

Message from the Dean

Greetings friends and colleagues!

Sometime early in my professional life, I came to fully recognize the value of staying connected to our optometric community. As a student driven by the pursuit of "why", the *American Academy of Optometry (AAO)* and its acclaimed journal began to define for me what it meant to be part of the optometric community. The beginning of my interest in the *American Optometric Association* and the importance of a collective voice for optometry seems indistinguishable from the commencement of my interest in our Academy. I am grateful for the seemingly countless optometric organizations which provide each of us diverse opportunities to improve eye and vision care, expand the reach of optometry and as a result provide more patients the means to receive the best eye and vision care in the world.

Over the past few months I have had the privilege of joining colleagues across Missouri, many whom are alumni of UM-St. Louis, as a guest during meetings of their respective local professional societies. I have thoroughly enjoyed these interactions. More than ever, I am convinced that the vital connections between the various optometric organizations and the individual optometrist have been and will continue to be an essential component for a strong profession. Those who already "get it" know that participation in professional organizations provides both personal and collective benefits. Others preferring to stay on the sidelines have denied themselves and others those enriching experiences.

As we begin 2007 the need for a collective voice for the interest of our patients has never been greater. The health care landscape for the poorest Missourians stands to change substantially in the coming months. Children continue to enter school with uncorrected vision abnormalities. Optometrists will help influence each of those situations for the good of our communities.

Together we can continue to be the *Primary Eye Care Profession*. Wishing you and yours all the best in 2007.

Celebrate, Reflect, Renew!

Best Regards,



"Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Class of 2010



The College of Optometry welcomes the class of 2010 as they begin their professional studies. The class is comprised of 44 students, who come to UMSL from 12 different states and one foreign country. Twenty students hail from Missouri, and 27 (61%) are female. The academic qualifications of the class are excellent with an average GPA of over 3.4.

We welcome all of you to our College and wish you the best during your four years of professional study!

Each One Reach One What Can Optometrists Do To Help?

Over 60% of optometry students tell us the reason they are interested in optometry is their own optometrist. There are several ways that all practitioners can help:

- Introduce the profession of optometry as a career consideration to your patients and to parents of young people
- Be knowledgeable about the current application process, admission requirements and the Optometry Admission Test (OAT)
- Log on to the ASCO website (www.opted.org), download a career guide, visit our Frequently Asked Questions Section, and
- Join ASCO's "Each One, Reach One" Career Promotion Corps.

Go to the Association for Schools and Colleges of Optometry (www.opted.org) to sign up. You will receive free materials for your practice to help recruit students into your profession.

NEWS & NOTES

◆ Edward Jarka, OD, and Kelly Shoan ('05) presented a course entitled "Optometric Tales from the ER" at the June AOA meeting in Las Vegas.

◆ Tim Wingert, OD, Jeff Weaver, OD, and Ralph Garzia, OD, co-authored a poster entitled "Infant-SEE™: Results of the first six months" at the June AOA meeting in Las Vegas.

◆ Barbara Willis Brown, OD '88, the College's Manager of Student and Special Services, was honored as the recipient of the 2006 Administrative/Professional Staff Chancellor's Award of Excellence at the 15th Annual Founders Dinner. Congratulations, Barbara!

◆ Faculty member Julie DeKinder and her husband welcomed Athena Marguerite into their family on October 5, 2006. Athena weighed 8 lbs. 14 oz. and was 21 inches long. Congratulations!

◆ Jordan Gwaltney, OD '06, and her husband Kevin welcomed Madison Kaye into their family on June 13, 2006. Congratulations!



◆ Optometry student Tom Brooks,

'07, and his wife were doubly blessed on July 21, 2006, when Peyton Grace and Rylee Hope joined their family. Peyton weighed 5 lbs. 7 oz. and Rylee tipped the scales at 4 lbs. 10 oz. Congratulations!!

◆ Sara (Martin) Schmitz, OD '05, was married to John Schmitz on October 17, 2006 in Ocho Rios, Jamaica. Sara practices in Troy, Mo at Finklang Eye Health Associates. She and John live in Wentzville, MO. Congratulations, Sara!

◆ The College of Optometry was honored with the 2006 Community Service Award from the Saint Louis Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired during their 95th Anniversary Recognition Dinner on September 21st. The award recognizes the outstanding contributions of our faculty and students working with others in the SLSBVI in order to improve the quality of life for those in our community who live with vision impairment and blindness. Dean Davis was accompanied to the dinner by Katie Boland, OD '02, Ralph Garzia, OD, and GA Franzel, OD, all of whom have made substantial contributions to this 10

year endeavor. Congratulations, all!

◆ The 2006 Annual August Academe brought together 150 clinicians and vision researcher around the new and emerging area of nutrition and the eye. Chancellor Thomas George, PhD, welcomed participants to our campus. A publication of the highlights is forthcoming. Special congratulations to GA Franzel, OD, Carl Bassi, PhD, and Lis Ellerbush for organizing such a successful event.

◆ The College of Optometry is now on the list of FY 2008 priorities for capital improvements for the University of Missouri system for a new building. Thanks are due to President Floyd, Chancellor George, Curator Ream, OD '84, and the Board of Curators for their support of this important initiative. Since 1980 the College has been housed in a renovated dormitory originally built for the Daughters of Charity. There is still much work to be done before a new facility for the College becomes a reality. Stay tuned!

◆ Cheryl Bergin, OD '05, was in a car accident in March, 2006 and required daily physical therapy to overcome severe whiplash injuries. For a time she was unable to raise her arms or turn her head and was fearful that might not be able to return to her St. Louis optometric practice or to running. This August, Cheryl completed the Pikes Peak Ascent Marathon, which is run on a 13 mile course that starts at 6,295 feet above sea level and climbs 7,815 feet to Pikes Peak, 14,110 feet elevation. The average grade elevation of the course is 11%. Cheryl, you are an inspiration to all of us who get winded climbing a flight of stairs!

◆ The Jefferson City, MO News Tribune featured Tom Green, OD '01, in its September 6, 2006 issue. After graduation, Dr. Greene started a practice "cold" in Jefferson City. He has since added a partner and formed Central Missouri Eyecare Associates.



Kyle Dohm '06 graduated in May, got married and then reported to fulfill his military obligation. Recently, he has been on the USS Ronald Reagan. When fully loaded the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) houses about 6,000 personnel. Literally, it is a floating city/airport. He was able to provide 89 full eye exams including refraction and external and internal health evaluations.

PAST TIMES

Fifteen years ago, 1991

◆ Research grants were awarded to Gary Bachman, OD, MS (\$22,700 from the Varilux Corporation); Ray Myers, OD (\$12,000 from the Revlon Science Institute); and Gary Bachman, OD, MS, Ed Bennett, OD, Tim Wingert, OD, and Howard McAlister, OD, MPH (\$13,000 from Vistakon)

◆ Marian Welling, Optometric Technician, was interviewed by a reporter from the Nashville Tennessean newspaper for an article entitled "New lens gives eyes total protection, too". In the article Welling emphasized the importance of blocking UV rays and described the value of Transition Lenses. The Center for Eye Care was selected as a test-market, and had been fitting Transitions Lenses for the past two years.

◆ Jonathan Stevens, OD, Scott Steinman, OD, PhD, Aaron Franzel, OD '90, all received appointments as Assistant Professors.

Five years ago, 2001

◆ Anne Ream, OD '84, was appointed to the Board of Curators of the University of Missouri.

◆ Kent Harrington, OD '88, received the Distinguished Alumni Award at the University of Missouri-St. Louis Founders Dinner. Harrington also entered the PhD program in Physiological Optics at the School of Optometry.

◆ The Gateway Lions and Partners program was selected as one of the "What's Right with St. Louis" award winners for 2001. The College of Optometry was heavily involved in the provision of comprehensive eye services to qualified patients.

From Optometry Student to Curator

(Part Two)



The following article is a continuation of the interview with Anne Ream, OD '84, a graduate of the College of Optometry's inaugural class. Dr. Ream is currently a curator of the University of Missouri system.

EYEWIRE: Has the experience of being a curator changed your view of the University?

Curator Ream: I've learned much more about accreditation, although I learned something about it in optometry school. We were aware that our fledgling program had to be accredited in order for us to be licensed, but the program couldn't be accredited until it graduated its first class.

EYEWIRE: Sort of a Catch 22?

Curator Ream: Exactly, and it made a lot of us nervous. Also, I didn't understand the importance of research to a university until I became a curator. I'd been exposed to research during optometry school, but never thought much about it. My classmates and I only wanted to be practicing optometrists. Dr. Applegate talked about research, but it didn't mean anything to me. Now I realize that research is an important measure of the strength of an academic department, school, college, campus or university. Research is essential to the reputation of a university and its programs.

EYEWIRE: Research has always been difficult for the College because of the expense.

Curator Ream: Funding has always been a problem for the College, hasn't it? One of my disappointments as a curator is that UMSL and the College of Optometry have never been properly funded. It's frustrating.

EYEWIRE: Yes, given the way in which our program was started, the University elected to make it as self-supporting as possible. Compared to other university located optometry programs, a much smaller percentage of our budget comes from state funds. Financially we are more like a private optometry program than a public one. During the 1990s tuition was raised substantially and the College was forced to return a certain percentage of tuition income in the form of scholarships. This has reduced the College's effective operating budget.

Curator Ream: Money is essential to getting a research program started. I've learned about the funds needed.

EYEWIRE: Not only do researchers have to be hired, but laboratory space renovated, and a reasonable amount of set-up money provided. It's costly, but there's no alternative.

Curator Ream: Life science is the big push now — stem cells — and the other health professions are on the bandwagon; optometry needs a life sciences initiative. Also, the current shortage of nurses and doctors is driving the system right now.

EYEWIRE: The College needs to find a research niche.

Curator Ream: Yes, with the aging population maybe diabetes, which I already see a lot of, will become even more important, and possibly dry eye.

EYEWIRE: Now there are plans for the College to have a new building.

Curator Ream: Yes. Such an initiative will have to be kick started with private funds. That's just the way it works. Then the University and the State can be convinced to contribute. The process will have to be creative and encourage our alumni to support their school.

EYEWIRE: What has given you a sense of accomplishment during your tenure as curator?

Curator Ream: I feel that the Board has met most all of the challenges it has faced. I think we manage money well, and part of that is due to the high quality of information provided by the university.

EYEWIRE: Everyone associated with our program is proud of you and appreciate your work as a curator. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to give our readers some idea of what it's like to be a curator.

Curator Ream: You're welcome.

UMSL Grad and InfantSEE™

Tom Cullinane, OD '96, was attending a family reunion when he learned that Nate and Christie Burdek's (she a distant cousin of Tom's) infant son, Ben, suffered light sensitivity and did not crawl as expected. The Burdek's pediatrician looked at Ben's fundus and declared it normal. Cullinane told the Burdeks about the InfantSEE™ program, a public health program designed to promote professional eyecare as part of an infant's wellness care. Cullinane examined Ben and when he found Ben's corneas to be large and clouded and that Ben had myopia of twelve diopters, he referred him to a pediatric ophthalmologist who determined that Ben had congenital glaucoma. Goniotomy was performed on Ben just before his first birthday and his pressure is now controlled and he is wearing glasses. The Burdeks report that Ben is now more comfortable and much more mobile. They are great supporters of the InfantSEE™ program. Good work, Tom!

Seibel Inducted as Distinguished Practitioner

Dr. David B. Seibel (Class of '87) was inducted as a distinguished practitioner into the National Academies of Practice (NAP) on November 4, 2006 in Washington, D.C. The NAP chooses the top 150 doctors in the nation as elected by their colleagues in each of the health care professions for a lifetime membership. Election is based on the doctor's research, publications, community service and leadership in their profession. The NAP provides guidance to U.S. lawmakers in Washington on public health policy. Dr. Seibel is the first UM-St. Louis College of Optometry graduate to be honored with membership in the NAP. Congratulations!



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