The Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Research Foundation (OPERF)

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Why is research important to O&P?

- We strive to be a profession
  - So, what does it mean to be a “profession?”

“A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others. It is inherent in the definition of a profession that a code of ethics governs the activities of each profession.”

~ Australian Council of Professions
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• **Characteristics of a profession**
  - Acquisition of specialized knowledge
  - Development of a unique set of skills
  - Provision of ethical service to others
  - Self-regulation in the methods of service
Why is research important to O&P?

• A body of knowledge derived from...
  – Research
  – Education
  – Training

• Knowledge requires research
  – Who takes ownership of this need?
  – If we do not, can we truly call this “our profession?”
What are the most pressing needs?

• **Priorities**
  – We need to make research important

• **Education**
  – We need to create a culture of understanding

• **Motivation**
  – We need to find those who are interested and capable

• **Opportunity**
  – We need to encourage research to be done
Research Foundations

• **Organizations that serve the community**
  – Advance science and research
  – Create research and educational opportunities

• **Examples**
  – Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation
  – Foundation for PM&R
  – Foundation for Physical Therapy
  – American Occupational Therapy Foundation
  – The Center for O&P Learning and Outcomes
  – O&P Education and Research Foundation (OPERF)
O&P Education and Research Foundation

- Independent foundation for scientific research & education
  - Advance O&P education and research
    - Sponsor awards for deserving individuals and institutions
  - Raise the standards of science, research, and education
    - Develop a foundation of quality research in O&P
    - Cultivate a community of experienced educators
    - Promote, support, and stimulate research and education

www.operf.org
What is OPERF doing?

- **Promote**
  - Provide research education
    - Community
    - Applicants
  - Advocate for award recipients
    - Presentation
    - Publication
  - Lead by example
    - Collaboration with other O&P organizations
    - Elevate perceptions

“Bad research is better than no research”
What is OPERF doing?

- **Support**
  - Recruit funds to support O&P research
  - Sponsor awards across the continuum
    - Top-down/Bottom-Up
      - Residents
      - Graduate Students
      - Clinicians
      - Investigators
  - Appropriate support for appropriate research
    - More than $100,000 in awards
What is OPERF doing?

- **Stimulate**
  - Research is expensive
    - NIH pilot grants (R03) = $50k/year
    - NIH research grants (R01) = 250k-500k/year
  - Research is evolutionary
    - Needs to grow from within
  - Created a three-tier seeding program
    - Resident travel awards ($1,000)
    - Graduate fellowships ($5,000)
    - Investigator initiated small grants ($25,000)
What next?

- **We need to develop research priorities**
  - Foundational research
  - Applied research
  - Translational research
  - Outcomes research
    - Comparative effectiveness

- **Industry collaborations**
  - Partnerships can be mutually beneficial
  - Independent, but targeted research

- **Build the body of knowledge in O&P**
  - Demonstrate that we are indeed a profession
www.opertf.org