I. Program Mission

The educational mission of the Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy Program is consistent with that of the University. It is our mission to prepare our students for entry level professional practice by facilitating:

a. the ability to think and reflect critically about local, national, and global issues impacting occupational therapy practice and make professional judgments which consider and integrate the complex and multifaceted nature of clients' occupational performance problems.

b. the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for current and future practice of the profession, in order to enhance and/or sustain the quality of human life.

c. an awareness of the responsibility associated with the moral, ethical, and legal obligations inherent in the role of an occupational therapist.

d. a respect for cultural diversity and individual similarities and differences through the use of a client centered approach, and a recognition of the role of occupation in the realization of participation, health, and human potential.

e. sustainable professional growth through life-long learning via engagement in service, professional leadership, and ongoing scholarly pursuits.

II. Philosophy

The Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy Program emulates the philosophy of occupational therapy as articulated in the Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2011). We believe that individuals are biopsychosocial, spiritual, and occupational beings who have the capacity to influence their health through participation in everyday activities that are intrinsically meaningful and purposeful to them. Human beings influence and are influenced by their physical and mental health, their spirituality, and their social, physical, and cultural environments through participation in meaningful occupations that support participation in daily life. As described in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2014, p. S7) “Occupational therapy practitioners recognize that health is supported and maintained when clients are able to engage in occupations and activities that allow desired or needed participation in home, school, workplace, and community life.” The program is grounded in the belief that the ability of an individual to engage in chosen occupations (occupational performance) is dependent upon the dynamic interplay between the innate capacities of the person, the demands of the occupation, and the influence of the contexts and environments in which the occupation is performed. We
recognize that occupational performance can be impacted by various factors including, but not limited to disease, developmental delay, psychosocial conditions, trauma, and contextual factors. The notion of a client centered approach is central to the program’s philosophy. In determining clients’ needs, wants, and expectations, occupational therapy practitioners work collaboratively with individuals, groups, and populations to evaluate, restore, and enhance occupational performance and promote sustainable health. Appreciating the impact of the power of occupation on health, wellness, and quality of life, occupation is recognized as the essential medium of both therapeutic interventions (means) and outcomes (ends) (Gray, 1998). The teaching learning experience is developmental in nature and is based on the principles of constructivist learning theory (Wadsworth, 2005). Using a developmental perspective, concepts are initially introduced and subsequently developed throughout the curriculum at increasing levels of complexity. Students evolve along several continuums including faculty-directed to student-directed learning; content emphasized to process focused; passive learning to active engagement; and contrived to contextual learning experiences. Students are expected to progress towards self-reliance as they move from novice to entry level practitioners through scaffolded academic and fieldwork experiences, internalization of faculty modeled behavior, and self-reflection. Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to identify and question assumptions, and reflect on previous knowledge and experiences as they move towards constructing new meanings and a sense of professional identity (Mezirow, 2000).


