

## TOUR DE OPTOMETRY REPORT: 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR

BY LYNN F. HELLERSTEIN, OD, FCOVD, FAAO

COVD continues to make great progress in reaching out to the optometric students, residents, faculty, and administrators. Many thanks to Dr. Ida Chung, East Regional Director of COVD, Dr. Carole Hong, Vice-President of COVD, the members of the Academic Services committee, and Penny Melkerson-Kirby, from the COVD International Office, who have worked diligently to create another very successful year for the Tour de Optometry.



*Tour visit at Indiana University*

### Tour Review:

COVD initiated the Tour de Optometry Program in 2005. It is very difficult for a student to fully experience a developmental/behavioral approach in the optometric educational clinical setting. Therefore, our goal for the Tour was to bring "private practice" to the schools. A COVD Board member or Past President is scheduled to visit every school of optometry. A Tour visit includes a lecture to all classes if possible. Sometimes lectures to individual classes are given as well. Time for consultation with faculty and administrators is also planned.

The main lecture given to each school was:

- "Practice Full Scope Optometry-Including Vision Therapy" in 2005-2006. This included the myths of VT, financial viability, and success stories.

- "Optometry's Best Kept Secret: Developmental Vision and Therapy" in 2006-2007. This lecture included summary of current VT research, case studies, and success stories.
- "How to Get Started in VT" in the 2007-2008. This lecture included the basics for starting a VT practice: equipment, setup, staff, forms, etc.

Thanks to a generous \$12,500 grant by the Mountain States Congress of Optometry, expenses for this Tour were partially covered. Highlights of the 2007-2008 Tour are bulleted below:

- 15 schools of optometry in the US were visited, including our first International visit to Canada at the University of Waterloo, School of Optometry
- Over 500 responses were received on the surveys after the lectures
- Very positive comments were received from students, faculty and administrators including the following:

*"Dear Dr. Grant, Thank you for visiting ICO and providing quality time with our students and faculty. A few days after your presentation, I heard a first year student exclaim about your presentation, impressed by the passion and energy you have for behavioral optometry. While this student knows little about this part of optometry, she wants to pursue it, primarily because of your lecture and mentoring. Congratulations on that achievement."*

Darrell Schlange, OD, DOS, Illinois College of Optometry, Assoc. Professor of Optometry

*"Dr. Scott, I was so excited to hear your presentation at the UMSL College of Optometry. I may be just a first year, but I have fallen in love with binocular vision and vision training/therapy. I had three eye exams last year - one at my insurance doctor, one at my job, and one by a third year UMSL optometry student. The first two doctors had years of experience, but it took an optometry student to find my problem! I'm in a VT program at UMSL, and I enjoy learning about the VT instruments while I work to fix my problems. I really think that I want to specialize in pediatric and binocular vision. I want to 'save' the undiagnosed children from suffering like I do now."*

Erin Brooks, UMSL  
1st Year Student

The COVD Board thanks all of the student, resident, and faculty liaisons. Tremendous gratitude goes to our 2007-08 national liaisons: Faculty: Esther Han, OD, FCOVD; Student: Shanda Ross; Resident: Meredith Walburg, OD; and Extern: Shelly Mozlin, OD, FCOVD. Our success would not be possible without their support.

COVD is open to taking the Tour to more schools internationally. Of course the increased expenses for international travel needs to be evaluated. If you would like COVD to visit your school outside of the US, please contact either of the Tour de Optometry Co-Chairs: Dr. Lynn Hellerstein, COVD Past-President or Dr. Carole Hong, COVD Vice President, for information.

Although visiting these schools is time consuming and costly to administer, the Tour de Optometry has been tremendously successful and is just one example of COVD's dedication to the optometric community. This

*(continued on Page 7)*

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*Tour visit at Northeastern State University*

*(continued from Page 6)*

program further expands the relationship between COVD and academia for the benefit of all.

The Tour de Optometry is a Board project, but 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 of Optometry to become a part of this collaborative process. Consider contacting the COVD Board to assist in a site visit or, alternatively, contact the school's student or faculty liaison and offer to give a student talk or presentation.

Our optometry students are the lifeblood of this organization! This is such a valuable program that addi-

tional sponsorships and funding are being sought. You can help! To support COVD's Tour de Optometry, please contact the COVD International Office toll free at 888-268-3770 or email [info@covd.org](mailto:info@covd.org) for additional information and to make donations to support the Tour. We look forward to our 2008-2009 Tour visits!

*Dr. Hellerstein is Past President of COVD and practices in Englewood, Colorado.*