The UMSL College of Optometry provides a variety of programs, courses, and organizations to assist students to become successful independent professionals. The track of practice management courses, the Student Association for Independent Optometry, the MOA Industry Alliance, the MOF speaker series and the UMSL Chapter of the American Academy of Optometry, provide students with many opportunities to hone their business acumen. Supplementing those are lectures by successful local contact lens specialists Drs. Carmen Castellano and David Seibel ('87). This is a fascinating story about how success can be achieved when you pair an optometry student eager to pursue independent optometry with a successful, multi-talented, and open-minded independent private practitioner who is willing to take risks in order to achieve long-term gains. It is also the story of how invaluable the College of Optometry's 4th year clinical externships are in allowing students the flexibility of setting up rotations in private practices which, as will be discussed, resulted in two excellent young UMSL graduates finding a very rewarding home for their optometric career.

It all started in the late 1990s not long after Dr. Scott Tomasino, who had been a long-time Director of Contact Lens Services for St. Louis Eye Clinic, had moved his St. Louis based practice to O’Fallon, changing the business name to Iverson-Tomasino Eyecare. A first year student, Robert Goerss ('01), approached him at a social gathering with a desire to observe at this office. The rest, of course, is history, as Dr. Tomasino relates: “He was interested in observing at my O’Fallon office and I was happy to have him out, to show prospective and current optometry students that private practice optometry is alive and well.” Dr. Goerss, who became very active with both the St. Louis Optometric Society and the Missouri Optometric Association during his years at UMSL concurs: “During the summer of my first and second year I worked as a technician in an HMO optometry health clinic where I met Scott Tomasino at a Christmas party. We instantly determined that we had a lot in common as we discussed stereo equipment and music. At the beginning of my second year I started working at Vision Care Consultants with Drs. David Seibel and Rex Ghormley. I did a private practice clinical rotation in his office during my fourth year and was offered a job upon graduation. I was able to bring my work experience and personal skills that I had gained while working through school to Scott’s
practice, making my addition to the practice immediately more valuable.

It is at this time that Dr. Tomasino had the foresight to take a risk that continues to serve as a template for any successful independent practitioner to consider adopting as he relates. "I wasn't quite ready for a full time doctor, but I decided to invest in Robert by paying him a full time salary and having him do other projects with his additional time when he wasn't seeing patients. This included implementing an office-wide computer system as well as working on marketing and promotional projects. Within 3-5 years his practice matured and his schedule was filling up. Not long after we arranged for Robert to buy half of the business (Dr. Iverson was retiring) and we became equal partners in the practice. This has worked well for all of us and is a blueprint for any future partners who might buy in," Dr. Goerss concours. My aggressiveness and drive to grow the office and Scott's years of multi-disciplinary experience created a great balance for our partnership does not end with Scott and Robert. As my clinical rotations were coming to an end, Drs. Tomasino and Goerss and I reconnected with the focus of the office to remain on the quality of care that our patients receive.

It is important to emphasize that these two successful optometrists have many common bonds which they feel helps them to be a successful team. First, they are both leaders and have been recognized as such. Dr. Tomasino has served both as Past President of the St. Louis Optometric Society and as a member of the board of directors for the Heart of America Contact Lens and Primary Care Society. Dr. Goerss was awarded both the 2004 Missouri Optometric Association Young Optometrist of the Year, and the 2011 St. Louis Optometric Society Optometrist of the Year. He was also a Past-President of the St. Louis Optometric Society, and serves as an Executive Board Member/Trustee of the Missouri Optometric Association. Dr. Goerss had a background that included professional photography whereas everyone knows "Doc Scott" from Kaylor and Tomasino fame (www.digitaltouche.com) as he relates: "My music dude buddy, Mark Kaylor and I have been playing together for about 12 years and we play nearly every weekend at venues throughout the St. Louis area. It's my true passion and I'll probably be playing music for many years to come. We entertained at the Heart of America meetings in 2011 and 2012, which was a lot of fun.

However, the story of this successful partnership does not end with Drs. Tomasino and Goerss. It continues with the journey of another excellent UMSL graduate, Dr. Erin Barr Gagnon ('08) which ended in much professional satisfaction in the office of these two excellent role models. According to Dr. Tomasino: "Erin joined us four years ago upon graduation and is on a similar path. She started as a student doing a clinical rotation with us and we hired her right out of school. We knew Erin was special and we wanted her in the practice. Like Robert's situation, we were not quite ready to take her on as an associate, but we moved ahead anyway. She spent the additional time as Robert did, working on projects, attending chamber meetings and promoting the practice in the community. She even had a baby this past year and is now back from maternity leave and going strong. Our investment once again paid off and we now have a thriving three doctor practice." Erin is quite appreciative of this opportunity which she helped create, aided by the ability to set up a clinical rotation site in their practice. "I first met Drs. Scott Tomasino and Robert Goerss while volunteering for MOA and HOA conventions as a student. As I learned more about their office, I became interested in completing one of my clinical rotations there during my fourth year. The rotation was a great experience where I learned a lot about patient care and the business side of optometry in a private office setting. As my clinical rotations were coming to an end, Drs. Tomasino, Goerss and I reconected to discuss the possibility of me joining them in practice upon my graduation. They were ready to take on another doctor and I was very grateful for the option to join a successful private optometric practice. Both Scott and Robert have served as wonderful mentors to me over the last 5 years. The clinical and business knowledge they have passed on to me is invaluable and has helped shape and grow my practice. Private practice optometry has proven to be very rewarding and is where I feel I should be."

Dr. Erin Barr Gagnon

The College of Optometry was well represented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Optometry, held October 24-27 in Phoenix, AZ. A large number of students from the newly formed Student Chapter of the AAO were in attendance. In addition, the following UMSL alumni earned their fellowship at this meeting: Drs. Megan Alberts ('10), Janette Dumas ('03), Frankie Goolsby ('05), Vandana Rajaram, PhD ('05), OD ('08), and Stephanie Woo (Cornea and Contact Lens Resident '12). Dr. Lawrence "Kent" Harrington ('88), served as Diplomate Award Chair of the Section on Public Health and Environmental Vision, and Dr. Ed Bennett, as Awards Committee Chair, moderated the Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses, and Refractive Technologies Awards program. In addition, the following scientific presentations were given.

Ashley Craven, OD ('11): "Intracocular Acuity Differences Alter the Spatial Frequency Tuning of Stereopsis".

Eron Franzel, OD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Erin Brooks, OD ('11), (Graduate Fellow), "Path Analysis of Direct and Indirect Effects of Duration of Fixation to Word Reading Skills."

Ed Jarka, OD, Clinical Assistant Professor, "The Use of Platelet-Rich Plasma for the Treatment of Severe and Mild Ocular Surface Disease."

Matt Kaufman, OD, (Cornea and Contact Lens Resident '13), "Custom Soft Contact Lens Fitting on a Post-Penetrating Keratocomic Patient."

Keshia Elder, OD, Clinical Associate Professor, co-authored an abstract titled "Comparison of Year Osomolarity to Other Ocular Surface Disease Indicators."

Linda Marks, OD, (Pediatric Resident '03), Clinical Assistant Professor, "Permanent Vision Loss in a Pediatric Patient Secondary to Repeated Voluntary Globe Luxation."

Vandana Rajaram, PhD ('05), OD ('08), co-authored "Repeatability and Learning Effects of the Developmental Eye Movement Test (DEM) in Young Adults."

Christopher Futuyma, OD, (Graduate Student), Pauline Gassman Bland, ('15), Carl Bassi, PhD, Associate Professor "A Novel Device to Measure Spatial Distribution of Macular Pigment."

Stephanie Woo, OD (Contact Lens Resident '12), Edward Bennett, OD, Associate Professor, co-authored an abstract titled "Clinical Evaluation of a Large Diameter Rigid-Gas Permeable Lens for the Correction of Refractive Astigmatism."

Stephanie Woo, OD, (Contact Lens Resident '12) "Comparison of Three Different Methods of Sceral Rigid Gas Permeable (GP) Lens Insertion."

Christina Sorenson, OD, (85) "Tubular Sclerosis Complex with Astrocytic Hamartoma of the Retina."

Christina Sorenson, OD, "Utilization of Latest Novel Technology in Imaging of the Anterior Chamber Angle."

In addition Mohammed Rafieer, OD ('88) presented a continuing education course entitled: "Retinal Fiber Layer: Beyond Normative Data."

Also honored in the American Optometric Foundation program were: Derek Wells, OD ('15); 2011 Carl Zeiss Fellowship and Award of Excellence in Contact Lens Patient Care; CARYN LA BUDA ('13): 2011 J Pat Cummings Scholarship recognizes student clinicians who best exemplify ideal eye care standards of practice. Melissa Schmidt ('12); Vistakon Award of Excellence in Contact Lens Patient Care.
The 11th Annual Fechner Day was also quite popular again this year. The honored speaker was Dr. Jacob Sivak, Graduate Dean Emeritus from the Waterloo College of Optometry. The title of his talk was “Finding the Causes and the Means to Prevent Myopia”. His presentation highlighted current research trends that focus on the relation between genetics and environment, as well as studies, both animal and human, that explore the effect of peripheral refractive error on the refractive development of the central retina. His talk was preceded by an entertaining history of the namesake for this award, Gustav Fechner, a renown German experimental psychologist and an early pioneer in experimental psychology and founder of psychophysics, by Dr. Carl Bassi, Director of Research and Graduate Studies. This program was developed by Dr. Bassi and he was pleased with how it turned out.

“Dr. Sivak’s talk was well received by the overflowing crowd in the Millennium Student Center. We are already looking forward to Fechner Day XII next year.”

The annual Residency Day, which provides an excellent opportunity for residents from all of the clinical residency programs affiliated with the College of Optometry to give presentations resulting from interesting and often challenging patients they have provided care for, was held October 18th at the Student Millennium Center. Each year the presentations seem to get even better than the previous year, and again that was the case as the quality of the cases and the presentations themselves were outstanding. This program was originally developed by UMSL’s Director of Residencies, Dr. Vinita Henry (’85) and she continues to do a great job coordinating this event, which is attended by most of the student body. She relates: “Our residency programs draw highly qualified applicants from all over the country. This was evident in the outstanding presentations given on Residency Day which continues to grow each year. Residency Day not only allows our residents a chance to give lectures, but our students benefit from being able to experience our programs and communicate with the residents. Behind the scenes are our program coordinators and residency faculty that work with the residents on a daily basis. I am honored to be a small part of all the outstanding residency programs affiliated with UMSL College of Optometry.”

The 11th Annual Fechner Day celebration has grown and now fills conference rooms in the Millennium Center. Our speakers have included recipients of all the major vision research awards from the Academy of Optometry and ARVO.

In an effort to provide eye care to members of the Spanish-speaking community, Dr. Sonia Salas has stepped in to fill a need at a local clinic in St. Louis. Dr. Salas, who speaks fluent Spanish, joined the College of Optometry in August 2012 and was immediately assigned to the Center for Eye Care Mobile Eye Clinic servicing the immigrant community at Casa de Salud. The mission of Casa de Salud is to deliver high quality clinical and mental health services for uninsured and underinsured patients, focusing on new immigrants and refugees who encounter barriers to accessing other sources of care.
Dr. Howard McAlister Completes a Mission Trip to Nepal

From September 5-18th, Dr. Howard McAlister was one of four optometrists providing patient care in Nepal as part of Operation Pacific Angel, a US Air Force mission. In addition to eye care, services in pediatrics, family practice, OB/GYN, and physical therapy were provided. Those health care professionals providing care were Project HOPE volunteers, and officers from the US Air Force, Australian Air Force, Mongolian Army, and Nepal Army. The optometrists provided care to 966 patients. Most of the care was refractive; however many eye health problems were treated, and several consults from physicians in the other services were addressed.

Four months. What one can learn in three months is amazing! Welcome to my new column for the EyeWire and let me take a quick moment to introduce myself. I’m Nick, Nicholas if I am in trouble. I joined the student services staff on October 1, 2012 as the senior advisor/administrator for the office and it has been an experience of a lifetime.

Coming from an educational background I felt confident in knowing the role I was filling—at least I thought I did. The role has enlightened me and opened my eyes to a wide array of new assignments, new goals, the ability to grow and expand Student Services and myself. I have learned a lot. I have learned that if given the chance a third year student will walk up to you and show you a book of images and play a joke on you saying you have some long name disease—the joke was on me. I too, can play a joke every now and then. Honestly, though I have learned a lot about what it takes to even begin to apply to optometry school. The prerequisites, the shadowing, the leadership, the OAT test, and then what is looked at in the interview—the entire process truly amazes me.

Working closely with Dr. Bennett, Dr. Simmons and Linda Stein has been an awesome journey thus far. We have a good time and most of all we work as a team and even feel like family. The learning of new terminology, policies and procedures is always an interesting one because you have this scope of knowing, but you really don’t know anything until you step into the role. I have big shoes to fill. Dr. Brown worked in this role for many years, now here I am. Sometimes people walk by my office and gander—I just want to say, “I don’t bite,” but, I refrain because I understand that when someone new joins a staff or group the process of learning about the person is primarily done through observation.

My column in the EyeWire will be one that highlights the events of student services, the journey of learning the ropes, changes, and a step outside the box. I am big on laughter and so if reading this can make you chuckle then the space and words my column occupies is worth it. I am enjoying my position and learning all I can about the college of optometry, the staff and students.

Until next time, Cheers!

As Eye See It
By Nick Palisch

The 2013 Global Specialty Lens Symposium (GSLS) was held January 24-27 in Las Vegas. The largest contact lens conference in North America, it was attended by over 500 practitioners. The UMSL College of Optometry had a very prominent presence in this program. One of the faculty was Stephanie Woo OD, who completed UMSL’s Cornea and Contact Lens Residency in 2012. She gave four presentations including a scientific paper entitled: “Correction of Low to Moderate Astigmatism with Large Diameter Rigid Gas Permeable Lenses vs. Soft: A Clinical Study.” The latter pertained to a multi-center clinical study that she was an investigator for. Ed Bennett, Assistant Dean of Student Services and Alumni Relations, has served as a member of the GSLS Program Committee since it’s inception in 2002.

Two students, Angel Husher (‘13), and Jacqueline Gabbert (‘13) served as Monitors for this symposium. For Angel, it represented a great experience (see quote below). Also attending the program were Beth Henderson OD, Clinical Assistant Professor who attended the program courtesy of grants from Bausch + Lomb and the Contact Lens Manufacturers Association, and Matt Kauffman OD, the current UMSL Cornea and Contact Lens Resident, who received funding from Bausch + Lomb.

As a first-year resident, I was absolutely blown away by the passion delivered by every speaker, especially our own Stephanie Woo as well as the scleral lens guru from the Netherlands Eef van der Worp. Not only were the CE topics extensive, but they were so well presented that I feel more confident in fitting specialty contact lenses. I can’t wait to use my knowledge to start fitting irregular corneas, keratoconus, ortho-K, and even healthy corneas with RGP lenses! It was a once in a lifetime networking opportunity. All in all, this conference was simply amazing and I encourage those interested in contact lenses to attend.”

Angel Husher (‘13)
Notables

Kyle Dohm (’06) was recently promoted to the rank of Lieu-
tenant Commander. He is now an Aerospace Optometrist and
Department Head for Optometry at the US Naval Hospital in Oak
Huntington, Washington.

Jeffrey L. Weaver has retired from the United States Army Re-
serve after over 30 years of ser-
vice. Colonel Weaver received the Legion of Merit for “serving
his country with distinction in po-
sitions of increasing responsibility
as a clinician, teacher, researcher,
healthcare administrator, and com-
mander.”

The UMSL College of Optom-
etry was well represented at the
Annual UMSL Founder’s Dinner,
held October 2nd at the Ritz-Car-
tlon Hotel.

Kyle Long and Dr. Natasha Jen-
kins Long (’07) of Scottsbluff are
pleased to announce the birth of
their firstborn son, Declan Jenkins
Long. Declan arrived on November
13, 2012, weighing 7 lbs., 2 oz., and
measuring 20 1/4 inches long.

Dr. Carol Tam and her husband
are the proud parents of Aryana
Moradian, born on September 25,
2012. Dr. Tam was our Cornea and
Contact Lens Resident several
years ago.

Future ODs

Jessica Hary-McElhinney, OD (’10)
gave birth to Chloe on October 30,
2012.

Amanda Strom, OD (’04) is the
proud mother of Lewis William, born
on October 17, 2012.

Drs. Abi and Ryan Barnes (’07) are
the proud parents of Karina Noelle,
born January 11th.

Dr. Alan G. Wegener (’08) and his
wife welcomed their son, Emmett
Jeffrey on August 14, 2012. His sta-
istics were 9’3 oz., 21.5” long.

Kristen (Scott) Pope (’10) is the
proud mother of Charles Scott born
January 21st.

Jocelyn Liao (’03) is the mother of
Charles Scott born January 21st.

Drs. Abi and Ryan Barnes (’07) are
the proud parents of Karina Noelle,
born January 11th.

Dr. Alan G. Wegener (’08) and his
wife welcomed their son, Emmett
Jeffrey on August 14, 2012. His sta-
istics were 9’3 oz., 21.5” long.

Angelique Forsha was pro-
moted from Administrative
Assistant to Clinic Business
Operations of the University’s
Director of Clinical Operations.
Angelique has been with
the College of Optometry since
October 2010 and works close-
ly with the Center Manager and
Director of Clinical Operations.
Her duties include administra-
tive, fiscal, and marketing func-
tions related to the day to day
operations of the University’s
four eye care clinics.

Staff

Spotlight

Stephanie and Joe Kaimann
are proud to announce the
birth of William Anthony born
on December 13, 2012. He
weighed in at 7 lbs 10 oz.
Best wishes to your family!

David and Cassidy Cooley are
proud to announce the arrival
of Jericho Daniel on January
28th. He was 6 pounds, 7 oz.,
20 inches long. Congratulations!

Angelique Forsha was pro-
moted from Administrative
Assistant to Clinic Business
Operations of the University’s
Director of Clinical Operations.
Her duties include administra-
tive, fiscal, and marketing func-
tions related to the day to day
operations of the University’s
four eye care clinics.

Notables

Seleah Travis, OD (’11), Barbara
Cleaves, OD (’13), and Ja-
nie graf, OD (’12) authored
“Contact lens-induced
blepharoptosis” for the Novem-
ber issue and: “An update in
oph-
thalmic anti-infectives” for the
December issue.

The optometry students once
again distinguished themselves
very well in campus intramura-
lar volleyball. One team from
the class of 2016 won the campus
championship while the other
team finished fourth. The runner-
up for the campus championship
was our entry from the Class of
2015.

Dr. Gary Bachman has won a
$4,000 three day chance to expe-
rience the Porsche Sport Driving
School at Barber Motorsports
Park in Birmingham, Alabama.
Porsches will be driven under the
guidance of some of the country’s
most accomplished race drivers
including Hurley Haywood.

Errata–
Two changes from the Fall
EyeWire: Josh Wilson’s (’08)
dughter is named “Riley” and
“Liam Alexander” is Teal Sherwin
Steffanik’s (’01) niece.

In the December issue of Primary
Optometry News.

Dr. Jennifer Sidun (’13) was fea-
tured in an article on leading a na-
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ing myopia progression in children”
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Dr. Barbara Brown Changes Roles at the College of Optometry

In September 2012, Dr. Barbara Brown ended one chapter in her optometric life when she retired from the College of Optometry’s student services. After many years of service to the college, the time came for her to embark on her other passions—her private practice and more involvement in her church. Students reflect on her role and the impact she had on them during her time in student services. Dr. Brown remains connected to the College of Optometry, serving part-time as the Assistant Dean where she takes on special projects to enhance the College of Optometry here at the University of Missouri St. Louis.

“Dr. Brown was the heart of college of optometry.” She was the one person who could either help you or point you to the person who could help you. When she got wind of some of my tuition payment issues between the military and the UMSL billing office, she intervened even though she was not directly involved and didn’t have to, and it was resolved that day. I give that as just one of many examples of how she kept the college of optometry well-oiled and running smoothly for the students. She was so good at what she did because she knew everyone—not only in the college, but in the university—and especially because she really cared about students and making their lives easier. Sometimes, with all she had on her plate, she always did everything with a smile. She will be sorely missed, though I’m glad to know she will still be working in and around the college.” —Josh

“Dr. Brown was a lifesaver during optometry school. She helped me with everything—everything helping me to plan my wedding day. Any question I had—optometry related or not, she was always there to offer sound advice.” —Courtney

“Dr. Brown has been extraordinary during my time at UMSL. She always was willing to help and was very efficient and knowledgeable. She is always looking out for students and graduates alike with everything from scholarship information to job openings. She is a tremendous asset to the university.” —Toan

“I came to make a difference in the lives of students, and hope that I have done that.”

Dr. Brown continues to be a part of the College of Optometry, just in a different role. Thank you for your many years of service to the success of our students and to the College of Optometry.

Missouri Optometrists Remember Albert E. Schoenbeck (1916-2012)

By Dean Larry Davis

The Missouri Optometric Association (MOA) forged a relationship with a young attorney in 1942. It would be the first time that the developing organization would have legal counsel on retainer; the MOA would be among Mr. Schoenbeck’s first clients. That was the beginning of a partnership that would last more than 60 years. Mr. Schoenbeck described the introduction, “Dr. Felix Koetting, president of the MOA, expressed a desire to have an attorney on retainer. He added that the Association was not in position to pay a large retainer. I asked what amount they had in mind and he said $25.00 a month and I promptly said ‘Now you have an attorney!’

Over the next 60+ years, Missouri Optometrists and Mr. Schoenbeck would work together in order to transform Missouri optometry into a vibrant independent primary health care profession. Mr. Schoenbeck’s influence on eye and vision care in Missouri includes defining and defending the scope of practice for optometrists, protection of the public from non-licensed contact lens fitters, the sales tax exemption for corrective lenses and prescription eyeglasses and the formation of Missouri’s school of optometry. His life well-lived was remembered during a January 3, 2013 service at Central Presbyterian Church in Clayton, Missouri.

He was awarded the Chancellor’s Medallion by the University Of Missouri at St. Louis in 2001.


Nutrition and the Eye VI
April 13 & 14, 2013 - 12 hrs CEE

JCPenney Conference Center, North Campus, UMSL

Saturday, April 13th (8 hrs)
- Michael Fossel, MD, PhD and Dave Woynarowski, MD

Sunday, April 14th (6 hrs)
- Nuran Ercal, MD, PhD
- Stuart Richer, OD, PhD
- Jeffrey Anshel, OD

For questions: Lis Ellerbusch (314) 516-5615
To register by phone: Jennifer Clemente (314) 516-5994

Register early and save!

optometry.umsl.edu > Continuing Education

Tuition:
Saturday, April 13, 2013
9:00 am - 4:00 pm (6 hrs)
$250.00 on or before April 5th.
$300.00 after April 5th.

Sunday, April 14, 2013
9:00 am - 4:30 pm (6 hrs)
$250.00 on or before April 5th.
$300.00 after April 5th.

Register early and save!
Hazelwood High School Students Visit the College of Optometry

Thirty-six students from Hazelwood West High School visited the College of Optometry. The students are currently enrolled in the Human Body Systems class which is part of the Project Lead the Way Biomedical Science program. The students were given a tour of the anatomy and physiology lab, pre-clinic and ended with lunch in the student center. Eye dissections were demonstrated to the group.

Dr. Aaron Franzel (second from left) describes the dissection procedure.

Dr. Angel Novel-Simmons (at right) leads the hands-on demonstration with the students.

The EYEwire is published for the alumni and friends of the UMSL College of Optometry and distributed by the Office of the Dean in the College of Optometry.

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If you have missed a previous issue of the EyeWire you can navigate to the archive page as well as the current issue from optometry.umsl.edu.