A SHARED PURPOSE

USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
BEYOND

Sensory Adapted Dental Environments
Dr. Sharon Cermak collaborates with USC dentists for her research studying how altering the sensory characteristics of the dental environment can reduce children’s anxiety and contribute to safer, more efficient, and less costly treatment.

Inspire Lab
Led by Dr. Grace Baranek, the Innovations in Neurodevelopmental Sensory Processing Research (Inspire) Lab is a multidisciplinary team committed to advancing our knowledge of early risk signs of autism spectrum disorder and related neurodevelopmental disorders. We partner with local artists, engineers, clinicians, and families to employ cutting-edge technologies to design novel screening tools and effective interventions.
At USC Chan, we lead innovation to transform health and well-being through meaningful occupations.

Guided by our core values — integrity, collaboration, inclusion, distinction, innovation, and compassion — we are optimizing people’s engagement in the ordinary and extraordinary activities of life. We invite you to see how USC Chan is helping to shape the future of occupational science and occupational therapy.
At USC Chan, we leverage our unique strengths across education, research, and practice to create an enterprise that is more than the sum of its parts.

**Teaching**

46 percent of our teaching faculty members are practicing occupational therapists at one or more of our 10 USC-affiliated clinical sites. More than 150 USC Chan students receive clinical experience across these sites as well. The latest evidence and clinical practice examples are incorporated into our educational programs.

“As a master’s student, it was my opportunity to volunteer in research that helped me decide to pursue my PhD. I’m excited for my future research to benefit clinical practice and improve policies for the betterment of those who are underserved.”

— DOMINIQUE COMO  PhD Student

**Research**

Dr. Beth Pyatak collaborates with front-line providers at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center, one of the largest public hospitals in the country, to explore the impact of chronic conditions such as disabilities and arthritis on health and well-being. Students from across the USC educational programs work and train in Dr. Pyatak’s lab.

“We are developing clinicians, researchers, and educators prepared to meet the complex healthcare needs of society through synergistic collaboration and problem-solving.”

— DR. JULIE MCLAUGHLIN GRAY  Associate Chair for Curriculum and Faculty

**Clinical**

Our USC Chan Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice provides many Lifestyle Redesign® services, including ergonomic evaluations and interventions. Because it is located adjacent to Dr. Shawn Roll’s Musculoskeletal Sonography and Occupational Performance Laboratory, the same clients who receive clinical services are able to participate in USC Chan research studies. Conversely, participants may be identified as good candidates for occupational therapy services at the Faculty Practice.

**Faculty Members**

We have 97 faculty who are working together to educate the next generation of occupational therapists, conduct research to improve health outcomes, and provide patient care to individuals and communities.

**Research Labs**

A total of 11 research labs employ students across all levels, from undergrad bachelor’s students to postdoc fellows.

1. A-Z Lab
2. Boundary Crossings Laboratory
3. Healthy Aging Research & Technology Laboratory
4. Innovations in Neurodevelopmental Sensory Processing Research (insp!re) Laboratory
5. Lifestyle Redesign® for Chronic Conditions (LRCC) Laboratory
6. Musculoskeletal Sonography and Occupational Performance (MSOP) Laboratory
7. Neural Plasticity and Neurorehabilitation Laboratory (NPNL)
8. Occupational Reconstruction and Social Transformation Laboratory
9. Sensory Adaptations in Dental Environments (SADE) Laboratory
10. SensoryLab
11. Tailored Environmental Modifications (TEM) Laboratory
At USC Chan, our groundbreaking approaches generate and integrate knowledge to advance occupational science and occupational therapy at large.

Dr. Sook-Lei Liew uses big data approaches to brain imaging and behavior to understand how people recover after stroke, as well as neuromodulatory techniques and technologies such as noninvasive brain stimulation, brain-computer interfaces, and virtual reality to promote learning and enhance plasticity and rehabilitation after brain injury. Her goal is to understand mechanisms of neural plasticity in healthy individuals and individuals after neurological injury in order to help them learn and recover. Her team has developed their own software and open-source imaging analysis pipelines and her work has been featured at the South By Southwest Conference and in press outlets such as Forbes, CNET, and PC Magazine.

"I have been able to leverage my role as a faculty mentor to bring an occupational therapy presence to components of the continuum of homeless services in Los Angeles' Skid Row."

— DR. DEBORAH PITTS
Associate Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy

"In my course, titled Bridging Global Perspectives on Occupation and Justice, students from USC Chan connect with students at the University of Cape Town in South Africa in real time to discuss occupational justice."

— DR. REBECCA ALDRICH
Associate Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy

Innovation Award Competition

The Mark and Semira Moshayedi Innovation Award Competition was established in 2014 to foster innovation, technological advancements, and entrepreneurship for USC Chan students. Thanks to the couple’s generous pledge, this competition will continue for 20 years. Competition winners are awarded $5,000 and ongoing mentorship to support the continued development of their innovation.

Previous winners of the Mark and Semira Moshayedi Innovation Award Competition:

2016 Daniel Luo for “ArmsFree”
Luo designed a wearable stroke therapy sleeve that leverages trace muscle contractions remaining in the arm after stroke.

2017 Tonia Nguyen for “Outhandle”
Nguyen developed a smartphone accessory for people with limited fine motor abilities.

2018 Harshada Patil for “Saksham-15”
Patil designed an alternative universal cuff that could be produced very inexpensively.

2019 Janice Choi for “Grab and ErGo”
Choi designed a laptop case that converts into a stand to improve the ergonomics of “gig economy” professionals working at cafes and coffee shops.

Current Research Funds
Together USC Chan faculty actively manage $18M in federally funded research grants.

Brain Imaging

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At USC Chan, we are preparing diverse leaders with a strong identity and understanding of occupation and its power to transform people and society.

“As the only occupational therapist on the National Quality Forum’s 25-member Opioid and Opioid Use Disorder Technical Expert Panel, I am able to use my expertise in Lifestyle Redesign to offer feasible, practical solutions to empower people for better managing their pain in the real-world in order to avoid or reduce the opioid option.”

— DR. KATIE JORDAN
Associate Chair of Clinical Services

“SUPPORT FOR AOTA”

In fall 2018, USC Chan hosted the AOTA Specialty Conference for Adult Rehabilitation with over a hundred attendees and presentations from many USC Chan faculty and alumni with rehabilitation expertise.

“IT IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR GRADUATES TO BE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND REFLECTIVE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR DIVERSE SOCIETY AND REDUCE HEALTHCARE DISPARITIES. I AM ABLE TO SUPPORT THESE GOALS IN OUR ADMISSIONS PROCESS AND ON THE USC CHAN DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS COMMITTEE.”

— DR. ARAMEH ANVARIZADEH
Director of Admissions

“HELPING COLLEGE STUDENTS THRIVE”

In a 1-unit course for USC undergraduate students titled THRIVE, Drs. Ashley Uyeshiro Simon and Kate Crowley (pictured above, at center) are working to address the nationwide concerns for adolescent and young adult mental health. THRIVE was developed in collaboration with the USC Undergraduate Student Government and Provost Office and addresses important life skills and topics including self-care, time management, human connection, and redefining success.
At USC Chan, we are accelerating the dissemination and movement of discoveries into active use for broader societal impact.

“Our specialty continuing education courses have been taken by over 3,300 people and offered in over 15 different countries across 4 continents.”
— DR. STEFANIE BODISON
Assistant Professor of Research and Instructor for Sensory Integration Continuing Education Certificate

“We are actively working to disseminate innovative discoveries and interventions to impact practice and policy. We are committed to ensuring that we positively impact the health and lives of individuals, families, and communities.”
— DR. MARY LAWLOR
Associate Chair of Research

Occupational science was established at USC Chan and this year we celebrate the 30th anniversary of its founding with our 26th Occupational Science Symposium.

The central focus of occupational science is the phenomenon of occupation itself — the complex array of personal, social, community, behavioral, developmental, sociocultural, and environmental factors that influence how we engage in life’s activities and how our participation shapes our health, identity, sense of purpose, and fulfillment.

More than 75 graduates from our PhD in Occupational Science program are working around the country and throughout the world.

USC Chan PhD alumni also currently hold faculty appointments at institutions in:

- Australia
- Canada
- Ireland
- Japan
- Scotland
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- Thailand

USC Chan PhD Alumni are advancing our shared purpose at these institutions nationwide.
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

At USC Chan, we are improving health equity, well-being, and quality of life across local, national, and global communities.

“I found out my autism diagnosis when I was a master’s student at USC Chan and was fortunate to receive support from the Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice as a client. I am now a successful occupational therapist, an online influencer in OT and autism, and the only OT to speak at more than one TEDx event. I am extremely proud to be an alumnus of USC Chan!”

— DR. BILL WONG
USC Chan Alumnus

“For 15 years, I have had the privilege of taking USC Chan students to Ghana to gain clinical experience abroad, provide opportunities for leadership development and train current and future professionals working with people with disabilities in West Africa, to improve health access and equity.”

— DR. BONNIE NAKASU JI
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy

At USC Chan, 46% of our faculty members actively practice at USC-affiliated clinical sites

850+
Over 850 active fieldwork sites across 37 states and 7 countries

Multidisciplinary service-learning programs empower students to impact local populations.

OPTIMAL LIVING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
In partnership with the National MS Society, students learn how to offer a program that aims to enhance the quality of life for participants with mild to moderate MS.

USC STUDENT-RUN CLINIC
Using and learning about team-based approaches to care, USC health profession students operate monthly clinics at a community center in Los Angeles’ Skid Row district.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM
In partnership with a local school and science museum, students design and implement a science and social skills curriculum to advance community-based participation for children with autism spectrum disorders.

GERIATRIC WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM
Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, this program provides advanced training to create a pipeline of future professionals prepared to provide quality care for older adults.

60K+
Annual patient encounters by USC Chan faculty at our academic medical center
TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

At USC Chan, we are establishing impactful partnerships across the globe.

The Global Village

USC PhD alumnus Eric Asaba is head of the Division of Occupational Therapy at the Karolinska Institute, one of the world’s premier medical universities and Sweden’s single largest academic medical center.

China Initiative

To foster the evolution of occupational therapy in China, USC and Peking University Health Science Center are training a new generation of practitioners who will provide quality clinical services to the estimated 85 million Chinese living with, or at risk for, a disability.

Building Cultural Fluidity

During the past 15 years, nearly 300 USC students have traveled to Ghana for a leadership externship experience at Mephibosheth Training Center, a vocational boarding school for Ghanaian children and adolescents with disabilities.

Cross-Country Team

With NIH funding, USC’s Dr. Grace Baranek and colleagues from the University of North Carolina are testing a parent coaching model designed to increase social engagement for infants at-risk for autism spectrum disorder.

CE Course Locations

PhD Alumni Faculty Appointments

Global Initiatives

Joint Projects

CE Abroad

Faculty members have delivered USC Chan Continuing Education courses in 15 countries, such as Spanish language advanced training courses in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Summer Exchange

Occupational therapy students from programs around the world, including Griffith University in Gold Coast, Australia, spend one month at USC Chan every summer in order to learn about life and occupational therapy in the United States.

Key

Message from the Chair

Occupational therapists across the country and around the globe have a shared purpose — to help people engage in the ordinary and extraordinary activities that life has to offer. This is not a mission that can be achieved in isolation; the success of any one of us can be felt by all of us.

Since 1942, the University of Southern California has worked toward realizing that shared purpose. For more than 75 years, USC has trained thousands of occupational therapists who have, in turn, used their skills for the good of people and populations throughout the country and across the world. From Mary Reilly to Elizabeth J. Yerxa, A. Jean Ayres to Florence Clark, USC has been an incubator of revolutionary ideas that have truly transformed our profession.

Today, our fundamental vision remains steadfast. We believe that excellent research must make an impact in communities beyond our own neighborhoods; we believe that educational programs must build an outstanding workforce; we believe that at the heart of every true leader is a deep desire to serve others. Together with you, we are all united in a shared purpose to serve occupational therapy.

Sincerely,

Grace Baranek
Associate Dean, Chair and Mrs. T.H. Chan Professor of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

As one of the first students from China to come to USC Chan as part of the China Initiative, I am so excited to be a part of the curriculum development for Peking University Health Science Center and to be able to impact the future of occupational therapy in China.

— Yujun Liu
OTD Student

“In USC Chan Global Initiatives, we have created relationships with occupational therapy partners around the world, allowing our students to visit those countries and hosting students, practitioners, and scholars here. We also provide support for our own international student community.”

— Dr. Danny Park
Director of Global Initiatives
It’s a shared purpose — innovative and collaborative approaches that elevate occupational therapy for all.