

TOUR DE OPTOMETRY

An Awesome Accomplishment: COVD visited All 22 Schools and Colleges of Optometry in the US and Canada

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“In just twelve short months, starting last August 2010 and ending this July 2011, we were able to visit ALL 22 Schools and Colleges of Optometry in the US and Canada. Board members and past presidents of COVD, we did it! This is an awesome accomplishment!” States Dr. Carole Hong, co-chair of the popular COVD Tour de Optometry program.

Preparing for its eighth year, Dr. Hong reports that the Tour continues to spark interest in vision therapy by bringing “private practice” to the schools and colleges. The focus of this past tour was on the “3D’s of 3D Vision- Discomfort, Dizziness, and Lack of Depth.” As with past presentations, practice management, research, video cases, and resources are provided in the tour presentation. Not only did each Board member or Past President connect with optometric students, but often met separately with residents, faculty, and administration at each school. The Tour de Optometry program continues to help COVD in fulfilling its mission of ***Improving lives by advancing excellence in optometric vision therapy through education and board certification.***

Alison Leung, student liaison from the University of Waterloo School of Optometry sums it up perfectly in reporting what the tour visit meant to the students

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at her school: “Your presentation motivated students of all four years to get a taste of what vision therapy is, to entertain the idea of vision therapy in their practice, and to incorporate it as a major part of their practice in the future. I had really positive feedback from the students. The first years have piqued an interest in binocular vision and are looking forward to learning more about it in class in the upcoming year. The second years found your talk especially helpful since they just finished their Strabismus course and are currently learning about the different techniques. The third and fourth years really benefited from your case stories and the success of vision therapy in private practice.”

There are so many great things that are happening due to the success of the Tour. Almost 500 surveys were received after the Tour visits. Based on what the attendees learned about COVD, 98% said that they planned to join COVD now or in the future and would return for another COVD presentation. Student membership continues to be free for all students and we are at an all time high of 1174 students. Resident membership is at 52 and 20 sat for the written exam portion of COVD’s Fellowship program. This test was offered for the first time to all optometry schools which have residency programs in pediatrics and rehabilitation to use in order to help encourage residents to pursue Fellowship in our organization. Students and residents are the lifeblood of our organization and will help our organization grow.

Many of the schools now have COVD student liaisons in their first, second, third, and fourth year classes and have even started school clubs or chapters in order to help facilitate further education in the area of developmental optometric care and vision therapy. Some schools have reported that their groups invite other developmental optometrists to speak, organize outings to private practices in their area, have

monthly journal club meetings where they discuss recent articles and research, give talks to local parent or teacher groups, have fundraisers by selling pediatric packs and help with school screenings.

At the American Optometric Association Meeting this past June, Faculty Liaison, Dr. Pia Hoenig, who has attended many residency information sessions, stated, "This year was different. Out of the 100's of students that came through, over 50% asked about the vision therapy and vision rehabilitation residency our school had to offer. I was amazed at the increased interest and awareness of vision therapy by many of the students!"

Furthermore, at UCBSO, The Vision Development Club (VDC) of Berkeley was formed in 2010 by former COVD student liaison Anna Griffith, who is now doing a Residency at Pacific College of Optometry, and Cecilia Tong a third year student who has been the COVD liaison since her first year. They had the help of faculty mentors, Drs. Pia Hoenig and Debora Lee, as well as classmates Vy Tran and Jennifer Doan.

According to Cecilia, "Our mission is to expand the knowledge of this specialty among our UC Berkeley student colleagues. We want to increase awareness of all aspects of vision therapy early in optometric education, including visual skills and perceptual training, sports vision, traumatic brain injury, and stroke rehabilitation. We would also like to offer information about incorporating vision therapy into a private practice and hope this will provide a smooth transition from what we learn about vision therapy in the classroom to patient care."

Cecilia shared that their first school wide event for the 2011–2012 academic year will be in September, called "Brock String, Batwing and Beyond!" It will be an interactive event for our incoming first years. Dr. Debora Lee will share her background knowledge about Vision Therapy followed by a vision skills screening by our third year clinicians and a hand-on discussion/demonstration about vision therapy treatment based on our findings.

These are just a few examples of the many positive things happening at the schools and colleges of optometry due in part to the success of COVD's Tour de Optometry program. What started out as a vision of past president Lynn Hellerstein and the board almost ten years ago, to help build communication between students, residents, faculty and administration, and COVD, the voice of developmental optometry, is

really making a difference for all! Lynn Hellerstein has stepped down as Co-Chair of the Tour program this year, but will continue to advise and contribute behind the scenes. We want to thank Lynn; not only for her vision, but for all the hard work, dedication, and time she spent over the years to make the Tour such a success. Lynn personally visited all 22 schools over the years, which is an awesome feat in and of itself.

The Board of Directors is committed to continuing and growing the Tour. COVD contributes \$500 dollars to each school and college for tour refreshments and other meetings that the COVD liaisons plan.

A special shout out to all the colleges and schools of optometry, the student, resident, and faculty liaisons, who help to plan and coordinate the tour visits, and make our Board members feel at home. A huge thank you to Mountain States Congress of Optometry (MSCO) who generously awarded COVD a \$20,000 grant this past November. To date, MSCO has contributed \$67,500 towards our mission. Without everyone's contributions the tour would not have been such a success.

Tremendous thanks also goes to past presidents Dr. Robert Sanet, Dr. W.C. Maples, and Dr. Lynn Hellerstein for making tour visits, as well as Dr. Marie Bodack, Chair of the COVD Academic Services Committee, and to COVD's national liaisons:

2010-11 Liaisons

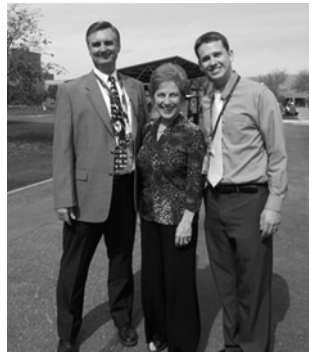
National Faculty Liaisons – Marc Taub, OD, MS, FAAO, FCOVD and Lisa W.T. Christian, OD
National Resident Liaison – Ira Strenger, OD
National Student Liaison – Paula Johns, OD
National Extern Liaison – Shelly Mozlin, OD, FCOVD, FCOVD-A

And to all our wonderful Local Student Liaisons – Each year it seems we have more and more volunteers at each school, thank you!

Co-chair, Carol Scott, past chair, Lynn Hellerstein, and fellow board members, Christine Allison and Robin Price and I have been busy planning for the 2011-2012 Tour and visits are already scheduled for the fall. Being involved with the tour is very rewarding and is just one example of COVD's dedication to the optometric community and the benefit of all. We are looking forward to another year of accomplishments and another successful Tour year!

Please do not hesitate to become involved. We welcome you to be a part of this collaborative process. Consider assisting at a site visit, giving a separate

student presentation, inviting students to visit your practice or helping with a donation to our Public Awareness Fund, which helps support COVD's Tour de Optometry program. **Donate today** so we can continue our successful Tour de Optometry journey for many years to come! Your contributions make all the difference! Call 888-268-3770 or email info@covd.org.



AZOPT Faculty Liaison, Dr. Bill Rainey, Dr. Hellerstein, and COVD Student Liaison, Lance Bloom



Students at Western University learning about the 3D's of 3D!