

2011 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Bradley E. Habermehl presented the following membership report during the State of the Organization Meeting at the COVD Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Thursday, October 27, 2011.

Last year our 40th annual meeting was held at the Rio Mar Beach Resort in beautiful Puerto Rico. As usual, many people enjoyed the camaraderie, education, and warm, sunny location. We had a record attendance for the meeting and many exhibitors. This year I hope you are enjoying the Tropicana Las Vegas and their amenities.

In case you haven't had time to read your email blasts, *VISIONS*, and *OVD Journals*, below you will find some highlights of the events that have taken place in COVD this past year.

Tour de Optometry Program

"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, 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.*

There are so many great things that are happening due to the success of the Tour. Almost 600 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 1695 students. Resident membership is at 57.

Public Relations

Our public relations program is an important component in helping COVD achieve its goal of serving as an informational and educational resource. In the past two years we have worked on expanding and updating our website, making it more user friendly and keeping current events and new information on the main page. As we all know, having a good website is now crucial not only for marketing but dissemination of information.

Social Media efforts have continued in earnest during 2011. The COVD blog has averaged 1010 clicks per month since the beginning of this year. One of the greatest draws to the blog was Dr. Shelly Mozlin's response to the Wall Street Journal Editorial. As of this writing, COVD's following on Facebook numbers 612. In addition to this group, COVD has also been instrumental in the formation of two other Facebook groups, Make "Fixing My Gaze" into a Movie, and School Screenings are not Enough Support Comprehensive Vision Exams! The followers of these Facebook pages number 96 and 254 respectively. The number of people that follow us on Twitter is an amazing 1,558. Sovoto and LinkedIn also continue to be important sources for sharing information. Most importantly, more and more COVD members are taking the leap and joining social media endeavors. These members are posting links on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Sovoto as well as uploading videos to YouTube and blogging about their experiences as developmental optometrists and therapists.

Our *August is National Vision and Learning Month Campaign* continues helping to spread the word about optometric vision therapy. This year we received 27 proclamations. We were fortunate to have Robin Benoit and her daughter, Jillian, join us to help spread the word about the connection between vision and learning, as well as the benefits of vision therapy. I want to thank our State Coordinators, Dr. Carole Hong, and Ms. Toni Bristol, for their help in making the campaign such a success this year.

Membership

As of September 1, 2011, our membership was 3,580. Overall, our membership increased by 31.57% from September 2010 to September 2011. Our Fellows count increased by almost 6% and our COVTs increased by almost 14%. I believe our Fellow and COVT numbers will continue to grow. As the public continues to be more aware of the need for optometric vision therapy, they will be looking for optometrists and therapists that can provide this service. We must continue reaching out to students and our colleagues making them aware of how COVD can help them meet this growing demand.

We are continuing work on our State Coordinator facilitated Study Group project as a way to offer educational opportunities, facilitate networking and help us grow our membership. Thanks to Drs. Dan Fortenbacher and Carole Hong who are working on this project with our volunteers.

International Examination and Certification Board

The IECB members have worked extremely hard this year. We have 64 candidates testing to complete certification at this year's meeting – 28 FCOVD, 2 FCOVD-A, and 34 COVT candidates. And we have more than 100 candidates in the process most of whom may be ready to complete the certification process by next year!

We have a large number of candidates for FCOVD and COVT certification this year, and it takes dedication and effort to help all these candidates through the process. Our Associate-to-Fellow Committee Co-Chairs, Dr. Jennifer Dattolo and Mary Bartuccio, and their committee have been instrumental in helping keep our Fellow candidates on track. COVT Mentoring Subcommittee Chair, Debbie Killion and her committee have done an outstanding job with helping the COVT candidates. I would also like to thank Dr. Celia Hinrichs for her leadership as IECB Chair this year, the IECB members, Drs. Robert Fox, Israel Greenwald, Kristi Jensen, Nancy Mackowsky, Susan Oh, Len Press, Irwin Suchoff, Marc Taub, Terri Vasche' for their time and dedication and Ms. Jackie Cencer for keeping the process so well organized.

This year we opened the Fellowship multiple-choice written exam to the pediatric, VT, and rehabilitation residents at all the optometry schools.

Twenty-one residents applied for and passed the multiple-choice exam. This test was offered 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.

Volunteers and Staff

We should all give our thanks to the excellent team at the COVD International Office. I thank Pam Happ, our Executive Director, for her leadership and passion, and Jackie Cencer, Penny Melkerson-Kirby, and Julie Ickes-Jefferson for all their help this past year.

I really appreciate the number of hours that our Board, committee chairs, and volunteers contribute in helping make COVD a success. It adds up to a phenomenal amount of time. It is great to have so many dedicated members who are willing to contribute time and money to our cause. We are a volunteer organization and can't do all we do without all of you! Please continue to help make COVD and optometric vision therapy visible!

Thank you for this opportunity to serve as your President, and for your support.

With great appreciation for all of you,

Bradley E. Habermehl, OD, FCOVD

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President

