Wayne State University researcher elected to the American Occupational Therapy Foundation’s Academy of Research

(Detroit, Mich.) Dr. Cathy Lysack, Associate Professor in the Institute of Gerontology and the Department of Health Sciences in the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Wayne State University, is being honored on April 20, 2007 by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation. She has been elected to the Foundation’s Academy of Research, an elite distinction being given to her for her extensive research in advancing knowledge in occupational therapy.

Dr. Lysack of Windsor, Ontario, is being honored for her work on the social, cultural and environmental factors that can facilitate or restrict community participation and social inclusion of older adults and persons with disabilities in society. Her long-term goal is to contribute to emerging models and theories about community formation and provide useful knowledge to policy-makers who hold the power to significantly improve conditions for those living with chronic illness and disability.

"Dr. Lysack is an exceptional scholar and original thinker, whose work is challenging conventional notions about the impact of disabilities on community integration," commented Dr. Peter Lichtenberg, director of WSU’s Institute of Gerontology. The rehabilitation process considers how to help patients with drastically altered bodies, but that is very individual and patient-centered. Dr. Lysack and her research team are taking this a step further and looking at how to prepare patients to return to communities and society.

“Dr. Lysack’s work is revolutionary,” stated Dr. Gloria Heppner, WSU’s interim vice president for Research. “There have been few studies that examine community reintegration of older adults and persons with disabilities in society. She and her research team are looking beyond the traditional approach of focusing largely on the individual. Her research will bring voice to the issues considered most significant to people with disabilities and someday will add flexibility to possible resolutions,” Dr. Heppner added.

The Academy of Research was started in 1989 by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation to recognize those whose outstanding contributions through research have served to advance knowledge in occupational therapy. The American Occupational Therapy Foundation works to implement, strengthen and constantly refine its vision of a just and equitable society that is welcoming and accessible to all individuals and fosters dignity and independence for everyone.

Wayne State University is one of the nation’s pre-eminent public research universities in an urban setting. Through its multidisciplinary approach to research and education, and its ongoing collaboration with government, industry and other institutions, the university seeks to enhance economic growth and improve the quality of life in the city of Detroit, state of Michigan and throughout the world.  

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