

TOUR DE OPTOMETRY

The COVD “Tour de Optometry” Program Continues its Successful Journey!

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I am delighted to report that our 2008-09 “Tour de Optometry” Program had another successful year. Initiated in 2005 with the goal of bringing “private practice” to the schools and colleges of optometry, we’ve made great progress in connecting with the optometric students, residents, faculty, and the administration at all the schools and colleges of optometry across the United States and Canada.

Our visits continue making an impact in the lives of students, faculty and administration and we are starting to see some very gratifying results. COVD students are beginning to relate how their interest in VT was sparked by a Tour visit. And even more important is that those students are making the decision to incorporate optometric vision therapy into their future practices. Through these connections, COVD is helping fulfill its mission to serve as an advocate for comprehensive vision care emphasizing a developmental and behavioral approach.

While the Tour program is in its fifth year, you may be unfamiliar with what the Tour is all about. In 2005, the COVD Board of Directors approved developing a program to help students at optometric schools and colleges experience a developmental and behavioral approach to optometric care. Each year a COVD board member or past president schedules a visit to a college or school of optometry in the US and Canada. We try to make at least one visit to



Pacific University students raising funds for COVD Tour visit.

every school every year. A typical Tour visit includes a featured lecture for all classes. Sometimes lectures are also given to individual classes on VT topics, and on occasion, even CE for faculty and administrators is planned. Time for consultation and sharing with faculty and administration is an important component of the Tour visit.

Here’s a brief recap of our last four year’s presentations:

The first presentation, “Practice Full Scope Optometry – Including Vision Therapy” was given during the 2005-06 academic year. The presentation included the myths of VT, financial viability, and success stories.

During the 2006-07 academic year, the presentation was “Optometry’s Best Kept Secret: Developmental Vision and Therapy.” This lecture included a summary of current VT research, case studies, and success stories.

“How to Get Started in VT” was the topic for the 2007-08 school year. Lectures included information on the basic start-up of a VT practice: equipment, setup, staff, forms, etc.

Correspondence regarding this article can be e-mailed to emailed to lhellerstein@hbvision.net or sent to Dr. Lynn Hellerstein, 7180 East Orchard Road Suite 103, Englewood, CO 80111. All statements are the author’s personal opinion and may not reflect the opinions of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, Optometry & Vision Development or any institution or organization to which the author may be affiliated. Permission to use reprints of this article must be obtained from the editor. Copyright 2009 College of Optometrists in Vision Development. OVD is indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Online access is available at <http://www.covd.org>.

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This last academic year, the presentation was “The Power of Developmental Optometry.” This is the first year video presentations of patients’ before and after VT results were included. Special thanks to Dr. Linda Dejmek for donating some of the videos.

Thanks to a generous \$7,500 grant from the Mountain States Congress of Optometry, expenses for this year’s Tour were partially covered. Since the Board determined reaching out to optometry schools was an important way to expand the intra-professional awareness of optometric vision therapy, remaining expenses for 2008-09 Tour visits were paid using donations made to the Public Awareness Fund.

Here are the highlights of the 2008-09 Tour program:

- 15 schools of optometry in the US and two in Canada were visited.
- Over 500 surveys were received after the visits.
- Very positive comments were received from students, faculty and administrators including the following:

Dear Carole (Hong, OD, FCOVD)

Your presentation was one of the best and most inspirational related to behavioral/developmental optometry that I have seen in years. When I was a student, Bill Ludlam talked to the students every autumn and it was always a high point of the year. He conveyed such passion and devotion to optometry that you could not leave his presentation without feeling excited about the future and assured about your career choice. I think that many students left your presentation feeling the same way. You did a great job! My thanks to you and Lynn and anyone else involved in generating the videos.

- Bradley Coffee, OD, Pacific University College of Optometry (PUCO) Associate Professor of Optometry

Dear Dr. Habermehl (Brad Habermehl, OD, FCOVD),

I am the COVD liaison for the University of Waterloo. I’m wondering if there is a preferred time for a COVD representative to visit the University of Waterloo in the 2009-2010 year. Or is that my decision? Also, I’m wondering if your practice takes students for their primary care rotations in their final year. Our primary care

rotation must be with two different optometrists for 2 months each. Would you consider having me doing that at your practice at the beginning of 2011?

- Clark, COVD Student Liaison, University of Waterloo

Dear Carol (Scott, OD, FCOVD),

Thank you so very much for the great job you did promoting COVD and vision therapy to our students. Your presentation was excellent. I especially thought all the practice management tips, for example, the success letter and the pictures on the bulletin board, among others, were very effective. Thanks for coming to NSU-OCO!

- Lynn Cyert, PhD, OD, Professor/Pediatric Clinic Chief, Northeastern State University

Some Tour visits are greatly supported by the faculty at the schools, while some visits are driven by strong student interest. As the schools become more familiar with our program and the students more enthusiastic and informed as to what COVD is all about, we’re finding it a little easier each year to schedule a visit with the schools. A great example of this enthusiasm came from Nicolas Tea, 2009 graduate of the University of Montreal School of Optometry. Thanks to Nicolas’s efforts, I had the pleasure of making the first official Tour visit to his school. We’re looking forward to having an assigned student liaison at Montreal for the 2009-10 academic year and growing our relationship with that school as we have done with others unfamiliar to our cause.



Dr. Carole Hong lecturing to students at Pacific University.

Table 1. 2008-09 Academic Year COVD Liaisons

<p>The COVD Board of Directors thanks the COVD School Liaisons for their work in making the 2008-09 Tour de Optometry program so successful.</p> <p>Chair – Academic Services Committee – Marie Bodack, OD, FCOVD National Faculty Liaison – M.H. Esther Han, OD, FCOVD National Resident Liaison – Maura Massucci, OD National Extern Liaison – Shelly Mozlin, OD, FCOVD, FCOVD-A National Student Liaison – Joe Borden</p>		
School of Optometry	Faculty Liaison	Student Liaison
University of Alabama	Kristine Hopkins, OD, MSPH	Kelley Davis
Ferris State University	Michael Cron, OD, FCOVD-A	Erin Theut
Inter American University of Puerto Rico	Dr. Angel Romero	Simi Simon
University of Houston	Janice Wensveen, OD	Erik Hasselhorst
Illinois College of Optometry	Christine Allison, OD, FCOVD	Tiffany Andrzejewski
Indiana University	David Goss, OD, FCOVD-A	Sarah Brodie & Andrea Eyler
University of Missouri	Ralph Garzia, OD & Linda Marks, OD	Erin Brooks
New England College of Optometry.....	Richard Laudon, OD.....	Yos Priestley & Marcia Thiel
Northeastern State University	Wesley J. DeRosier, OD.....	Jamie Dunn
NOVA Southeastern University.....	Deborah Amster, OD	Cathy Dau
The Ohio State College of Optometry	Marjean Taylor Kulp, OD	Jaelyn Taylor
Pacific University	Graham Erickson, OD, FCOVD	Suzanne Tsang
Salus College of Optometry.....	Michael Gallaway, OD, FCOVD	Laura Satkofsky
Southern College of Optometry.....	Marc Taub, OD, FCOVD.....	Michelle Brennan
Southern California College of Optometry	Carmen Barnhardt, OD, FCOVD	John Vinh, Andy Cheng, & Julius Tiu-Lim
SUNY State College of Optometry	Audra Steiner, OD	Abraham Zuckerbrod & Tamara Petrosyan
UC Berkeley School of Optometry	Pia Hoenig, OD	Jenny Sung
University of Montreal.....	Nicolas Tea
University of Waterloo.....	Debbie Luk

The COVD Board extends its gratitude to all the student, resident, and faculty liaisons (See Table 1). Tremendous thanks go to our national liaisons: National Faculty Liaison - M.H. Esther Han, OD, FCOVD; National Resident Liaison – Meredith Walburg, OD; National Student Liaison – Joe Borden; and special thanks to Dr. Marie Bodack, Chair of the COVD Academic Services Committee. The Tour success greatly depends on their support!

The Tour Co-Chairs are working with the COVD Board and all the schools, including the three new optometric schools, to schedule our 2009-10 academic year Tour de Optometry visits. We look forward to another successful Tour year!

While the Tour de Optometry is a Board project, we need OD mentors and follow-up visits by local ODs to these schools. Please do not hesitate to become involved. Use your ties and connections to any of the schools or colleges to become a part of this collaborative process. Consider assisting in a site visit or, alternatively, giving a student talk or presentation. Those interested may contact me (lhellerstein@hbvision.net) or my co-chair, Dr. Carole Hong (chong2see@gmail.com), COVD Vice President, for additional information.

COVD is open to taking the Tour to more schools internationally. Of course, before we can do that the increased expense for international travel needs to be evaluated. If you would like COVD to visit your school outside of the United States and Canada, please contact me or Dr. Hong.

Although visiting the schools is time consuming and costly to administer, the COVD Board agrees that the Tour de Optometry program has been tremendously successful in educating the future optometrists on the benefits and need for providing optometric vision therapy. Additional sponsorships and funding are being sought to help us continue this program and expand it. This incredibly successful program is just one example of COVD’s dedication to the optometric community and further expands the relationship between COVD and academia for the benefit of all. If you haven’t donated lately to the Public Awareness Fund, please do so now. Your contributions make the difference. Our optometry students are the lifeblood of this organization. Support COVD’s Tour de Optometry; *donate today* so we can continue our successful journey for many years to come!