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College of Optometry

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NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

the Visionary

Volume one/Issue one

Inaugural
Issue

NSU College of Optometry externships in Tianjin, China



Adventurous students experience the East.
See inside story...



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Accreditation

Programs in dentistry, advanced education in general dentistry, endodontics, orthodontics, periodontics, pediatric dentistry, prosthodontics, and oral and maxillofacial surgery are accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; telephone number 404-679-4501) to award associate's, bachelor's, master's, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees.

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Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, sex, age, non-disqualifying disability, religion or creed, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, and does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.



“The college’s educational programs are benefiting from the latest technologies available, both in the classroom, where we use remotes for instant responses from students, and the clinics...”

As the College of Optometry completes its 17th year, we reflect on our past achievements while looking forward to a future of new opportunities. More than 1,000 students have graduated since the college matriculated its first class in 1989, and with the growing number of alumni, our fledging alumni association has taken shape and become an active and official chapter of the Nova Southeastern University Alumni Association.

This new magazine format is evidence of our growth, and we hope that you enjoy exploring it and look forward to our future issues. This May, we will honor the graduating class of 1996 on its 10-year anniversary in what has become a new college tradition—the 10th Annual Clinical Eye Care Conference and 4th Annual Alumni Dinner Dance. I hope to see many of you at these events because it’s a great chance to catch up with classmates and former instructors.

The college is bubbling with activity. We have a number of major research projects underway, including several funded by national sources such as the National Eye Institute and the National Institutes of Health. For example, principal investigator Dr. Stacey Coulter and team are conducting a federally funded research project entitled “Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial.” Dr. Richard Dix, who joined our faculty last year, is working on a cancer-related research project, also federally funded. In fact, the general level of faculty scholarship has increased exponentially, due in part to financial support and physical space provided by the Health Professions Division and additional financial support from the university. To facilitate the experiences of younger faculty and students, mentorship has become an ongoing process.

Our Master of Science in Clinical Vision Research program, which is an entirely online program, draws students from far and wide and also enables our own faculty to develop the skills and knowledge needed to

conduct relevant clinical research. More information about this program can be found in another section of this issue.

The college’s educational programs are benefiting from the latest technologies available, both in the classroom, where we use remotes for instant responses from students, and the clinics, where digital equipment is replacing all older models, for example in GDX technology. The Eye Institute in North Miami Beach completed a remodeling project some time ago, and now the optical division at the Davie Eye Institute site is being remodeled, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Linda Rouse, who secured a grant for the project. Dr. Rouse joined the faculty about three years ago and became the chief operations officer of The Eye Institute in 2005.

NSU College of Optometry also actively participates in international optometry. NSU is a member of the World Council of Optometry and is home to the North American Associated Center of the UNESCO chair in visual health and development. Dr. Janet Leasher, director of outreach programs, serves as the UNESCO chair and has facilitated NSU’s founding membership in the Association of Latin-American Educators and Colleges of Optometry. Additionally, Dr. Bai-Chuan Jiang, who came to NSU from the University of Houston College of Optometry, has facilitated an exchange program in which we send students in their fourth year to externships sites in China for six months at a time (please read the feature article in this issue for more information). This year, we are reciprocating by hosting two visiting scholars from China who are assisting with research and in our optics laboratories.

I hope this brief overview of some of our more recent accomplishments will entice you to visit our campus, check the college and university Web sites for news and information, and make that connection with NSU College of Optometry. You can be as proud of our growth, achievements, and progress as we are!



“NSU is clearly on the cusp of something extraordinary...”

The past few years have been extraordinarily prolific ones for NSU's Health Professions Division, which is a trend that is destined to continue as we move closer to the realization of The Medical Village at NSU.

However, now that the Health Professions Division and the university as a whole have reached a stage where quality programs and academic excellence are the unqualified norm, the next step in our progression is to aspire to a position of educational preeminence. To that end, President Ray Ferrero, Jr., and the NSU Board of Trustees approved a five-year plan in 2005 that incorporates a mission to weave research into the fabric of our academic excellence.

Thanks to its futuristic approach to medical education, most of the Health Professions Division's six colleges are already heavily entrenched in various research-related endeavors. In fact, the university's increased emphasis on this area has already allowed us to strengthen our research infrastructure through the hiring of some of the most significant academic researchers in the nation.

As many of you already know, the NSU campus is continuing to transform structurally

with the advent of the forthcoming academical and medical villages. It will also serve as the home of a much-anticipated research center that will be established adjacent to the Health Professions Division parking garage sometime in the next two-to-four years. This structure will house a range of researchers, including an 80-member scientific team of the U.S. Geological Survey unit, which is responsible for the scientific overview of the Everglades restoration. As we're constructing the research building, 50 percent of the space will also be designated for wet lab and research space for the Health Professions Division, the Oceanographic Center, and other NSU-affiliated researchers.

NSU is clearly on the cusp of something extraordinary as it moves toward incorporating a strong research component to its already acclaimed academic and programmatic offerings. As we evolve, these enhancements will provide a more complete educational experience for our students—and a much richer work environment for our wonderful team of academic faculty, administrators, and staff.



As the president of the College of Optometry Alumni Chapter of the NSU Alumni Association, I am excited to address all of you in the inaugural edition of this magazine. Our college has come a long way from its beginning in North Miami Beach, and so has our Alumni Association. In order to keep our alumni

informed of special events and news about the school, we require your current contact information. A Web site has been set up by the university to enable you to provide that information. The Web page may be accessed at www.nova.edu. This Web site should become one of your favorite sites for information on practice management, continuing education, and classmates.

It is my pleasure to highlight a few of the events that have been sponsored by the Alumni Association. This year at the FOA convention in South Beach, we had a successful and well-attended cocktail reception. We also hosted a dessert reception at SECO, which we hold each year. The alumni attending these meetings have

an opportunity to interact with peers and faculty. The joint reception at the AAO is another opportunity for alumni to socialize. Each year, the college selects an alumnus to win the Award of Excellence. You will learn more about this year's recipient in this issue.

The 4th Annual Alumni Reunion Reception honoring the class of 1996 is scheduled for May 20, 2006, at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. Our Alumni Reunion Weekend features continuing education on practice management, Florida requirements for TQ, HIV, and jurisprudence. Each year at the Annual Alumni Weekend, a specific optometric topic is the lecture focus. This year's conference focuses on women's issues. In addition, during the third annual reunion, we voted to change the bylaws and received an inspirational speech from Dr. Manny Bergman upon his retirement.

The Spring Phonathon is the next opportunity that the alumni have to donate. "College of Optometry" must be designated along with the donation. The current scholarship funds include the Terry Ingraham, Jack Wolfe, and General Scholarship (which was originally set up for Bob Gilman).

CLASS OF 1997

- Julie Tyler, O.D. (PC resident) was named chief of the primary care service at Davie in August 2004. Her husband, Greg Black, O.D. (PC resident), is chief of the Broward Boulevard clinic.
- Sherrol Reynolds, O.D. (NSU '96, PC resident '97) is married to Andre Ethridge and has two children, Brayden and Andre, Jr. She is currently a full-time assistant professor at NSU.
- Alexandra Espejo, O.D. (PC resident) has been married to Juan Carlos Gonzalez since June 2005. She is an assistant professor at NSU and is the primary care module three director.
- Richard Sorkin, O.D. (NSU '97, BV/peds resident '98) served as interim chief of the pediatric service for NSU and then purchased a practice in St. Petersburg, Florida, where he does primary care, pediatrics, and vision therapy. He has NSU externs rotating through his practice.

CLASS OF 1998

- Michelle Collier, O.D., has three children.
- Deb Weston, O.D., has one child.
- Shalita Antebi, O.D., is now in California with her husband and two children.
- Kevin Broome, O.D., is working at his father's practice in North Florida.
- Ken Hunt, O.D., and his wife have twins.

CLASS OF 1999

- Robert Love, O.D. (BV/peds resident) practices in Lake Mary, Florida, at his office—Lake Mary Eye Care. He does primary eye care with an emphasis in pediatrics, vision therapy, and ocular disease. He also has NSU externs rotating through his practice.

CLASS OF 2000

- Kristy Canavan, O.D. (PC with emphasis in CL): works at Vistakon headquarters in Jacksonville, Florida, in research and development. She bought a new home in April 2005.
- Karen Memoli, O.D. (PC resident) married Sergio Gonzalez and has settled into offices in South Florida. She also gained a new sister-in-law in June 2005 when Alex Espejo married her husband's brother.

CLASS OF 2001

- Perla Najman, O.D. (NSU 99; PC with emphasis in CL) joined the faculty of NSU full time after completing her residency. She is an "optometrist-of-all-trades" working in primary care at Davie and Broward as well as the contact lens service.

- Elizabeth Carroll McMunn, O.D. (PC resident) married Chris McMunn and stayed on for a year of teaching at NSU. Since then, she moved to Connecticut, and on July 16, 2005, her daughter, Shaelin Elizabeth McMunn, was born.

CLASS OF 2002

- Lori Vollmer, O.D., and Joe Sowka, O.D., were married on May 3, 2003. Lori is now an assistant professor at NSU.
- Deena Falsetta, O.D., and David Gilbert, O.D., were married in 2003 and live in Virginia.
- Thomas Brown, O.D., married Leslie Rosenblatt, a 2001 graduate of the NSU Physician Assistant Program.
- Christie Munro, O.D., gave birth to a baby boy, Cole Heaton, on May 31, 2004, and is living with her husband in Colorado.
- Tara Theil Brousseau, O.D., gave birth to twins. She lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.
- Rob Lucky, O.D., has a new baby, Rob III, and practices in Tampa, Florida.
- Regina Portocorrera, O.D., is working at the Gainesville VA in Florida.
- John and Debra Marcev, O.D., are living in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and have a baby boy, Nathan. Debra is pregnant again with twins.
- Roopal Rammohan, O.D., is married to husband Guhan and living in Pennsylvania. Roopal completed a residency at a VA hospital in Illinois.
- John Cargo, O.D., is doing well with his private practice in Irving, Texas. Check out his Web site at www.cargo.optometry.net.
- Tiffany Chase, O.D., is living in North Carolina and is very busy with her nursing home practice.
- Troy Blanchard, O.D., is married to Angela Salas Blanchard, O.D., and they relocated to Texas from New Orleans, Louisiana, after Hurricane Katrina.
- Steven Spear, O.D., is doing well and living in Lexington, Kentucky.
- Adam Perlman, O.D., is practicing in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and is an officer in the Alumni Association and a trustee in the Dade Optometric Association.
- Bonnie Ng, O.D. (PC resident) moved back to California after her residency and established her own practice in San Francisco in December 2005.
- Gregory Fecho, O.D. (PC resident) lives in Boca Raton, Florida, and works at Nova Southeastern University teaching OTM I and ABV I. He continues to be happily married to Diana Cajamarca, O.D., class of 2001.

CLASS OF 2003

- Lorena Bejar, O.D. (PC resident) married Danny Mukamal in April 2004. More recently, on January 25, 2006, they had a little girl—Sofia Ana Mukamal.
- Crystal Henderson, O.D. (PC resident) practices in Canada and was married on January 21, 2006, in Winnipeg, Canada.

CLASS OF 2004

- Marlon Demerritt, O.D., completed a residency at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville, Florida. He is currently practicing in the South Florida area.
- Adrienne Manzo, O.D., has opened a private practice in Delray Beach, Florida, called Eyes & Style.
- Jackie Rodena, O.D., completed a residency in pediatrics and binocular vision in 2005. She is currently a clinical instructor at Nova Southeastern University.
- Zoe Schinas, O.D., married Chris Lopez in November 2004. She completed a residency in primary care and cornea and contact lens and is currently a clinical instructor at Nova Southeastern University.
- Becky Schoonover, O.D., currently has two practices in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, area.

- Stephen Cyford, O.D., is living in Forest Hill, Maryland. He began practicing immediately following graduation at the Parris Castoro Eye Center (www.parriscastoro.com) in Bel Air, Maryland.
- Jeremy Baumfalk, O.D. (PC resident) lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, and works in a private practice. Jeremy and Becky had baby number two, Briella Rose, on August 29, 2005.
- Tracy Kimmelman, O.D. (PC resident) got engaged in December 2005. Tracy works at TLC in Tampa.

CLASS OF 2005

- Zoeanne Schinas, O.D. (PC with emphasis in CL) joined the NSU faculty after completing her residency in the summer of 2005. She and Chris are enjoying being “new” homeowners and marked their first anniversary in November 2005.
- Maryke Neiberg, O.D. (PC resident) joined the NSU faculty and is working in OTM laboratories and primary care clinics.

FEATURED ALUMNUS

2005 NSU Award of Excellence – Charles Kinnaird, O.D.



Dr. Kinnaird in the office at Westside VA Hospital reviewing patient findings.

Each year, we honor one of our alumni with an award of excellence. The Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award is given to a graduate who has shown an outstanding record of leadership and service to the community. Charles “Chuck” Kinnaird, O.D., was chosen this year for his contributions to the optometry profession. Dr. Kinnaird graduated from NSU College of Optometry in 1994 and was a member of the second class to graduate.

He completed his residency training at Chicago’s Westside VA and then became the facility’s director of student education. Dr. Kinnaird supervises residents and fourth-year students and feels that his clinical and didactic supervision of students is one of the most significant contributions he has made to the profession.

Dr. Kinnaird became a fellow in the American Academy of Optometry in 2001. His interest in pathology led him to become chair of the subcommittee for Poster Review of the Disease Section and coordinator of the annual photography contest. He also is an examiner for the clinical skills examination for the National Board of Examiners and has served as a senior examiner on two occasions. He was also invited to be a question writer for the National Board of Examiners newly formed ACMO test.

Dr. Kinnaird’s community contributions involve his study on increasing the yield of diabetics receiving appropriate referrals for eye exams. He received a National Eye Institute grant called the Community Health Award to grade diabetic retinopathy from images taken in a primary care clinic setting. The grading of the photos increased the number of diabetics receiving appropriate care.

We honor Dr. Kinnaird as our alumnus of the year and hope that his service and commitment to the profession serve as an inspiration to others because he has involved himself on a local and national level. Dr. Kinnaird is truly devoted to his community and advancing the profession. His work with diabetics and students is exemplary and certainly worthy of recognition.



Dr. Kinnaird (L) receiving award from Associate Dean Dr. Lewis Reich.

What's Your Vision for NSU?

By Sara DuCuennois, Associate Director of Alumni Relations



Terry Ingraham Student Activity Award winner Kasey Suckow accepts her plaque from Dean Loshin.

The NSU Annual Fund provides a vehicle for alumni to make an immediate impact on current College of Optometry students. Gifts designated to the Annual Fund directly support every aspect of the College of Optometry experience, from scholarships and technology to faculty development. This support enables the College of Optometry to attract gifted students and faculty and offer them the finest resources available in a cutting-edge learning environment. The depth of an education cannot be covered by tuition alone. The Annual Fund provides the dean with unrestricted dollars to be used for emerging needs not covered by fees and tuition, such as recruitment initiatives, faculty development, and

scholarships for deserving students. Two awards given to third-year optometry students that are typical of the numerous grants provided to students are: The Jack Wolfe Scholarship Award and the Terry Ingraham Student Activity Award. Alumni and friends can contribute to these funds by specifying that their contribution go directly to them. In future articles, we shall discuss more about these and other student awards.

As NSU alumni, you can take great pride in the university's achievements. The annual gifts and pledges you and your fellow alumni make contribute significantly to the quality of our university. Your gift enhances the NSU educational experience, and as alumni, your gift adds value to your own degree by ensuring that the NSU College of Optometry builds upon its solid reputation for the future.

Keep in mind that there is more than one way to give. Cash is the simplest and most direct, but there are popular alternatives such as securities and real estate. Giving appreciated assets generates double tax benefits. There are also life income gifts that allow you to make a contribution while still providing for your own financial needs. Beneficiary designations for life insurance and retirement plan assets permit you to make substantial gifts at relatively modest cost. Also consider designating a portion of your assets to NSU College of Optometry in your will. You can leave a legacy to benefit future students in your school.

The next time a student calls you from the NSU Phonathon, consider making a gift to the College of Optometry and take the opportunity to catch up on the latest news and achievements of the university. Your annual gift to the College of Optometry, regardless of the amount, increases our alumni participation.



Jack Wolfe Scholarship Award winners Trina Perkins and Dana King, posing with Dean Loshin.





- **NSU** optometry students have been busy this current semester. Three fourth-year optometry students—Takeia Locke, Parres Monet Harris-Roberts, and Maria Mandese—presented as authors at the American Academy of Optometry meeting in San Diego, California, in December 2005.
- **Seven** student representatives participated in the annual Legislative Day in Tallahassee. The students not only had a chance to learn about the process of passing important legislation, but also had a chance to talk to some of the representatives. Participants included Tara Boyle, Monica Brown, Kasey Suckow, Brandon Cornish, Ericka Herrera, Jeanine Hayen, and Sara Gaib.
- **SVOSH** (Student Volunteers in Optometric Service to Humanity) is busy planning its annual trip to Peru. The organization has been extremely active in

raising funds to subsidize the trip and in neutralizing donated glasses. SVOSH has been hosting numerous events such as barbecues, bake sales, and welcome-back-to-school parties. Attendees have included Dr. Calderon, Dr. Patterson, Dr. Brauss, Dr. Oliver, Dr. Corrella, Dr. Lanier, and Dr. Patino. The current SVOSH president is Brandon Cornish.

- **Second-year** student William Yu organized the monetary collection donated to Hurricane Katrina aid. He also founded a company, which wishes to remain anonymous, to match our donations. Thanks to everyone's generosity, \$2,388 was donated to the American Red Cross.
- **Optometry Student Government Association (OSGA)** 2005-2006 officers include: Kasey Suckow, president; Brandon Cornish, vice president; Saretta Zanjanchian, secretary; and Ericka Herrera, treasurer. The OSGA has added a few events to our normally busy calendar. Throughout the year, we hosted events such as Meet the Officers hour during orientation, where the officers of all our organizations came to talk to the incoming first-year students about getting involved. We also hosted a welcome-back picnic, had a 5K team for both the Women in Distress and American Heart Association Walk. Our first annual self-defense class was held on March 4, 2006. In addition, our annual formal called the Eyeball was held March 25 at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood.
- **The AOSA** (American Optometric Student Association) has been busy attending annual conferences and lining up students to attend this year's annual congress in Las Vegas in June. Upcoming events include a local "Super Bowl" contest to pick this year's contestant to compete on behalf of NSU. NSU's contestant last year was Christina Llerena. The AOSA officers are: Isabel Calderon, trustee, and Beth Paternoster, SOSA trustee elect.
- **Two** third-year optometry students got married on December 17, 2005, but not to each other. Congratulations to Tara Boyle and Jennifer McCall.



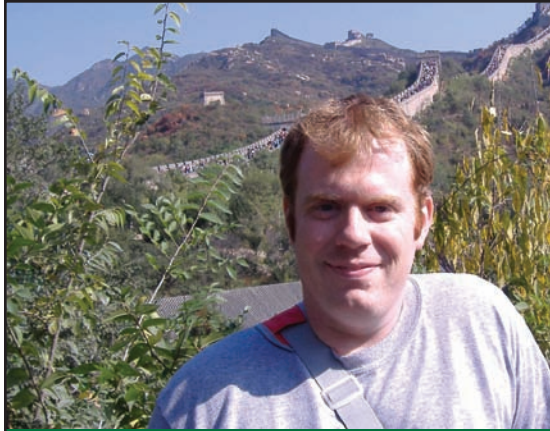
Students performing screening in Belle Glade.



Students, along with FOA members, visiting legislators in Tallahassee.

Externships: China Rotation

Kimberly Reed, O.D., FAAO, Director of Externship Programs



NSU College of Optometry student Paul Driggers ('05) takes a break while visiting the Great Wall of China.



Driggers in front of the Tianjin Medical University with one of the professors.

It's externship matching time, and you have your choice between going to the tertiary care center down the street, or to Tianjin, China. Which would you pick?

A few adventure-seeking souls have recognized this externship site as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and have—despite in most cases a complete absence of familiarity with the local language and culture—enthusiastically enrolled in a three- or six-month stint in China. See some patients? Go see the Great Wall? All in a day's work.

The city of Tianjin is China's third-largest city, with a population of over 10 million people, covering an area of 4,200 square miles. The city is southeast of Beijing, situated near the Bohai Sea, and sometimes referred to as the "Diamond of the Bohai Gulf." Its location in the middle of North China's gold coast makes it an important port for import and export of products to and from all over the world. To get an idea of the climate in Tianjin, it is located at approximately the same latitude as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The externship's clinical activities are primarily held within the Tianjin Medical University, which boasts an 11-story eye clinic encompassing an optical dispensary; outpatient care centers; surgical suites; specialty areas such as retina, strabismus, glaucoma, cornea, cataract, and refractive surgery; medical labs, library, and research areas; a fitness center; and a cafeteria and "resting" area for personnel to take a quick nap after lunch. More than 90 ophthalmologists and over 40 optometrists are on staff at Tianjin Medical University, not including the students and residents.

Approximately 1,000 patients are seen throughout the clinic on any given day. The hospital also has an inpatient capability, and for a few very wealthy patients, private rooms are available for approximately \$100 per day. While that might not seem like a huge price to pay, bear in mind that the average annual salary in China for an accountant is about \$8,000, with industry workers earning far

lower salaries. One estimate places the average wage in China at about \$50 a month.

A typical day for the students at this site begins around 8:30 a.m. and ends around 4:00 p.m., with a two-hour lunch break included that provides just enough time for a refreshing nap after enjoying the complimentary hospital cafeteria food. During their workday, the students may examine patients—with the help of a translator in almost all cases—follow the surgeons on rounds, attend remote screenings with residents, or utilize the facilities of the medical library. On average, the students see about 30 patients per day. This sounds pretty standard and fairly consistent with what all the other students do who elected to remain stateside. However, there are some rather intriguing differences in the patient care delivery system in China as compared to the United States.

The majority of the patient base at Tianjin Medical University is older (40+), with the exception of the strabismus clinic, where children predominate. Younger adults typically just "ride out" any infectious or inflammatory problems without the benefit of eye care. Almost all the students who return from China report being amazed by the complete lack of privacy for patients. While we struggle with HIPAA, make sure we close exam doors, and even remodel our offices to protect patient privacy, quite the opposite is true in China. Many exam "suites" are large rooms with 30 or more patients scattered around, often jockeying for position to be "next in line." The doctor examines one patient while other patients—not related or even known to the person being examined—look over the doctor's shoulder, asking questions and (gasp) getting answered. Patients travel long distances to the Tianjin Medical University to be seen by some of the country's most respected practitioners, and as such, the wait times are often quite lengthy.

This is not a place where patients would complain to the staff about the long wait time, however, as they often do in our country.

These patients are grateful for being seen at all. The upside of the system from the students' perspective is that they get to see many different patients in a relatively short period of time. However, because of the language barrier, some students have said that translating names of diseases and conditions was very challenging, with some condition names not having an English translation. Often, they were frustrated by trying to do independent study related to patients or conditions they had seen due to this disparity.

Aside from the expected differences in culture, like food (braised creamed cabbage, anyone?) and entertainment, there are some other not-so-obvious differences as well. For example, most of us commute to our clinic in some fairly uneventful manner such as hopping on the train or driving a short distance to a comfortable parking area. However, in Tianjin, the roads are quite crowded. As a result, many students elect to ride a bicycle from the provided

housing to the hospital, which is a harrowing 15-minute ride each way. Taxis are available, but with a relative lack of control for the heavy traffic as well as a nonexistent "nonsmoking" policy, our students typically elect to not use this means of transportation. There is a lot of pollution, much of which is generated from the construction surrounding the 2008 Olympics. Hot water is available in the housing area for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening—and that's it. Toilet paper isn't easily found, so you have to take your own with you.

Despite these unexpected circumstances, students who have completed this externship all say it was the experience of a lifetime.

(Special thanks to Julie Ly and Paul Driggers, who kindly provided the photographs as well as nearly all the information in this article.)



Community Service Learning is Infused into Curriculum

Janet Leasher, O.D., M.P.H., Director of Outreach Service and Assistant Professor, College of Optometry



With increasing disparities in health access, and the need for applied public health involvement and sensitization to the barriers to access, service learning in optometric education creates a sense of awareness, sensitivity, curiosity, responsibility, and advocacy in preclinical training. The experience broadens students' confidence in clinical skills, brings relevance to their academic studies, exposes them to cultures and communities that may be very different from their own, and fosters an understanding for civic engagement as a health care professional.

The service delivered fulfills an unmet need in the community and links participation, observation, and reflection with social mobilization for stronger communities. Since most optometry students do not come from the communities where the need is greatest, service learning is a powerful pedagogy to bridge gaps on

the part of patients and practitioners alike with respect to accessing eye care.

At Nova Southeastern University, service to the community is part of the mission statement. The College of Optometry is part of the larger multidisciplinary Health Professions Division, which trains osteopathic physicians, nurses, physical and occupational therapists, physician assistants, optometrists, dentists, educators, and counselors side-by-side. In the optometry program, students fulfill a 10-hour annual requirement of community service. However, there is a difference in the type of self-reported service activities and the required activities as part of a course requirement.

Prior to entering their clinical training, students in the second year must take OPT 3741 and OPT 4941, which are two courses that focus on vision screening and community outreach. They participate in at least three outreach experiences per term and turn in an outreach reflection and evaluation in which they consider how the

experience impacts their education, what aspects of the experience challenges them as a future clinician, and what they would do differently to improve their professional clinical skills.

Class of 2008 student Kyle Benner explained his experience at a health fair held at the Southwest Focal Point Senior Center by saying, "This was an awesome experience, and it felt great to be able to go out into the community."

Sonia Parekh, class of 2008, after screening kindergartners at a public elementary school, summed up the sentiments expressed by many of her classmates when she said, "As we do more and more vision screenings, I really think I am learning how to communicate with my patients better. Although these children were young, there is still a certain way that you have to present yourself, and in this case it was so they would listen. I really think I got better and more efficient at the testing procedures as well."



Student Vang Pham ('06) measures near acuity at a local elementary school.

Christine Manzella, class of 2008, adds, "This screening helped me and makes me want to send the senator a letter on requiring eye exams for children."

After volunteering at an employee health fair at a local manufacturing company, Gloria Aguilar, class of 2008, wrote, "It was definitely my first time with 'real patients.' Overall, my

experience was fulfilling. I had to speak in Spanish to some people, which was good for me."

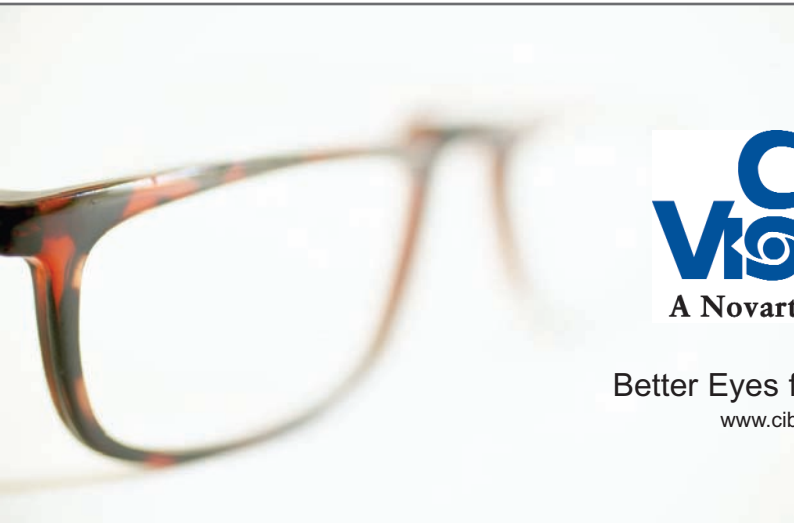
The principal collaborator is the Broward County School District (kindergartners, teachers, administrators, and parents) in the 10 most impoverished minority elementary schools. Multidisciplinary health fairs, including faith-based, media, and elected government official-sponsored events, are a big part of the courses. A course

requirement is to write a health policy memo that reflects on their experience in the community to a policymaker to promote social change. Another is to develop a community health education program based on the Healthy People 2010 vision objectives. One of the principal outcomes is that students are inspired and empowered to become responsibly engaged in the community where they will practice, and their choice of where to practice may be influenced by this exposure.

Since June 2003, when Janet Leasher, O.D., M.P.H., became director of community outreach for the College of Optometry, thousands of people have received information about healthy vision and early detection of vision problems in South Florida each year. This program continues to grow with collaborations with CBS Channel 4 WFOR, Caridad Migrant Health Clinic, St. Rose of Lima Catholic School, Christy Academy, Florence Fuller Head Start, Broward County Public Schools, North Broward Hospital District, Memorial Health Care Systems, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Broward County, as well as many churches and community centers in the area.



Faculty members Tanya Mahaphon, Janet Leasher, and Maryke Neiberg assist students Alex Romero ('07), Diane Luu ('07), Mylene Nguyen ('07), and Anthony Rusignuolo ('06) in giving out vision information at the Walk for Autism in April 2005.



Better Eyes for a Better Life.
www.cibavision.com

In 2003, Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry officially began its online Master of Science in Clinical Vision Research (MSCVR) degree program. This program is administered via the Web-based distance learning technology that NSU has pioneered and for which it is well noted. Details of the program can be found on <http://optometry.nova.edu/cvr/>.

The rationale for such a program was simply the need for eye-care professionals who are interested in vision research to have a mechanism whereby they can acquire the necessary education and training while conveniently staying within their current home or work environment. The time element for completion of the degree program also allowed for flexibility in the amount of time necessary to commit in any given quarter.

The MSCVR is a 45-credit program and is the first completely online degree designed and offered by a college of optometry to meet the diverse interests and needs of optometric physicians. The focus of this unique program is to bridge clinical care in optometry with vision science by educating optometrists, optometric educators, optometric students, as well as other health-care professionals in the basics so they can conduct clinical research in a patient care or academic setting. The program has the potential to broaden the student's career opportunities and provide professional advancement and prestige. Within a safe and confidential Web environment, students have the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of students and faculty who are professionals interested in the same training and who bring their own unique life experiences to the learning situation.

The curriculum provides the student with an opportunity to acquire or enhance knowledge and skills to design, develop, perform, analyze, and evaluate research projects and studies. Students worldwide complete their coursework on their home or office computers, without having to sacrifice their professional or personal obligations. The student has access to the extensive electronic library provided by NSU located at <http://www.nova.edu/library/eleclib/eleclib.htm>. We hope to attract individuals who have an interest in doing clinical trials or other research projects, presenting research at professional meetings, attaining the ability to critically evaluate research in the literature, or who intend to apply for grants and awards. For some, it can also be an avenue for promotion based on academic achievement.

During the first year of study, students take core courses that build the foundation to be able to investigate a research question. These courses focus on giving the student a set of skills that address ethical and legal issues in human subject research, statistics, research design, research funding, and proposal writing. Courses highlight how to use information science (library resources) and prepare studies for presentation or publication. Students receive a certificate upon successful completion of the core courses. It is entirely possible for a student to elect to take only this first year and not pursue the degree endpoint. Our experience has been that non eye-care professionals are the ones that most frequently elect this

option. We have had a number of dentists, osteopathic physicians, and pharmaceutical industry employees select the one-year option.

An important characteristic of online teaching and philosophy of this program is the concentration on personal guidance from teaching and advising faculty who work directly with the student. One of the most attractive features during the second year of training is that the specialization track is individually designed to fit the specific interests and expertise of each student. For example, if a student had an interest in pediatrics and contact lenses, advanced courses and a thesis project would reflect both areas of concentration.

In May 2005, the college held its first commencement ceremony for the students in the MSCVR program. Four students, including one from as far away as Switzerland, celebrated their completion of this rigorous two-year program. Following completion of the program, the four CVR graduates find themselves well prepared to face the challenges of contributing to the research and knowledge base of their profession as evidenced by some of their comments.

- **Student A:** Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania (private practice) –
“The MSCVR program has provided a research knowledge base that has changed the way I think about patient care.”
- **Student B:** University of California at Davis (senior optometrist) –
“The first year was excellent preparation for the research arena, and it also made me a better optometrist.”
- **Student C:** Lucerne, Switzerland (private practice) –
“The program was well balanced between theory and practice-related courses, so that, at the end, I was well prepared to pursue my thesis.”
- **Student D:** Springfield, Massachusetts (private practice) –
“Participating in the Masters in Clinical Vision Research Program gave me the opportunity to transform my optometric career from routine to passionate. Rarely in clinical practice does one have the opportunity to have access to academic experts as well as a phenomenal electronic library, and to do research without corporate funding.”

The program includes a thesis, which is based on a research project designed according to the student's interest. Each student has an adviser who is an expert in the student's area of interest and guides the student's thesis project. The four graduates have attended and presented posters and papers at the annual meetings of the American Optometric Association, American Academy of Optometry, and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology. All have papers in preparation for review in one of the official journals from the above-mentioned associations, reflecting the findings from their theses as well as individual research initiatives beyond the thesis topic.

The vision of the NSU College of Optometry is to utilize information technology to advance science in the clinical arena with regard to the diversity of the users and usage environments.

The program's mission is to achieve this vision through a strategic plan that integrates theoretical and applied research with numerous educational, outreach, diversity, and knowledge transfer initiatives. The long-term shared goal of all MSCVR-supported activities is to use technology to facilitate access and usage to

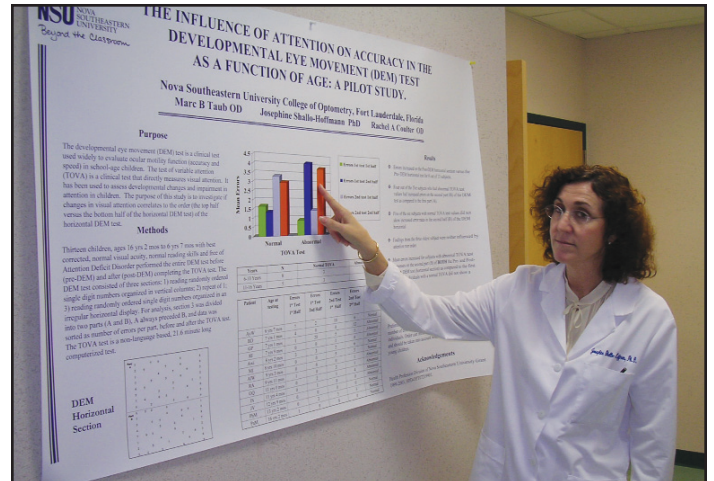
- optometrists
- health care professionals
- individuals employed or seeking employment in pharmaceutical firms
- the needs of optometrists in the Indian Health Service and the Veterans Administration

- academicians
- the specific requirements of the health care professional in the military who can tailor degree-at-a-distance to their military assignments and duty schedules

The program is small and the administration does not intend to expand it to include a large number of students. Clinical research demands expertise, time, and financial support. NSU's College of Optometry is committed to investing in an initiative to advance the knowledge of those colleagues who have the interest, but not the on-campus opportunity, to acquire the tools and skills to perform systematic investigations.



Dr. Shallo-Hoffman with second-year MSCVR student Gilbert Blanks.



Dr. Shallo-Hoffman presenting a poster at AOA meeting.

Research Thesis

- Edward Savarno, O.D., M.S. "The Relationship of Retinal Thickness and Axial Length"
- Thomas Barnes, O.D., M.S. "Wavefront Aberration and Reading: Measures of Visual and Optical Quality"
- Urs Businger, O.D., M.S., FAAO (Diplomate CL) "Contact Lens Induced Dry Eye and the Use of Homeopathic Eye Drops"
- James Merlin, O.D., M.S. "Contrast Sensitivity Function with Soft Multifocal Contact Lenses at Photopic, Mesopic, and Scotopic Light Levels"

IN MEMORIAM

We mourn the passing of the following College of Optometry alumni, students, and staff:

Iris Berman, receptionist, College of Optometry and College of Osteopathic Medicine administrative offices

Molly McClendon Dobbs, O.D., 2001 alumna

Nichola Seegovin, class of 2007

John Wagoner, Jr. O.D., 1996 alumnus

Faye Wheeler, Eye Institute staff, Broward Boulevard clinical site



Research has become a significant and growing mission for the College of Optometry in recent years, and many faculty members now pursue a wide spectrum of clinical and basic research interests that receive funding from a variety of intramural and extramural sources. These include the Nova Southeastern University President's Faculty Research and Development Grant, a number of pharmaceutical companies, and the National Eye Institute (NEI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Of the eight NIH-funded grants presently active throughout the entire NSU campus, two have been awarded to faculty of the College of Optometry, which is a fact that underscores the college's outstanding success in the highly competitive research arena.

Dr. Rachel "Stacey" Coulter, a pediatric optometrist who serves as chair of the Department of Optometric Sciences, is spearheading a project funded by the NEI that is designed to compare the effectiveness of two active treatment approaches for patients with convergence insufficiency. Involving nine clinical centers, a total of 208 patients are being enrolled in the study. "NSU is proud to be a study site for the Convergence Insufficiency Treatment Trial (CITT), which is the first research study of vision therapy to be funded by the National Eye Institute," said Dr. Coulter. "The results of this study will provide important information in the area of improving visual performance among school-age learners."

Dr. Richard Dix, an ocular virologist and immunologist who is interested in the pathogenesis of retinal diseases, is conducting the second NEI-funded project. Unlike Dr. Coulter's study that is clinical in design, Dr. Dix uses mice to investigate the molecular and immunological events that take place during the onset and evolution of a sight-threatening retinitis caused by cytomegalovirus (CMV) in patients who are immunosuppressed by HIV/AIDS. His studies suggest that cytokine immunotherapy using interleukin-2 might be a powerful therapeutic approach to the management of AIDS-related CMV retinitis in the clinical setting.

On a more basic scientific level, his research has also identified a specific cellular immune pathway that protects against onset of retinitis in immunologically normal persons normally infected with CMV. This discovery not only has profound therapeutic implications for AIDS-related CMV retinitis, but it may impact other diseases of CMV origin that often develop in patients immunosuppressed for solid organ or bone-marrow transplantation. Dr. Dix also serves as co-investigator on a NEI-funded study at Duke University that is exploring a possible role for CMV as a novel cofactor in the pathogenesis of the neovascular ("wet") form of age-related macular degeneration.

These studies are together being performed in the newly



Dr. Dix in the laboratory.

acquired laboratories of the Rumbaugh-Goodwin Institute for Cancer Research of Nova Southeastern University—a satellite facility located approximately five miles from the main campus that also serves as an extension of the College of Optometry's research program.

Additional research pursuits within the College of Optometry include investigations being conducted by Dr. Bai-Chuan Jiang, an expert on physiological optics. Dr. Jiang has received funding from multiple sources over many years to perform studies on retinal image quality as well as the role of the oculomotor system in the etiology of human refractive error development, specifically young adult onset of myopia. Another ongoing project in Dr. Jiang's laboratory involves an investigation of the static and dynamic behaviors of the accommodation and

vergence systems using control-theory models. The ultimate goal of this project is the development of neural network models for these systems. Dr. Jiang's research program is housed within the newly renovated Vision Research Laboratory that is located immediately adjacent to the optometry clinics and classrooms. It consists of six individual research suites and a conference room to facilitate student involvement in vision research.

Dr. Jiang has also contributed to the college's expanding research program through his professional ties with several major medical universities in China. He and Dr. David Loshin, dean of the College of Optometry, visited Shenyang Medical College in China last year to inspect its impressive research facility in biochemistry and perhaps stimulate interest in a possible research exchange program. A reciprocal visit to NSU earlier this year by a delegation of optometry faculty and administrators from Shenyang Medical College ultimately resulted in an agreement that will allow their graduate students and junior faculty to travel to the United States and spend some time with us for an exchange of ideas and vision research technology. "This is an exciting prospect that will greatly benefit the optometry programs of both countries," Dr. Jiang said.

Future plans for the College of Optometry's research program include expansion into new laboratory space that will be located within a six-story, 208,000-square-foot research building on the NSU campus that is scheduled for completion in 2009. Shared by other NSU research programs that include pharmacology, dentistry, osteopathic medicine, and oceanography, this research building will stimulate new collaborations in vision research with other scientific disciplines and eventually lead to an increase in funding opportunities from government, industrial, and private-donor sources. "We will soon be able to hire additional NEI-funded investigators to further expand our vision research program", said Dr. Loshin. "As optometrists, we must also play our role in training the next generation of vision scientists."

Congratulations to Dr. Joseph Sowka on becoming the first and only diplomate in the American Academy of Optometry Disease Section.

Dr. Sowka received his B.S. degree from Cornell University and his Doctor of Optometry degree from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, where he also completed an optometric residency program. Dr. Sowka has been a full-time faculty member at Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry since 1992, where he teaches the course in glaucoma and retinal disease. He also serves as chief of the Advanced Care Service and Glaucoma Service at the Eye Institute at Davie. Dr. Sowka is on the Alcon Glaucoma Advisory Panel and is a founding member of the Optometric Glaucoma Society, which is a group of optometric glaucoma specialists that is recognized by the International Glaucoma Society. He is also a founding member of the Optometric Retina Society.

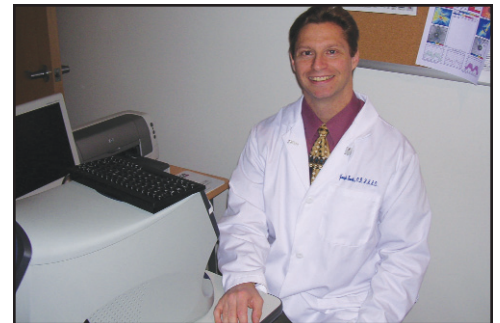
Dr. Sowka lectures nationally and internationally on topics in glaucoma as well as publishing frequently in this area. Dr. Sowka is the lead author of *The Handbook of Ocular Disease Management*, which is an annual supplement published by *Review of Optometry*. He is also on the Editorial Review Board for *Optometry – The Journal of the American Optometric Association*. Dr. Sowka is also a diplomate in the American Academy of Optometry – Ocular Disease, Glaucoma Subsection.

The Glaucoma Service at the NSU Eye Institute

The Glaucoma Service is a specialty referral center for advanced diagnostic testing, consultation, and/or management of patients either suffering from glaucoma or suspected of having glaucoma. It is also a teaching facility for optometry students, residents, and community practitioners. Advanced diagnostic technology is available for referring doctors to assist either in diagnosis or management of patients with glaucoma or suspected of having glaucoma. For any patient undergoing advanced diagnostic testing, results and a written report of the findings will be sent to the referring doctor.

Special services available include GDx Nerve Fiber Layer Analysis, Heidelberg Retinal Tomograph II (HRT II), Humphrey automated visual-field analysis (with SITA and SWAP programs), and ocular and optic nerve head photography. Optic nerve head photography can be made available to the referring doctor in either 35 mm slide form or digital images.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Joseph Sowka, director of the Glaucoma Service, at (954) 262-1472 or email jsowka@nova.edu.



Office of Continuing Education and Alumni Affairs – Programs

May 13 – 18, 2006: CruisE the Caribbean

May 19 – 21, 2006: 10th Annual Clinical Eye Care Conference and 4th Annual Alumni Reunion

May 28, 2006: 15th Commencement Ceremony – Bank Atlantic Center – Sunrise, Florida

June 23, 2006: American Optometric Association Congress – Alumni Reception – Las Vegas, Nevada

July 1 – 2, 2006: Florida Board of Optometry Examination Review Course

July 15, 2006: Florida Optometric Association Convention – Alumni Reception – Marco Island, Florida

July 21 – 23, 2006: Florida Board of Optometry Examinations – Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale-Davie, Florida

August 16, 2006: Tri-County Meeting

August 27, 2006: Glaucoma Update 2006

December 9, 2006: American Academy of Optometry Annual Meeting – Alumni Reception – Denver, Colorado

<http://optometry.nova.edu/ce>



Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry recognizes that a significant portion of the curriculum devoted to practice management is provided well in advance of when it is needed most, and the graduate can benefit greatly if practice management education and information are made available following graduation. Therefore, to meet the needs of its alumni, the college developed the Optometric Practice Enhancement Program (OPEP)—an online portal to practice management education, resources, and support.

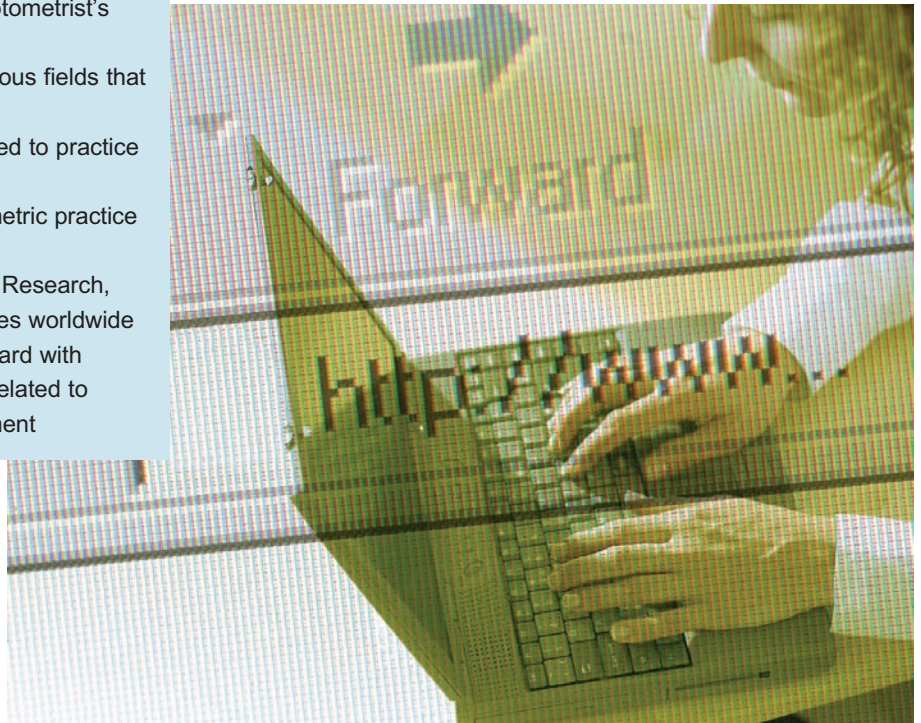
A Web site was created that is comprised of the following sections:

- Tutorials – multimedia presentations on a variety of subjects related to the business of optometric practice
- Ask the Experts – a monthly column that addresses questions submitted by alumni
- Practice Pearls – information that can benefit the optometrist's practice
- Featured Articles – articles written by experts in various fields that support optometric practice
- Book of the Month – a review of current books related to practice management and personal development
- Resource Center – links to a variety of online optometric practice resources
- Virtual Library – a link to the Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center and other libraries worldwide
- Virtual Cafe – a moderated electronic discussion board with threaded discussions that cover a variety of topics related to practice development, management, and enhancement

The OPEP Web site debuted on May 20, 2005, during the college's Alumni Weekend and is located at <http://optometry.nova.edu/o pep>. Although the Web site is open to the world, access to the multimedia courses requires a username and password since they are located in WebCT, which is a course management system.

The establishment of this online program in practice development, management, and enhancement provides a value-added program to the college's alumni that will help support them throughout their practice lifetimes. In addition, the Web site serves as a virtual community in which the college's alumni may gather to share practice experiences, challenges, and solutions.

We welcome your suggestions, recommendations, and comments about the OPEP program and the OPEP Web site. Please contact us if you would like to contribute to the OPEP program.



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