College of Optometry Awarded Continuing Accreditation!

On March 2nd, the College of Optometry received the news from the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) that, for the second consecutive time, the College was awarded the highest honor possible, continuing accreditation without conditions. Better yet the Council found that no recommendations for corrective action were necessary. In brief, the College could not have possibly received a higher rating. The report did include eight suggestions, defined as “... improvements that would substantially enhance the potential for excellence ...”, most of which are already being addressed.

The Council summary was quite impressive and included the following statements:

1) “The governance structure of the College appears to work well and is inclusive of faculty, students, and staff with open communication among and between these groups and the administration.”

2) “The College has made imaginative and constructive use of an older building that was not constructed with Optometry's clinical, teaching and research needs in mind.”

3) “The faculty are dedicated and engaged in the educational process as shown by the program's outcome results, student feedback, and alumni support.”

4) “The College's Office of Student Services demonstrates a high level of professionalism and responsiveness to student concerns, and students' opinions are given serious consideration by the faculty and administration in the governance of the College.”

5) “The Assistant Dean for Clinical Programs effectively utilizes the Compulink Eyecare System to closely monitor clinic utilization and quality of care, allowing for effective quality assurance and improvement of clinical care.”

6) “The UMSL Provost and Vice Chancellor clearly understand and support the College and its programs as they exist today and the College's role in UMSL's future plans.”

The constructive suggestions made by the Council included that the College should continue to pursue funding for the new building which would allow the College's research and clinical activities to expand.

In addition, it was recommended that an increase in the number of faculty members should continue to be pursued, efforts should be made to increase patient numbers in local clinics, and the College should work to strengthen its scholarly and research activity. The overall report, however, was extremely positive.

As this is the second consecutive successful accreditation review by the ACOE under the direction of Dean Larry Davis, he has to be proud of the outcome as it reflects an enormous amount of preparation by the faculty, staff and students which resulted in volumes of information provided to the ACOE. “My impression during the site visit was that the site team was extremely well informed about our program as a result of our comprehensive self study report. Of course I am delighted that the site team and ultimately the Council validated the contents of our self study during their visit. The Council also affirmed the critical importance for much of our ongoing work -- faculty and staff recruitment, pursuit of new facilities appropriate for health professions education in the 21st century, fulfillment of our full potential for patient service in the community and the revitalization of our graduate and research programs.”

Of course, the absence of any recommendations for corrective action was especially significant. “The lack of recommendations indicates that our program is well grounded in an appropriate and relevant mission and is effectively fulfilling that mission.
NEWS & NOTES

Dr. Guoqiang Li was awarded $30,000 from the University of Missouri Research Board.

Dr. Ed Bennett received the Dr. Leonard Bronstein Memorial Award presented at the Annual Bronstein Contact Lens Symposium, January 24th in Scottsdale, AZ.

FAAO Class of 2008! Congratulations to the following alums who are among the newest Fellows in the American Academy of Optometry:

Tina R. Porzukowiak ('05)
Khan Ghen Wai Lau ('05)
Gina A. Stokes-Johnson ('04)
Tomohiko Yamada ('03)
Barbara W. Brown ('88)
Carrie (Wright) Riley ('07)

Dave Ernst ('09) performed two shows in front of 600 people at “Stand Up” a production of Comedy & Song at Shiloh United Methodist Church on February 28th. Dave sang vocals as the opening act to entertainment that included several performers who had appeared on The Tonight Show, David Letterman, and other national television shows.

Ryan Read ('09) was awarded an Educational Grant and Jamie Gold ('10) was awarded a Student Travel Grant. Both students received their grants from the Heart of America annual meeting in Kansas City, Missouri on February 14, 2009.

Tonia Batts ('11) was selected for the AOA-PAC National Liaison.

Dane Peterson ('09) and his wife Kristen completed the Twin Cities Marathon in Minneapolis this past October.

Nutrition & the Eye Symposium

Dr. Stuart Richer with registered dietician Elizabeth Somer on break February 26th during a satellite media tour which included NBC’s TODAY SHOW.
(Photo courtesy of the AOA News)

The Second Nutrition & the Eye Symposium was hailed as a success by the nearly one hundred optometrists in attendance at the March 22 program on the UMSL campus. Coordinated by Stuart Richer, O.D., Ph.D., the program featured keynote presenter Loren Cordain, Ph.D., whose studies include the relationship of Paleo diets to modern day health and disease.

Dr. Cordain addressed the origins, evolution and implications of Western diets; paleolithic food groups; hyperinsulinemic diseases; and the role of nutrition in juvenile onset myopia. Dr. Richer reported on his studies on vitamin D deficiencies and the “Brighter Side of Sunshine”, and Jeffrey Gerson, O.D. explored the relationship of antioxidants and human vision. Carl Bassi, Ph.D. contributed information on his ARMD studies of macular pigment, carotenoids and visual function, and Jeffrey Anshel, O.D., President of the Optometric Nutrition Society, discussed the importance of nutrition considerations in primary care optometry practice. The knowledgeable audience engaged the presenters in stimulating exchanges and follow-up discussion.

Accreditation

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through the dedicated work of the faculty, staff and students,” stated Dean Davis. “Our current and future students and alumni can have confidence that the education received from the College of Optometry compares favorably alongside other programs. That is of course one of the reasons that we worked so hard preparing for accreditation.”

Certainly this outcome is cause for celebration and confirmation that the College of Optometry continues to move in a very positive direction. The progress we experience is most certainly, a collaborative effort. The dean agrees, “Our goals and aspirations are large and will require substantial influence from not only the College leadership but many others throughout the campus and UM-System. I am inspired by the many ways in which our friends and alumni are stepping up to help us meet those goals. Together we will succeed.”
NOSA Participates in Science Center Showcase

Members of the UMSL National Optometric Student Association (NOSA) volunteered at the Saint Louis Science Center Scientist Showcase held January 17-19. The showcase was a three-day exhibition of different scientific disciplines.

University-School of Medicine, University of Phoenix-St Louis Campus, St Louis College of Health Careers, Rawlings, the Water Division and the Building Division of City of St. Louis, ABNA Engineering, and St. Louis Community College were some of the other participating schools and companies.

NOSA provided handouts and information concerning eye care, our campus clinic, and our optometry program. They also had a model of the eye, stereopsis kits, and color vision test booklets for spectators. The kids especially enjoyed the visual aids.

NOSA volunteers included Allison Coleman, Sarah Burgett, Janice Le, Eric Harris, Erin Brooks, Courtney Wilson, Katreena Washington, and Duyen Xin.

From left to right: Allison Coleman, Janice Le and Sarah Burgett.

Harlan Hodge Presents “Seeing People”

From the left, Harlan B. Hodge, BSW (UMSL '96), MSW (Wash U.) and Eric Harris, second year student, President of NOSA.

The National Optometric Student Association (NOSA) sponsored a presentation entitled "Seeing People." Social worker, video producer, and life coach, Harlan Hodge delivered a powerful message to the UMSL College of Optometry. His presentation allowed future optometrists to grasp the essence of seeing a person in the examination room versus an ID number, diagnosis or generic tag. "Seeing People" ultimately helped UMSL optometry students to realize that success in eyecare does not rely on the number of diseases we treat, but the number of positive connections we make with our patients and our local communities.

Mark your calendar for UM-St. Louis Alumni Weekend
April 17 & 18, 2009
http://www.umslalumni.org

NEWS & NOTES

Congratulations to Lori Ehlers Swoopes ('03) on the birth of her daughter, Paige Kay on October 1, 2008. She was 7lbs. 15 oz. and 20 inches long.

Congratulations to Derek Swader ('10) and his wife, Kimberly, on the birth of Carter Edward. He was born on December 16th, 2008, 7lbs. 13oz.; 20in.

Congratulations to Arraya Paksin-Hall ('02) who gave birth to Peter Jerran on February 2, 2009. He weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long.
Upcoming Events

Corneal Classic

The 2009 Corneal Classic will be held Sunday, April 26th with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. It will be a a four person 18 hole scramble format and will be held at the Crystal Springs Quarry Golf Club located near Creve Coeur Park. For more information please contact co-coordinators Jordan Jones (jkj684@umsl.edu) or Chris Boschen (chbz8b@umsl.edu).

Sprint for Sight

The AOSA is hosting the Sprint for Sight event, a 5K run benefiting the Society of the Blind and Delta Gamma. The event will take place at Tower Grove Park on May 3rd: $20 early registration fee and $25 on the day of the race. Registration starts at 10:00 a.m. and the race will start at 11:00 a.m.

Continuing Education — http://optometry.umsl.edu

April 18 & 19 - Care of Ocular Disorders
May 11 - Coding Update 2009
August 16 - Annual August Academe

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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

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