



NEWS

SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY AND VISION SCIENCE

JUNE 2010

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GREETINGS FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



Welcome to our June edition of the School newsletter. It is hard to believe we are already halfway through 2010. This has been our first experience of the 5th year in the new optometry programme involving students undertaking up to 700 hours of external clinical placement to complement their clinical experience at UNSW. Several new clinical teaching initiatives have been introduced including placements at the new Centre for Eye Health, at an acute red eye clinic at the School, placements at the Australian College of Optometry and private ophthalmology and hospital clinics. We also welcome Tina Adel as our new clinic development manager. This position is supported by the Optometrists Association Australia (NSW/ACT) division. Other changes this year: We also welcomed industry mentors from ODMA into our 4th and 5th year student clinics to work with our undergraduates. We are moving ahead with a clinic refurbishment later this year to increase our number of consulting rooms and to redevelop our clinical teaching, dispensing and laboratory area. I would like to thank Carolyn Hewett for her passion and drive in moving this project forward. We also welcome Dr David Mann as our Acting Clinic Director, while we are recruiting for this position. In research, 2009 was a huge year in publications, PhD student completions and grant income all increasing over 2008 and we look forward to that trend continuing for us in 2010.

EVENTS

- ▶ **Tuesday, 13 July 2010:** SOVS@ UNSW Alumni CE Meeting 2010. See http://www.optom.unsw.edu.au/downloads/Invite_CE_130710.pdf for more information.
- ▶ **10-12 September 2010:** SEM02010: 13th Biennial Scientific Meeting, 7th Educators' Meeting in Optometry. See <http://www.optom.unsw.edu.au/news/2010/SEM02010.html> for more information

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

We thank Luxottica, the Fine family and the Brian Kirby estate for supporting the School and our students with scholarships and awards. This year, we have a new award, the Leonard Fine/Luxottica Memorial Prize, donated in remembrance of Leonard Fine, a fine clinician and educator with a special interest in children's vision and vision therapies. The Brian M Kirby Postgraduate Scholarship in Optometry and Vision Science is provided for 2 or 3 years (\$5000) to a research degree student investigating rural or indigenous eye care. Finally, we invite eligible applicants to apply for the Luxottica Scholarship for Indigenous Students. For more information, please email optometry@unsw.edu.au.

CONTACT US

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OPTOMETRY CLINIC UPDATE



OUR CLINIC TEAM FROM L TO R: Swagatika Rath, Tina Adel, Sharon Oberstein, Ulli Stahl, Annie Brissett, Lily Ho, Androniki Delaveris, Trevor Dawson, Nicole Grskovic, Maria Bui, Vanessa Honson, Kristine White.

- ▶ The first 'Fifth Year': This month saw the successful completion of the 1st Semester for 5th year students. As a result, there was an increased uptake of speciality clinics such as the Low Vision clinic supervised by Sharon Oberstein, Vision Training and Behavioural Optometry organized by Rosemary Paynter, the Advanced Contact Lens clinic organized by A/Prof. David Pye and supervised by Lily Ho, the Red Eye Clinic as part of the clinical therapeutics training, organised by Prof Fiona Stapleton and supervised by Maria Bui and Lily Ho, and Colour Vision clinic headed by Nikki Delaveris. We'd like to thank Vanessa Honson, one of our supervising optometrists, in providing valuable support to the Colour Vision clinic.
- ▶ Our 5th year students also now spend 2 weeks of their clinical training at the Australian College of Optometry in Melbourne undertaking a range of experiences including general clinic, outreach clinic, ocular diseases, low vision and contact lenses

- ▶ ODMA has shown great support through the Mentor Program. Industry professionals have been visiting the clinic to assist 4th and 5th year students in developing their skills
- ▶ The clinic refurbishment has been postponed to the end of Session 2, 2010 to avoid disrupting the academic session and the students' timetables at the clinic. We are grateful to Carolyn Hewett for her considerable role in progressing the clinic refurbishment project.
- ▶ **Staff:** This month sees Dr. Paul Gifford leaving his role as Acting Clinic Director to join the ROK group. We thank him for his contributions and wish him all the best. We are currently recruiting for a Clinic Director (<http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/services/recruitment/jobs/28051001.html> for a link to the job advertisement). We welcome Tina Adel, Clinic Development Manager and Swa Rath, Senior Receptionist who joined the Optometry Clinic team. Kathryn Bodnarchuk has left to join CFEH and we wish her well.

UNSW INAUGURAL CONTINUING EDUCATION ALUMNI MEETING, FRIDAY 22ND MAY 2009, OPTOMETRY COLLEAGUES, ALUMNI AND DONORS

An exciting evening was had by all. Ninety attendees listened to Professor Anthony Adams from the University of California Berkeley speak about structural changes in the retina, electrophysiology and the early detection of diabetes, mingled over cocktails at the School clinic reception, and



..... had a preview visit of the new Centre for Eye Health



Be sure to attend our upcoming alumni CE evening on the 13th July and our SEMO conference coming up in September! See Events section for links.



POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK NEWS

INAUGURAL GRADUATION FROM THE MASTER OF COMMUNITY EYE HEALTH PROGRAM

Eleven community eye health workers from India and Nepal recently graduated from the School's new Master of Community Eye Health program. The graduates include ophthalmologists, optometrists and eye health administrators, and all have completed six courses on topics such as Community Eye Health Needs Assessment and Advocacy and Education in Community Eye Health. In addition, all graduates have successfully completed a research project on a topic related to community eye health, such as "Barriers to the uptake of eye care services and accessing eye care facility by people with eye ailments identified by community eye care workers in the urban slums of Hyderabad". The courses were delivered at the International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eyecare, Hyderabad, India, and research was conducted in the field at a range of locations.



Graduates of the Masters in Community Eye Health, LV Prasad Eye Institute, February 2010

The graduates will now take the understanding and skills acquired in this program back to their roles in community eye health, in rural and urban areas of India and other developing countries. In the words of one of the graduates: "After this course I have learned that the success of a program depends on good research and good planning, as well as coordinating with all the stakeholders in a particular area."

Dr Catherine Suttle, who coordinates the program, is currently exploring possibilities for the incorporation of online learning within the program, while retaining the important elements of field work. A format of this kind would allow participants from any location to attend lectures presented online and to participate in online discussions, for example, while conducting field work locally under appropriate supervision. Work on this modified format has begun, and it is hoped that some of the courses will be available online from March 2011.

For more information on the programs, please contact Dr Catherine Suttle at c.suttle@unsw.edu.au

ALUMNA PROFILE: PAULA KATALINIC



MUSICIAN IN OUR MIDST

Paula grew up on a small farm at Jindera, 15km from Albury. From the age of 10 years, Paula was introduced to optometry as one of Graham Peachey's patients in Wodonga. These experiences over several years (reading adds, rigid gas permeable contacts, orthokeratology etc), perhaps encouraged Paula to study optometry. At the same time, Paula was intensely interested in music, having learned to play on her grandmother's violin and achieving an Associate Music Diploma at just 16 years of age.

Career-wise, Paula has been drawn along two trajectories. After graduating from optometry at UNSW, and a year gaining a wealth of experience in optometry with Graham Peachey, Paula moved to Boston, USA, with her husband Jon in early 2000. Paula worked at the Joslin Diabetes Centre's Beetham Eye Institute on a retinal telemedicine program called the Joslin Vision Network. This was the start of a prolific period in terms of publications and teaching. In 2004, Paula returned to Australia where she has worked, and continues to work, in a number of roles: staff optometrist at the SOVS and at the newly opened Centre for Eye Health and project officer at the Optometrists Association Australia NSW/ACT div. Paula has also travelled to Vanuatu and Nauru with the ICEE/World Diabetes Foundation project for work on complications in a sample diabetic population.

On top of being prodigiously busy and productive in the field of optometry, Paula continues to play violin to this day as a current member of the Eastern Sydney Chamber Orchestra. Paula now plays a precious 1799 Gagliano violin and performs at 5 concerts a year. We applaud Paula for her fantastic achievements and hope that she performs at an optometry function in the near future.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN OCULAR THERAPEUTICS

Our next Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics starts in July 2010. For the first time this course is running in several locations around Australia. The modules will be held in Sydney, Adelaide and Perth with the considerable support of the Optometrists Associations Australia divisions in South Australia and Western Australia. The current programme is fully enrolled with 130 optometrists confirmed, and a considerable waiting list for places.

HIGHLIGHTS IN POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH EDUCATION

Our postgraduate research community continues to expand and this session we have welcomed four more full-time research students to the School, with some very interesting research projects: Taghreed Alnahedh is examining barriers to evidence-based optometry practice; Ezail Noor Badarudin is investigating the relationship between dry eye, ocular sensitivity and HRT; Edward Lum is exploring the impact of orthoK on corneal innervation; Vishnu Sarpeshkar is studying visual perception and skill acquisition in cricket batting.

In April, all our research students took part in the annual review week. This week was an opportunity for students to present their work, to hear what everyone else has been up to, to participate in skills seminars and workshops and to enjoy the PG social scene.

If you are interested in joining our successful PhD and MSc students and pursuing a research degree, or if you would like more information about PG opportunities at the School, please contact Dr Blanka Golebiowski (b.golebiowski@unsw.edu.au).

VIRTUAL PATIENTS @ UNSW

Dr Isabelle Jalbert, has received a \$3,000 Learning & Teaching Seed Grant from UNSW to develop a bank of Virtual Case Studies for use in undergraduate teaching of Ocular Diseases and Therapeutics. These will provide excellent "real life" examples of what optometry students will need to manage in clinical rotations and after graduation. Cases will gradually be made freely available as a revision resource on the School of Optometry and Vision Science website.



CFEH PLACEMENTS ADD VALUE FOR UNSW OPTOMETRY STUDENTS

A new clinical placements program at Centre for Eye Health (CFEH) is enhancing the clinical education of final-year optometry students.

For a two-week period, each final year optometry student attends clinics at CFEH. During this time, the students can discuss with staff optometrists test results and findings, and they are also shown how to use and interpret data from the Centre's advanced eye-imaging instruments. At the end of their placement the students give two case presentations to CFEH's clinical staff to demonstrate their understanding and analysis of client test results.



"Feedback from students to date is that CFEH is exposing them to a considerably larger range of clinical case experience than they have had to date," says Associate Professor David Pye, CFEH's Director of Clinic Operations and Teaching. "This is a real benefit to senior students as it provides them with information as to how advanced ocular images are obtained, interpreted and possibly used in the management of patients."

Final year Optometry student Sahar Falahati was delighted by her clinical placement at CFEH. "The Centre is impressive in so many ways," she says. When you combine the expertise of the staff, the wide array of hi-tech diagnostic equipment and the fact that clients get a free service, it's really an amazing facility for clients, students and the teaching of clinical optometry.

With the UNSW School of Optometry and Vision Science graduating 40 per cent of Australia's new optometrists annually, the placements at CFEH are also extremely valuable in developing the patient management skills of the optometric profession as a whole.

MEETING A POSTGRADUATE STUDENT: WILLIAM LAU



Q: Tell us a little about yourself and why you decided to do a PhD.

A: I completed the B. Optometry degree from UNSW in 2006 and worked

in private practice for a year before starting my PhD in 2008. I thought that I would like to work at a university as a lecturer (which requires a PhD), so I decided to start postgraduate study.

Q: Tell us about your research and why you decided to go into this area.

A: My research is to do with corneal biomechanics and their impact on intraocular pressure measurement. The Goldmann tonometer is the current gold standard instrument, however its accuracy is affected by corneal properties. Some relevant properties such as corneal thickness can be easily measured clinically, but it currently isn't possible to measure corneal biomechanical parameters such as Young's modulus in vivo. My work is based on a clinical instrument called the Ocular Response Analyser which claims to assess corneal biomechanical behaviour, but in a very different way compared to biomechanical traditional tests. I chose this research area as I wanted to stay in a relatively clinical setting.

Q: Has doing research affected the way you practice optometry?

A: My research has led me to appreciate the varying results that different tonometers can provide. I would recommend to optometrists who primarily use non-contact tonometers to use the Goldmann tonometer on patients if high pressures are detected.

Q: Any advice for anyone thinking of doing a PhD?

A: Starting (and finishing) a PhD is an enormous undertaking that requires careful planning. Anyone thinking of doing a PhD should think about what their career goals are, their financial situation and how well they can manage their time.