Message From the Dean

The Next Chapter

*I feel that the greatest reward for doing is the opportunity to do more.*

--- Jonas Salk

Greetings Friends and Colleagues---

Stories are full of significant events that capture our imagination and connect us with the situation. The most memorable stories are often those that elicit elation. Everyone loves a happy ending, especially when the outcome is the result of hours of preparation, hard work and focused attention to the task. The image of linebacker Mike Jones completing a critical tackle on the one yard line during the final seconds preserving the St. Louis Ram's lead in their 1999-2000 Super Bowl win will forever be etched in my mind. It was an exciting end to a tremendous season.

This past week I had the privilege to be part of an exciting win for the College of Optometry. After our season of months of preparation and focused attention for the re-accreditation of our program, the time of our site visit had arrived. Like the 2000 Super-Bowl Champions we believed that we were sufficiently prepared. However, one is never completely certain about the impact of that preparation until faced head-on with the real-time challenge—in our case, the up-close-and-personal review and analysis by representatives of the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE).

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UMSL Optometry Continues Two Great Traditions

The UMSL College of Optometry successfully continued two outstanding traditions last month. Fechner Day-2008, under the coordination of Carl Bassi, Director of Research and Graduate Studies, was held October 17th at the Millennium Student Center. The invited speaker this year was Cynthia Owlsley, MSPH, PhD on the topic of “Psychophysics: What it reveals about older driver safety and performance”. Dr. Owlsley is the Nathan E. Miles Chair of Ophthalmology and Vice Chair for Clinical Research at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her presentation was well received by the many students and faculty in attendance (representing several departments) and was followed by a Poster Session featuring UMSL optometry students who participated in the 2008 Summer Research program.

Residency Day, under the coordination of Vinita Henry, Director of Residencies, was also held at the Millennium Student Center on October 15th. This all day program consisted of case presentations presented by residents affiliated with the UMSL College of Optometry. The program was attended by all third and fourth year optometry students as well as faculty who could receive up to five hours of continuing education. After the program concluded, a panel discussion was held between the residents and the students. According to Dr. Henry: “The benefits of the program are twofold: the residents have the opportunity to present a case for a large group of participants and the students have the opportunity to learn more about residencies. I especially enjoy the enthusiasm of the residents as they share their experiences and encourage the students to pursue residencies. Many students share with me that their first interest in a residency program came from Residency Day.”

Olivia Do, O.D., UMSL Contact Lens Resident 2008-09 speaks at Residency Day.

Jennifer Keiser, O.D., UMSL Pediatric/Binocular Vision Resident 2008-09
Message From the Dean
(Continued from page 1)

The site visit could not have gone better. “Positive” and “engaging” are words that describe the interactions that I had the opportunity to observe. We will have to wait until the next formal meeting of the ACOE in early 2009 to learn exactly how the story ends. However, in the meantime one thing that we do know from this latest chapter is that the momentum is in our favor. The site team was impressed with our carefully prepared Self Study, and their conversations with students, staff, faculty and alumni of the College appeared to validate virtually every point in our documentation.

The faculty, students, staff and alumni are all critical players in our very exciting story. Once again, thank you for contributing to that story.

All the best,
Larry J. Davis, Dean

NEWS & NOTES

Dr. Steven Tilley (‘98), as Floor Leader of the Missouri House of Representatives, was the subject of an article in the November 14 St. Louis Business Journal. According to the article, Dr. Tilley “is the future” in Missouri politics and is “truly the one to watch” when it comes to legislative forces in Jefferson City. Dr. Tilley also maintains an independent optometry practice in Perryville Missouri.

Several UMSL faculty distinguished themselves at the Annual Academy of Optometry meeting in Anaheim. Dr. Julie DeKinder

Alumnus in Service to Current and Prospective Students

Barbara W. Brown, O.D., FAAO brings a unique perspective with relevant life and career experiences that enhance her valuable role in the broad scope of Student and Special Services within our College: she is an alumna of both the College of Optometry (‘88) and the Department of Chemistry at UMSL (‘84), as well as a practicing optometrist. She also holds a graduate certificate in non-profit management and leadership completed in 2005. As Manager of Student and Special Services, her varied contributions in the areas of recruitment, coordination of scholarships, debt management and assistance with day-to-day student concerns (schedules, registration, and housing, among others) make her the “go-to” person for prospective and current students, as well as for fellow alums.

As a well-connected placement coordinator she has an uncanny ability to assist in matching our graduating students with rewarding career opportunities. Her longstanding and active alumni network maintained through a variety of professional activities serves to engender support for her efforts to advance alumni involvement in support of our program. In recognition of her many abilities and accomplishments Dr. Brown received UMSL’s highest staff award, the “Chancellor’s Award for Staff Excellence” in 2006.

Dr. Brown provides leadership for the continuation and expansion of a number of student initiatives offered throughout the College. These include collaborative efforts with other departments on campus to develop “3+4” programs (Physics & Honors College) that provide qualified students the opportunity to complete their B.S. and O.D. degrees in 7 years, with completion of the final year of the baccalaureate coinciding with the first year of optometry school. Through ongoing professional relationships with campus housing, her efforts ultimately resulted in establishment of the “Optometry Villa” complex (adjacent to the Honors College on campus). The Villa setting offers housing for over 30 of our students with living arrangements focused on common goals of the pursuit of serious scholarship. She has also developed sound relationships with the Center for Student Success, whose members provide first-year seminars on study skills and stress management, as well as Professional Development workshops for College staff. Dr. Brown has also introduced several programs for optometry students desiring tutoring assistance, including the availability of a third-year student enlisted to devote six hours per week to any interested first year students. Assistance is available for all courses in the first year curriculum.

The students in turn, are greatly appreciative of her efforts. According to

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The College of Optometry Leadership Council held its first meeting on Oct. 3. This council is part of a university-wide effort to revitalize its volunteer boards so members can better assist the University of Missouri-St. Louis in fulfilling its mission to provide the highest quality teaching, research and service.

The council has three specific roles. It will support the College's academic activities. This includes, but is not limited to, monitoring clinic and outreach efforts, aiding in the reaccreditation process and enhancing partnership and rotation opportunities. Members also will help communicate with various constituencies, such as the American Optometric Association and the Missouri Optometric Association. Finally, the council will assist with fundraising efforts.

Dean Larry Davis presented the “Vision for Missouri's College of Optometry,” which is a plan for a new health sciences building that will house the College of Optometry and the College of Nursing. The structure will encourage multi-disciplinary learning through its shared clinic space and expanded laboratories. The University has received $300,000 for planning from the state of Missouri and is currently selecting an architect. While the ribbon cutting is still years away, enthusiasm is high and council members look forward to helping the college accomplish this important goal.

The Leadership Council is a vital part of the College's continued success. Special thanks to the many alumni, optometric and community leaders who have agreed to serve.

The Honorable Anne C. Ream, O.D., Chair
James Bureman, O.D.
Carmen F. Castellano, O.D.
Thomas Cullinan, O.D.
Raymond Fada, O.D.
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Joni K. Laferla, O.D.
Sean P. Mulqueeny, O.D.
Daniel Osborn, M.D.
Jay Pепose, M.D.
G. Ryan Powell, O.D.
Karen B. Rosen, O.D.
Christina M. Sorenson, O.D.
Steve Sutherlin
Jeffrey L. Weaver, O.D.

New UMSL College of Optometry faculty member, Dr. Guoqiang Li was invited to join a subcommittee for the Optical Society of America to plan their “Frontiers in Optics 2009” meeting.

Dr. Ed Bennett was elected Chair of the Cornea and Contact Lens Section of the American Academy of Optometry.

Dr. Vinita Henry was elected Vice-Chair of the Association of Optometry Contact Lens Educators (AOCLE). This announcement was featured in the September, 2008 issue of Women in Optometry.

UMSL graduate Dr. Valerie Barber (’95) published an article in the September, 2008 issue of Women in Optometry.

The Pupil Project, a collaboration between the College of Optometry and the College of Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, was the subject of a feature in the August issue of St. Louis Magazine. The article focuses on how the project uses vision therapy and tutoring to help visually and academically struggling children improve in school. A feature story was also included in the Fall issue of the UM-St. Louis Magazine.

Make Annual Giving Your Holiday Tradition

Dionne Lewis, Development Officer

The holiday season is a time to enjoy family and friends, as well as show appreciation for the people and organizations that make a difference in your life or the lives of others. The University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry is proud of the contributions our students, staff and alumni make to their communities. With your assistance, the College can do even more to enhance its academic programs, scholarships and resources.

Annual support is extremely valuable. It allows the College to address immediate needs, expand learning opportunities and plan for the future. The College is not immune to the current economic situation. In fact, this past summer, staff members spent hours helping students secure financial support after companies that once offered loans pulled back due to the credit crisis.

Please consider making a donation to help UMSL continue to excel in its mission to provide a quality, affordable education. You can designate your gift to optometry scholarships, indigent eye care, the general optometry fund or any area that interests you. All gifts, regardless of size, are accepted and appreciated. Please visit our Web site, http://giveuto.msl.edu, to learn more about our great programs and to make your gift online.
NEWS & NOTES

The Center for International Studies (CIS) is supporting the research of a growing cadre of international studies faculty. Drs. Howard McAlister and Tim Wingert are among the faculty fellows in the CIS in 2008-09.

Congratulations to the Class of 2012 co-ed volleyball team for finishing second in the UMSL intramural league this Fall.

Two future optometrists enter the world. Congratulations to fill Radkowiec (’10) for the birth of her daughter, Grace Mary, on July 29th. She was 6 lb 6 oz and 19.25 inches long.

Congratulations to James Hsiau (‘10) for the birth of his daughter, born on September 15. Paulina Grace Hsiau was 7lb and 20.5 inches long.

College of Optometry Mourns Loss of Former Faculty Member

Former Clinical Assistant Professor at the UMSL College of Optometry, Monica J. (Harris) Espelien (’94) passed way suddenly on September 4, 2008 at the age of 40. Upon graduation from the College of Optometry, Monica was awarded the Charles C. Matlock Award for Clinical Excellence in Pediatric Optometry. After completing a residency in pediatrics and binocular vision, she joined the UMSL faculty where she served for several years as a popular instructor in the pediatric clinic as well as an invaluable contributor as a member of both the Admissions and NBEO committees. She has served as Director of Special Projects for the Washington University School of Business and, most recently, as Manager, Strategic Resources Team for Ascension Health.

UMSL Optometry Graduate Selected for Aerospace Optometry Program

Kyle Dohm, OD (‘06) was recently selected for the aerospace optometry program, only the 21st individual to be provided with this opportunity since the inception of this program in 1989. He is currently in Florida for a six month training program in which he is the only optometrist among a class of physician flight surgeon candidates. The Navy is the only branch of the military that offers such a program. Dr. Dohm is very excited about this opportunity. “My follow-on tour will be at the Naval Air Facility in Atsugi, Japan, for three years. Ann and I are very excited about that--what an adventure! There, in addition to running the clinic as the solo OD, I will also fly out to the carrier (USS George Washington) every other month or so for a week or two at a time. We expect to leave the states in May sometime.”

Mark your calendar for UM-St. Louis Alumni Weekend
April 17 & 18, 2009
http://www.umslalumni.org
Future ODs “Test-Drive” Optometry as a Profession

In mid-October seven lucky Normandy High School Seniors had an opportunity to spend time at our College listening, learning, watching, and navigating some direct hands-on experiences to find out more about optometry as a possible future profession.

The National Optometric Student Association (NOSA) chapter at UMSL strives to provide career exposure specifically to members of a high school audience where the field of optometry tends to be overlooked and sometimes overshadowed by the field of medicine. One of their goals is to introduce high school seniors to our profession—particularly minority students who may have limited prior knowledge of the field through pre-collegiate studies, relative practitioners, or patient experience. With the help of both NOSA members and other volunteering 4th year optometry students, these seniors were given preliminary instruction and allowed to practice optometric procedures on each other, including slit lamp biomicroscopy, color vision testing, stereopsis, visual acuity, and direct ophthalmoscopy. The event enabled current students and role models to present valuable eye care information to the students to pass on to their respective communities and to give students a hands-on approach in mock optometric clinical settings. This “Future ODs” event was enthusiastically embraced by this year’s participants, and we look forward to seeing some of these familiar faces again in a few years.

Eric Harris (‘11) (right) performs a depth perception test on a visiting high school student.

Katrina Washington (‘09 (left) demonstrates the examination of pupilary light reflexes.

NEWS & NOTES

Natalie Crothers, ‘11, was part of the cast in the UM-St. Louis theater production Urinetown-The Musical, Nov. 13-15.

Tom Sullivan, blind since birth, spoke at UMSL on October 10th to recount his lifelong journey of turning negatives into positives, disadvantage into advantage. An inspiring speaker, Tom lives life to its fullest as an athlete, singer, actor, author, writer, producer. His interests, insights, wisdom and passion for excellence, have motivated audiences all over the world. Along with Helen Keller, Tom is the only recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from The American Foundation for the Blind.

The Clinical Manual of Contact Lenses (3rd edition), authored by Drs. Ed Bennett and Vinita Henry was published by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins and became available in November, 2008.

Linda Stein, Administrative Assistant in the Office of Student Services, received the UMSL campus-wide Employee of the Month Award in September, 2008 in recognition of excellent teamwork.
A Sincere Thank You to Our Donors

The College of Optometry's success is due, in part, to the generosity of its alumni and friends. Donors help provide academic resources, scholarships, clinical care and more. The people listed below contributed to the College last fiscal year (July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008). Their assistance is greatly appreciated. Our goal is to expand this base of supporters. If your name is on this list, thank you. We hope to have your continued support in the future. If you are not listed, please consider a gift to the College of Optometry.

A sincere thank you is extended to our generous donors for Fiscal Year 2008.

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Kamrian S. Wilson
Lijing Yao
Alumni in Service  
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Jessica Mai, OD (’08): “From the first day of orientation when I was a nervous wreck, to graduation day when I was excited, scared and anxious to begin my career, Dr. Brown has been there every step of the way to support and encourage not only me, but all of my fellow classmates.” Dave Ernst (’09) agrees. “Dr. Brown is our ‘optometry mom.’ Her selfless efforts and caring nature have made all the difference in my success here at UMSL.”

In addition to offering personal attention, Dr. Brown is responsible for a wealth of information and resources appearing on the Student Services website, including contributions to a very user-friendly online application. She has also initiated web-based seminars for appreciative pre-optometry groups who value the opportunity for an interactive forum without the necessity of travel time and expense. A relatively new offering is the on-line community created for incoming students, who now have an easily accessible forum for discussion and engagement for months prior to matriculating in August. Dr. Brown's personal availability via e-mail for individual communication is legendary among students.

We are fortunate to have a service-minded, professional and engaging student body. The dedicated service of Dr. Brown is an important factor which contributes to the successful recruitment of such an outstanding group of students.

Alumni and Friends Meet with Accreditation Visitors

Many visitors were on campus during the week of November 10th. By coincidence, rather than design, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reaccreditation site visit for the UM-St. Louis campus coincided with that of the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) visit for the College of Optometry. We are appreciative that several individuals met with the accreditation teams on behalf of the College of Optometry. Drs. Robert Goerss (’01), Eric Polk (’94), Sara Schmitz (’05) and Erin Sullivan (’03) met with representatives from the ACOE providing an important perspective that was highly valued by the site team and mentioned specifically during the final exit interview. In addition Drs. Carmen Castellano and Sean Mulqueeny (’OD 91, BSBA 87), both members of the College Leadership Council, participated in a luncheon hosted for the HLC site visitors, providing evidence of the support that our campus has from our distinguished alumni and friends.

College of Optometry Faculty Service Awards

25 Years
G. A. Franzel, O.D.
Associate Dean

20 Years
Carl Bassi, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

25 Years
Ralph Garzia, O.D.
Assistant Dean

20 Years
Timothy Wingert, O.D.
Professor

25 Years
Carol Peck, Ph.D.
Professor

15 Years
Larry J. Davis, O.D.
Dean,
Associate Professor

20 Years
William Gary
Bachman, O.D.
Associate Professor

10 Years
Raymond I. Myers,
O.D.
Clinical Professor

Mark your calendar!
Sunday, March 22, 2009
8 hours COPE/CEE
2nd Bi-Annual Nutrition and the Eye Symposium
Need a Replacement Diploma?

Several of our alumni have contacted Dr. Barb Brown recently with questions about replacing damaged (floodings, fires, etc.) diplomas. Others, who have married (or divorced) and have a name change, wish to have a diploma with their current name. Here is the process!

Replacement only: please send a check, with your current address and phone number, payable to “UMSL” and for the amount of $25. Please include a quick note with it requesting a replacement diploma. The address is below.

Name change and replacement: in addition to the above, form is required and available on the UMSL website. It can easily be found by going to www.umsl.edu/~registration/.

See “printable forms” on the left side of the page for name/address change forms. Name changes require that you have a notary public notarize your information.

Mail all information and check to:
Office of the Registrar, 351 MSC, UMSL, One University Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63121

And, as always, questions may be directed to Dr. Barb Brown at BrownBW@umsl.edu.

If you have missed a previous issue of the EyeWire you can locate the archive page as well as the current issue at:
http://optometry.umsl.edu/news/EyeWireArchives.html