

# COVID Programs for Students and Faculty

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During the past several years, a priority item for COVID has been to increase our interaction and level of communication with students and faculty at the various schools and colleges of optometry across the country. COVID recognizes that the future leaders of the profession and of developmental, functional and behavioral optometry are within each of our optometric educational institutions.

Thanks to Dr. Ida Chung, East Regional Director of COVID, and the members of the Academic Services committee, COVID has made incredible progress in reaching out to the students and faculty. Several programs of primary interest to students and faculty have been developed and instituted. These programs include:

- An increased number of travel grants for students/residents so they can attend COVID's Annual Meeting
- Free student/resident COVID membership for all years of optometry school. (Our current student membership has grown to 1350)
- Reduced fees for annual meeting registration and housing for students/residents



*Dr Lynn Hellerstein on de Tour in Puerto Rico*

- Expanded externship sites in the areas of vision therapy, pediatrics, binocular vision, and learning related vision problems
- The development of an Externship manual for COVID ODs in practice. (This is available on the COVID website)
- An implementation of a student/OD mentoring system
- A continuation of the Tour de Optometry Program for the 2007-08 school year.
- The development of the FCOVDA program for those in academia

## **TOUR de OPTOMETRY 2006-07**

The Tour de Optometry Program was first initiated in 2005. COVID has recognized that it can be very difficult for the schools and colleges of optometry to be able to duplicate providing specialty care in a private practice setting. COVID now brings the experience of "private practice" to the schools. A COVID Board member or Past President is scheduled to visit every school of optometry. Each Tour visit includes one or more lectures to students and



*Dr Dan Fortenbacher on the Tour at NOVA*

time for discussion with faculty and administrators.

The lectures given to each school can include:

- "Practice Full Scope Optometry-Including Optometric Vision Therapy." This presentation reviews the myths concerning vision therapy, the financial viability of providing specialty services, and success stories from our patients.
- "Optometry's Best Kept Secret: Developmental Vision and Therapy," which includes a summary of current optometric vision therapy research, case studies, and success stories
- "How to Get Started in VT" is a presentation that was specifically developed for the 2007-08 school year and includes basic start-up recommendations for a pediatrics/BV/VT practice; the necessary equipment; setup guidelines; information on hiring staff; what forms should be used, and more.

The 2006-07 Tour program was quite successful due in large measure to a generous grant by the Mountain States Congress of Optometry. During 2006-07:

- All 17 schools of optometry in the US were visited, including Inter-American University School of Optometry in Puerto Rico
- Over 647 survey responses were received after the presentations

Many positive comments were received from students, faculty and administrators. These included:

“We have made a giant step forward during your stay in raising the awareness of behavioral/functional optometry within the NECO community and beyond. A number of occupational therapists spoke to me at the conclusion of our continuing education program to thank all for our efforts in helping children with learning and developmental problems. Dr. Richard Laudon, NECO

“It was a pleasure having you at the school and the Student Convention. Thank you for taking your time to share with us your ideas and information concerning COVD. I hope you can come again in the near future. Please relay to COVD our gratefulness by supporting your visit to our school.” Best regards, Héctor Santiago, OD, PhD, FAAO, Dean, Inter American University School of Optometry (Puerto Rico).

“Many thanks for taking the time to spend the day on our campus. I enjoyed your seminar and urge you to repeat this message to as many students as possible. Being able to develop a professional practice takes a lot of effort and creativity and the example you shared about your own experiences sends a very positive message. I wish to also thank you for meeting with me to review the challenges of providing a meaningful external clinical experience for students. Your insights were invaluable and I will share these with Dr. Schornack. We are anxious to expand vision therapy rotation opportunities and will look to your office as a model for providing professional experiences for our interns. I hope that you will continue to visit SCCO in the years ahead. Thank you for the

encouragement you offered to our faculty, residents and students.” Morris Berman, O.D., Dean SCCO.

“It was wonderful to have you visit and to lecture to our students in Vision Science 715 - Binocular and Spatial Vision. They found the lecture interesting and informative. Thank you for an excellent presentation.

Paulette Schmidt, OD, FAAO, FCOVD, Professor OSU

Many of the students attending the Tour programs commented that:

“VT works!”

“You really opened me up to vision development.”

“I now realize the value of VT in increasing a practice income as well as increasing the scope of practice.”

“Case examples were most valuable; as were the success stories.”

“Loved the demonstrations!”

“Much better idea of who COVD is and its importance within optometry.”

“Your enthusiasm is contagious!”

The future plans for the Tour de Optometry include taking the program to different countries (Israel, Canada). If you would like to become more involved in this program, or would like us to visit your school/college of optometry no matter what country you live in, please contact Ms. Pam Happ, Executive Director of COVD at [phapp@covd.org](mailto:phapp@covd.org).



## Support the Tour de Optometry

The Tour de Optometry program is designed to increase awareness of behavioral and developmental vision and vision therapy in optometry school students.

Help us increase awareness to the future of COVD by contributing to the COVD Public Awareness Campaign.

Visit [www.covd.org](http://www.covd.org) and learn about how you can Donate to COVD with the Making Vision Therapy Visible contribution form.

Thank you for your continued support of this important campaign and for helping spread the word!