



2026 Fall Academic Leadership Council Meeting Online ~ October 21-23, 2026

Online each day (live sessions will be recorded)

11:00am- 2:30pm (Eastern) | 10:00am-1:30pm (Central) | 9:00am-12:00pm (Mountain) | 8:00am- 11:00am (Pacific) | 7:00am- 11:00am (Anchorage) | 6:00am-10:00am (Honolulu)

Except for the small group breakouts ALL sessions will be **recorded** and made available to registrants following the meeting. All times reflect Eastern Time Zone. Schedule is subject to change based on last minute availability of speakers.

Day 1: Wednesday October 21, 2026 (3.5 contact hours)

10:55 am	Chairperson's Welcome
11:00 am	Plenary: Demystifying Competency-Based Education and Frameworks Speakers: Bryan M. Gee, PhD, OTD, OTR/L, BCP, CLA, FAOTA; Razan Hamed, PhD, M.Sc., M. Ed., OTR/L, FAOTA; Dawn M. Nilsen, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA
12:00 pm	Our Profession, Our Voice, Our Future Arameh Anvarizadeh, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA
12:15 pm	Plenary: Higher Education National Trends & Strategic Issues Speakers: Neil Harvison, PhD, OTR, FNAP, FAOTA
1:15 pm	BREAK
1:30 pm	Plenary: Student Success: Navigating the Changing Recruitment & Admissions Landscape Speakers: Ashley Stoffel, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA, FNAP, Dalmina Arias, OTD, OTR/L, & Gail Fisher, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (UIC); Audrey E. Kane, PhD, OTR/L (VCU)
2:30 pm	Session concludes.

Day 2: Thursday, October 22, 2026 (3.5 contact hours)

CONCURRENT SESSIONS: Annual ALC Sections Meetings

11:00 am-2:30 pm

Room 1: OT- ALC Annual Meeting:

Chair: Anne Kiraly-Alvarez, OTD, OTR/L

Part 1: AOTA, ACOTE, & NBCOT: Alignment and Opportunities for Collaboration

OT program directors are navigating complex sociopolitical contexts and institutional demands to maintain quality educational programs and achieve strong outcomes. Many program directors have voiced a desire for ACOTE standards reform, more clearly defining entry-level practice, clarity on NBCOT exam development, and greater alignment among national organizations. Presenters will focus on collaborative efforts such as the AOTA Reimagining and Reenvisioning OTA/OT Education Ad Hoc Committee and the NBCOT Crosswalk Analysis of task-level competencies in the NBCOT OTR Examination Content Outline and the ACOTE B Standards. Presenters will also discuss opportunities for program directors to increase their awareness of these efforts and future opportunities to contribute to alignment and collaborative processes.

Part 1 Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe past & current efforts by national organizations to promote alignment & collaboration.
2. Discuss opportunities for future/expanded collaboration amongst national organizations.
3. Identify possible opportunities for OT program directors to contribute to collaborative efforts.

Part 2: Predictors of Student Outcomes & Implications for OT Programs

OT program directors are required to ensure that their programs remain in compliance with ACOTE Standards related to documenting and publishing student outcomes. Nationally, many OT programs have documented decreased student retention/graduation rates and declining NBCOT exam pass rates. A 2026 scoping review explored current evidence on predictors of various student outcomes, including academic success, fieldwork performance, and certification exam success. One author of this study, Dr. Sabina Khan, will present the methods, results, and implications of this study. Panelists will contribute to the discussion on implications by sharing specific examples of how they are implementing strategies to address these outcomes. Attendees will have opportunities to ask panelists questions and explore how they may be able to implement similar strategies within their programs.

Part 2 Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the methods, results, and implications of a recent scoping review about predictors of OT student outcomes.
2. Identify strategies to facilitate student self-regulated learning to achieve strong academic outcomes.
3. Identify strategies to promote emotional intelligence to achieve strong fieldwork outcomes.
4. Identify strategies for using exam preparation resources to achieve strong certification exam outcomes.

Room 2: OTA- ALC Annual Meeting:

Chair: Vicky Vu, OTD, OTR/L, MBA, BCP

**Occupational Therapy Assistant Academic Leadership Council (OTA-ALC) Breakout Session
OTA Education and Program Quality Through an ACOTE Lens**

OTA program directors are balancing rising expectations for program quality, evidence of student learning, responsible use of emerging AI technologies, and fieldwork readiness, often while leading small programs with limited resources. This breakout session uses the ACOTE Standards as a shared lens to look at the challenges OTA programs face today and the practices that are helping them succeed.

After a brief overview of how program outcomes, curriculum, faculty effectiveness, and fieldwork readiness connect to accreditation evidence, participants will take part in three facilitated small-group discussions. The first looks at how programs measure teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction beyond course evaluations, and how outcome data turns into continuous improvement, strategic planning, and ACOTE self-study evidence. The second explores responsible uses of artificial intelligence in teaching, curriculum development, lesson planning, and program analysis, including safeguards for academic integrity and students' own clinical reasoning. The third examines the competencies and assessment methods programs use to prepare students for fieldwork, including students in hybrid programs.

The session closes with cross-topic synthesis and action planning. Participants' contributions will be compiled into a shared resource collection, and the issues they raise will help shape future OTA-ALC priorities, so every program director's voice counts.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify methods OTA programs use to measure teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction beyond course evaluations.
2. Discuss approaches for connecting outcome data to continuous improvement, strategic planning, and ACOTE self-study preparation.
3. Examine responsible uses of artificial intelligence for teaching, curriculum development, lesson planning, and program analysis, along with the safeguards needed to protect academic integrity.
4. Compare competencies and assessment methods used to prepare OTA students for fieldwork, including strategies for students in hybrid programs.
5. Develop at least one action step to strengthen educational quality within their own program.

Room 3: AFWC- ALC Annual Meeting:

Chair: Kathryn Sorensen, OTD, OTR/L, ADAC

From Warning Signs to Remediation: Managing a Student Failing Level II Fieldwork

AFWCs are regularly called on to guide fieldwork educators and students through one of the most difficult moments in occupational therapy education, a failing performance on Level II fieldwork. Co-presented by two AFWCs, this session will walk through that process, from the first sign of struggle

through remediation and next steps, with an emphasis on structure, documentation, and reducing the emotional weight that so often complicates these decisions.

The first half of the session will focus on building an effective performance plan, including the role of weekly objectives in tracking progress, how accommodations factor into performance planning, and how to support fieldwork educators in using the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) as intended, as an objective tool rather than a subjective judgment call. Particular attention will be given to strategies for taking emotion and personal decision making out of the process of determining that a student has failed.

The second half will shift to what comes after a failing outcome, including approaches for helping students gain genuine insight into what led to failure and how to collaboratively build a plan that supports the student's path forward. The course will also be covering strategies and resources that can be used for implementation of a remediation plan along with supporting the student during their repeat Level II experience.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the components of an effective fieldwork performance plan, including the role of weekly objectives in monitoring and documenting student progress.
2. Explain how accommodations should be incorporated into performance planning for a struggling Level II fieldwork student.
3. Apply the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE) as a structured, objective tool to support fieldwork educators in making failing performance decisions.
4. Identify strategies that guide students to develop insight into the factors that contributed to a failed Level II fieldwork experience.
5. Know how to develop and implement a remediation plan that supports a student's progression following a failed fieldwork experience.

Room 4: DCC- ALC Annual Meeting:

Chair: Theresa Delbert, OTD, OTR/L

Quality, Innovation, and the Future of Doctoral Capstone Education

DCCs are navigating evolving expectations related to quality assurance, student learning outcomes, faculty mentorship, innovation, and emerging AI technologies. This breakout session will explore current challenges as well as effective practices shaping the future of doctoral capstone education.

Through a panel discussion, participants will examine how programs are defining and measuring capstone quality, using assessment and outcome data to inform continuous improvement, and leveraging evidence to support accreditation and program evaluation efforts. A panel discussion will also explore the growing influence of artificial intelligence on doctoral capstone education, including

considerations related to academic integrity and preparing students for practice in an AI-enabled healthcare environment.

The session will also include an Innovation Showcase highlighting creative approaches being implemented across programs, followed by updates from the DCC Research Agenda Groups to foster collaboration and advance scholarship related to doctoral capstone education.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss strategies used by occupational therapy programs to evaluate doctoral capstone quality, outcomes, and impact.
2. Identify approaches for using assessment and program evaluation data to support continuous improvement and accreditation-related processes.
3. Examine opportunities and challenges associated with artificial intelligence in doctoral capstone education.
4. Describe innovative practices and emerging initiatives that may be adapted to strengthen doctoral capstone education within their own programs.
5. Explore opportunities for collaboration and scholarship through the Doctoral Capstone Research Agenda and related research initiatives.

Day 3: Friday, October 23, 2026 (3 contact hours)

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

11:00 am-2:00 pm

Room 1 — Hybrid Delivery Models: What Works, What Doesn't, and What's Next

How do we preserve quality, engagement, competency development, and connection as educational delivery becomes more flexible?

Moderator: Theresa Delbert, OTD, OTR/L

Presenters:

- Roxanna M. Bendixen, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA & Twylla Kirchen, PhD, OTR/L, CLA, FAOTA (MUSC)
- Anna Domina, OTD, OTR/L & Lou E. Jensen, OTD, OTR/L, LVST, BIG (Creighton U.)
- Lara G. Taggart, EdD, OTR/L (NAU)

Hybrid and flexible approaches to occupational therapy education continue to create both opportunities and challenges for academic programs. This interactive session will move beyond the question of whether education should be delivered in person or online and focus instead on how programs make intentional decisions about what should happen where, when, and why.

Through examples from programs, facilitated discussion, and small-group problem solving, participants will examine approaches to didactic instruction, laboratory and experiential learning, assessment, student engagement, fieldwork and capstone preparation, faculty workload, and community building. Participants will identify practices that appear to be working, areas that remain challenging, and questions that programs should consider as flexible delivery models continue to evolve.

Room 2 — AI in OT/OTA Education: From Policy to Practice

What are programs allowing? What are they prohibiting? How are assessments changing? What should every graduate understand about AI?

Moderator: Vicky Vu, OTD, OTR/L, MBA, BCP

Presenters: Amanda C. Jozkowski, PhD, OTR/L (Towson U.); Marianne H. Mortera, PhD, OTR/L & Dana Richmond, OTD, OTR/L, MSCS (Rutgers U.)

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how students learn, how faculty teach and assess learning, and how practitioners access, analyze, and create information. Academic programs are being challenged to make decisions about appropriate AI use while protecting academic integrity and ensuring that graduates develop the knowledge, reasoning, skills, and professional judgment expected for entry-level practice.

This interactive session will move the conversation from AI policy to educational practice. Participants will examine how programs are establishing expectations for student and faculty use of AI, redesigning learning and assessment, addressing ethical and professional considerations, and beginning to define the AI competencies future OT and OTA practitioners may need.

Room 3 — Supporting Student Success: Strategies, Systems, and Lessons from OT Programs
In a higher education environment where students are entering with increased needs, how can we best support them and facilitate their success?

Supporting OTA and OT students who are struggling academically, personally, or professionally requires intentional systems and a coordinated approach. This session will bring together OT educators to share practical strategies, program structures, and lessons learned for promoting student success and providing effective support. Following the student experience from recruitment/admissions through graduation, presenters will highlight approaches such as student success committees, early identification and intervention, faculty and program-level supports, and strategies for helping students navigate challenges while maintaining academic and professional expectations.

Moderator: Anne Kiraly-Alvarez, OTD, OTR/L

Presenters:

- Molly Bathje, PhD, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA (DePaul University)
- Jessica Harney, DPT, OT (Tufts University)
- Carole K. Ivey, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (Virginia Commonwealth University)

Plenary: Student Success: Navigating the Changing Recruitment & Admissions Landscape

The session would examine three forces shaping programs' ability to recruit, admit, and support future OT and OTA practitioners:

1. Paying for OT Education: What's Changing in Student Loans, Federal Funding & Loan Repayment

What are the changes affecting federal student loans and graduate/professional education?

What are the implications of borrowing limits or other financing changes for OT students and programs?

What are the current loan repayment and forgiveness options and what graduates need to understand

What are the implications for recruitment, enrollment, access, and students' educational choices?

What program directors, faculty, and admissions teams should be communicating to prospective and current students?

What academic leaders should be watching over the next 1–3 years?

What does this mean for a prospective student deciding whether they can afford to become an OT or OTA?

2. Holistic Admissions in Practice: Building an Admissions Process for Student Success

What programs themselves can control: how they identify and select students using holistic admissions practices, lessons learned at UIC, and practical approaches other programs can adapt.

3. Admissions Community of Practice: Learning and Problem-Solving Together

How the Admissions CoP can help programs continue addressing recruitment and admissions challenges together—sharing practices, resources, questions, and emerging solutions.