

## **Salus University Speech-Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy Students Unite with Arcadia University**

**Elkins Park, Pa. –** The Hafter Student Community Center on the Salus University Elkins Park, Pennsylvania campus was a hub of collaboration recently. Physical Therapy (PT) students from Arcadia University joined with first-year students from Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) and Occupational Therapy (OT) at Salus to learn how to work together for the benefit of their patients.

For the past several years, students from the two universities, which represent the allied health and physical health and rehab disciplines that work with one another in various healthcare settings and schools, have gathered at Salus to collaborate and learn. This year, almost 200 students, including 40 SLP and 55 OT students from Salus and more than 80 PT students from Arcadia participated in the interprofessional educational event.

“I don’t think these students have ever had the opportunity to interface with students who are in the same life phase that they are but in different professions,” said Jessica Denniston, PT, DPT, NCS, assistant professor in Arcadia’s PT department. “So, this is a really nice opportunity for them to learn about what other students are learning in other allied health professions.”

The Arcadia students were all hybrid and have conducted only part-time clinical experiences totaling no more than 20 hours over the course of the semester, according to Dr. Denniston. She also added this was the first time the students got to initiate collaboration and not just observe it.

The session’s objectives included:

- Identifying roles and responsibilities of disciplines (PT, OT, and SLP) in patient-centered care.
- Teaching and demonstrating a skill to the students of another healthcare discipline.
- Observing and learning a skill from students of other healthcare disciplines.
- Gaining an increased value and commitment to interprofessional collaboration.

According to Robert Serianni, MS, CCC-SLP, FNAP, Salus SLP department chair and program director, the interprofessional event is designed to be an authentic experience for the students and is based on a real client from the Speech-Language Institute (SLI) and the pro bono PT clinic on Arcadia’s campus.

“Vannie is an actual client and we’ve presented her medical history and done sample evaluations and the students were responsible for reviewing all of those prior to the event,” said Serianni. “The idea is that through Vannie, they’re going to discuss their different roles and responsibilities as practitioners.”

According to Dr. Denniston, Arcadia has joined Salus for this event for the past five or six years and she has always received positive feedback from students who participated.

“They really like the opportunity to interface with students who are like them but also different from them,” she said. “I feel very good about the experience that we’ve been able to co-create with Salus.”

###

### **About Salus University**

Salus University, founded as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1919, today is a diversified, globally recognized professional academic center of learning that offers a wide range of degree programs in the professions of Optometry, Audiology, Physician Assistant, Blindness and Low Vision Studies, Biomedicine, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology and Orthotics and Prosthetics. Salus operates three clinical facilities in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties that provide highly specialized vision, hearing and balance and speech-language pathology. The University has more than 1,200 students, and more than 14,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit [www.salus.edu](http://www.salus.edu).