

# 2026 ILOTA Pre-OT Mentorship Program Workshop



Illinois  
Occupational  
Therapy  
Association

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- We'd like to thank the past and present members of the ILOTA Community Outreach Committee who have helped to develop resources, make connections in the community, and design this mentoring program
- We'd like to thank our guest panelists who are also contributing to this presentation



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# AGENDA

- ❑ Introduction & mentoring program overview
- ❑ Benefits of OT as a career
- ❑ OT as a career
- ❑ OT practitioner panel
- ❑ OT service user panel
- ❑ OT/OTA application process
- ❑ Personal statements & resumes
- ❑ Letters of recommendation & observation hours
- ❑ Scholarships and financial aid
- ❑ GRE preparation
- ❑ Q&A
- ❑ Breakout session: Meet your mentors/mentees!



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# INTRODUCTION



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# ABOUT ILOTA

- ❑ The Illinois Occupational Therapy Association (ILOTA) is the official representative of the occupational therapy profession in the state of Illinois. ILOTA acknowledges and promotes professional excellence through a proactive, organized collaboration with OT personnel, the health care community, governmental agencies, and consumers.



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# ILOTA'S MISSION & VISION

- ❑ Mission: ILOTA is recognized as the premier occupational therapy resource in Illinois. We strive to advance the best practice of occupational therapy through serving, supporting, and promoting the profession.
- ❑ Vision: ILOTA is a multifaceted association committed to enhancing health and well-being through the utilization of best occupational therapy practices in Illinois.



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# JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION IN OT

- ❑ Presently, the overwhelming majority of OT practitioners are white females. However, the clients we serve represent diverse backgrounds and identities.
- ❑ We acknowledge the need to increase the diversity of OT practitioners in order to better address the needs of the diverse clients we serve.
- ❑ ILOTA is committed to increasing opportunities to engage in learning, dialogue, and action related to topics of Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI)



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# PURPOSE OF PRE-OT MENTORING PROGRAM

- ❑ Provide guidance and support to pre-OT/OTA students throughout their journey exploring OT as a career and applying to OT/OTA programs through 1:1 and group mentoring sessions
- ❑ Offer resources to learn more about OT as a profession and applying to OT/OTA programs
- ❑ Facilitate connections between pre-OT/OTA students and current OT/OTA students and practitioners



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# WHAT TO EXPECT

- ❑ Today's workshop: meet your mentor/mentee
- ❑ March: meet with mentor to set goals for remainder of program
- ❑ March - August: meet monthly with mentor; work on 'assignments' between meetings
- ❑ TBA: attend future group mentoring session(s) on common topics of interest



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# BENEFITS OF OT AS A CAREER



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# WHO ARE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTITIONERS?

- ❑ Occupational Therapists (have at least a four-year degree)
- ❑ Occupational Therapy Assistants (have at least a two-year degree)



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# WHERE DO OT PRACTITIONERS WORK?

- ❑ Hospitals
- ❑ Schools
- ❑ Rehabilitation clinics
- ❑ Homes
- ❑ Community settings
- ❑ Mental health facilities
- ❑ Nursing homes
- ❑ Academia
- ❑ And more!



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# WHY SHOULD YOU CONSIDER OT AS A CAREER?

- ❑ There are broad opportunities to work in various settings with different types of people; this variability helps prevent burnout.
- ❑ It's fun! It's a chance to be creative and be hands-on while helping people.
- ❑ You can incorporate your own interests and hobbies into your work.
- ❑ It's rewarding and fulfilling to help improve someone's quality of life.



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# WHY SHOULD YOU CONSIDER OT AS A CAREER?

- ❑ You can advance your career by specializing in various techniques, creating your own business, or taking on leadership roles.
- ❑ There are lucrative job opportunities - OT is one of the most top-rated and fastest-growing careers.
- ❑ There are various opportunities to collaborate with other professionals and experts in order to continue learning and growing.



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# WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A GOOD OT/OTA?

- ❑ Compassionate
- ❑ Patient
- ❑ Flexible
- ❑ Creative
- ❑ Good communicator
- ❑ Resourceful
- ❑ Innovative
- ❑ Critical thinker
- ❑ Perceptive
- ❑ Multi-tasker
- ❑ Responsible
- ❑ Respectful
- ❑ Reliable
- ❑ Organized
- ❑ Ethical



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# OT Practitioner Panel: A Day in the Life of an OT

1. Kyra Barillier
2. Ray Cendejas
3. Andrea Karr



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# OT SERVICE USER EXPERIENCES



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# EXPERIENCES FROM OT CLIENTS

1. Megan LeClair- Early Intervention services user
2. Jenny Cray- Stroke survivor (video)  
[https://youtu.be/tIPDMF10A\\_c](https://youtu.be/tIPDMF10A_c)





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# OT/OTA APPLICATION PROCESS



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# Types of OT Programs

- ❑ Full time
- ❑ Hybrid
- ❑ Weekend
- ❑ Bridge programs (OTA to OTR)
  
- ❑ Overview of programs in IL can be found [here](#).
- ❑ List of programs in the US can be found [here](#).



# OT PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

- ❑ Bradley Univ. (OTD)
- ❑ Chicago State Univ. (MOT)
- ❑ DePaul Univ. (MOT)
- ❑ Elmhurst Univ. (MOT/OTD)
- ❑ Governors State Univ. (MOT)
- ❑ Lewis Univ. (MOT)
- ❑ Midwestern University (MOT/OTD)
- ❑ North Central College (MOT/OTD)
- ❑ Quincy Univ. (OTD)
- ❑ Roosevelt Univ. (MOT)
- ❑ Rush Univ. (OTD)
- ❑ SIU Carbondale (OTD)
- ❑ Univ. of Illinois at Chicago (OTD)



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# OTA PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

- ❑ Black Hawk College
- ❑ Fox College
- ❑ Illinois Central College
- ❑ Lewis & Clark Community College
- ❑ Lincoln Land Community College
- ❑ McHenry County College
- ❑ Parkland College
- ❑ Shawnee Community College
- ❑ South Suburban College
- ❑ Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market



# DETERMINE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

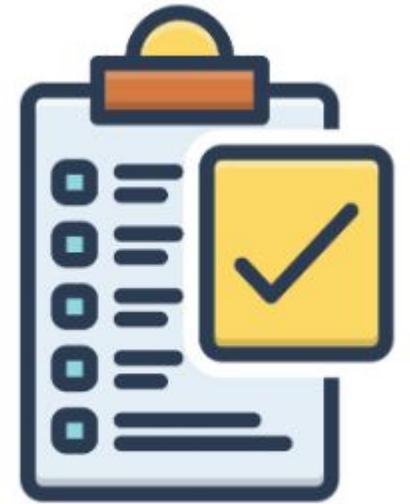
- ❑ OTA Programs
  - ❑ School website
- ❑ OT Programs
  - ❑ School website OR
  - ❑ Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service (OTCAS), opens annually in July for applications
    - ❑ Helpful videos on OTCAS and application process from local schools:
      - ❑ [Application recommendations and OTCAS \(start at 1:10\)](#)
      - ❑ [Example OTCAS application](#)



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# Frequent Application Requirements

- ❑ Two-year or bachelors degree - *will vary*
- ❑ Prerequisite coursework
- ❑ Minimum undergraduate GPA
- ❑ Minimum prerequisite GPA
- ❑ Personal statement
- ❑ Letters of recommendation
- ❑ Observation hours
- ❑ Interview



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# COMMON PREREQUISITE COURSES

- ❑ Anatomy/Physiology
- ❑ Psychology/Sociology
- ❑ Human Development
- ❑ Statistics/Research Methods
- ❑ Medical Terminology



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# Frequent Additional Considerations

Not typically required but will reflect well in your application:

- ❑ Volunteer experience
- ❑ Leadership experience
- ❑ Work experience
- ❑ Research experience
- ❑ Other life experience



# OBTAINING DOCUMENTS



- ❑ Transcripts
  - ❑ Consider both high school and/or college transcripts
  - ❑ Contact schools registrar's office to request an official transcript
  - ❑ **Be aware of the processing fees and timelines**- give yourself plenty of time before the application deadline to request the transcript
- ❑ Letters of recommendation
- ❑ Observation Hours
  - ❑ OTCAS does not require proof of observation, however make sure to check program specific requirements
  - ❑ Keep a log of hours and consider getting a signature from the practitioner you observed



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# PERSONAL STATEMENTS & RESUMES



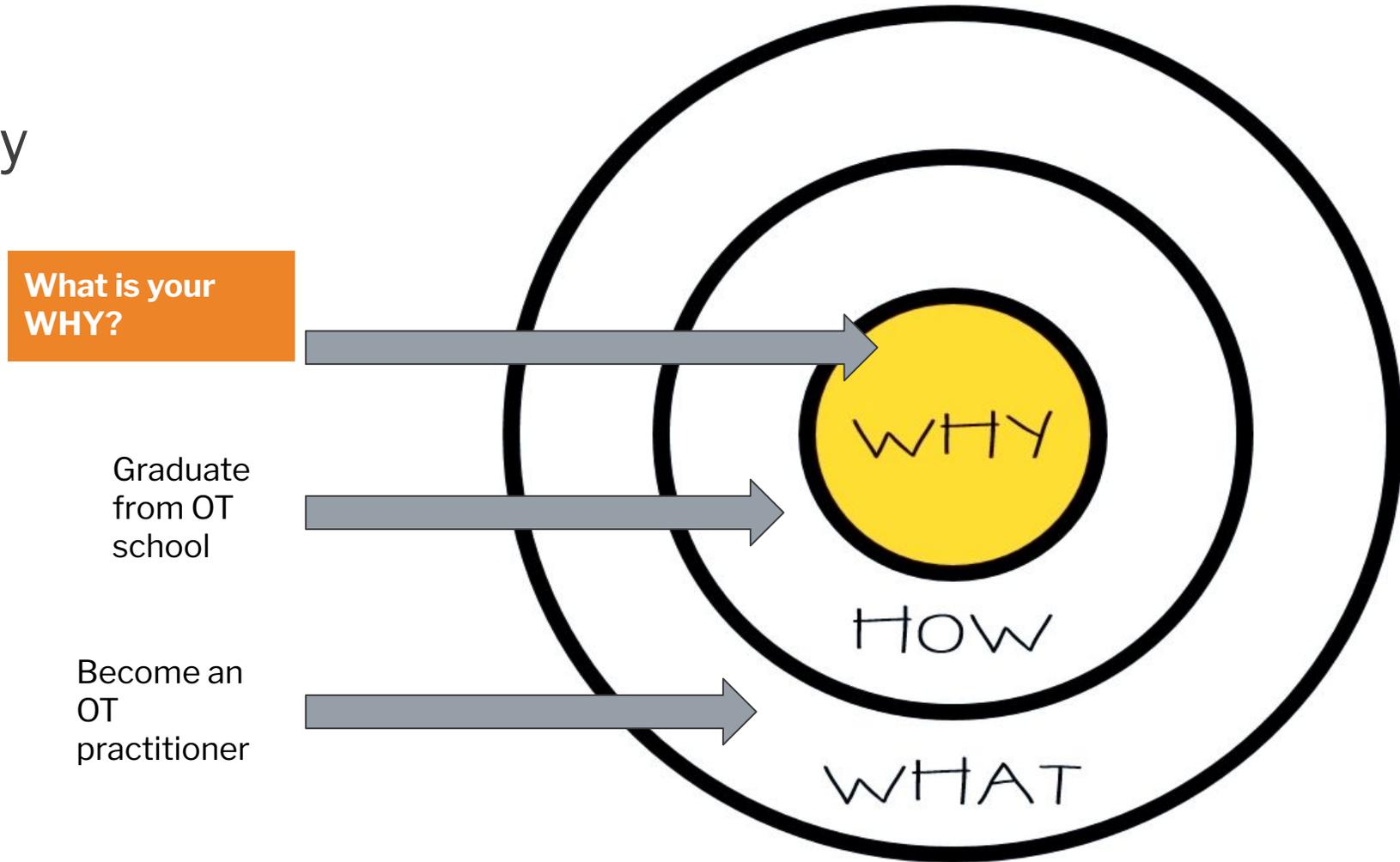
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# OTCAS Personal Statement

*Explain how your lived experiences (e.g., personal, professional, cultural, etc.) have influenced your interest in pursuing OT.*

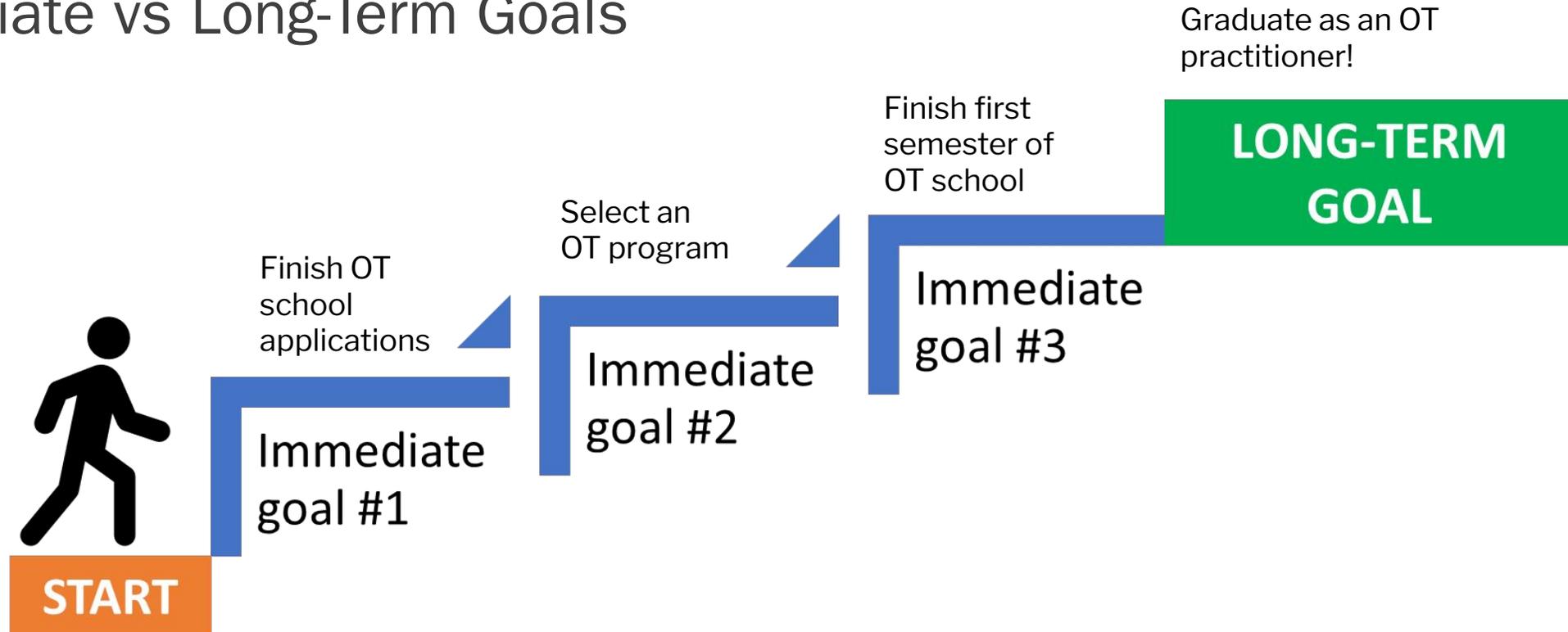


## Finding your why



**Take 2 minutes to write or think about WHY you want to join the OT profession.**

# Immediate vs Long-Term Goals



Besides becoming an OT practitioner, what is another **LONG-TERM GOAL** you have?

# Background

<b>Personal &amp; Cultural</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Professional</b>
Experience living as a person with a disability	Meaningful undergraduate classes, projects, or theses	Volunteer experience related to OT
Living with a loved one with a disability	Connection between OT and undergraduate major/minor	Internship experience and the skills you developed
A challenge you experienced in your life	Research experience as a research assistant	Shadowing experience and the feelings it elicited as a future OT practitioner
Reflecting on a cultural identity or community you belong to	Extracurricular activities (both OT and non-OT related!)	Participation in any conferences or programs (like this one!)

**What parts of your background will you share?**

# Resume

What do you think of this resume?

**Lea Leopard**  
 1750 First Street, La Verne, CA 91750  
 (909) 243-5678, [Lea.Leopard@laverne.edu](mailto:Lea.Leopard@laverne.edu)

## EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science, Sociology**  
 University of La Verne, La Verne, CA

May 2015

## RELATED COUSEWORK (in progress \*)

- Social Problems
- Research Methods
- Sociology of Deviance\*
- Senior Thesis \*(Adolescents and deviance)

## INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

### **Case Management Intern**

June 2014 – Present

T.Y.K.E.S. Resource Center, Chino, CA

- Collaborate with community agencies and nonprofit organizations to locate available resources for parents in need of social services
- Assess need and recommend services for diverse families with children birth to five years of age
- Co-lead the facilitation of court mandated parenting classes

### **Intern**

June 2013 – August 2013

Pals Program, Human Services Department, Anaheim, CA

- Facilitated educational workshops and activities aimed in promoting positive self-esteem and leadership skills among diverse adolescents
- Delivered one-on-one mentoring to at risk and troubled teens
- Provided tutoring in math, science, and writing to high school age students

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### **Front Office Assistant**

August 2012 - Present

University of La Verne, Career Services

- Greet guests, answer questions, and provide information to client inquiries
- Schedule appointments, with proper follow-up to clients and counselors
- Answer telephones, direct calls, monitor voicemail and take messages
- Create, monitor and file office records
- Maintain supplies, resources. Keep office clean and resources/supplies stocked.

## On-Campus Involvement

### **President**

August 2013 - Present

Sociology and Anthropology Club

- Lead weekly meetings, create agenda, and follow up on member inquires
- Schedule guest speakers to enhance member knowledge and create networking opportunities

### **Events Coordinator**

September 2012 – May 2013

Campus Activities Board

- Contacted and hired vendors for various events on campus
- Worked with University Risk Management Department to secure contracts
- Managed a budget of \$8000

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Fluent in Spanish
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint
- Knowledge of Adobe

# Resume

What do you think of this resume?

Your Name

1234 Fourth Avenue, Smallville, Minnesota 55988, (600) 555-1234  
yourname@mail.com, Portfolio: yourname.com

## QUALIFICATIONS

- CREATIVE AND VERSATILE DESIGNER WHO UNDERSTANDS ITS ALL ABOUT BRANDING
- EXPERIENCED DESIGNING BRAND IDENTITY, BROCHURES, PACKAGING, ADVERTISING, SIGNAGE, POSTERS, AND WEB SITES
- SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY AND UP-TO-DATE WITH CURRENT WEB TRENDS
- ABLE TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH CLIENTS TO DISCUSS IDEAS AND PRESENT DESIGN SOLUTIONS
- DEVELOPED ILLUSTRATION SKILLS WITH WATERCOLOR, COLORED PENCIL, AND DIGITAL MEDIA

## SOFTWARE

- PHOTOSHOP, ILLUSTRATOR, INDESIGN, DREAMWEAVER, HTML, CSS, FLASH, EDGE, ACROBAT, AUDACITY, WORD, EXCEL AND POWERPOINT

## EDUCATION

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, MARKETING

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, GRAPHIC DESIGN

BROWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

## EXPERIENCE

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

THE ZEAL, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. 20XX-20XX

- DESIGNED AND PRODUCED A MONTHLY COLLEGE NEWSPAPER (20 ISSUES TOTAL)
- REDESIGNED THE LOGO AND FORMAT TO UPDATE THE LOOK AND FOLLOW INDUSTRY TRENDS
- CONTRIBUTED STORIES, PHOTOS, AND ORIGINAL ARTWORK FOR PUBLICATION

RETAIL SALES ASSOCIATE

EDDIE SAUER, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. 20XX-20XX

- DEALT DIRECTLY WITH CUSTOMERS, ASSISTED WITH SELECTIONS, PURCHASES AND RETURNS
- RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MONEY, RETURNS, AND SALES TRANSACTIONS ON THE WEEKENDS
- 20XX SALES ASSOCIATE OF THE YEAR. INCREASED MY ANNUAL SALES VOLUME 15%
- ORGANIZED LOSS-PREVENTION EFFORTS IN THE STORE (WE SAVED \$500 ANNUALLY)

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- VICE PRESIDENT, GRAPHIC DESIGN CLUB, BROWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE. 20XX-20XX
- THIRD PLACE GUTENBERG AWARD, POSTER DESIGN. 20XX

# Resume

What do you think of this resume?

## Craig Kunce

304 Fourth Avenue South, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54602, (608) 555-3480

### OBJECTIVE

A challenging position in the graphic design field that utilizes my experience, education and creativity to help the company grow and succeed.

### SUMMARY OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience designing advertising and marketing materials for a variety of projects including logos, brochures, packaging, advertising, signage and websites
  - Excellent ability to communicate and work in a team setting - derived from current freelance projects
  - Thorough knowledge and understanding of prepress and the offset printing process
  - Experienced illustrator with strong watercolor, oil painting, and colored pencil skills
  - Able to work directly with clients to discuss ideas and solutions to their needs

### SOFTWARE KNOWLEDGE

- Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Dreamweaver, Flash, Acrobat, GoLive, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
- Tech-savvy, comfortable, and up-to-date with current online design and media trends and interfaces

### EDUCATION

Associate of Applied Science, Graphic Design  
Western Technical College, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Graduated with highest honors. GPA 3.8.

- Hardware experience: Mac and PC computers, flat-bed color scanners, digital photography, B/W and color printers, large format printing, working on servers and networks, prepress and film imaging equipment (Xitron Xenith 4 PDF Workflow Solution), offset printing presses, bindery and finishing machinery, and electronic paper cutters.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Assistant Manager, Meat Department

Quillin's, La Crosse, Wisconsin. 2007-present

- Assisted Meat Department Manager with all daily responsibilities
- Inspected and signed for deliveries in manager's absence (5-10 times per week)
- Direct customer service (dealt with approx. 50 customers per day)
- Trained and mentored all new employees (30 to date)

Graphic Designer and Publication Artist

The Zeal, La Crosse, Wisconsin. 2006-2007

- Designed and produced the monthly school newspaper (20 issues total)
- Consistently met our monthly design and printing deadlines
- Redesigned the logo and format to update the look and follow industry trends

Retail Sales Associate

Eddie Bauer, Onalaska, Wisconsin. 2004-2005

- Dealt directly with customers, assisting with selections, purchases and returns
- Worked independently and performed opening and closing responsibilities
- Responsible for all money, returns, and sales transactions on the weekends
- 2008 Sales Associate of the Year. Increased my annual sales volume 15%
- Organized loss-prevention efforts throughout the store (saved \$2,000 annually)

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Vice President, Graphic Design Club, Western Technical College. 2008-2009
- First Place Portfolio Review Poster, Western Technical College. 2009
- Third Place Gutenberg Award, Poster Design. 2009

# Resume

What do you think of this resume?

**C.S. Whiz**  
 1234 Leopard Way, La Verne, CA  
[cs.whiz@laverne.edu](mailto:cs.whiz@laverne.edu)  
 (909) 555-5555

## EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Science, Computer Science** Expected: May 2015  
**Concentration: Software**  
 University of La Verne, La Verne, CA  
**G.P.A. 3.55**

## RELATED COURSES

- Principles of Computer Networks
- Data Structures
- Digital Logic Systems
- Assembly Language
- Operating Systems
- Database Management Systems

## COURSE PROJECT

**Huffman Tree Text Compressor** Fall 2014

- Implemented in Java SE 6 and tested in JUnit
- Compressed text files by assigning new bit encodings to characters according to frequency
- Re-expanded text files that were previously compressed with Huffman encoding

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Languages:** C++, HTML, Java, Visual Basic, SQL, JUnit
- **Operating Systems:** Windows, Linux, UNIX
- **Database Systems:** Oracle, ADB2
- **Software:** Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Photoshop

## RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

**University of La Verne, Office of Information Technology** July 2013 – Present  
*IT Assistant*

- Provided over-the-phone and in-person troubleshooting for various on-campus departments
- Coordinated with departments to utilize technology for improved communication
- Managed documentation and records maintenance according to entry procedures
- Made recommendations for improved processes

## ON CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

**Associated Students of ULV** August 2014 – Present  
*Senator of the College of Arts & Sciences*

- Represent the interests of the College of Arts & Sciences
- Collaborate with other student government leaders on issues concerning the ULV student body at large

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- **Language:** Fluent in Vietnamese
- **Social Media:** Proficient using Facebook, Yelp, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr

# Resume:

## Required Sections (in 1 page):

- Contact information (name, address, email address, phone number)
- Education (anticipated degree and graduation date, GPA)
- Work/Internship experience (reverse chronological order)
- Extracurricular/Related Work Experience
- Skills (language, software, etc...)

RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

## Resume Sample

Always use your @college email account and check it frequently, even if you have enabled forwarding.

Firstname Lastname

If an employer asks for your SAT/ACT scores or GPA, include in your Education section.

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17 Main Street • Los Angeles, CA 92720 • youremail@college.harvard.edu • (714) 558-9857

**Education**

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**  
A.B. Honors degree in History. GPA 3.73.  
Relevant Coursework: International Political Economics and the European Community.  
Commit 25 hours per week to Harvard Varsity Field Hockey Program.  
Cambridge, MA  
May 2022

**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**  
Study abroad coursework in European History and Econometrics.  
London, UK  
May - August 2020

# PERSONAL STATEMENT/ESSAY/RESUME

- ❑ Do:
  - ❑ Be creative
  - ❑ Provide details about your qualities, skills, and/or previous experiences that help explain why you are interested in OT or why you think you would make a good OT practitioner
  - ❑ Proofread and ask others to review
- ❑ Don't:
  - ❑ Be generic or extensively rely on AI
  - ❑ Plagiarize your writing from other sources
  - ❑ Include several grammatical/spelling errors
- ❑ Additional resources:
  - ❑ Utilize your mentor/career center/career counselor!
  - ❑ Review websites such as

<https://career.las.uic.edu/internship-program/resume-cover-letter-and-interview-prep/>



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# OBSERVATION HOURS



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# OBSERVATIONS/VOLUNTEERING

- ❑ Hospitals
- ❑ Public schools or therapeutic day schools
- ❑ Nursing homes/skilled nursing facilities
- ❑ Outpatient clinics
- ❑ Community mental health organizations
- ❑ Drivers rehab organizations
- ❑ Low vision programs
- ❑ Home health agencies
- ❑ If having difficulty, try reaching out to ILOTA



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# Observation Hours

- How to set up observation hours:
  - Identify a setting you are interested in observing
  - Check your area to see where OTs are working and contact the setting
  - Complete any additional paperwork required by the setting
- When to start observation hours:
  - It is recommended to start observing as soon as possible
- How many hours are needed?
  - OTCAS requires 50 hours, but some programs require more or less hours
  - The more hours you observe the greater understanding you have of OT in that setting



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# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION



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# Letters Of Recommendation

## ❑ **Who to ask:**

- ❑ OTCAS requires 3 letters of recommendation.
- ❑ One occupational therapist, one professional reference, and one academic reference.
- ❑ Consider professors, bosses, supervisors, OT practitioners that you observed with, coworker, other professionals who know you well through volunteer/work/school activities.
- ❑ Ask the person writing your letter to include details about your academic strengths, work ethic, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and professionalism.
- ❑ Include your resume in your letter request.



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# Letters of Recommendation

## ❏ **When to ask:**

- ❏ Give your reference enough time to write the letter without being rushed.
- ❏ Allow at least one to three months from the time of asking for the letter to be written and sent into OTCAS.
- ❏ Give them a deadline before your full application is due.
- ❏ Send a follow-up reminder close to the deadline



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# Letters of Recommendation

## ❑ **How letters of recommendation are submitted:**

- ❑ Give information about how to submit the letter
- ❑ You will input your reference email & OTCAS will send them an email within 24 hours detailing how to create their account and submit a letter on your behalf.
- ❑ Please contact your reference beforehand to confirm they would be willing to write the letter before adding their contact information into OTCAS.



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# Letters of Recommendation- Thank You Note

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wanted to thank you for once again for taking the time to write me a letter of recommendation. I know that you have a busy schedule, and it means so much to me that you wrote a letter on my behalf. I appreciate your support throughout the process. I will keep you updated in my progress in applying to OT/OTA school. Again, thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if I can be of assistance to you in any other way.

Sincerely,



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# INTERVIEW PREPARATION



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# Interview Preparation

## ❑ What to wear:

- ❑ Business Casual
- ❑ Nice slacks, a sweater, button down shirt
- ❑ Clean and presentable

## ❑ What to expect:

- ❑ Arrive early to the interview, make sure you know how to get where you're going
- ❑ Come prepared with the necessary materials listed in your interview invitation
- ❑ Bring a folder to take home information in
- ❑ Bring a pen to take notes

## ❑ Types of interviews:

- ❑ One-on-one
- ❑ Group/panel
- ❑ Virtual



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# Virtual Interview Tips

- ❑ Test run software (Zoom, Webex) prior to interview
  - ❑ Ensure optimal volume, video quality, and internet connection
  - ❑ Test out the lighting
  - ❑ Utilize Zoom Virtual Background for a clean background
- ❑ Reduce possible distractions and background noise
  - ❑ Inform family, roommates of upcoming interview
  - ❑ Silence cell phone
- ❑ Look into the camera when responding to questions to improve perception of eye contact
  - ❑ Plug computers into power source
  - ❑ Ensure profile picture is appropriate
  - ❑ Be yourself!



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# Interview Preparation

- ❑ Research the program you are interviewing for beforehand
  - ❑ Understand their mission and vision statement
  - ❑ Unique attributes to the program
  - ❑ If possible, research your interviewer and become familiar with their experience as an OT
- ❑ Sample Interview Questions
  - ❑ Tell us about yourself.
  - ❑ In your own words, what is occupational therapy?
  - ❑ Why do you want to become an occupational therapist?
  - ❑ How does occupational therapy differ from physical therapy?
  - ❑ Why did you choose to apply to our occupational therapy program?
  - ❑ How will you contribute to our program?



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# Interview Preparation

- ❑ Make sure you come prepared with interview questions as well
  - ❑ What distinguishes your program from other occupational therapy programs?
  - ❑ Do OT/OTA students and other healthcare professional students collaborate with one another?
  - ❑ Is there a certain setting/area of occupational therapy that focuses on more than others?
  - ❑ What opportunities do you have for students to be involved in leadership or research?
- ❑ Contact your school's career or counseling offices, they may have mock interview appointments and resources



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# Interview Preparation- Thank You Note

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wanted to thank you for considering me for your program. I know that you have a busy schedule, and I appreciate your time interviewing me and sharing some insight into your program.

I especially like your program has many connections in the community for service opportunities. I believe that my background in working as an aide at a multi-disciplinary pediatric clinic in past two years has prepared me for the next step in my career, which is obtaining my graduate degree to become an OT/OTA.

Again, thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you on your final decision.

Sincerely,



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# SCHOLARSHIPS & OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL AID



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# SCHOLARSHIPS

- ❑ ILOTA has a list of available scholarships for current OT/OTA students here:

<https://www.ilota.org/assets/Scholarships%20for%20OT%20and%20OTA%20Students.pdf>

- ❑ Additional scholarships may be available for current high school or undergraduate students



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# FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

- ❑ Basic federal student aid eligibility requirements:
  - ❑ demonstrate financial need for need-based federal student aid programs;
  - ❑ be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen
  - ❑ have a valid Social Security number (with a few exceptions)
  - ❑ be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student in an eligible degree or certificate program
  - ❑ be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible for Direct Loan Program funds
  - ❑ maintain satisfactory academic progress in college or career school
  - ❑ sign the certification statement on the FAFSA form stating that you're not in default on a federal student loan, you do not owe money on a federal student grant, and you'll only use federal student aid for educational purposes
  - ❑ show you're qualified to obtain a college or career school education



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# FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

## □ Applying

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA<sup>®</sup>) form at <https://studentaid.gov/>
- More information on filling out the form: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>



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# OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL AID

- ❑ Private/institutional loans
- ❑ Grants
- ❑ Federal work study student employment
- ❑ Assistantships
- ❑ Veteran benefits



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# SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIPS

- ❑ Finding scholarships
  - ❑ Use FREE websites
  - ❑ Ask around you for ideas: family, friends, past employers, places you've volunteered
  - ❑ Check local newspapers, organizations in your town
- ❑ Organize
  - ❑ Organize applications by deadlines, check if it says “postmarked by” or “received by”
  - ❑ On the first page of every application, list the deadline and all necessary materials on a sticky note!
- ❑ Prioritize
  - ❑ Prioritize scholarships offering the most funds, OR by local organizations with smaller applicant pools
- ❑ Writing essays
  - ❑ Have a theme!
  - ❑ Discuss discrepancies in record (grades, a year off, etc)
  - ❑ Share why you are personally drawn to the organization offering a scholarship
  - ❑ Save essays! You may be able to reuse or edit them and save yourself a lot of time!



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# GRE PREP



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# GRE PREPARATION

- ❑ Not all OT/OTA programs require the GRE for admission
- ❑ ETS a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance quality and equity in education
- ❑ ETS has many free GRE prep materials available through their website
- ❑ [https://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/about](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about)



# GRE PREPARATION RESOURCES

- ☐ Smartphone applications
  - ☐ Manhattan Prep | GRE Practice
  - ☐ GRE Prep & Practice by Magoosh
  - ☐ Varsity Tutors GRE Prep



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Q&A



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# BREAKOUT SESSIONS



#1. **Yemi Ogunbuyide**, Erin Donaire; Marlee Bates

#2. **Ashley Burks**, Carina Cabrera; Sabrina Pierre

#3. **Giovanna Marzano**, Adison Eisenberg; Grace Jasinski

#4. **Mina Kim**, Lizbeth Tlapa; Sandy Marin; Stella Carroll

#5. **Zeljana Antic**, Mixtli Rojas; Jasleen Alvarez; Sayra Rodriguez

#6. **Diamond Josephs**, Nitaya Williams; Jimena Vazquez

#7. **Araceli Urbina**, Alany Gonzalez; Eliza Alfonso

#8. **Anna Miller**, Maya Montavon; Jaylin Quintero; Ariana Avila

#9. **Jackie Rizzi**, Cecilee Burns

#10. **Sophie Meier**, Ava Engstrom; Lexie Rivera (gmail)

#11. **Kaylee Winkler**, Ximena Sanchez; Julia Kramper

#12. **Shae Madula**, Emma Gonwa; Halie Plaut

#13. **Lauren Frame**, Katherine Ptasnik; Hannah Roggensack

#14. **Juliette Giorgio**, Amanda Lee

#15. **Josel Solis**, Elena Jackson; Kamryn Celis; Abby Meneses

#16. **Grace Zoellick**, Lesly Toledo; Diana Gonzalez Zavala

#17. **Asfia Mohammed**, Paige Way; Antwan Elam

#18. **Ana Cinch**, Maya Dagamac; Nicole Muench

#19. **Samantha Benak**, Sasha Zweig

#20. **Hannah Vercellotti**, Abbey Tan

#21. **Olivia Rotelle**, Mallery Dirks; Olivia Samet

#22. **Annika Knuth**, Kaelyn Bonner; Marcela Vega

#23. **Debbie Patino Juarez**, Zzaje Jean; Avia McKinzie

#24. **Dustin Hogan**, Nicole Svartoiien; Daniel Lopez

#25. **Bryanna Johnson**, Mary Kate Halleran

#26. **Rocio Leon**, Krupa Patel; Fritz Nicklaus; Nathaniel Martinez

#27. **Sophie Masini**, Lia Velez; Sophia Simboli

#28. **Izabela Liszewski**, Talia Cottrell; Sloan Leyda; Ivana Donev

#29. **Lydia Schallenberg**, Avery Counihan; Genna Vilorio

#30. **Mycah Reiland**, Aileen Chesniak; Allison Fritz; Nicole Vlad

#31. **Bethany Keuter**, Faith Mrksic; Leah Renne

#32. **Caroline Bernstein**, Emily Klempa

#33. **Ashlie Broadhurst**, Karen Solis; Natalie Phornruangwong

#34. **Kayla De Cicco**, Haley Huber; Isabella Bedini

#35. **Ashley Hong**, Riley Dunlavy; Ashley London

#36. **Taeja Foster**, Alexandra Nita; Syaana Campbell

#37. **Kaitlyn Thornton**, Samantha Opalinski; James Spiller III; Lydia Hawkins

#38. **Annalisa Ranallo**, Lexie Rivera (illinois.edu)

#39. **Jacqueline Becker**, Leah Piotrowski

#40. **Gabriela Arteaga**, Sarah Phillips; Chèya Bishop

#41. **Emma Ospina**, Julia Fitzgerald; Olivia Allen

#42. **Katie Coakley**, Angelina Arellano; Kate Halbig

#43. **Asmaa Musleh**, Madison Allen

#44. **Kimberly Weinberg**, Samantha Serpico; Adriana Platt; Trista Geagan

#45. **AJ Olivares**, Ella Buzek; Laretta John; Sannie Ruan

#46. **Samantha Holton**, Madison Lockhart

#47. **Emma Lopez**, Yeili Luense

#48. **Madison Miller**, Stephanie Hu; Claire Black; Claudia Muchoki

#49. **McKenna Halverson**, Jocelyn Lagunas Vargas

#50. **Ruby Gates**, Nora McGovern; Molly Wallace; Kelli Hewitt

#51. **Nicole Karabas**, Christion Moore-Burks; Owusua Peprah

#52. **Kaj Patel**, Cesar Altamirano

#53. **Abigail Lapins**, Alicia Macleod

#54. **Olivia Kauffman**, Iveth Aguilera

#55. **Marissa Wayne**, Ella Ackerman; Wendy Perez

#56. **Jennifer Walberg**, Maegan Panes; Misael Reyes

#57. **Stephanie Olson**, Alexandria Hoger

#58. **Claudia Cirrincione**, Xochitl Sanchez

#59. **Hahnbit Lee**, Leslie Morales Rivera

#60. **Karolyn Keiken**, Allison Hellmers; Isabella Villalobos

#61. **Monika Robinson**, Amanda Polachek; Emily Neumann

#62. **Jenin Hasan**, Norah Britt; Mya Laster

#63. **Bridget Hahn**, Abigail Schrauben

#64. **Franny Fotopoulos**, Nicole Vlad



Thank you!

