



CAOT Volunteer Program *Get Involved!*

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it's enjoyable and
it's important.

Sandra Hobson

CAOT Representative on the Joint Accreditation Committee of the Occupational Therapist Assistant and Physiotherapist Assistant Program Education Accreditation Program

Sandra's story

Not everyone embraces change and fewer still are willing to take on the heavy work to make it happen. Sandra Hobson enjoys both. She has been a CAOT representative on the Joint Accreditation Committee (JAC) since its inception. Actually before - as part of the initial advisory committee for devising standards. At JAC, representatives from CAOT and PEAC (accreditors for physiotherapy education) review and make recommendations regarding OTA/PTA education programs and standards. As a relatively new process, the learning curve is steep and the degree of change constant. The meetings take place twice a year for two days each, once in the East and once in the West. Prep for the meetings can be 150-200 pages of reading and tasks include in-depth review of applications for candidacy status, evaluation of progress reports for programs recently accredited and follow ups. It's a continuous quality improvement process.

Sandra feels that "The work is all worth it because it's enjoyable and it's important. You feel that you're contributing, that you're making a difference, assuring potential students and their parents that the OTA/PTA programs are really good quality programs."

"It's really interesting work and very important work. You know, the way health care is moving OTs really need to be able to assign work to OT Assistants and rely on them, and the better their education, the more confidence OTs can have in doing that. And the education preparation of these individuals is really rigorous, thorough and impressive."

Later she notes "It's delightful to see that grow and to see the wonderful strength of collaboration and the degree of good care we can offer with a good OT/OTA collaboration. So that's very exciting, to be a part of that.

While many of the JAC members have served on the JAC for some years, there is a recent graduate from an OTA/PTA program on the committee right now who is "there to talk through that student lens." A public member further broadens the group's perspective.

When asked what she gains by participating on the JAC, Sandra summarizes that "it's a broad, thoughtful process. You just learn a lot. And constantly learning is also very stimulating and, the people are just lovely. So you enjoy the time together. It's a committee I really enjoy. I value the participation on that committee."

Sandra is the 2016 recipient of CAOT's Dr. Helen P. LeVesconte award for exceptional volunteerism, and the JAC received the 2017 CAOT Award of Merit acknowledging significant contributions to the profession, so Sandra's CAOT volunteer pedigree is a long and venerable one. That doesn't mean she isn't having fun though. When asked about what she enjoys while serving on the JAC, Sandra doesn't hesitate "the good thing is, when we get together for these meetings we have lots of work to do but they feed us very nicely ... we all look forward to the dinner!

CAOT thanks Sandra Hobson for sharing her volunteer story with us.

