



FAOTA Award – Megan C. Chang PhD, OTR/L

Dr. Megan Chang PhD, OTR/L has made significant contributions to the profession of occupational therapy by “supporting the profession through evidence-based practice”. I am honored to nominate Dr. Megan Chang for the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Roster of Fellows (FAOTA) award. Over the past 20 years, Dr. Chang has generously shared her extensive research knowledge and skills with colleagues, students and others as demonstrated by her impressive history of publications and presentations. The FAOTA award is designed to recognize occupational therapists who have “made a significant contribution over time to the profession by utilizing special skills and/or knowledge”. As an occupational therapist and scientist, Dr. Chang sought to understand the factors that compromise occupational engagement. Her research has been instrumental in advancing the knowledge of how sensory issues influence the occupational pursuits for those diagnosed with autism and developmental disabilities. Her focus on occupational engagement and the impact of sensory processing helped produce two unique assessment instruments: the Adult Sensory Processing Scale and the Comprehensive Observation of Proprioception. These standardized instruments, both published in the American Journal of Occupational Therapy, have significantly contributed to the profession by providing valid and reliable measures. Several other countries recognized the importance of these instruments and adopted them in research and practice. Dr. Chang’s amazing efforts as an educator and a researcher make her a worthy recipient of this honor.

Dr. Megan Chang’s commitment to advancing the profession of occupational therapy is obvious upon reviewing her substantial list of research publications. During the past 12 years, Megan has published 16 peer-reviewed research articles and numerous chapters in well-respected professional textbooks. Dr. Chang’s expertise in research methods, data collection, and analysis was critical to the success in publishing these articles and contributing to the evidence-based body of knowledge for the profession. Although researchers with Megan’s skills often focus on her or his own research agenda, Dr. Chang understood the importance of creating a research network. Her collaborative research nature is apparent and many articles are published with colleagues and graduate students from other disciplines. She instills in her graduate occupational therapy students the professional commitment to use evidence-based practice to advance the profession of occupational therapy. Many of her presentations at peer-reviewed conferences are with her research students. It is precisely these attributes that make her worthy to be recognized as a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Dr. Megan Chang has distinguished herself by supporting student researchers. During the past 7 years, her guidance and mentorship resulted in 108 occupational therapy graduate students having presentations accepted at peer-reviewed local, state, national, and international conferences. This is a remarkable accomplishment since San Jose State University is a public institution and cannot financially support students to attend these conferences. Dr. Chang inspired these students to contribute to the professional body of knowledge. All Master of Science occupational therapy students are required to complete a research project as part of their graduate degree. Students are particularly attracted to work with Dr. Chang because they know she will tirelessly support them. She skillfully guides these novice occupational therapy student researchers through the process of defining a clinical issue, searching for



existing evidence, examining the areas where research is needed, then designing and implementing a project to answer a specific clinical question. Dr. Chang's support and guidance ensures students engage in the rigorous process of completing the research process from systematic data collection and analysis to providing functional conclusions to the clinical question. She then guides them to submit a proposal to a peer-reviewed conference. Megan uses her expertise to launch the next generation of occupational therapy practitioners and researchers thereby advancing the profession.

Dr. Megan Chang is an exemplar of collaborative interdisciplinary research and has completed projects with Engineering, Kinesiology, Nursing, and Social Work. She was the Interim Director for the Center for Healthy Aging in Multicultural Populations, an interdisciplinary program, and continues to engage students in interdisciplinary research projects. This is truly an example of enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration for the next generation of occupational therapy clinicians. A further example of support is seen with the mentorship Dr. Chang provided to SJSU OT graduate students who were accepted to the AOTF Future Scientist Fellowship Program. Megan had a vision for these students. She worked to support them to apply to this program and celebrated when the students were accepted to participate in the program.

Dr. Chang has served the profession for many years by volunteering her research expertise to review AOTA Practice Guidelines and Critically Appraised Papers. For over seven years she has reviewed research proposals for state, national, and international profession conferences. She has advanced the profession through her skilled review of research articles and volunteers on several editorial boards. She was selected as the guest editor for the Occupational Therapy International journal issue dedicated to child and adolescent mental health concerns. She is recognized nationally and internationally for her research expertise and has served for several years as a grant reviewer for the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research, and the California Foundation of Occupational Therapy. This volunteer service supports the profession of occupational therapy and provides external visibility of the profession by serving on national grant committees.

Dr. Megan Chang's expertise in research and her commitment to advance the occupational therapy profession through creating new knowledge make her a worthy recipient of the award of Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association. What distinguishes Megan from other notable researchers is her true commitment to advance the professional body of evidence by supporting students, by inspiring students to ask occupation based questions related to clinical issues, and then systematically search for answers. Her commitment to supporting evidence-based practice to support the profession of occupational therapy is clear. Dr. Megan Chang is truly committed to "supporting the profession through evidence-based practice". I am honored to nominate Dr. Megan Chang for this award.