Constitution of the Student Occupational Therapy Association

# ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of this organization is the Student Occupational Therapy Association, and it will be based in the Department of Occupational Therapy, College of Public Health and Health Professions, University of Florida. This organization will use the acronym SOTA in all publicity, materials, and correspondence. The website of SOTA will be sota.phhp.ufl.edu.

# ARTICLE II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

Section 1:

The Student Occupational Therapy Association desires to facilitate professional identity development of Doctor of Occupational Therapy Students through creating professional development events such as guest lectures, service experiences and student panels.

Section 2:

The Student Occupational Therapy Association desires to promote interdisciplinary collaboration with other college and university departments.The association will collaborate with community health care organizations through projects and volunteer efforts.

Section 3:

The Student Occupational Therapy Association desires to instill a passion for advocacy for the profession of occupational therapy in its members to increase understanding of the profession across the UF campus and in the community. The organization will advocate for the field throughout campus by attending health career sessions and fairs. The organization will also encourage student representatives to attend state and national occupational therapy conventions.

# ARTICLE III. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Upon approval by the Department of Student Activities and Involvement, SOTA shall be a University sponsored student organization within the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Florida. SOTA shall comply with all local, state and federal laws, as well as University of Florida regulations, policies and procedures. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the University’s regulations related to Non- Discrimination, Sexual Harassment (including sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking), Hazing, Commercial Activity, and Student Leader Eligibility.

# ARTICLE IV. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Section A. Non-Discrimination

SOTA agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin,

political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. Discrimination on the basis of the protected classes described in University of Florida

Regulation 1.006 (Nondiscrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policies) is prohibited.

Section B. Sexual Harassment

SOTA agrees that it will not engage in any activity that is unwelcome conduct of sexual nature that creates a hostile environment. Behaviors that could create a hostile environment include sexual harassment (which could include inappropriate sexual comments), sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking and repeated instances of cyber abuse. Sexual harassment as described in University of Florida Regulation 1.006 (NonDiscrimination/Harassment/Invasion of Privacy Policy) is prohibited.

Section C. Hazing

SOTA agrees that it will not initiate, support, or encourage any events or situations that recklessly, by design, or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student for any purpose including but not limited to initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student group or organization. Hazing as defined in the University of Florida Regulation 1.0081 (Prohibition of Hazing; Procedures and Penalties) and 4.040 (Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code) is prohibited. If found responsible for hazing, sanctions may be imposed against the organization, its leaders and/or members.

Section D. Responsibility to Report

The University of Florida identifies Responsible Employees and Campus Security Authorities to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of campus. If SOTA becomes aware of any such conduct described in this article, they are encouraged to report it immediately to staff in Student Activities and Involvement, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, the

University’s Title IX Coordinator, or to their Student Organization Advisor, who are identified as mandated reporters.

Section E. Officer Eligibility

SOTA understands, acknowledges, and agrees to uphold and abide by the specific minimal requirements regarding officer eligibility as defined in the Registered Student Organization Classification and Officer Eligibility Policy

# ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this organization is open to all enrolled OTD graduate students at the University of Florida.; All members and associate members are free to leave.

# ARTICLE VI. STUDENT ORGANIZATION ADVISOR

The advisor(s) and Department of Occupational Therapy holds the responsibility to oversee the day-to-day functions and operations of SOTA including the management of its finances, the

selection of its members, and ensuring the organization adheres to university and department policies.

The student organization advisor(s) shall serve as a resource person and provide advisory support for the officers and members of the organization. A student organization advisor should attend executive and general meetings; however, the student organization advisor may not vote in any SOTA matters. The student organization advisor shall be nominated by the Department of Occupational Therapy. If for some reason the student organization advisor(s) cannot complete his/her duties, one will be appointed to SOTA through the Occupational Therapy department of the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

# ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

**Section A:** The selected officers of SOTA shall be President**,** Vice-President, and Treasurer. At no time should one person hold more than one of these positions. The elected officers of SOTA shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Outreach Chair, Orientation Chairs, Professional Development Chair, Service Chair, Fundraising Chairs, Social Chair, Accessibility Chair, and the Assembly of Student Delegates. All elected positions, aside from the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, outreach and social chairs, can have a co-chair, but this is not mandatory. For a position to have a co-chair, two students must run together. They will indicate this on their application. The Assembly of Student delegates must have two representatives, whether this be through a co-chair application or electing the nominees with the highest and second highest number of votes.

Part 1: The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization and shall coordinate the work of the officers and committees. The President will communicate and/or delegate communication with faculty advisors and outside organizations.

Part 2: The Vice-President shall serve as an aide to the President and shall perform the duties of the President in his/her absence or inability to serve. The Vice President will assist the President in communicating with faculty advisors and outside organizations.

Part 3: The Secretary shall keep a record of the minutes of all meetings of SOTA and shall perform other duties as may be delegated and oversee SOTA’s Gmail account (notifying appropriate positions when correspondence is required). When messages, such as the monthly newsletter, need to be sent to all cohorts, they will communicate with the occupational therapy administrative office.

Part 4: The Treasurer shall receive all monies of SOTA, keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures, and pay out local funds in accordance with the approved budget as authorized by the organization. The Treasurer shall present a financial statement at each general body meeting and as requested by the Department of Occupational Therapy or SOTA executive board.

Part 5: The Outreach Chair shall plan and coordinate occupational therapy promotion on campus and throughout the community and shall maintain the SOTA website, create the monthly newsletter, create SOTA-related Facebook events, advertise SOTA events to UF OTD students through SOTA social media accounts, present slideshows of photos when requested, and write “Thank-You” letters to sponsors and other organizations.

Part 6: The two Orientation Chairs shall plan and coordinate all parts of the OTD new student orientation for first year OTD students, which occurs in August of their first semester (creating brochures, PowerPoint to introduce the program and additional resources, provide tours), encourage active participation in SOTA, and oversee the mentor/mentee program.

Part 7: The Professional Development Chair shall plan and coordinate events pertaining to members’ professional development such as communicating with potential guest speakers and coordinating their attendance, and schedule professional development events that explore specific OT fields/topics.

Part 8: The Service Chair shall organize and promote SOTA involvement on campus and in the community.

Part 9: The Fundraising Chair shall plan and conduct fundraising events within the regulations of the organization. They will organize merchandise creation, advertisement, and distribution with the help of the treasurer.

Part 10: The Social Chair shall organize formal and informal social activities throughout the school semesters to promote inter-class socialization. They shall coordinate specific events for the OTD program, such as the “Friends and Family Weekend”, and any other social events.

Part 11: The Accessibility Chair shall create accessibility events (i.e. workshops for culturally sensitive care, health disparities, or inequities in the global community). They shall ensure all events hosted by SOTA are accessible to all persons. They shall promote resources that offer educational benefits to the SOTA members regarding accessibility.

Part 12: The roles of the Student Representatives of the Florida Occupational Therapy Association and Assembly of Student Delegates of the American Occupational Therapy Association will include: representing the students and curriculum at all relevant FOTA and AOTA meetings, reporting all pertinent information from these meetings to the student body, serving as a liaison between graduate and undergraduate classes, relaying information to professional development chair for creation of professional development events, and assisting executive board officers with event planning when necessary. Delegates will be considered members of the executive board and will be required to comply with executive board requirements. ASD delegates are selected by the UF OTD student body via a voting process where the candidate with the highest votes becomes the head delegate and the candidate with the second highest number of votes becomes the alternate delegate.

**Section B:** Officers shall assume their official duties once elected and serve until their successors are elected/appointed.

**Section C:** Any officer of SOTA may be removed from office through the following process:

Part 1: A written request by at least three active members of the organization shall be submitted to the President, Vice President, or Treasure. Written notification shall be sent to the officer in

question asking that officer to be present at the next general body meeting and prepare to respond to the removal request.

Part 2: A two-thirds majority vote of the active members present at a general body meeting is necessary to remove the officer.

Part 3: In the event of the removal of an officer, a special provision may be granted to the president and vice president to appoint an interim replacement until an election may be held.

**Section D:** Any elected officer may choose to resign from their position. The following must occur for an officer to resign:

Part 1: A meeting must be called with the president and vice president to discuss resignation.

Part 2: A special provision may be granted to the president and vice president to appoint an interim replacement until an election may be held.

**Section F:** In the event that an officer’s position becomes vacant for any reason during the term, a new officer will be elected by the president and vice president according to the procedures outlined in Article VII, ii-v and will complete the term.

# ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS

1. *Timeframe*

In the fall semester, all interested students shall submit a short election biography, speech, and/or video which will be uploaded to Qualtrics survey by the end of the second week of October, which will then be sent out by the faculty advisors for a vote for each executive board officer position by the end of October.

1. *Qualifications*

Any UF OTD student can run for a position as long as they are in good academic standing.

1. *Popular Election*

The slate of candidates for all positions shall be presented in a Qualtrics survey sent out by the faculty advisors to UF OTD students and presented to the general body at the next possible

general body meeting. SOTA members shall approve the executive board members’ nominations through secret balloting, requiring a simple majority vote in order to be elected. If there is not a simple majority vote, members shall nominate another candidate on the spot. If this nominee does not receive a simple majority vote, the executive board nominee will win the election by default.

vi) *Length of Term(s)*

Officers/ terms will take effect once the nominated officers are affirmed into their respective positions by a simple majority vote during the beginning of the Fall Semester.

Their terms will run from their moment of affirmation until the moment of affirmation of the next executive board nominees in the following Fall semester. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same position.

The election process should be conducted at the beginning of the Fall semester each year.

# ARTICLE IX. FINANCE

SOTA will not require membership dues; it will primarily raise funds through merchandise sales and community fundraisers for merchandise, events, travel to leadership conferences, and other operational expenses of the organization. Members are expected to participate in these fundraising activities. ASD executive board members will be given priority for funding for AOTA annual conference, if funds are available.

# ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION

In the event this organization dissolves, all monies left in the treasury, after outstanding debts and claims have been paid, shall be donated to the Occupational Therapy department of the College of Public Health and Health Professions.

# ARTICLE XI. BYLAWS FOR SOTA

SOTA may elect to maintain a separate bylaws document to outline the day-to-day operations of the organization and to clarify policies and procedures otherwise not included in the previous articles. Bylaws and/or other guiding documents may not take precedence over the requirements sent forth by local, state, and federal laws, the university of Florida’s regulations, policies, and procedures, and the SAI constitution requirements. Amendments and changes may be made to the bylaws and shall be consistent with the SAI approved constitution on file and SAI’s constitution requirements. Should the organization transition leadership, all bylaws and guiding documents will be transitioned to new student organization leaders and/or advisor(s). SOTA agrees to provide all unaltered by laws and guiding documents and/or clarify its procedures in writing to any university of Florida student, faculty, or staff upon request.

# ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS TO CONSTIUTION

Amendments to the constitution may be proposed by any active member or executive board member to the president and vice president. These amendments will then be proposed to all general body members and voted on at any general body meeting, with notice of the proposed amendment being given one week prior to a vote. Amendments require a two-thirds vote of the active members in attendance at the meeting to be passed and are subject to final approval by the Department of Student Activities and Involvement*.*