

2026 NCOTA Annual Conference

Onsite Program

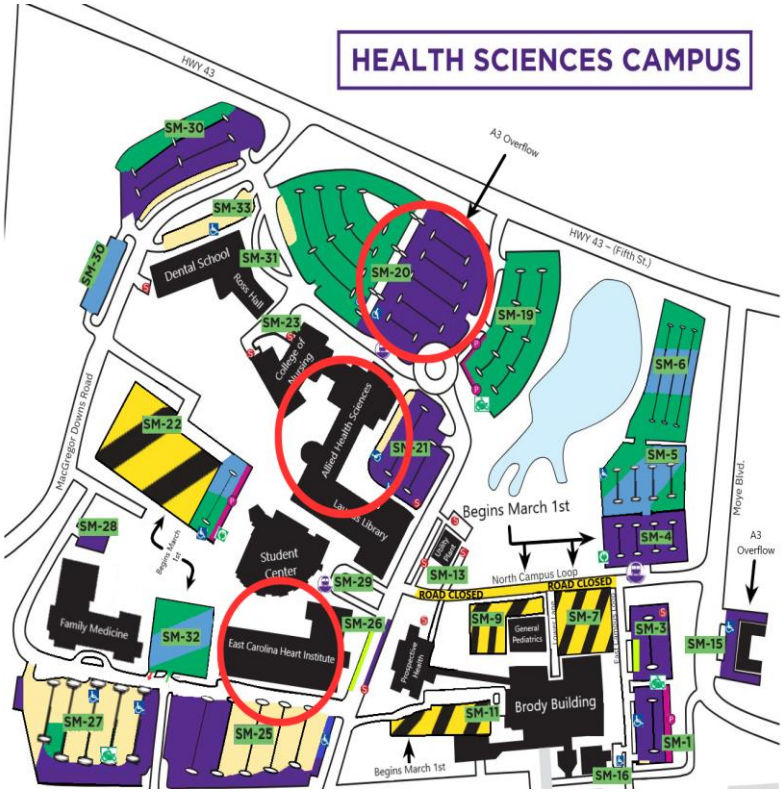
September 18-19, 2026

East Carolina University - Greenville, NC

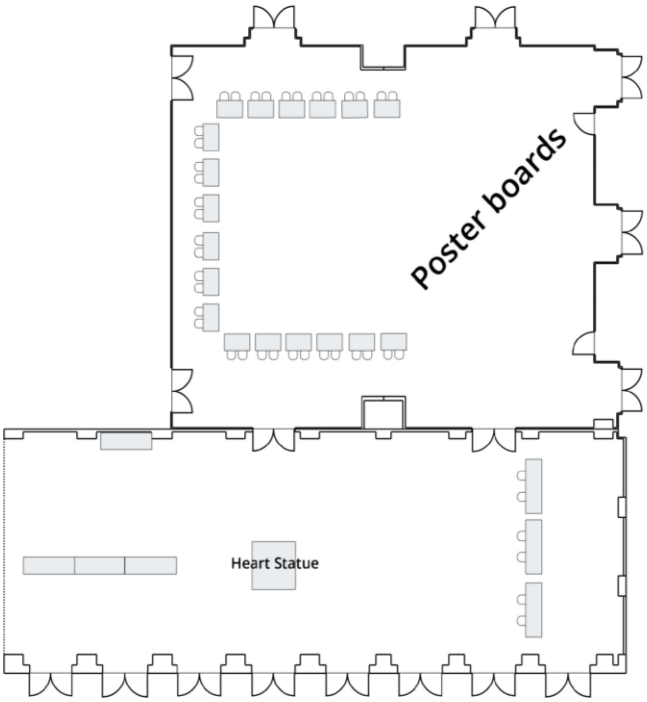
NCOTA

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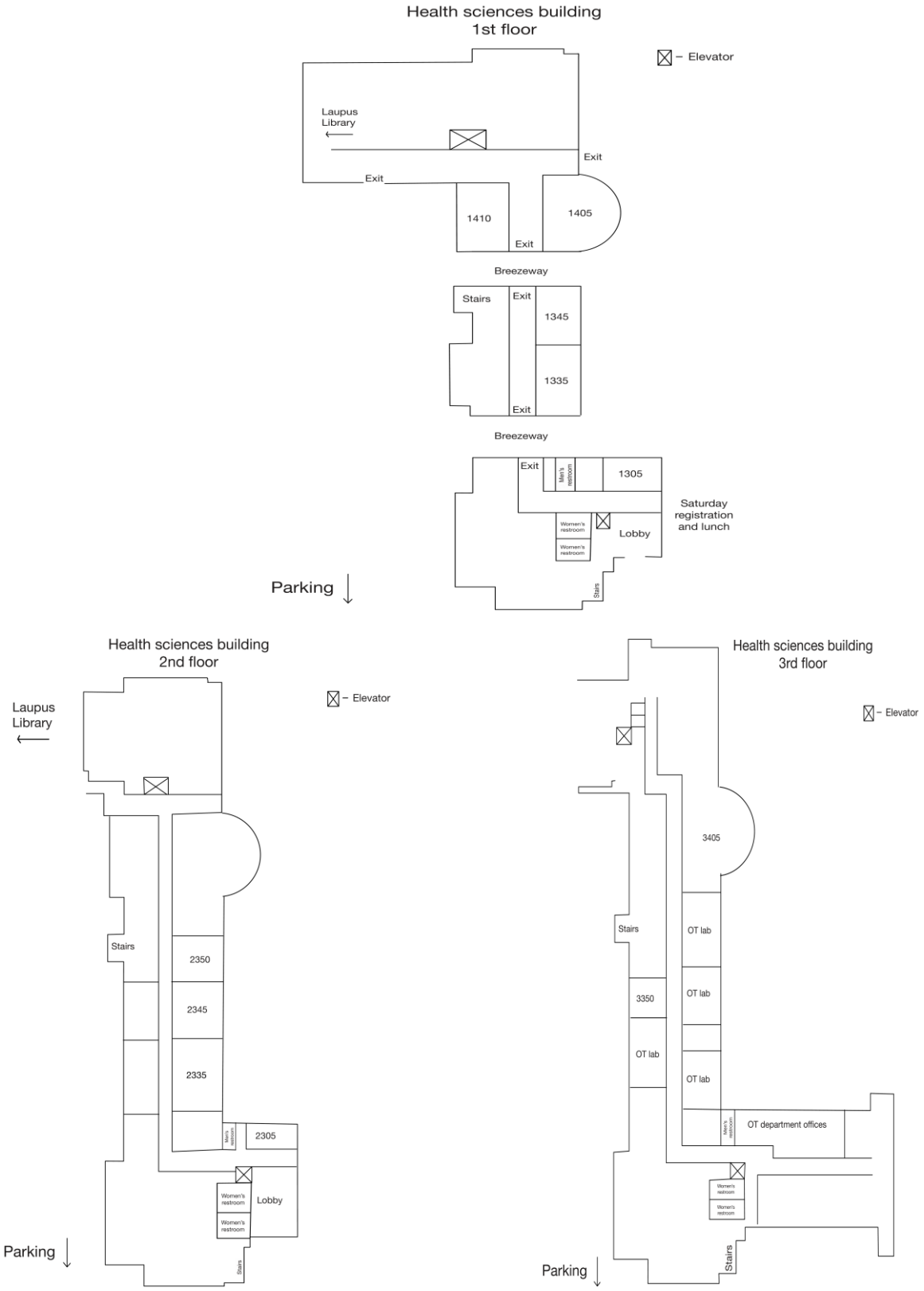
Campus & Building Maps



East Carolina Heart Institute (ECHI)
Friday, 7:00 am – 12:00 pm



Allied Health Sciences Building
Friday, 12:00-6:00 pm



Parking, Accessibility, Registration & Food

Parking and Accessibility

Parking is monitored. NCOTA Conference parking is assigned to lot SM-20 in the A3 Overflow. ADA accessible parking is available in the SM-20 lot.

A golf cart, wheelchairs, and volunteer guides are available upon request. If you have any accessibility requests or needs during the conference, please visit the conference registration table where volunteers will be available to assist.

Registration and Food

The registration table will be located in the East Carolina Heart Institute (ECHI) lobby.

Coffee and tea will be provided throughout the day on Friday. Menu options will include accommodations for attendees who indicated dietary restrictions during registration.

Box lunches will be provided for attendees who registered prior to September 5. Box lunches will be available for pickup in the Allied Health Sciences building lobby at 12:00 pm, a short walk from the ECHI.

NCOTA Logo Design Competition

Congratulations to Tracey Russell, BS-OTA Class of 2028 from Methodist University, this year's NCOTA Logo Design Competition Winner!





Friday, September 18 Schedule

7:30 – 8:00 am | Registration and Breakfast

ECHI Lobby

Continental Breakfast

8:00 – 8:30 am | Opening Plenary (0.5 CEU)

ECHI Auditorium

Welcome to the NCOTA Annual Conference
Swetal Thaker, MS, OTR/L, and Katie Jones, EdD, OTR/L, CLT-LANA, CWT — NCOTA Continuing Education Co-Chairs

Welcome from the NCOTA President
Charley Cross, MS, OTR/L — NCOTA President

Behind the Scenes with Your NCOTA Lobbyist
Ashley Perkinson, JD — NCOTA Lobbyist

8:30 – 9:00 am | NCOTA Award Presentations (0.5 CEU)

ECHI Auditorium

Outstanding Practice Award in Mental Health

Distinguished OTA Award

Presidential Award

9:00 – 10:00 am | Keynote Address (1.0 CEU)

ECHI Auditorium

The Courage to Uphold Humanity: Reimagining Occupational Therapy Through Building Community, Connection, and Collective Action
Arameh Anvarizadeh, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA — AOTA Board President (2025–2028)

10:00 – 10:30 am | Find Your People Networking Session

ECHI Auditorium

Find Your People Networking Session

10:30 am – 12:00 pm | Exhibitor Hall & Poster Sessions (0.75 each (up to 1.5 total) CEU)

ECHI Conference Rooms & Lobby

The Exhibitor Hall and Poster Sessions run concurrently. Plan your route if hoping to visit more than one; CEU credit is awarded per area actually visited (0.75 hour each, up to 1.5 total).

Thank you to this year's exhibitors:

- **Broad River Rehab (Silver Tier Sponsor)**
- Continuum Therapy Partners
- Duke Health
- ECU Health
- **Juzo (Silver Tier Sponsor)**
- **Liberty Health (Silver Tier Sponsor)**
- MUSC (Medical University of South Carolina)
- National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT)
- Numotion
- Obi Robot – Desin LLC
- Principle Long Term Care
- Therapy Smarts
- UNC Health



12:00 – 1:00 pm | Lunch

Pick up in the Allied Health Sciences Building lobby



1:00 – 3:00 pm | Concurrent Workshops (2.0 CEU)

#	Session	Speaker(s)	Room
A	Feeding with Understanding: Autism, Sensory Needs, and Mealtime Success	Kimberly Holt, OTD OTR/L; Kalyn Moeller, MS OTR/L	1335
B	Reframing Pediatric Behavior Through the Lens of Sensory, Regulation, and Executive Function	Brittni Winslow MS, OTR/L	1345
C	Visual Assessment Protocol for the Neuro Population in Acute Care and Functional Implications for Driving	Gina M. Garriss MS, OTR/L CBIS; Helen Houston MS, OTR/L	1410
D	Utilizing Genograms to Explore Family's Sensory, Occupational, and Emotional Inheritance	Shannon Preto, OTR/L	2305
E	Addressing Sleep in Behavioral Health: OT Approaches and Collaboration	Allison L. Taylor, OTD, OTR/L, CPRP	2330
F	The Value of Strengths-Based Occupational Therapy Practice for Autistic Adults	Sharon Eva	2350



3:15 – 4:15 pm | Advocacy Updates & Everyday Advocacy (1.0 CEU)

Room 1410

Advocacy Updates & Everyday Advocacy

Dawn M. Solomon, OTD, MS, OTR/L — Q&A Panelist: Dr. Arameh Anvarizadeh

4:30 – 6:00 pm | Concurrent Sessions (1.5 CEU)

#	Session	Speaker(s)	Room
A	Limb Loss to Life Participation: OT's Role in Prosthetic Rehabilitation	Karen Ambrose, OTR/L; Sierra Ruggiero, OTD, OTR/L, CNS	1335
B	Grounded in Nature, Rooted in Regulation: Nature-Based Pediatric OT	Josie Samuelian Bruno, OTD; Lauren Clark, OTR/L	1345
C	The Process and Framework of Integrating an Interprofessional Student-Run Clinic	Rachel Taylor, OTD, OTR/L; Christine Lysaght, PT, PhD, FNAP, CSCS; Rebekah Siekierski, OTS; Zola Sheek, OTS; Ainsley Kidwell, PTS; Haley Briles, PTS	1410
D	From policy to practice: Ethical leadership to support students with disabilities	Pamela Kasyan-Howe, OTD, OTR/L, EdS	2305
E	Interdisciplinary clinical collaboration between OT and Nursing programs at UNCP.	Jose Rafols, EdD, OTD, MHSA, OTR/L; Stanley Paul PhD, MD, OTR/L	2330
F	Promoting Student Success in Fieldwork Education	Caroline Andrews, OTD, MS, OTR/L; Helen Houston, MS, OTR/L	2335
G	Living after Surviving: The Critical Care Recovery Center at Duke University Hospital	Louise (Meg) Williamson, OTR/L, BCPR	2350

Keynote Speaker

Arameh Anvarizadeh, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA



Dr. Arameh Anvarizadeh, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA is a Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy and former Director of Admissions at the USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. As the architect of USC Chan's holistic admissions process, Dr. Anvarizadeh led transformative efforts that resulted in the most diverse cohorts in the Division's history all while preserving rigorous and effective admissions standards. Her leadership has also been pivotal in strengthening recruitment and retention strategies, creating pathway programs, and promoting inclusive pedagogy.

A Founding Member and former Chair of the Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD), Dr. Anvarizadeh has been a driving force in advancing justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-oppression within the occupational therapy profession. She is the visionary behind many of COTAD's cornerstone initiatives, including COTAD Chapters, the COTAD Toolkit, the Ignite Series, and the Fieldwork Task Force.

Dr. Anvarizadeh made history as the youngest and the first Black and Iranian woman to serve as Vice President of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and to be inducted into the prestigious Roster of Fellows (FAOTA). She made history again with her landslide election as AOTA President, a role she officially assumed in July 2025.

In addition to her current role as AOTA President, Dr. Anvarizadeh has held numerous national leadership positions, including Chair of the Credential Review and Accountability Committee (CRAC), member of the Representative Assembly Leadership Committee (RALC), member of the Governance Task Force, and liaison between the Governance and DEI Task Forces. She also served on the AOTA Special Task Force on Entry-Level Education and was a key contributor to the national dialogue on entry-level degree requirements. Dr. Anvarizadeh is a proud alumna of the 2020 Executive Leadership Program for Multicultural Women.

In her home state of California, she has been recognized with the Janice Matsutsuyu Outstanding Service Award and the Vision Award from the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC). She previously served as OTAC's Communications Chair for seven years and contributed to various committees, including Advocacy and Government Affairs and Conference Planning.

An accomplished author and dynamic speaker, Dr. Anvarizadeh has presented at numerous state, national, and international conferences, delivering keynotes, lectures, and commencement addresses. She has authored multiple peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and is a contributing editor to the recently published book Occupational Identity.

Most recently, Dr. Anvarizadeh is embracing her most meaningful role yet: motherhood. She is intentional about honoring this life shift, leaning into her community, and nurturing balance. Deeply passionate about building sustainable, healthy, and inclusive communities, she continues to champion equity, empowerment, and advocacy. Through her work and heart-centered leadership, she inspires others to discover, cultivate, and amplify their fullest potential.


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