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MOT Students to Present and Inform at Research Day

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MOT Students to Present and Inform at Research Day



[Governors State University's Occupational Therapy program](#) is one of the only schools where students do not simply learn the methods of research, but perform the process and analyze the data collected to present.

To [Dr. Caren Schranz](#), chair of Occupational Therapy, this is essential to learning about the field.

"The world is evidence based," she said.

On Dec. 4, her students will present their research culminating months of study and fieldwork, at the annual MOT Research Day in the atrium of the G Building.

The road to the presentations is as long as it is rewarding. Students first take a course on research methods, where they learn how to interpret research, conduct literature searches, and determine methods of research design and data collection.

Once they have learned the methods, they enroll in an independent study in which they work closely with a faculty or research advisor and a group of students to explore a topic in the field. Under the advisor, the students complete a full research project, from literature review, to methodology, to data collection, to analyzing the results, and finally to presentation at MOT Research Day.

To Steve Lyons, a student who will be presenting at this year's MOT Research Day, working on this project as a group was what made it unique.

"I learned that communication is one of the biggest predictors of team success," he said.

The process is not just completed to learn how to perform the research, but for the students to disseminate the information, and, since it's a completed study, to inform the public and those within the field. The work provides real world context to students who can better understand how to read research articles and how to apply it to real life



practices.

Students at all stages of the Occupational Therapy program are encouraged to attend the event. Lyons remembers the first time he went to MOT Research Day and how it inspired him to attend three conferences in one year—2018 State Student Conclave at Shirley Ryan Ability Lab, the 2019 Illinois Occupational Therapy Association conference, and the 2019 National Student Conclave.

"I remember visiting last year's poster presentations and getting a very small taste of multitude of directions that occupational therapy research and practice can go," he said.

Students develop a Research Abstract and submit it to the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association (ILOTA) annual conference. Last year, every research group was accepted and presented.

These events, besides being an impressive addition to their resumes, also lend the opportunity for the students to practice the skills of their field. Jordan Willhoit, a student presenting this semester, appreciates all she has learned from the process and how those skills will transfer through the rest of her career.

"It is an important moment of growth in my own confidence and recognition of my ability to speak publicly and feel more comfortable doing so," she said.

Schranz is proud of the work done for MOT Research Day.

"We need to keep progressing and informing for our profession to move forward. It's something we do in the department that's a shining star."