
UND SMHS Strategic Plan Individual Unit Report for 2021

GOAL 2 for Occupational Therapy

LEARNING

One UND Strategic Plan Goal 2: Increase undergraduate, graduate, and professional graduation rates.
UND SMHS Strategic Plan Goal 2: SMHS Units will expand their current systems of student support to ensure continued high graduation rates and improve student satisfaction with the overall quality of their education.

1. Describe if/how your unit has addressed this goal.

The OT department has identified 9 departmental goals to support the One UND strategic plan Goal 2. These departmental goals include:

- emphasizing the importance of the faculty advisor role through inclusion of the advising role in curriculum vitae as a faculty service expectation.
- improving communication amongst necessary individuals (clinical educators, faculty advisors, fieldwork coordinators, department chair) regarding fieldwork performance
- developing reporting processes and procedures to ensure student retention on Level II fieldwork
- developing reporting processes and procedures to ensure student retention on Doctoral Experiential Placement and Capstone.
- ensuring department courses identified as essential studies courses meet University requirements
- increasing potential bachelor's degree options for students entering the OTD with the prerequisite 90 credits
- continuing to diversify the awarding of student scholarships and publicizing student scholarship availability with admissions materials to increase the breadth of the applicant pool
- gathering data related to student return on investment to assess financial accountability through strong educational outcomes

 On Track

2. Describe how your efforts are being assessed.

The OT department places strong emphasis on effective and knowledgeable advising, at the pre-OT and professional level. Pre-OT students are assigned one of two pre-OT advisors in the department for consistency of academic advising and application submission. Both advisors also serve on the department Admissions Committee. At the professional level, OT students are assigned a faculty advisor who remains with that student through the first two years of the OT program. In the third year, the student is assigned an experiential faculty advisor, who supports and advises the students through the graduate capstone, and the doctoral experiential process. Faculty advisors take a highly active approach to student advising, and as such, include advising as a service outcome in annual reviews, and promotion and tenure processes.

Students are asked to complete a Qualtrics survey each academic year to determine their perceptions of program quality, including academic advising. Results of the survey are then shared through the Assessment Executive Summary with the department as a whole during the annual department retreat. 2019-2020 assessment data indicates that the majority of students were satisfied with the level of access to faculty, faculty being committed to academic success, and access to academic advisors. The assessment committee has also collected and analyzed data regarding loan debt for student borrowers in the program (obtained from Financial Aid), in comparison to starting salaries for new graduates (based on post-grad assessment data). The most recent data indicates that the total average loan debt is slightly lower than first-year entry-level salary for program graduates.

The department has identified two fieldwork coordinators, one for each program location. These coordinators, along with the department fieldwork committee, have developed policies to improve communication, retention, and role and responsibility clarification for the fieldwork process that are now standard departmental practice. Documents pertaining to these processes have been included in the department student manuals and shared advising site. Completion of level I fieldwork is directly tied to a class the student is enrolled in each semester, and the faculty member of that course reviews the Level I Student Performance Reports. Any concerns noted are brought to the fieldwork coordinator at the indicated campus for follow-up. Additionally, student are assessed for Level II fieldwork readiness every spring during a full faculty meeting. Where concerns occur, the entire faculty strategize during department meetings, and students are directed to work with their academic advisors and the fieldwork personnel to develop remediation plans to support proficiency in areas of concern. The student is then reassessed for further clinical placement pending successful remediation. The same process occurs, in collaboration with the fieldwork placement, if a concern arises during the fieldwork experience.

As noted in the One UND Goal One report, the OT department has finalized expanded bachelor's degree options, to be awarded at the end of the first professional year, in either Psychology, Kinesiology, Rehabilitation and Human Services, or General Studies with an emphasis in Health Sciences. Offering these degrees allows students to complete a bachelor's degree utilizing the pre-requisite courses and content from the first year of the OT program for additional degree completion if a student does not hold a prior bachelor's degree. Additionally, The OT Department has validated two OTD courses to address UND Essential Studies goals. OT 400 Culture and Occupation, and OT 403 Research Methods, to address Intercultural Knowledge and Skills, and Advanced Communication, respectively.

The department scholarship committee has worked diligently to meet the identified action items. Beginning with an extensive review of the scholarship awarding process, the committee has strengthened both the notification and awarding procedures for the annual scholarship cycle. Additionally, the department has been very successful in developing scholarship support, which covers a broad range of applicant criteria. Scholarship emphases include leadership, cultural diversity, community and professional service, school-based practice interest, rural practice interest, and academic excellence.



3. Describe how your unit analyzed these data and what assessments were determined.

Pre-OT advisees who are considered to be committed applicants in the long term are provided advising files through the SMHS record retention system. Successful advising is reflected in a completed application by a pre-OT for admission to the professional program, with little to no difficulty in transfer to UND if outside the UND system, and strong and timely completion of the pre-requisite requirements.

Professional advising is assessed through the indicated student satisfaction survey annually, through post-graduation assessment, and through both retention rates, and national certification pass rates. The most current assessment data on retention and completion indicates that department graduation rates were 96.7% for 2017, 93.5% for 2018, and 100% for 2019. Retention rates are also reflective of successful completion of fieldwork as supported by the department's fieldwork processes and policies. National certification exam rates have been 100% for the past three years, indicative of supportive and effective advising and instruction, as well as successful clinical experiences.

When assessing outcomes for Essential Studies validation, data collection and analysis of designated assignments for OT 400 and OT 403 are conducted annually through eMedley. In OT 400, Intercultural Knowledge and Skills, and Critical Inquiry and Analysis are assessed through the Final Goal Reflection paper, which analyzes the student's understanding of their own cultural competency progression through the course, and how that understanding relates to their interactions with others professionally, and in the larger society.

In OT 403, Critical Inquiry and Analysis, Written Communication, and Information Literacy are assessed through the development of a Critically Appraised Topic (CAT). The CAT requires students to analyze current evidence on a designated clinical topic, select and synthesize the evidence in a clinical scenario and supporting literature review, and then develop this synthesis into a "bottom-line" clinical significance statement for occupational therapy practitioners. The CATs became available through the UND Scholarly Commons beginning summer 2020, and will be posted annually moving forward.

 On Track

4. Describe how your unit will implement any further changes and what barriers may exist.

Data collection and analysis are the key to determining the success of policies and procedures in the department. Assessment outcomes allow for a clear understanding of student satisfaction, retention, certification passing, and value for investment. Where areas need to be strengthened, the department works collectively to identify causes, and determine solutions to strengthen the program as a whole. Data outcomes are shared openly and across administration, faculty and staff. This transparency creates a department where everyone assumes accountability and works to perform their assigned roles to the highest level. Outcomes of assessment data indicate that this approach is beneficial for student success.

Additionally, clear departmental communication at all levels of the program is essential to assure that students receive the best support possible, across all domains of their educational experience. Clear policies with consistent adherence are provided to guide department personnel and students with a clear path to academic completion, including those times where students need additional support, structure, or resources. This pattern of open and clear communication is a hallmark of the department and will continue to be emphasized in the departmental culture.

 On Track

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Additional Information on Goal 2 (optional):

Insert any additional information here.