



(L-R) Samantha Shann, President of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists, Steve Ford, CEO of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists & Odeth Richardson, Chair of the British Council of Occupational Therapists

Aug 29, 2023 15:32 BST

Leading experts inspire occupational therapy students

Some of the world's leading figures in the field of occupational therapy have visited Northumbria University to talk to students about the exciting opportunities ahead when they graduate.

Northumbria is [one of the top 10 universities in the UK for occupational therapy](#), where students learn how to work with adults and children of all ages with a wide range of conditions that can affect their ability to do things

they want, need or ought to do.

Course leaders invited senior representatives from the [World Federation of Occupational Therapists](#), the British Association of Occupational Therapists and the [Royal College of Occupational Therapists](#)(RCOT) to a special conference to talk to students about some of the key trends and issues in the field.

Approximately 150 students studying [Occupational Therapy](#) at undergraduate, postgraduate and degree apprenticeship levels benefitted from the conference, which included several inspiring keynote speeches from a range of leading industry experts.

Speakers included the President of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), Samantha Shann, who gave the students a comprehensive, global perspective highlighting the crucial importance of occupational therapists in achieving occupational and social justice through their work with a variety of communities.

Odeth Richardson, Head of Occupational Therapy at Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, used experience from each stage of her career and spoke on the importance of displaying leadership in any role the students undertake going forward. Odeth also chairs the British Association of Occupational Therapists and RCOT Councils.

Steve Ford, CEO of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists provided the final keynote and shed light on the role that the RCOT will play in leading the profession through the 21st century and signalled the importance of student member involvement on shaping the profession.

Presentations were followed by an array of breakout sessions and workshops, covering topics such as tackling loneliness in older age, cognition and creativity. Additionally, students had the opportunity to network and browse several employability stands to find out more about career opportunities throughout the day. They were able to find out more about a new occupational therapy teaching garden and allotment being developed at Coach Lane Campus, specially created to enable students to gain practical experience of the benefits of gardening for wellbeing as a therapeutic practice.

[Julie-Anne Lowe](#), professional lead for Occupational Therapy at Northumbria University, said: “The conference provided an exceptional platform for our students to connect with industry leaders and gain valuable insights into the profession. Having been able to bring together such a knowledgeable, insightful, and high-profile range of speakers was so powerful to the outcomes of the conference. It was amazing to play a part in passing on such invaluable insight to the next generation of occupational therapists. And we are sure it will have a lasting impact on our student’s educational journeys.”

Occupational Therapy student, Sarah Painting, said: “The OT conference was a brilliant day. It was so interesting listening to professionals who have excelled in various domains of OT practice. It was truly inspiring to witness the transformative impact of OT across different countries, each with its own unique set of resources and needs.

“The diverse range of activities offered at the conference enhanced my learning experience, particularly the engaging OT garden activities. The garden provided a therapeutic environment that facilitated the processing of information and deepened my understanding of the day’s lessons. Moreover, I was privileged to have the opportunity to present my OT poster from a previous project at the poster exhibit. This experience filled me with immense pride and served as a significant milestone in my learning journey.”

Click here for more information about Northumbria University and its [Occupational Therapy courses and apprenticeships](#).

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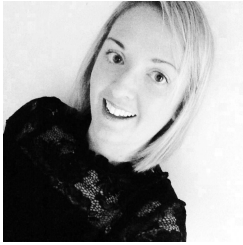
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