PROPOSED BACHELOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The Letters and Science Course and Curriculum Committee recommends to the College of Letters and Science Faculty approval of the Bachelor of Science program in Occupational Therapy.

Description

Occupational Therapy like other health professions may be considered both an art and a science. It utilizes directed activity and special skills in the promotion and maintenance of health, the prevention of disability, and as treatment in the rehabilitation of persons whose normal growth and progression have been interrupted by disease or injury.

The Occupational Therapy Program on this campus will be a four (rather than a four-plus) year course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy and will provide a good foundation for post-graduate study. The student will be prepared to write the national examination for admission to the National Registry of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Graduates may expect to work as staff therapists, supervisors, and consultants in health facilities, rehabilitation programs, pre-school programs, school systems, industry, and community health projects.

The student will be introduced to the problems and practices of health care delivery in the freshman year. A continuum of observations and field work in occupational therapy will provide the student with increasing professional experience as he progresses through the occupational therapy curriculum.

The junior and senior years of the program will include two three-month periods of field work in occupational therapy departments of health facilities in the metropolitan area. Each field work experience at this level requires a two-three week seminar on campus before and after the clinical experience.

The following centers will be affiliated with the occupational therapy program:

Columbia Hospital
Curative Workshop
Kiwanis Children's Center
Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital
Saint Mary's Hill Hospital
Lutheran Hospital of Milwaukee
Saint Luke's Hospital
Veterans Administration Center, Wood, Wisconsin
Saint Mary's Hospital
In addition to hospitals and out-patient clinics, nurseries, schools, nursing homes, industrial and rehabilitation facilities will be developed as affiliation sites. Letters of commitment and support for our program are included in the formal program proposal available in the office of the Dean and in the Office of the Secretary of the Faculty.

Currently, students in our pre-professional program must transfer after two years to the Madison Campus or Mount Mary College, or leave the state if they desire to obtain a baccalaureate degree in Occupational Therapy.

Our own O.T. program will utilize the basic science courses required of other health professionals in addition to a common curriculum related to administration and health care team function. Specific professional instruction will be developed in cooperation with medical and O.T. personnel from the hospitals, schools, health care centers and rehabilitation centers in the Milwaukee area and—intramurally—with faculty and/or physical resources from the School of Fine Arts, the School of Education and the School of Nursing.

Increasing emphasis in O.T.—a reflection of the total health team emphasis—is on prevention of physical and psychological disorders by operating in programs originating outside of the traditional hospital setting in curative workshops, community health centers, and schools. Our program which will be geared to a preventive medicine approach will train the professional O.T. to be comfortable and functional not only in a hospital model but in a variety of non-hospital settings including schools and industry.

Contacts with the medical departments of Milwaukee's major industries have resulted in enthusiastic endorsements of this aspect of our projected program.

Justification

An Occupational Therapy degree is consonant with our overall mission of education and service to "our complex urban society" which "requires ever greater numbers of technically skilled men and women." (UWM must also offer a wide range of professional programs at the baccalaureate level and post-baccalaureate levels for those who wish to learn new skills or update old ones. In addition, many metropolitan Milwaukee area residents lack the time and money necessary to attend a resident campus and UWM must therefore continue to meet the diverse and growing educational needs of these citizens . . . . Professional degree programs are a necessary ingredient of an urban university . . . . Manpower needs call for additional programs in such areas as . . . allied health professions. The local and national manpower requirements make it imperative that we give them our continued attention). (From our officially revised UWM Mission Statement.)

The national need for occupational therapists is recorded in the Division of Allied Health Manpower statistics and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
In March 1972 in response to our query, the Executive Director of the American Occupational Therapy Association concluded after reviewing the data provided by the above-mentioned governmental agencies and from AOTA statistics that

It seems clear . . . in looking at the current student enrollment in occupational therapy schools, that there continue to be serious shortages in the number of occupational therapists available to meet current client service needs, as well as those teaching in professional and technical curricula or performing consultive services.

The non-hospital need for O.T.s is reflected in a considerable literature indicating expansion of occupational therapy services; public health programs, grade schools, and industry are just beginning to utilize occupational therapists.

The Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association Bulletin regularly indicates job openings for OTRs in our state.

The 1973 Occupational Outlook Handbook from Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to support the need for OT's.

Employment opportunities for occupational therapists are expected to be excellent through the 1970's. Despite anticipated increases in the number of graduates of occupational therapy programs, the demand for therapists is expected to exceed the supply as public interest in the rehabilitation of disabled persons and the success of established occupational therapy programs increases. Many occupational therapists will be needed to staff the growing number of community health centers.

There are presently only two O.T. programs in the state; one at UW-Madison and the other at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. The increased interest in this profession will tend to overload the clinical facilities in Madison and the program development potential at Mount Mary. Both institutions have had their programs for approximately 25 years or more. They consistently turn out between 15 - 20 students a year. Formerly another O.T. program existed in Milwaukee at Downer College (a women's college). This institution merged with Lawrence University and the program moved out of Milwaukee to the Lawrence campus. In 1967, Lawrence chose to eliminate professional education including the O.T. program. This diminished the number of O.T. graduates by 33% at a time when there was increasing demand.

An O.T. program recently in the planning and recruiting stage at UW-Eau Claire was phased out because available clinical facilities were insufficient to permit proper development. On the other hand there is a rich and varied opportunity for clinical training in Milwaukee, and several hospitals, the Curative Workshop, Veterans Administration, etc., have guaranteed cooperation by way of clinical instruction and personnel for on-campus instruction when necessary. This kind of consortium has proved highly successful in other programs in the College.
A grant proposal was submitted in November 1972 for an Allied Health Professions Special Improvement Grant for a five year period for $445,392. Of this sum, $215,478 was for the development of an occupational therapy program.

**Recommendation**

That the Bachelor of Science program in Occupational Therapy be approved and implemented.

Approved by UWM Academic Program and Curriculum Committee, February, 1973
Approved by College of Letters and Science Faculty, March 8, 1973
Interim approval by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, June 1, 1973
Approved by the Board of Regents, June 8, 1973