries	1x 48,000 to 60,000	2 x 48,000 to 60,000 x.04	3 x 48,000 to 60,000 x.04 x 04	4 x 48,000 to 60,000 x.04 x 04	4 x 48,000 to 60,000 x 04 x 04x .04
Staff Salaries	12,000 (.5)	Same multiplier forward			
Fringe Benefits	University multiplier				
Supplies, w/travel	7,000	7,000	9,000	10,000	10,000
Equipment	Begin with existing equipment	1,000-2,000	1,000-2,000	Add .02 to .04 for inflation	Add .02 to .04 for inflation
Library	Begin with existing resources	5,00-1,000	5,00-1,000	Add .02 to .04 for inflation	Add .02 to .04 for inflation

Comparing enrollment figures, generated credit hours, and considering grant funding for graduate health care programs and scholarships in relation to costs this program would be a viable addition to WNMU's graduate programs.

### Quality of the program

The program will meet all accreditation requirements of ACOTE. The quality standards of ACOTE must include, but are not limited to

- Faculty effectiveness in their assigned teaching responsibilities
- Students' progression through the program
- Qualitative and quantitative information on fieldwork performance
- Student satisfaction with the program
- Graduates performance on the NBCOT certification exam
- Graduates job placement and performance based on employer satisfaction

The quality standards as described in NMAC 5.3.12 include a comparison of admission standards for the proposed graduate program as compared to other graduate programs at the institution. The following section explains the proposed COTA to MOT graduate program admission requirements

#### Admission

The student seeking admission to the OT program must apply with the Occupational Therapy Program prior to the first fall semester of desired enrollment and complete application to graduate school at WNMU (refer to requirements below).

To enter into the COTA to MOT program proof of initial certification as an occupational therapy assistant, through the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, is required. Two letters of reference with at least one being from current or former supervising OTR are required.

ALL of the following courses must be completed prior to admission into the Professional Occupational Therapy Program. Numbers in parentheses indicate the minimum number of semester credits required.

OT Program Specific Prerequisites:

- \_\_\_\_\_ English Composition or Technical Writing -200 level or above (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Human Anatomy and Physiology - 200 Level or above (4)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Human Kinesiology -100 Level or above (3)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction to Occupational Therapy (2)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Medical Terminology (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ PSYCH 100 General (or Human) Psychology (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Abnormal Psychology - 200 level or above (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Human Development Through the Life Span -200 level or above (3)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction to Sociology or other Sociology-200 level or above (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Statistics- Social statistics, business or math statistics at 200 level or higher (3)

An application for admission to the OT Program must be completed separately from WNMU graduate admission. A maximum of 20 students per year are admitted. Applications are accepted

year round with decisions made by the end of spring semester until classes are filled for each fall class with admission occurring in the fall only.

*Regular Graduate Student Admission at the University level*

A regular graduate student is one who meets all Graduate Division and program requirements for admission as a graduate student. To be admitted as a regular graduate student, an applicant must do the following:

1. Complete the form, "Application for Graduate Admission to the University" through the Admissions Office;
2. Provide the Admissions Office with copies of official transcripts showing the award of a bachelor's/master's degree from an accredited institution recognized by The Commission on Recognition of Post-Secondary Accreditation (CORPA). These transcripts must be on file before an applicant is admitted to graduate study;
3. Applicants with an overall grade-point average of at least 3.00 for the last 64 credit hours of undergraduate/graduate work will be admitted on REGULAR status and will not be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

Applicants who have a GPA of between 2.75 and 2.94 for the last 64/36 credit hours of undergraduate/graduate work will be admitted on REGULAR status if they provide evidence of having earned combined scores of at least 720 on the GRE.

Applicants who have a GPA of between 2.75 and 2.94 for the last 64/36 credit hours of undergraduate/graduate work will be admitted on PROVISIONAL status. A student may take up to nine credit hours while on provisional status and must take the GRE and earn a combined score of at least 720. Upon completion of nine hours of graduate work with a grade of B or better in each course and submission of GRE scores, the student must request a review of his/her admission status.

Applicants who have already completed an advanced degree will be admitted on REGULAR status and will not be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Students must provide the Admissions Office with an official transcript showing the award of a Master's Degree from an accredited institution recognized by CORPA.

The requirements above parallel the graduate school entrance for the School of Education at WNMU.

**Fieldwork**

Other criteria required by NMAC 5.3.12 are inclusion of relevant work setting exposure in the curriculum and the integration of experiences to assure that students have knowledge and skills expected for the degree. The MOT degree plan includes Level I and Level II Fieldwork classes. The Level II Fieldwork, as required by ACOTE, includes two three-month affiliations that require the student to synthesize and apply knowledge based learning in an application and skills based environment.

### **Assessment of operations and impact**

In the area of assessment, the current OTA program has several mechanisms that it utilizes. These could easily be transferred to the MOT program as they have similar requirements from ACOTE. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a). Graduate surveys are typically administered at the end of Level II Fieldwork and again one year from graduation. Thereby, information is obtained on relevance of coursework, employment patterns and salaries of graduates.
- b). Tabulation of graduate pass rates on the National Board of Certification for Occupational Therapy exam. The ACOTE standards require that a program receive a 70% pass rate over a three-year period. WNMU's current OTA program has exceeded this average since its inception.
- c). Employer surveys are done annually to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the communities that we serve.
- d). Formative types of assessment are used throughout the curriculum by course instructors to ensure that the department mission is being fulfilled.
- e). In the fiscal areas, audits of budget and analysis of spending are done on a yearly basis for operations assessment.

### **Administrative Responsibility**

WNMU has a reputation of commitment to the accredited programs that it currently offers. The administration has consistently supported the OTA program and the same degree of support could be anticipated for the proposed MOT program.

The School of Health Science and Human Performance would be the umbrella organization with direct responsibility being within the Allied Health Department that currently includes OTA, Rehabilitation, Kinesiology, and Wellness programs. Additional departments on campus such as the social sciences will benefit from the required pre-requisites for this program such as social statistics. This proposal will be reviewed by the School of Health Sciences and Human Performance in the spring of 2007. The Graduate Council at WNMU will be responsible for specific review of syllabi. The university administration was initially informed of the plan to begin this program in fall of 2005. At that time they voiced support and have continued to express the plan to support the programs' development as long as it can be viable and fiscally sound.



**Division of Health**

May 15, 2007

Western New Mexico University  
Silver City, New Mexico

To Whom It May Concern:

The Eastern New Mexico University Division of Health and its Occupational Therapy Assisting Program strongly support your plan to create a new program that will provide a bridge from the Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to a Master's in Occupational Therapy. We have been searching for this type of program for several years in order to provide an opportunity for our students to move forward in their chosen career.

We would like to partner with your university in this endeavor and are ready to provide whatever support in the creation of the program. Please let us know what steps we can take to create a memorandum of agreement with WNMU in this new endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jane Batson'.

Jane Batson, Chairperson  
Division of Health



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

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Occupational Therapy Graduate Program  
MSC09 5240  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001  
Telephone (505) 272-1753  
FAX (505) 272-3583

May 14, 2007

Claudia Leonard, OTD, MBA, OTR/L  
Assistant Professor, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator  
Western New Mexico University  
Occupational Therapy Assistant and Rehabilitation Program  
PO Box 680  
Silver City, NM 88602

Dear Claudia:

I am writing in support of the Proposal for Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to Master's in Occupational Therapy Bridge Program at Western New Mexico University. There is a shortage of occupational therapists in the state of New Mexico and your degree program would be unique in allowing the COTAs the opportunity to advance their skills to Master's entry level Occupational Therapists. The on-line and weekend format allows great student access from all areas of the state. I believe your program is visionary and would support the current need and trend in higher education.

Good luck through all steps of the approval process.

Sincerely,

Janet L. Poole, Ph.D., OTR/L  
Interim Division Chief and Associate Professor  
Occupational Therapy Graduate Program  
University of New Mexico  
MSC09 5240  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

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