



## The Academy is leading the way to develop a clear path for the future of O&P research.

### Your Academy is working for you.

 Identifying top researchers

 Facilitating a significant O&P research meeting

 Taking a stand on encroachment

#### Future Funding for O&P Research

**The Academy, as part of the O&P Alliance, facilitated and participated in a meeting last month with several government agencies, researchers, and O&P specialists.** This Alliance Researcher Meeting was the brainchild of Academy Past-President Jason Highsmith, PT, DPT, PhD, CP, FAAOP, who worked closely with Peter Thomas, General Counsel for the [O&P Alliance](#), and Academy Interim Executive Director Chellie Blondes to gather experts to discuss future research opportunities for the O&P profession. Representatives from the National Science Foundation ([NSF](#)), National Institutes of Health ([NIH](#)), Veterans Administration ([VA](#)), National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research ([NIDILRR](#)), and the Department of Defense ([DOD](#)) met with representatives from the O&P community to discuss future funding opportunities for O&P research.

The Academy was represented by Jared Howell, MS, CPO, FAAOP. Other meeting participants included David Boone, BSPO, MPH, PhD, and Geza Kogler, PhD, CO. Jim Campbell, PhD, CO, FAAOP, and Tom Fise, JD, represented AOPA. Jim Wynne, CPO, FAAOP, represented ABC. This meeting created a venue for transparent discussions about how each federal organization views O&P research, the areas of interest within O&P research, and future funding opportunities.

#### Identifying Top O&P Researchers

As a result of the Researcher Meeting, the Academy took a lead role in developing a list of top O&P researchers who are qualified to serve as grant and proposal reviewers. The Academy worked with Jason Highsmith and Jim Campbell to refine the list of more than 40 researchers. The list has been sent to the agencies that took part in the Researcher Meeting and will be maintained by the Academy.

#### Taking a Stand on Encroachment and Finding Success

Last month, the Academy worked with [NCOPE](#), [ABC](#), and the [O&P Alliance](#) to address serious concerns created by the proposed [Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in Assistive Technology](#). We requested that references to orthotics and prosthetics be removed from these standards and that the assistive technology (AT) professional's role as it relates to orthotic and prosthetic care be more clearly defined in a revised set of standards. The Academy encouraged the [CAAHEP](#) Standards Committee to recommend to the [CAAHEP](#) Board of Directors that the current proposed standards be disapproved.

The Academy and ABC, each sponsors of O&P education at CAAHEP, partnered with NCOPE to create a platform for O&P professionals to make comments opposing the inclusion of "orthotics" and "prosthetics" in the proposed Assistive Technology Standards. CAAHEP received over 1,000 comments during the public comment period. Thank you to all who participated.

Academy representatives participated in an Open Hearing on the Assistive Technology Standards on July 22 to reiterate our concerns. We are pleased to report that we were successful in having the language in the [RESNA standards](#) changed to reflect the recommendations of NCOPE, ABC, and the Academy. The revised standards clearly identify orthotics and prosthetics as a separate interventional service and more clearly define the assistive technology professional's role.

**The Academy is committed to leading advocacy efforts to help protect the interests of O&P education, research, and clinical practice. We will keep you updated on developments with these ongoing issues. As always, we welcome your [feedback](#).**

