KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Letter of Intent

AAS Degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant

Office of the Provost

and

Department of Nursing

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1. Purposes and Goals

The goal of the A.A.S. in Occupational Therapy Assistant will be to prepare competent Occupational Therapy Assistants in the knowledge, skills and professional demeanor consistent with local employer expectations and national standards as currently described by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

Occupational Therapy Assistants work under the direction of Occupational Therapists to provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental, physical, emotional or developmental impairments. The goal is to improve clients' quality of life and ability to perform daily activities. For example, Occupational Therapy Assistants help injured workers re-enter the labor force by teaching them how to compensate for lost motor skills or help individuals with learning disabilities increase their independence.

Occupational Therapy Assistants help clients with rehabilitative activities and exercises outlined in a treatment plan developed in collaboration with an Occupational Therapist. Activities range from teaching the proper method of moving from a bed into a wheelchair to the best way to stretch and limber the muscles of the hand. Assistants monitor an individual's activities to make sure that they are performed correctly and to provide encouragement. They also record their client's progress for the occupational therapist. If the treatment is not having the intended effect or the client is not improving as expected, the therapist may alter the treatment program in hopes of obtaining better results. In addition, occupational therapy assistants document the billing of the client's health insurance provider

A. National and Local Educational Trends

There are about 140 Accredited and developing Occupational Therapy Assistant programs in May 2007 nationwide.

At the present time there are eleven OTA programs in New York: One at LaGuardia Community College and four SUNY institutions (Suffolk County Community College, Orange County Community College, Rockland Community College and SUNY-Canton). At the present time, The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) does not list any other developing programs in New York.

The typical first year of study includes an introduction to health care, basic medical terminology, anatomy and physiology. In the second year, courses are more rigorous and usually include professional courses in areas such as mental health, adult physical disabilities, gerontology and pediatrics. Students must complete at least 16 weeks of supervised fieldwork in a clinic or community setting.

Occupational Therapy Assistants are regulated in most States and must pass a national certification examination after they graduate. Those who pass the test are entitled to be a

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. (COTA). In New York Occupational Therapy Assistants must be certified in order to practice. Certification is the responsibility of NYS Education Department, Office of the Professions, Division of Professional Licensing Services. Graduated of programs Accredited by the ACOTE are eligible for New York State Certification without taking the national examination from the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). Participation in the NBCOT certification examination is voluntary in New York; but may be necessary to qualify to practice in other states.

Median annual earnings of Occupational Therapy Assistants were $38,430 in May 2004. The middle 50 percent earned between $31,970 and $44,390. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $25,880, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $52,700. Median annual earnings of occupational therapy assistants were $40,130 in offices of occupational therapists and other health practitioners.

Median annual earnings of occupational therapy aides were $23,150 in May 2004. The middle 50 percent earned between $19,080 and $31,910. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $15,820, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $41,560 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-07 Edition*, Occupational therapy assistants and Aides).

In Brooklyn salaries for OTAs are typically near or in the top 10% for the profession, earning salaries of more than $40,000.

B. Community Interest in the Program

Kingsborough already has active clinical training relationships with every hospital in Brooklyn and many others as well. The Physical Therapy Assistant Program is contracted with about sixty health care facilities which serve as affiliate training sites. Most of these facilities have Occupational Therapy departments as well. We will be in contact with those facilities for training site and advisory committee member volunteers.

C. Related College Offerings

The administration of the College has demonstrated a significant interest in programs of this type by its recent commitment to associate degree programs for surgical technicians and physical therapist assistants. Each has fully equipped laboratories, office space and highly qualified faculty. The College has a long standing A.A.S. in Nursing program which has 42 faculty, 15 of whom are full-time. In addition to the A.A.S. in Physical Therapist Assistant and the A.A.S. in Surgical Technology, the College offers programs in mental health, community health, therapeutic recreation and transfer options to baccalaureate programs in the health professions. The College fully supports these programs with sufficient office space, classrooms and learning laboratories and with equipment currently used in the field. The College is also in the process of developing a biotechnology program.

In its July 2006 *Report of Institutional Goals* to CUNY, Kingsborough made a commitment to target new certificate and degree programs in health occupations. Currently, Letters of Intent are being prepared for five other health professions programs. These are: Veterinary technician, Respiratory therapist, Radiologic Technologist, EMT-Paramedic and Pharmacy Technician.

The College is pursuing the creation of a new academic department which will be responsible for the A.A.S. in Occupational Therapy Assistant as well as five other new health-related technician programs. During this initial stage between the Letter of Intent and CUNY approval to develop a full proposal, and until a new department is established, the Department of Nursing has taken responsibility for the development of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program.

2. Need for the Curriculum

The largest employer in Brooklyn is by far and away health care and the healthcare resources in Brooklyn and the surrounding areas are legion. Kingsborough already is affiliated with 90 different healthcare facilities. These facilities will continue to employ huge numbers of health care workers.

3. Students

Kingsborough administration, faculty and counseling staff universally have confidence in the principle of "If we build it; they will come". Certainly, the population base served by Kingsborough is large enough to project that there will be a strong reaction to educational opportunities at his level for these rewarding professions. Applicant pools for the extant programs are excellent at present. Brooklyn has a population of over 2.2 million and cites its major employer as health care institutions.

Enrollment at Kingsborough Community College (excluding College Now) reached 11,790 students in the spring 2005 semester. In spite of the interest of significant numbers of these students in allied health career education, many do not have access due to the limited number of programs and program seats available. Therefore, there is a need to introduce additional, equally viable career programs.

Meetings with representatives from the 1199SEIU League Training and Upgrading Fund indicate significant interest in an Occupational Therapy Assistant program for its members who are currently employed in health care. The proposed program will address specific scheduling issues presented by these students and non-traditional course scheduling such as evening and weekend courses can be incorporated into the design of the program. Clinical experiences can be scheduled to accommodate student scheduling needs; however, most Occupational Therapy departments function during the regular work week.

Department of Student Development personnel has enthusiastically endorsed this proposed program and has agreed to schedule the shadowing of practicing professionals

prior to implementation to strengthen their understanding of the work environment and scope of practice for Occupational Therapy Assistants. This will better equip them to help potential students select the right profession and may increase retention in the program.
Only LaGuardia Community College offers an Occupational Therapy Assistant Program in the CUNY System. There is an Occupational Therapist Program offered at SUNY Downstate in Brooklyn.

We are working with Susana Makkias, OTR former Program Director of the Suffolk County Community College Occupational Therapy Assistant program on curriculum design and state and national standards compliance.

4. Curriculum

This curriculum is designed to prepare students who will be ready to work anywhere in the United States as highly qualified occupational therapy assistants. The curriculum includes the science of human anatomy all health technicians must know and is prerequisite to clinical courses, and the humanities, social science and other general education courses which are essential for all associate degree graduates, provide a foundation for further higher education and help create a well-rounded individual and citizen.

A. Description of New Courses

110 Introduction to Occupational Therapy

Credit hours 5
An overview of the domain and scope of Occupational Therapy practice; the intervention process, and the roles and functions of the Occupational Therapy Assistant in current health care and rehabilitation environments. Lectures cover the history, philosophy, language, theoretical frames of reference, ethics, and organizations of the profession. Each student will explore computer programs and demonstrate computer skills for personal and professional use.

Laboratory will cover occupational task analysis, grading, modifying, and adapting activities; the use of a variety of tools and materials, safety issues and precautions relevant to patient populations and activities.

Fieldwork I

Credit 3
The role that one's "occupations" have in promoting health and wellness will be explored through clinical observations in traditional and emerging community-based settings. These will allow the student to practice observation skills, interpersonal communication skills, and professional behaviors while expanding their knowledge of Occupational Therapy. This is a six week fieldwork experience in a occupational therapy department.

Students will participate in a clinical conference in addition to two full days in a functioning occupational therapy clinic.

112: Daily Living Skills

Credit 3

The knowledge and skills necessary to work with clients to improve functional levels and maximize their ability to engage in their chosen occupations as related to daily life will be developed through lecture and laboratory participation. The use of adaptive equipment and methods assessment of joint movement and strength, body mechanics, transfer techniques, and wheelchair use will be included, as well as an introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act, treatment precautions, terminology, and documentation.

145 Fieldwork 2

Credit 3

Students will be assigned to Occupational Therapy practice settings to participate in the therapeutic process. Assignments are designed to help the students gain an awareness of the occupational therapy and related services provided in that setting, giving them an opportunity to use the knowledge and skills gained in the first year of the program as they work with clients and professionals.

210 Occupational Therapy Skills and Application

Credit 6

Medical terminology, selected medical conditions, diseases, and function of all bodily systems will be covered. Medical and Occupational Therapy treatment approaches, precautions, and appropriate adaptations for treating specific diseases/ disabilities will be incorporated.

A variety of expressive, cognitive, and sensory-motor media will be covered by lecture and in laboratory experiences. The occupations of play, leisure, and social participation across the life span, and for various cultures will be explored. Emphasis will be placed on group dynamics, and planning and adaptive play, and leisure activities for various age groups. Students will have opportunities to practice planning and leadership skills that guide group leisure activities during labs as a foundation for skills in community-based settings.

211 Kinesiology

Credit 2

The musculo-skeletal system, human movement, posture, and body mechanics will be studied in lecture and laboratory. Case studies and movement analysis will be used to help the student apply these principles to Occupational Therapy.

153 Fieldwork 3

Credit 3

Students will be assigned to Occupational Therapy practice settings to participate in the therapeutic process. Assignments are designed to help the students gain an awareness of the occupational therapy and related services provided in that setting, giving them an opportunity to use the knowledge and skills gained in the program as they work with clients and professionals.

213 Occupational Therapy in Developmental Disabilities Practice

Credit 2

The student is introduced to conditions that interrupt the normal growth and development sequence. Lectures will cover etiology, signs and symptoms of various diagnoses, and the related Occupational Therapy theory, frames of reference, treatment techniques, and methods. Laboratory sessions stress hands-on learning designed to help the student develop the skills necessary to treat individuals in early childhood, school-based, and community-based programs from infancy through adulthood.

214: Occupational Therapy in Physical Dysfunction Practice

Credit 2

Lectures and clinical presentations are used to teach medical, neurological, and orthopedic conditions that result in physical, cognitive, and/or sensory dysfunction. The application of Occupational Therapy principles and techniques will be reinforced and practiced during laboratory sessions. Case studies, guest lectures, role playing, and clinical field trips will be used to present disabling conditions and Occupational Therapy treatment.

215 Occupational Therapy in Psychosocial Dysfunction Practice

Credit 2

The theory and application of Occupational Therapy principles and techniques in the treatment of individuals with psychosocial dysfunction are presented in lectures and laboratory sessions. Students will have opportunities to examine their own perceptions of mental illness, to learn about the history of the treatment of the mentally ill, and the diagnostic characteristics of psychological and behavioral disorders frequently seen in Occupational Therapy. Group dynamics, frames of references, and community and social services available for individuals with a mental illness will be covered. Emphasis will be on the Occupational Therapy Assistant's role in assessment, treatment planning, intervention and documentation. Interpersonal skills, group leadership and interviewing skills are practiced through role-playing and community based experiences.

247 Fieldwork 4

Credit 4

Learning continues with supervised clinical experience in at least two of several settings where Occupational Therapy is practiced. Level II Fieldwork allows the student to participate and gain competency in observation, assessment, treatment planning, documentation and the application of Occupational Therapy principles, techniques, and skills as clients are engaged in the Occupational Therapy process. Field work assignments will rotate among clinics specializing in Developmental Disabilities including developmental centers, pre-schools and school-based programs; Physical Dysfunction in hospitals, rehabilitation centers and nursing homes; and Psychosocial Dysfunction in psychiatric hospitals and community-based centers.

253 Fieldwork 5

Credit 5

The final six-week semester for full-time field experience to finalize skills and professional practice modalities. There is a weekly clinical conference.

220 Occupational Therapy Professional Practice

Credit 2

The official documents of AOTA, professional journals, and web sites are utilized to explore what guides and drives Occupational Therapy practice. Professional issues discussed will include Occupational Therapy practitioner roles and functions, values, ethics, organizational and administrative principles, clinical reasoning, supervision, reimbursement mechanisms, and professional development. The credentialing processes to meet professional and legal criteria to practice are also covered.

The outline of the entire curriculum follows on the next page.

Kingsborough Community College A.A.S. in Occupational Therapy Assistant Curriculum					
Course number		Lecture	Lab	Clinic	Credit
110	Introduction to Occupational Therapy	4	6		5
112	Daily Living Skills	2	3		3
132	Fieldwork 1*		3	96	2
145	Fieldwork 2			192	3
153	Fieldwork 3*		3	196	4
115	Occupational Therapy Skills and Application	4	6		6
211	Kinesiology	1	3		2
214	Occupational Therapy in Physical Dysfunction Practice	1	3		2
215	Occupational Therapy in Psychosocial Dysfunction Practice	1	3		2
216	Occupational Therapy in Developmental Disabilities Practice	1	3		2
220	Occupational Therapy Professional Practice	2			2
247	Fieldwork 4			288	4
253	Fieldwork 5*		3	196	4
				968	41
ENG12	English 12				4
ENG24	English 24				3
PSY 32	Human Growth and Development				3
BIO 15	Anatomy and Physiology for Allied Health				6
SCI 25	Applied Physical Science for Allied Health				3
PSY11	General Psychology				3
MH11	Introduction to Human Services				3
SOC31	Intro to Sociology				3
					28

Occupational Therapy Assistant Full-Time (4 semester) Program of Study

Fall / Winter		
12	English 12	4
15	Anatomy and Physiology for Allied Health	6
25	Applied Physical Science for Allied Health	3
110	Introduction to Occupational Therapy	5
132	Fieldwork 1*	2
		20
Spring / Summer		
111	Human Growth and Development	3
112	Occupational Therapy - Daily Living Skills	3
11	General Psychology	3
31	Intro to Sociology	3
12	English 12	4
145	Fieldwork 2*	4
		16
Fall / Winter		
11	Introduction to Human Services	3
115	Occupational Therapy Skills and Application	6
214	Occupational Therapy in Physical Dysfunction Practice	2
24	English 24	3
153	Fieldwork 3*	4
211	Kinesiology*	2
		20
Spring / Summer		
215	Occupational Therapy in Psychosocial Dysfunction Practice	2
213	Occupational Therapy in Developmental Disabilities Practice	2
247	Fieldwork 4	4
220	Occupational Therapy Professional Practice	2
253	Fieldwork 5*	4
		14

* Uses six week module

5. Faculty

The Occupational Therapy Assistant Program will require at least two full-time faculty members in order to meet minimum accreditation standards. Additional faculty and clinical faculty members may be required depending on the number of students enrolled and the number of program starts per year. The program is designed for two full academic years and at least one summer assuming a fall start. All program faculty members must hold at least a bachelor's degree and the COTA credential from the National Board Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). The accreditation standards for the program personnel as described in the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards are as follows:

The program director shall be an Occupational Therapist, initially certified nationally, and credentialed according to state requirements. The director shall have a minimum of five years of professional experience in areas related to clinical practice, administration, and teaching. At least one of these years must be a full-time academic appointment with teaching responsibilities.

The program director shall have academic qualifications comparable to other administrators who manage similar programs within the institution and relevant experience in higher education requisite for providing effective leadership for the program, its faculty, and its students.

The program director must have an understanding of and experience with occupational therapy assistants, which includes clinical supervision.

The program director shall be responsible for the management and administration of the program, including planning, evaluation, budgeting, selection of faculty and staff, maintenance of accreditation, and commitment to strategies for professional development.

The program must have at least one additional full-time equivalent faculty member.

The program director and faculty must possess the necessary academic and experiential qualifications and backgrounds, identified in documented descriptions of roles and responsibilities, appropriate to meet program objectives.

The occupational therapy assistant faculty will assume responsibility for development, implementation, and evaluation of fieldwork education. There will be an individual specifically identified with fieldwork coordination responsibilities.

The faculty shall include occupational therapy practitioners who have been initially certified nationally and who have documented expertise in their area(s) of teaching responsibility.

The occupational therapy assistant faculty must be sufficient in number and must possess the expertise necessary to ensure appropriate curriculum design, content delivery, and program evaluation.

6. Facilities, Laboratory Equipment, Supplies and Library Materials

Kingsborough Community College already offers the A.A.S. in Physical Therapist Assistant which requires approximately the same laboratory, classroom, and program and faculty office space as an Occupational Therapy Assistant program. Some of the equipment for a typical Occupational Therapy Assistant Program laboratory can be acquired by donation, rented or borrowed. The College is committed to funding any equipment needs through the College budget if necessary.

Several professional journals and supporting texts should be added to the library in sufficient numbers to support the assignments given to students in the program. On line access to Medline from the library will be available. Usually, arrangements can be made with hospitals and local medical schools for students to have access to any medical journals or text that they could need. Local hospital library resources can be appropriate resources and meet all national standards as long as the arrangements exist and are known to students, including any access policies students must follow.

7. Cost Assessment

Annual budgets for typical Occupational Therapy Assistant programs include disposable supplies, equipment needs, faculty development, accreditation fees and other miscellaneous items. Typical expenditures to set up a learning laboratory for an Occupational Therapy Assistant program is expected to approximate $50,000. Faculty salaries are comparable to those for the current Nursing, PTA and Surgical Technician programs' faculty and directors which range from $65,000 to $85,000. The College will incorporate the need for these funds into its strategic planning and budgeting process as well as seek external support where possible.