

2026-2027 OPTA Student Special Interest Group (SSIG) Monthly Meeting Meeting Minutes - Thursday, September 3, 2026

Attendees –

Kevin Adair; Alexis Baker; Kylie Baker; Brady Bly; Emma Brown; Kylie Burke; Carmina Ciccarelli-Aloisi; Callie Croom; Kaleigh Desmond; Sabrina Doll; Ada Donelan; Sam Duvall; Dylan Evans; Erin Flaherty; Elizabeth Foreman; Alex Gainer; Regina Habedank; Annette Hall ; Isaiah Helphinstine; Mattie Lacy; Samantha Mazzeo; Lily McDonald; Sophia Meese; Emily Murphy; Amanda Osorio; Gracyn Phillips; Kyle Poppe; John Rick; Angelica Riddle-Lash; Hannah Robinson; Maria Staubach; Dani Stewart; Sydney Stewart; Elizabeth Stolle; Mason Wahoff; Rebecca Weinel; Cassandra; Cotey; Madison

Student SIG PT Chair Emily Murphy, SPT welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the 2026-2027 academic year.

- Members of the Student SIG Board then introduced themselves and their roles on the Board.

Guest Speaker: **Dr. Erin Hofmeyer**, Mount St. Joseph University

OPTA Student Involvement and advocacy

- APTA and OPTA
 - OPTA represents 3800 of over 100k APTA members
- Impact of associations
 - Advance and protect profession
 - Unified voice in public policy and advocacy
 - Produce content and spread research/data
 - Facilitate networking
 - Lead the profession into the future
- Involvement in the OPTA/APTA at a younger age can lead to lifelong and opportunities as a professional
- Participation in can be active and passive - both are effective
 - Networking
 - Absorbing information
- Introduction of OPTA Leadership
 - They are all there for you and for the profession
- OPTA districts
 - Geographical districts that represent localized programming of OPTA goals

Student Membership Benefits

- OPTA committees
- OPTA Elevate
 - Reduced pricing for events
 - Advanced professional resources

The Advocacy continuum

- Not a linear process
- Relies on students heavily to advocate for themselves and the profession
- APTA advocacy app
 - Advocacy for state and national levels
 - Consider inviting a legislator to campus

Federal Advocacy Engagement

- Dr. Hofmeyer focuses on payment reform
- Why federal advocacy matters
 - PT relevance, PT access, and scope
- Current federal policies
 - Payment reform, administrative burden
- APTA federal advocacy infrastructure
 - Gov affairs team, FALs, key contacts
- Attend Capitol Hill Day

State Advocacy Priorities

- OPTA Website

Actionable Strategies for Students

- Start early, build leadership skills, student opportunities
 - Lifelong advocacy habits
 - Leadership skills and networks
 - Fresh perspectives/energy
 - APTA student assembly
 - Volunteer for local campaigns
 - Student advocacy committees
- OPTA Opportunities
 - State affairs committee
 - OPTA action alerts
 - Attend advocacy day
 - Engage with social media campaigns
 - @ohiopta on Instagram
- Building legislator relationships
 - Getting started
 - Identify who your reps are @legislature.ohio.gov
 - Signup for their newsletters
 - Making contact
 - Email - brief and personal, specific questions
 - Phone - to district office, ask to speak with health representative
 - in person - office visits, coffee meetings, town halls
 - Social media - thoughtful comments, relevant content
- Contributing to PT-PAC
 - Why giving matters...
 - PAC funds pro-PT candidates, not personal enrichment

Resources, Tools, and Your Advocacy Roadmap

- Recommended reading and learning
 - APTA advocacy training modules
 - State government websites
 - Health policy podcasts
 - Follow leaders on social media
- Skill development
 - Public speaking practice
 - Writing workshops
 - Health policy courses
 - Coalition building training

Questions:

- What are the biggest advocacy wins she has seen?
 - Direct Access
 - Licensure compact
- What advice would you give to someone who is nervous to network?
 - Bring a friend
 - Go to someone you know you can trust and build from there
 - OPTA is a supporting group

KAHOOT TRIVIA

Attendees closed the meeting answering questions about their program, practice interests, and knowledge of OPTA.