



## 2020 NCOTA Election Bios

President-elect

*Nominee:* **Valerie Fox, OTR/L, PhD**

Dr. Valerie Fox graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008 with her Master's degree in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy and returned in 2011 to complete her PhD in Occupational Science. She currently works as an occupational therapist in inpatient psychiatry at the Durham VA Hospital. Valerie also completed the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Fellowship at the Durham VA, which focused on recovery-based mental health services for Veterans. She has also worked in acute care, skilled nursing rehabilitation, and a hospital-to-home transition program. Valerie has served on the NCOTA board for the past 5 years. Valerie previously served 2 terms as president of the board of Threshold, a psychosocial clubhouse.

In her role as NCOTA Mental Health Special Interest Section Co-Chair, she has partnered with colleagues and interdisciplinary leaders to enhance occupational therapy's presence in community-based mental health in NC and support the OT workforce. In this role, she has planned and led continuing education events, met with state and local legislatures to discuss needed policy changes, assisted with drafting comments for legislature review, and created marketing and educational materials for advocacy endeavors.

Valerie is incredibly passionate about the occupational therapy profession and strives to not only protect our profession's scope of practice, but ensure occupational therapy is included in all facets of the healthcare system for the betterment of our population. If elected, Valerie will continue to be an active voice at the state and national level for policy change to support OT practice; collaborate with the NCOTA Board to create a strategic plan of action to support advocacy efforts and growth of the organization; and promote and support NCOTA membership and networking among OT practitioners.

*Nominee:* **Bethany Pritchett, OTR/L**

Bethany began her career as an Occupational Therapy Assistant in 2001, and then received her MS in Occupational Therapy in 2013 from WSSU. Bethany has a diverse clinical background beginning in pediatrics, which evolved into a specialization in treating dysfunction in the older adult, and prepared her well for a career as a clinical leader in long term care. Bethany currently serves as Regional Director of Operations for Legacy Healthcare Services, and she is described by her teammates as “a leader with a selfless heart that is always striving to put her residents, employees, and customers first.” She also has a passion for student collaboration, taking special interest in new graduate development among OT practitioners here in NC, and promoting our profession in the continuum of care. She loves the field and looks forward to being involved in NCOTA.

Vice President

*Nominee:* **Melissa Hale, OTR/L**

Melissa received her BS in Occupational Therapy in 1998 from University of Hartford and currently completing her MBA at UNC Wilmington. She currently is serving as Senior Vice President of Operations for Legacy Healthcare Services, with greater than 20 years of experience working in the rehab field. She is described as a strategic leader with a caring heart and a thoughtful approach. She demonstrates the ability to take responsibility for projects while incorporating the staff needs and input.

Treasurer

*Nominee:* **Mary Bird, OTR/L**

Mary Bird has been an occupational therapist for thirty+ years. She earned a BS in Occupational Therapy from the University of North Dakota in 1985 and lives in Indian Trail, NC. Mary has worked in a variety of practice settings including school systems, hospital based/outpatient psychiatric services, rehab centers, and home health. She has managed several rehab departments, served as a corporate rehab manager, an area manager for a contracting company, and was the president of a rehab company that worked alongside the Office of Inspector General for rehab center regulatory surveys. She also had several departments that went through CARF Certification. She has now settled in the Home Health Realm serving patients that are homebound helping them to receive the care and therapy they need.

Continuing Education Co-Chair

*Nominee:* **Morgan Sawyer, OTR/L**

Morgan Sawyer received her MS in Occupational Therapy from UNC in 2017. She has extensive experience in coordinating and planning events in a vast array of settings and attendance levels, including fundraisers, continuing education opportunities, and social/professional networking events - including the 2019 & 2020 NCOTA Spring and Fall conferences! Morgan currently works as an early intervention clinician for the Raleigh Children's Developmental Services Agency. She is a member of NCOTA and AOTA. Morgan is excited about the possibility of continuing to service on the NCOTA board as a co-chair for the continuing education committee!

Nominee: **Charity Faragoi, COTA/L**

Charity completed her associate's degree as an Occupational Therapy Assistant in 2019. She is currently working with the Cumberland County School system. She is passionate about furthering the education of her fellow OT practitioners and community, as well as to the progression and enhancement of the career field. She is excited to serve as a member of NCOTA and looks forward to learning new skills while connecting practitioners throughout the state.

Special Interest Section Coordinator

Nominee: **Reeti Douglas, OTD, OTR/L**

Reeti Douglas received her BS in Occupational Therapy in 2001 from University of Texas Medical Branch and her post-professional doctorate degree in 2017 from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions. She has 19 years of experience as an OT in a variety of pediatric areas including outpatient, inpatient, home health, aquatics, wound clinics, burn clinics, hand clinics, sports medicine clinics, and special needs camps. She established the pediatric hand therapy program at Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin, TX and was the founding occupational therapist for the pediatric occupational therapy sports medicine program at Scottish Rite for Children Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center in Frisco, TX. Reeti has been invited to speak at national and state conferences in her areas of expertise including pediatric sports medicine and pediatric hand therapy. She has taught in occupational therapy programs at three universities and is currently the doctoral capstone coordinator and assistant professor at Wingate University. Her wide variety of experiences working with many different occupational therapists in these varied settings has provided Reeti with the knowledge and experience to work well with different groups of people. She recently became a member of NCOTA's diversity, equity, and inclusion committee and wishes to become further involved with NCOTA. Reeti describes herself as a very organized team player that is passionate about advocating for occupational therapy and mentoring occupational therapists in their areas of interest. She has loved her first year of living and working in North Carolina and is excited for this NCOTA opportunity!