

Creighton, Regis announce historic partnership for online occupational therapy doctoral degree program

For Immediate Release: Jan. 14, 2015

OMAHA, Neb. — Creighton University in Omaha and Regis University in Denver will this fall embark upon an historic partnership between the two Jesuit universities to provide a joint occupational therapy doctoral degree program.

The Creighton Regis Occupational Therapy Collaboration is the first and only partnership of its kind among Jesuit universities, but not the first time Creighton has partnered with another institution of higher learning to provide similar educational opportunities. In 2008, Creighton launched a hybrid learning collaboration for entry-level doctor of occupational therapy (OTD) students at the University of Alaska at Anchorage to address a shortage of occupational therapy practitioners in Alaska. The greater Rocky Mountain region faces a comparable shortage of occupational therapy professionals.

Students from Regis will begin the path to their OTD degrees with all didactic coursework being undertaken online, taught and administered by Creighton faculty and staff, respectively. Laboratory components of the curriculum and experiential learning will be completed on the Regis campus and at other locations around the State of Colorado. Throughout the program, students will have ready access to academic support and career mentoring from Creighton faculty. At the successful conclusion of the program, students will earn a Creighton University diploma.

“We are immensely pleased to set out on this new partnership together with a fellow Jesuit institution,” said J. Chris Bradberry, Pharm.D., dean of the Creighton School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. “To be able to train a new generation of practitioners and leaders to serve Colorado and the greater Rocky Mountain region in the occupational therapy discipline is a great trust Creighton and Regis have willingly and solemnly accepted. We look forward to a fruitful partnership that can benefit the people of Colorado, the nation and the world.”

Applications are now being accepted for the Creighton Regis Occupational Therapy Collaboration, which is the only program offering an entry-level OTD degree in Colorado. The Creighton Regis Collaboration will admit a small cohort of 18 to 20 students each year. Creighton’s was the first entry-level OTD degree program in the nation. Creighton has sustained its sterling reputation as a leader in the fields of distance learning and health profession education, which began in 2001 with the nation’s first Internet-based distance Doctor of Pharmacy degree pathway.

Susan Scherer, PT, Ph.D., associate dean of the Rueckert-Hartman College for Health Professions at Regis, said Regis is excited to offer this unique online program to Colorado-based

students, especially in light of the growing need in the Rocky Mountain region and the demand for more occupational therapists. A Bureau of Labor Statistics study predicts more than 30,000 new occupational therapist jobs will be created by 2022.

“There is a real and growing need for occupational therapists, and this program will help create some of the best practitioners in the country, right here in Colorado,” Scherer said. “Both Regis and Creighton have a firm commitment to academic excellence, so combining our respective strengths will greatly benefit our students.”

Creighton’s Chair of Occupational Therapy, Keli Mu, Ph.D., OTR/L, said the collaboration with Regis is another welcome step for the University’s online health professions degree programs. As with Creighton’s other online programs, the digital component, he said, is meant to be as engaging and compelling as classroom instruction.

“Our goal is to create a learning environment that mirrors, as closely as possible, what the students would experience on Creighton’s campus,” Mu said. “With the prestige of our online programs at Creighton and the reputation enjoyed by the faculty, staff and students at Regis, we want our students to feel equally at home and a part of both campuses.”

To learn more about the collaboration, request information, or apply to the program, visit <https://spahp.creighton.edu/admission/otd/doctor-occupational-therapy-program>.