Perspectives

Imagine a 12-foot-by-12-foot room that represents the world to one person and a prison to another. If you can, then you have probably read the compelling story of 5-year-old Jack and his mother in Emma Donoghue’s 2010 novel, Room. Jack and Ma live together, 24-7, in the same small space, holding completely different perspectives on it. Room is an absorbing, disturbing, and inspiring survival story but it is also much more: it speaks to the strength and frailties of the human condition, the power of language and storytelling, the intricacies of child development, and the depth of parental love.

As optometrists, we are all about vision and perspective. We help millions of Canadians see more and live better, for longer. We clearly live in interesting times as our scope of practice and the complexity of the health care landscape continue to evolve. Effective health care delivery requires collaboration by teams distributed across time, space, and professions. At the core of this activity is communication; effective team communication improves patient care, while ineffective communication jeopardizes it. A core paradox of interprofessional care is the tension that exists between autonomy and interdependence. How do different health care professionals collaborate and rely upon each other, while maintaining their professional autonomy? These are interesting questions for health care researchers, with compelling implications for practitioners and their patients.

The challenges and rewards of health care team communication are relevant not only across professions but even within them. It should not surprise us that we, as a profession, sometimes struggle with our competing perspectives. After all, the participants are bright, their perspectives are held passionately, and the stakes are high. The common ground we share is our vision for vision: we want Canadians to enjoy better vision and eye health.

While we will continue striving to surpass what we accomplish as optometrists, it will be important to focus on how we can work in teams within our profession. In my opinion, there are some encouraging signs of this type of collaborative teamwork and we must build upon these successes. Jack and his mother initially held fundamentally different perspectives on the same space but they worked hard and long, and with the help of others, they eventually managed to move forward together. Their struggle is symbolically illustrative of the work our profession must continue to do.

In this issue, you will learn about some of the teams operating at the School. We share updates about new faculty, retiring faculty and staff, major research grants and awards, our annual CE program, our new Founding Faculty wall, and our growing clinic renewal campaign. Inside, you will also learn about
some of the products of effective team work and communication, including the development of an innovative portable device for those with low vision, a successful student-initiated eye mission to Peru, and the funding of a local community care program.

We are extremely proud of each of these separate but interdependent developments and the role they play in advancing Canadian health care generally and optometry in particular.

New School Director Appointed

The School of Optometry and Vision Science is pleased to announce that Professor Paul Murphy will be its next Director. Dr. Murphy is an optometrist (Cardiff) with a PhD (Glasgow) in ocular surface sensation and a postgraduate certificate in tertiary level teaching methods. He is also currently working toward an MBA from the University of Glamorgan. He was previously a lecturer in the Department of Vision Sciences (Glasgow) and is currently Reader and Director of Teaching at the School of Optometry and Vision Sciences at Cardiff University.

Dr. Murphy’s research has focused on ocular surface sensation, contact lenses, the tear film, and the inter-relationship among them. To date, he has published approximately 45 peer-reviewed articles and delivered approximately 90 conference presentations and 45 invited talks.

In 2001, he established the Contact Lens and Anterior Eye Research Unit at Cardiff. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, the British College of Optometrists, the British Contact Lens Association, and the European Academy of Optometry and Optics (EAOO), and he is also the EAOO’s Vice President, Trustee and President Elect.

Over the past 20 years, Dr. Murphy has taught a wide variety of subject areas, including general disease and pathology, ocular disease assessment and management, and contact lens wear and its complications. In teaching clinics, he has taught primary eye care, contact lenses, and low vision. Dr. Murphy has also been an active graduate supervisor and advisor for more than a dozen PhD students. Through his administrative appointments, he has worked extensively on the design, development, and delivery of optometric education.

Dr. Murphy has garnered an international reputation in optometric education across Europe and is excited to bring his ideas and experience to Waterloo. He will begin his appointment as Professor and School Director in early 2013.

Stay Connected

Moving or retiring and want to stay in touch?

To ensure that you continue to receive the newsletter and get invited to School events please update your information by visiting optometry.uwaterloo.ca/alumni.

You can also email us at alumni@optometry.uwaterloo.ca or call Andrea Carthew at 519-888-4567, ext. 36319.

Thank you for staying connected!
When the Class of 2011 graduated, they wanted to do something special to show their appreciation for their education and express their commitment to supporting the next generation of Optometry students. To do this, they have demonstrated their support for the School of Optometry and Vision Science’s clinic renovation project by pledging a gift of $50,000 to fund an exam room.

Class campaign leaders Drs. Kristin Carr and Adrienne Tong have used their enthusiasm and passion for the School and profession to inspire their classmates to join them. “We truly believe that it is so important to give something back to the institution that taught us so much and gave us a lifetime of memories,” says Dr. Carr. “I can’t think of a better legacy for our class to leave behind.”

The clinic truly is at the heart of an optometric education. At 33,000 square feet, our existing space is sufficient to create a new, revitalized clinic that will bring the majority of our services to the first floor and provide additional clinic pods (which are ideal teaching spaces), as well as a new diagnostic and imaging suite. Changing the layout and designating multi-purpose clinic pods and rooms will enable us to provide more efficient patient care, improve operations, and implement changes to the curriculum. We aspire to operate more like private practice while providing the learning environment that students need.

With their pledge, the Class of 2011 is making a statement and setting an example for others to follow. They are in the beginning stages of their campaign, and strong participation from the class will be key to reaching their goal. “It would be phenomenal to meet our goal to help ensure that future generations can enjoy an even better learning environment,” says Dr. Carr.

As recent graduates, members of the Class of 2011 know it will take them time to get settled, but this dynamic group of new optometrists also knows that, together, their young class could meet the challenge they have given themselves. They are also setting a noticeable example for other young graduates. “Such an ambitious and altruistic effort by these young Waterloo graduates is truly inspiring,” says Dr. Marlee Spafford, Interim School Director.

The clinic renovation is an $8 million project for the School and it is critical to the program’s evolution. We are pleased to report that we have raised $1.2 million to date, but at least half the total is required in order for construction to begin. A few exam rooms have already been funded by individuals such as George and Judy Woo and Rodger Race and Judy Brisson. We hope that other optometrists will consider doing the same in order to help advance the profession.

If Classes like 2011, 1984, 1979, and 1978 can rally together, and if individuals and practices can step up to support us during this time of need, we can truly transform clinical education at the School of Optometry and Vision Science. We hope you’re up for the challenge!
Phase Two of our campaign is our ambitious clinic renovation, through which we plan to completely rebuild and reorganize our clinical facilities. This $8 million project comes at a critical time of transformation both in the profession and in our program as we contend with the introduction of TPAs in Ontario, expanded class sizes, and an evolving curriculum in an aging building. Our clinic is at the heart of our program and we hope you will consider making a donation to this important project.

Gift/Pledge Form

I/we wish to support excellence in education at the School of Optometry and Vision Science by supporting the clinic renovation campaign.

Name ___________________________________________ Phone _______________________________________

Mailing Address __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Gift/Pledge Amount __________ Pledge Period __________ Years Start Date ___________________________

Project: School of Optometry and Vision Science – Clinic Renovation Project

Method of Payment

☐ I/we would like to make a one-time gift of $ _________________

☐ I/we would like to pledge $ _________________ and wish to pay in installments of $ _________________

Please send me periodic reminders:

☐ Yearly ☐ Semi-Annually ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly

☐ Cheque (Payable to: School of Optometry and Vision Science)

☐ Post-dated cheques (Please attach all cheques to pledge form)

☐ Credit Card

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

☐ You may use this credit card for all pledge installments.

Card Number __________________________________________ Expiry Date ___________________________

☐ Other __________________________________________

Signature __________________________________________ Date ___________________________

Thank You For Your Support!
Charitable Registration Number: 11926 0685 RR0001

Please return this form to:
Andrea Carthew, Associate Director, Development and Alumni Affairs
School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo
200 University Ave. West, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1
Call For Nominations
The School of Optometry and Vision Science recognizes that we have a great number of alumni who are outstanding contributors to both optometry and their communities, going above and beyond to make a difference. In order to be able to begin to recognize some of these outstanding individuals for their efforts and achievements, we are proud to announce the 2013 Alumni of Honour Award, to be presented at this year’s CAO Congress.

We invite you to nominate a graduate from the School (including its graduate program in Vision Science) who has made a significant and proven contribution in one or more of the following areas:

- Professional Achievement (recognizes the accomplishments of an OD and/or Vision Science alumnus)
- Contributions to Community (recognizes the accomplishments of an OD and/or Vision Science alumnus in volunteer leadership, humanitarian endeavours, and community and public service)

Nominations will be accepted through the web at optometry.uwaterloo.ca or by hard copy, up until the deadline of May 17, 2013.

Award Process
Award selection will be made by a committee including the Director of the School of Optometry and Vision Science or designate; the Associate Director, Development and Alumni Affairs; a senior faculty member from the graduate program; and the President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists or designate. All applications will remain active for the duration of 2 award cycles.

The School welcomes nominations for the 2013 Alumni of Honour Award from alumni, students, staff, retirees, and members of the public. Self-nominations will not be considered. The nominees must hold at least one of the following Waterloo degrees: OD, MSc (Vision Science), or PhD (Vision Science).

To nominate an alumnus for the 2013 Alumni of Honour Award, a nomination form must be completed, including all mandatory fields. Please provide as much detail as possible while completing the online form or send a hard copy by mail or fax to:

School of Optometry and Vision Science
University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1
Attn: 2013 Alumni of Honour Award
Fax: 519-725-0784

Award Presentation
It is our intention to select an Alumni of Honour Award recipient every other year and present it during the biennial Canadian Association of Optometrists Congress. This year the Award will be presented to the recipient during the CAO Congress in Edmonton, Alberta, July 10-13, 2013. Recipients will have their biographies and pictures published in our newsletter and on our website. Their names and pictures will also be featured on a plaque displayed in the School.

Past Recipients
The 2011 Alumni of Honour recipient was Dr. Gordon Hensel. For more information about him and other past recipients, please visit optometry.uwaterloo.ca/alumni/awards.

***Privacy Statement: The University of Waterloo respects your privacy and that of the person you are nominating. Our full privacy policy is online or you may contact Andrea Carthew***
This form will be used to identify candidates for the School of Optometry and Vision Science’s 2013 Alumni of Honour Award. Please provide as much detail as possible; point form is encouraged. Nominators may need to attach a separate sheet in order to provide full details or can complete the online form at optometry.uwaterloo.ca. REQUIRED FIELDS ARE MARKED*.

1. Personal Information of Nominee
* Given name(s)
* Last name
* Year of graduation
* Address (full address if known)
* Phone number(s) Home     (          )
  * Business (          )
* Email address
* Practice name/employer

2. Professional Achievement (recognizes professional accomplishments or contributions to the profession or to vision science) 250 word maximum; point form is encouraged.

What makes a good entry? Successful career/professional achievement(s) or contributions to the profession:
• Exemplary career success, visibility
• Significant other roles (Board of Directors, advisory groups, association committees)
• Senior leadership
• Known beyond industry segment
• Leadership that has impacted the direction of the profession, affected policy, etc.

3. Contributions to Community (recognizes accomplishments and involvement in volunteer leadership, humanitarian endeavours and community and public service, including or outside of optometry) 250 word maximum; point form is encouraged.

What makes a good entry? Community Service/Humanitarian endeavours:
• Significant, sustained involvement, volunteerism, philanthropy
• Highly visible involvement that is clearly recognized
• Multiple leadership roles

4. uWaterloo Involvement – Other Information (that may aid in the selection process) 250 word maximum; point form is encouraged.

The candidate’s CV, résumé and/or biography including awards, journal articles, popular press articles, etc., will also be accepted and considered. Letters of support are also encouraged.

5. Personal Information of Nominator
* Name of nominator
* Address:
* Phone number(s) Home     (          )
  * Business (          )
* Email address
* Are you a uWaterloo Optometry alumnus? ☐ yes ☐ no     If yes, what year?
* Relationship to nominee
* Please state why you are making this nomination (100 word maximum)

* Please check one of the following:
☐ I plan to inform the nominee of this nomination;
☐ The School of Optometry and Vision Science may inform the nominee of this nomination;
☐ I prefer my nomination to remain anonymous.

Please send completed forms to:
School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West, Waterloo, ON  N2L 3G1
or fax: 519-725-0784
Attention: Alumni of Honour Award
In 1967, countless individuals lobbied, negotiated, and championed the College of Optometry of Ontario’s move to become a formal part of the University of Waterloo. This new partnership enabled optometric education to evolve in many key respects and helped ensure that optometrists would receive the credentials they needed in order to be recognized for their level of education and expertise as health care providers.

Once the program had arrived in Waterloo, there were five faculty members who stepped up to lead the way – Drs. Clair Bobier, Ted Fisher, Wally Long, Bill Lyle, and Emerson Woodruff. Their bold new vision for the future has been fulfilled, as is evidenced by what the School of Optometry and Vision Science is today.

On June 2, 2012, the School was proud to be able to recognize its founding faculty with the dedication of a commemorative wall honouring these remarkable gentlemen, each of whom brought a unique background, perspective, and passion that helped the School to expand its program and advance the profession in Canada.

With family, friends, and alumni in attendance, Lois Bobier and Doris Woodruff did the honour of unveiling the wall, while Drs. Bill Bobier and Susan Woodruff helped us remember the founding faculty for their impact. Once the wall was unveiled, Interim School Director Dr. Marlee Spafford read the plaque below, which states:

“The University of Waterloo would like to recognize Drs. Bobier, Fisher, Long, Lyle and Woodruff as the founding faculty members of the School of Optometry and Vision Science. When the doctor of optometry program moved to the university in 1967, their dedication to vision care, education and research set the stage for innovation and growth that has allowed the school to establish new programs, conduct original research and evolve with the profession of optometry. For this we are grateful.”

Located in the Museum of Vision Science in our building’s new addition, the Founding Faculty Wall is prominently placed for visitors and students to appreciate; the spot is most fitting, since the museum was founded by Dr. Fisher. We hope that if you have a chance to visit us at the School, you will take a few minutes to stop by this permanent place of honour and reflect on your education. Directly or indirectly, each one of the individuals featured there has played a large role in it.
The School of Optometry and Vision Science hosted the annual CE conference over the first weekend in June. The 2012 program had 2 main themes: “Myopia: The Past, Present and the Future” and “Contact Lenses: Striving for Success”.

The first half of the program focused on the topic of contact lenses. As is traditional, there were presentations from our own faculty and external speakers. The Centre for Contact Lens Research (CCLR) offered an impressive lineup of speakers on a variety of contact lens topics. Nancy Keir presented a review on contact lens comfort; Sruthi Srinavasan shared her knowledge of meibomium gland dysfunction and how it relates to dry eye and contact lens wear; Lakshman Subbaraman discussed the array of contact lens care products on the market with particular reference to their differences; Kathy Dumbleton discussed the etiology and assessment of corneal infiltrates in relation to contact lens wear; and Lyndon Jones reviewed some of the more common reasons why patients don’t always tell their practitioner the truth about their contact lens wear and he discussed methods to combat non-compliant behaviour.

Randy Kojima (Pacific University College of Optometry) took to the podium on Saturday and shared his wealth of knowledge on rigid gas permeable contact lens fitting. He also addressed the topic of presbyopia and contact lenses and answered the question “is there hope?” with a definitive answer of “yes” – with the right contact lens choice and lots of patience! Gina Sorbara then updated the audience on specialty contact lenses, with particular reference to keratoconic and astigmatic fits.

The theme switched halfway through the program to the very popular topic of myopia. Doerte Luensman (CCLR) gave an overview of the prevalence of myopia worldwide. This set the stage for Jane Gwiazda (New England College of Optometry) to share the risk factors for developing myopia in children. Elizabeth Irving then reviewed the findings of studies that induce refractive error in animals. Jill Woods (CCLR) continued the animal theme and shared her work on inducing myopia in chicks.

Randy Kojima returned to the podium on Sunday with a presentation on orthokeratology, with particular reference to the potential to control the progression of myopia in children. Lisa Prokopich switched things up with an overview of TPAs one year on. She addressed some of the practical issues that have presented themselves as we work within the Ontario legislation. Adam Keech (private practice) entertained the audience with a look at apps, gadgets and gizmos that can be used in clinical practice. He touched on many areas of technology from the complex (OCT, HRT, etc.) to the simple things available like apps for smart phones.

The CE weekend wrapped up with “My Child is Myopic – Now What?” by Jane Gwiazda. With all of the information that had been shared previously, it was apparent that as of June 2012 the only intervention that seems to have scientific foundation is the amount of time spent outside each day.

The School of Optometry and Vision Science has an impressive graduate (PhD and MSc) program. Seven of the current graduate students presented in rapid-fire format (10 minutes per presentation) throughout the CE weekend. The students gave a brief overview of the research that they are undertaking. The presenters were Balsam Alabdulkader, Jill Woods, Alex Hui, Norris Lam, Derek Ho, Mohammed Althomali, and Amith Hathibelagal.
The following companies and services generously donated their time, energy, and funding to the success of the 2012 Continuing Education Industry Information and Trade Show:

- Alcon
- Bausch & Lomb
- Benson-Edwards Optical
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Carl Zeiss
- Centennial Optical*
- Centre for Contact Lens Research (CCLR)
- Coopervision
- Essilor
- Hoya
- INNOVA Medical*
- Johnson & Johnson
- Menicon
- Nikon
- Novartis Ophthalmics*
- NVI-ware Designs
- Optometric Service Inc (OSI)
- Optos
- Rodenstock
- Sjogren’s Society Canada
- Topcon*
- Transitions Optical
- University of Waterloo Bookstore
- School of Optometry and Vision Science

See you again in 2013! 😊

*These companies also sponsored speakers for CE 2012
Optometric Assistants and Staff CE Program – Marilyn Smith, RO

On Saturday, June 2, forty-eight OA and optometry staff participants enjoyed a full day of lectures at the 10th annual Continuing Education program for Optometric Assistants and Staff. The next morning, many of those in attendance spent a second day of CE by attending the “hands-on” ophthalmic workshops.

Yvan Bertrand, an optician who has an extensive background in the ophthalmic industry, started the lecture day with the question all dispensaries ask: “From Conventional to Freeform...What’s the Difference?” He received a resounding response as he walked the participants through the myriad of definitions of freeform and how best to incorporate this lens design into one’s practice. Dr. Lisa Christian followed with a topic that everyone enjoys, “Babies Need Their Eyes Checked Too.” As an optometrist in our Paediatrics Clinic, Dr. Christian’s hands-on information kept everyone well engaged and left us with a better understanding of how to answer when parents ask why their little ones should have an eye exam.

Yvan was back to open the afternoon lecture session with “Frame Selection from A to Rx.” Martin Bell then presented “Dispensing Pearls & Opportunities.” Martin is an optician with vast experience in all aspects of the ophthalmic world, and a true master of the art of dispensing eyewear. Dr. Michelle Steenbakkers wrapped up the lecture day with the timely topic of age-related macular degeneration. This condition is the most common topic request at CE and Dr. Steenbakkers discussed all the new breakthroughs to help with patient adaptation and care for this central sight stealer. The final presentation of the day was open to both the optometrists and optometric assistants and was delivered by Dr. Jane Gwiazda, our Distinguished Bobier Lecturer.

On Sunday morning, three “hands-on” workshops were presented by Marilyn Smith. Workshops for 2012 concentrated on new products that can present challenges in the practice. Hour 1 highlighted the various lens products on the market that may appeal to the pre-presbyope. The neutralization, dispensing, and use of computer lenses/enhanced readers were then discussed and deciphered in Hour 2. The final hour was devoted to new photochromics in the optical market.

A huge thank you to all of the companies that supplied their most recent lens products to these very timely workshops – Nikon, HOYA, Essilor, Centennial (SOLA & Zeiss), Rodenstock, and Transitions. Your generosity is most appreciated!

Gary Marx Retires – Dr. Marlee M. Spafford

This December, our Administrative and Financial Officer, Gary Marx, will retire after 34 years of distinguished service to the University of Waterloo, the past 17 with the School of Optometry and Vision Science.

Gary moved here in October 1995 from Waterloo’s Data Processing department (now Information Systems and Technology), where he had begun as a programmer/analyst. While there, he wrote and maintained academic support unit software with a focus on student scheduling systems and financial system programming, before serving as a project leader and then a project manager. When Gary brought his many managerial and project planning skills to Optometry, it was at a time when we needed them!

Over his time with us, Gary’s position has evolved along with the School, which is arguably the most complex academic unit at the University. With more than 360 OD students, 50 graduate students, 60 staff, 30 regular faculty, and 50 part-time instructors, there are certainly a lot of moving parts.
Gary has been responsible for financial oversight, human resources administration, business activities (including continuing and ancillary education programs), and other administrative functions required to support our teaching and research missions.

Gary has provided strategic advice and support to the School Director and senior administration, and he has lead and supported many special projects and strategic initiatives as well. As the senior administrative staff member of the School, Gary has been a source of continuity while academic leadership changes.

During his tenure, Gary facilitated many initiatives, such as the computerizing of the clinic, as well as several renovations and building additions. Having had the opportunity to work with Gary in a variety of administrative capacities, I have benefitted from his excellent problem solving, organized planning, and quick wit. It has been an honour, and I know that I am one of many who recognize the tremendous value Gary has added to the School.

On behalf of the faculty, staff, students, and alumni at the School of Optometry and Vision Science, I thank Gary Marx for his tireless efforts to shepherd the school and its many constituents in a constructive and positive direction. Gary deserves a healthy and happy retirement with his wife, Joanne, their family, and their ‘fur kids,’ Koko and Bogey. We expect that Gary will spend more well-deserved time on the golf links post-retirement, and that should put a particularly broad smile on his face.

Congratulations, Gary!
This summer, VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity) Waterloo organized its very own mission to Cusco, Peru, where we were hosted by the Municipality of Cusco. Our group consisted of optometrists from Canada, including Waterloo grads Dr. Kelly Wells (2007) and Dr. Kristen Gee (2012), as well as Drs. Ken Cottrel and Paul Dunderland from the US. Together with eight students from the School of Optometry and Vision Science, opticians, and volunteers from all over North America, we provided free eye care and glasses to impoverished people in Peru.

The experience lasted seven days, but its impact will be lifelong. There were many hurdles, including long travel times, altitude sickness, general fatigue, and the challenge of setting up a clinic from scratch in a day. During the mission, we served close to 2,000 men, women, children, infants, parents, and seniors. Many of them presented with a variety of handicaps and illnesses. We were armed with approximately six thousand pairs of glasses, hundreds of bottles of various eye drops (donated by Alcon), and various types of ophthalmic equipment and machines, many of which were also donated.

We experienced a range of emotions and feelings, from joy and compassion and that warm, fuzzy feeling you get from helping others to frustration, sorrow, and exhaustion. It really was a deep human experience, one that we will always cherish.

VOSH Waterloo is a chapter associated with VOSH International, a non-profit organization that runs eye care missions all over the world. VOSH Waterloo was formed in 2007 by Dr. Heather Cowie (Class of 2010), and since then we have been active, along with VOSH Santa-Cruz in Montreal, in helping to organize missions to developing nations.

Since we are a relatively new club, the mission this summer was just the second that our chapter had planned and executed on its own and we are quite proud of it. If you are interested in hearing about upcoming missions, please email us at waterloovosh@gmail.com.
Two CIHR Grants for Optometry Faculty – Dr. Debbie Jones

In July 2012, it was announced that Dr. John Flanagan had received over $700,000 in funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to study Ocular Biomechanics and Glaucoma. Dr. Flanagan, who is internationally recognized for his research and is currently President of the Optometric Glaucoma Society, is co-recipient of the five-year grant with co-principal investigator Dr. Jeremy Sivak, son of our own Professor Jake Sivak. The grant will be used to specifically research “Ocular Biomechanics and Glaucoma: Finite Element Modeling of the Optic Nerve’s Response To Biomechanical Insult and Its Role in Astrocyte Activation.” The end of the study will represent over 30 years of continuous CIHR funding, an outstanding achievement for the School of Optometry and Vision Science.

The second CIHR grant was for Dr. Elizabeth Irving and Dr. Hélène Kergoat, who have received funding to study Convergence Insufficiency and Parkinson’s Disease. Their project, which has received three years of funding totaling $225,000 from CIHR and an additional $4,000 from the Canadian Optometric Education Trust Fund (COETF), is called “Improving Vision-Targeted Health-Related Quality of Life in Parkinson’s Disease: A Feasibility Study for Orthoptic Treatment of Convergence Insufficiency.”

Dr. Irving holds a University Research Chair and is an accomplished and recognized researcher in the area of eye development and adaptation. Dr. Kergoat, who is the principal investigator, has extensive knowledge and experience in aging and eye care for older individuals. She obtained MSc and PhD degrees from the School of Optometry and Vision Science and now is a faculty member at l’Ecole d’optométrie de l’Université de Montréal.

Congratulations to all for these critical funding awards!

Welcome To Denise Hileeto, MD, MSc – Dr. Jan Freddo

On April 1, 2012, we were pleased to have Dr. Denise Hileeto officially join the faculty of the School of Optometry and Vision Science. Dr. Hileeto comes to us from the University of Valladolid in Spain, where she served as an assistant professor at the Institute of Applied Ophthalmology.

Dr. Hileeto is a Bulgarian-trained physician. Following her move to Canada in 1997, she chose to pursue her interest in an academic career. In order to advance her skills in research methods and techniques, she earned a Master of Science degree in Pathology at the University of Western Ontario. She then went on to complete a 3-year residency in anatomic pathology at Yale University and a 1-year research fellowship in Pathology at McMaster University.

Bringing her experience as a clinical and anatomical pathologist to the teaching of histology of tissue and pathophysiology of systemic disease, Dr. Hileeto adds an important dimension to the teaching program in the Doctor of Optometry curriculum. Additionally, she adds perspective from her strength and understanding of immunology and infectious disease.

Welcome to Waterloo, Dr. Hileeto!
Introducing…The Flick!!!  – Dr. Graham Strong

Researchers from the Centre for Sight Enhancement at the School of Optometry and Vision Science have contributed to the development (by a Waterloo company called Sight Enhancement Systems) of a novel new assistive device for people with low vision.

Small and lightweight, the Flick is the world’s first gesture-controlled video magnifier. It allows users to do two things that have always proven difficult to reconcile through technology: the selective scanning, localizing, and visualizing of distant material in a classroom, and the reading of printed material at near distances.

The device features a high quality autofocus camera that responds robotically to input received from any linked Windows-based tablet, laptop, or desktop. Essentially, the user tells the camera where to look and how to process the camera’s video images so that they are optimally visible for each individual user. The device also features an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) option, which converts camera-captured text into enlarged text or speech output as required.

Research has shown that children with low vision exhibit significant visual search deficits and are affected disproportionately by peripheral crowding. The immersive display environment of the Flick redresses some of these deficits because all of the critical searches and observations are made within the virtual world of the display itself, using central vision while gaze remains stationary. The “looking around” and “tracking” functions are performed by robotic camera operations under on-screen gesture control. So the physical world is observed via live scrolling images under the user’s control and direction.

In order to be maximally effective in classroom settings, assistive devices must effectively anticipate the student’s need to perform two visual subtasks for every seeing activity: localization and visualization. With a low vision observer, there is a tangible disconnection between the localization and visualization activities and a corresponding demand for two different enhancement (primarily magnification) interventions. The problem is that the higher levels of magnification required for inspecting objects are inappropriately excessive for searching the environment to locate objects of interest in the first place; conversely, lower levels of magnification that enable this search are inadequate for inspecting objects of interest after they are identified.

The approach of the Flick is to use zoomable magnification so that objects of potential interest are localized under low magnification, whereupon the device-assisted observer’s gaze is stabilized on the target object. Magnification is then increased to enable more thorough investigation.

With the Flick, which is already in use at the Waterloo Region District School Board, students with vision impairment are able to function at levels consistent with those of their normally-sighted classmates. Parents and teachers are amazed to see how quickly youngsters become proficient with the device after receiving only modest guidance and instruction. But we look forward to a time when the potential of the technologies incorporated into the Flick become even better realized. We anticipate a number of useful derivative innovations, including an eyes-in-the-air orientation device to assist wheelchair users navigating crowded environments.

The future is certainly exciting!

---

Stay Current through the Witer Learning Resource Centre (WLRC)

The Witer Learning Resource Centre provides a range of free information services and resources for CAO members and our alumni (OD) due in large part to a COETF grant:

1. Free access to the following online resources:
   a) Wills Eye Manual
   b) eTherapeutics+ (includes e-CPS)
   c) Ocular Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy
   d) Optometry and Vision Science (e-journal)

2. Literature search support at your request

3. In-person library borrowing privileges at University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and University of Guelph

Email us for full details (optlib@uwaterloo.ca)

Limitations apply – see full details at www.optometry.uwaterloo.ca/wlrc/alumnicao.html (Resources and services contingent upon continued funding)
An important part of the School’s clinical education program involves the care that we provide to underserviced populations in Waterloo Region and beyond. Our outreach program focuses on bringing eye care to groups such as seniors, Mennonites, people with special needs, and children, all of whom frequently have travel restrictions or limited financial resources to visit us. Through this initiative, we strive to improve the quality of life of those we serve while providing Optometry students with a rich clinical experience that we hope will teach them the importance and impact of giving back to the community.

The patients we serve range from those who simply need a regular exam in order to maintain eye health to those with undiagnosed conditions requiring emergency treatment. Many of the patients we see would not have the opportunity to see an optometrist if we did not go to them. The impact we have on such patients can be extraordinary. As you can imagine, running an outreach program has its costs and requires specialized equipment and resources. Fortunately, the importance of providing eye care to the community has been recognized by the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation (KWCF) and the Lyle S. Hallman Fund, who last year made a gift of $15,500 to support our efforts. We were thrilled by their investment and with the funds we were able to purchase two hand-held slit lamps and 100 Vision Therapy Programs.

The slit lamps will be used by all outreach services and they help ensure that we provide as comprehensive an eye exam as possible to each patient. Working with the Waterloo Region District School Board’s Vision Therapist, we are now able to appropriately manage patients who have been diagnosed with conditions that involve the binocular vision system. These patients often struggle with academic performance.

The grant from the KW Community Foundation ensures that we have enough programs to meet the needs of the community for the next 5 years. An additional investment of $2,500 from the John F. Pollock Fund, a donor directed fund managed through the KWCF, helps us fund an additional 25 Vision Therapy Programs for students in need. The Programs will be given to children who could not otherwise afford them.

As Dr. Lisa Christian, Head of the School’s Paediatric Outreach Clinic and Interim Associate Director of Clinical Programs, has said: “To treat binocular vision conditions, vision therapy is recommended. Many of the patients seen through the WRDSB do not have the financial means to afford the therapy required. In coordination with the WRDSB, the vision therapy kits that have been donated now allow patients from underprivileged homes a means to effectively manage and treat their binocular vision disorder. Patients that have successfully completed vision therapy have seen an overall academic improvement in all areas. We truly appreciate the community’s support of our efforts.”

The School’s outreach eye clinics are out in the community 180 days a year, with third- and fourth-year students and supervisors contributing more than 28,000 clinic hours annually. We examine over 2,000 people each year at over 40 facilities and currently have a waiting list of ten additional locations in need of clinic visits. It is our goal to expand the program in future to meet the increasing demand.
On Saturday, June 2, following the dedication of our new Founding Faculty Wall, the School hosted its annual Reunion Dinner for alumni and friends. We were grateful to have a full house that included the families of our late founding faculty members. Each family was presented with a copy of the CAO history book, which highlights the many contributions of Drs. Fisher, Woodruff, Lyle, Long, and Bobier.

Dr. Marlee Spafford, Interim School Director, was our Master of Ceremonies. As a 1982 graduate of the OD program and a 1985 recipient of the MSc degree, she shared some of her experiences and memories of the founding faculty and reflected on the impact they had on her and others.

The event was once again a success thanks to all who attended. We hope to be able to continue to provide our alumni with this opportunity to reconnect with classmates and the School and hope that you feel it is of value. I know we enjoy having you here, especially those who come from out of town or who are graduates of the College of Optometry of Ontario (such as Drs. Donald Rumball, Bill Bryant, and Ron Buck!).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank INNOVA Medical, who has generously supported all seven reunion dinners. Their investment of over $40,000 over the years has helped make each evening possible. This year we were fortunate to have a new jazz duo join us to help entertain those in attendance. With INNOVA’s support we look forward to continuing to host this event.

Are you celebrating a milestone in 2013? If so, we hope you will consider making the School’s Reunion Dinner part of the occasion. Look for more information on next year’s event in the Spring 2013 newsletter and online at optometry.uwaterloo.ca/alumni.
E-Therapeutics+: Electronic Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties (e-CPS) and So Much More! – Kathy MacDonald

The Witer Learning Resource Centre (WLRC) purchases access to e-Therapeutics+ from the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) for our Doctor of Optometry alumni and CAO members. The CPhA is a nationwide association of volunteers dedicated to providing comprehensive, evidence-based information on human pharmaceutical products and devices with drug components. This information is specific to Canada.

As Canada’s primary information source for drug information (prescription and nonprescription, proprietary and nonproprietary), e-Therapeutics+ contains e-CPS, the Lexi-Interact drug interaction database, patient education handouts, and a growing list of condition/disease management charts. These charts, which are presented in a section called Therapeutics Choices, reflect the association’s disease-oriented model of information delivery and includes 160 common medical conditions, with a small but growing list of eye-related content. Each section has a clearly marked tab at the top of the e-Therapeutics+ home page.

The content for e-CPS drug monographs comes from two sources. The drug manufacturers themselves provide full or partial product monographs for each of their drugs. These have been approved by the Therapeutics Products Directorate – Health Canada. If a drug does not appear in e-CPS, then either the manufacturer has not yet provided the product monograph or CPhA is currently preparing the monograph for publication. CPhA editorial staff have also written over 100 full monographs for drugs listed under generic drug names. Such monographs are distinguished by the CPhA logo and based on literature reviews of the current best evidence. They undergo a review process by experts (physicians and pharmacists) in the field.

You can search for information using either the generic or brand name of any drug of interest. Once the specific drug monograph page appears, you can choose from Pharmacology, Indications, Contraindications, Warnings, Precautions, Pregnancy, Lactation, Drug Interactions, Adverse Effects, Overdose, Dosage, Supplied (medicinal and non-medicinal ingredients of various dosages and forms of the drug, etc.), Storage and Stability, and Special Handling Instructions.

The Therapeutic Choices tab opens to a page listing a variety of conditions. You simply click on a category and browse for the condition of interest. The content of each topic page includes Goals of Therapy, Investigations, Pharmacologic Choices (which links directly to the e-CPS Drug Monograph page), Nonpharmacologic Choices, Therapeutic Tips, Suggested Reading, and References. Each topic is summarized by an expert in the field (physician or pharmacist), using current best evidence, and then reviewed by CPhA pharmacist editors and 2 editorial review panel members. Review panel members come from universities, research institutes, and hospitals across Canada. Recent and controversial information is referenced so that readers may appraise the evidence themselves. Currency indicators reveal when the topic was created and when it was fully or partially reviewed.

E-Therapeutics+ and e-CPS are updated twice a month. CPhA asks its contributors to disclose potential conflicts of interest and no funding support is accepted from the pharmaceutical manufacturers.

The Lexi-Interact drug interaction database allows searching by one or more generic names, brands, or natural products. The search then brings up a list of potential interacting categories, such as antacids, NSAIDs, or natural products such as Ginkgo biloba. Selecting one of the interacting categories produces a summary of the interactions and includes a risk rating, a severity of interaction indicator, and a reliability of evidence indicator. The evidence for the summary is presented, as well as patient management information and a list of the specific drugs being discussed. The Patient Information section provides handouts that can be downloaded, printed, and provided to patients.

Like all health care resources, e-Therapeutics+ states that its content is not intended to be used as a sole resource for clinical decision making and that additional sources should also be consulted. But although there are plenty of other Internet sources, it is always advisable to check with e-Therapeutics+. Not only is the service frequently updated, complete with ratings and links to all evidence cited, but it concerns itself specifically with the Canadian health system and uses Health Canada-approved monographs.
On the Occasion of Graham Strong’s Retirement – Dr. Jacob Sivak

Graham Strong completed a joint OD degree from the University of Waterloo and the College of Optometry of Ontario in 1970. From then until 1979, he carried on a successful practice in the town of Napanee, Ontario. During this period he served on numerous municipal and regional boards and committees, including 2 years as Deputy Reeve.

In 1979, Dr. Strong was appointed a full-time Clinical Associate at the School of Optometry, University of Waterloo. During the next five years of full-time clinical teaching, he managed to complete a residency in Low Vision and an MSc degree in Physiological Optics. Dr. Strong’s research involved the use of contrast sensitivity measurements in the visual evaluation of cataract patients. He was appointed an Assistant Professor in the School of Optometry in 1984 and promoted to the rank of Professor in 1996.

In addition to a busy schedule in teaching and research, Dr. Strong held a number of significant administrative positions, including Clinic Director (1985-1990) and School Associate Director (1990-1998). He also served a term with the University of Waterloo Senate. He served as School Director and Associate Dean of Science for Optometry from 1999 until 2002, and since 1987 he has been the Director of the Centre for Sight Enhancement (CSE), an internationally acclaimed low vision research and clinical facility and Canada’s only low vision service accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). Dr. Strong also directs the Sight Enhancement Equipment Pool and Assessment Centre (SEEPAC), a provincially sponsored service specializing in the assessment and provision of high technology sight enhancement devices for people with low vision.

Graham has been active in local, national, and international low vision research forums. Since 1972, he has served as leader of the Vision Research Team for the Ontario Rehabilitation Technology Research Consortium (ORTC), a large, government-sponsored research collective whose mission is “to enhance the lives of persons with disabilities, their families and communities by conducting research and development into technology based products and services.” ORTC-sponsored research has led to the development and commercialization of many award-winning rehabilitation products. In recognition of these achievements, Dr. Strong’s Sight Enhancement Engineering lab received a Computerworld Smithsonian Award in 1999 and Dr. Strong became invested as Computerworld Smithsonian Laureate.

Dr. Strong’s research and development initiatives are responsible for the creation of two spin-off companies, Sight Enhancement Technologies and Sight Enhancement Systems. He has collaborated with Drs. Jeff Jutai and Phil Hooper in conducting a comprehensive “evidence-based” review of key areas of vision rehabilitation, including epidemiology and demography, driving and low vision, age-related macular degeneration and rehabilitation, and optimum text printing. Strong has been sole PI on four low vision research and development projects (with funding support from HTX, CITO, and CIHR) to develop new assistive device technologies for people with low vision. He has been co-PI in a 5-year CIHR-funded project looking at vision rehabilitation outcomes, and PI on a 5-year NIDRR project researching vision aspects of people who are frail and elderly and how these may influence universal design.

Graham is an Adjunct Scientist at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and is involved as a vision consultant on two large facility design and development grants, including the “Intelligent Design for Adaptation, Participation and Technology (IDAPT) and the Innovative Rehabilitation for People in Challenging Environments” project. In addition, he is a court-recognized Forensic Optometrist who has been consulted in connection with numerous homicide investigations and prosecutions. He also serves as a vision consultant for several police and military tactical shooting teams.

Dr. Strong’s many contributions to the field of Low Vision were recognized in 2003 by the CNIB when he presented the inaugural E.A. Baker Lecture in Low Vision at the CAO meeting in Halifax.

To summarize, Graham’s leadership has made it possible for the partially-sighted in Ontario, and indeed throughout Canada, to enjoy an unparalleled range and quality of service. The Centre for Sight Enhancement is a model of cooperative development between diverse professions and government agencies. His many longstanding contributions to the education of optometrists in Canada cannot be overstated and his upcoming retirement will certainly leave a hole in the program at School of Optometry and Vision Science. We at the School wish Graham the very best retirement possible, leaving the final bit of advice to British author and scriptwriter Jonathan Clements: “Retirement is like a long vacation in Las Vegas. The goal is to enjoy it to the fullest, but not so fully that you run out of money.”

Dr. Strong’s research and development initiatives are responsible for the creation of two spin-off companies, Sight Enhancement Technologies and Sight Enhancement Systems. He has collaborated with Drs. Jeff Jutai and Phil Hooper in conducting a comprehensive “evidence-based” review of key areas of vision rehabilitation, including epidemiology and demography, driving and low vision, age-related macular degeneration and rehabilitation, and optimum text printing. Strong has been sole PI on four low vision research and development projects (with funding support from HTX, CITO, and CIHR) to develop new assistive device technologies for people with low vision. He has been co-PI in a 5-year CIHR-funded project looking at vision rehabilitation outcomes, and PI on a 5-year NIDRR project researching vision aspects of people who are frail and elderly and how these may influence universal design.

Graham is an Adjunct Scientist at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and is involved as a vision consultant on two large facility design and development grants, including the “Intelligent Design for Adaptation, Participation and Technology (IDAPT) and the Innovative Rehabilitation for People in Challenging Environments” project. In addition, he is a court-recognized Forensic Optometrist who has been consulted in connection with numerous homicide investigations and prosecutions. He also serves as a vision consultant for several police and military tactical shooting teams.

Dr. Strong’s many contributions to the field of Low Vision were recognized in 2003 by the CNIB when he presented the inaugural E.A. Baker Lecture in Low Vision at the CAO meeting in Halifax.

To summarize, Graham’s leadership has made it possible for the partially-sighted in Ontario, and indeed throughout Canada, to enjoy an unparalleled range and quality of service. The Centre for Sight Enhancement is a model of cooperative development between diverse professions and government agencies. His many longstanding contributions to the education of optometrists in Canada cannot be overstated and his upcoming retirement will certainly leave a hole in the program at School of Optometry and Vision Science. We at the School wish Graham the very best retirement possible, leaving the final bit of advice to British author and scriptwriter Jonathan Clements: “Retirement is like a long vacation in Las Vegas. The goal is to enjoy it to the fullest, but not so fully that you run out of money.”

Dr. Strong’s research and development initiatives are responsible for the creation of two spin-off companies, Sight Enhancement Technologies and Sight Enhancement Systems. He has collaborated with Drs. Jeff Jutai and Phil Hooper in conducting a comprehensive “evidence-based” review of key areas of vision rehabilitation, including epidemiology and demography, driving and low vision, age-related macular degeneration and rehabilitation, and optimum text printing. Strong has been sole PI on four low vision research and development projects (with funding support from HTX, CITO, and CIHR) to develop new assistive device technologies for people with low vision. He has been co-PI in a 5-year CIHR-funded project looking at vision rehabilitation outcomes, and PI on a 5-year NIDRR project researching vision aspects of people who are frail and elderly and how these may influence universal design.

Graham is an Adjunct Scientist at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and is involved as a vision consultant on two large facility design and development grants, including the “Intelligent Design for Adaptation, Participation and Technology (IDAPT) and the Innovative Rehabilitation for People in Challenging Environments” project. In addition, he is a court-recognized Forensic Optometrist who has been consulted in connection with numerous homicide investigations and prosecutions. He also serves as a vision consultant for several police and military tactical shooting teams.

Dr. Strong’s many contributions to the field of Low Vision were recognized in 2003 by the CNIB when he presented the inaugural E.A. Baker Lecture in Low Vision at the CAO meeting in Halifax.

To summarize, Graham’s leadership has made it possible for the partially-sighted in Ontario, and indeed throughout Canada, to enjoy an unparalleled range and quality of service. The Centre for Sight Enhancement is a model of cooperative development between diverse professions and government agencies. His many longstanding contributions to the education of optometrists in Canada cannot be overstated and his upcoming retirement will certainly leave a hole in the program at School of Optometry and Vision Science. We at the School wish Graham the very best retirement possible, leaving the final bit of advice to British author and scriptwriter Jonathan Clements: “Retirement is like a long vacation in Las Vegas. The goal is to enjoy it to the fullest, but not so fully that you run out of money.”
A PROUD SUPPORTER OF CANADIAN OPTOMETRY

INNOVA

Canada-wide: 800.461.1200 | Email: info@innovamed.com | Web: www.innovamed.com
Book Review – Dan Gallacher, PhD, FCMA (curator emeritus, Canadian Museum of Civilization)


For over a century, the vocation in Canada of measuring eyesight, prescribing lenses, and detecting eye disease has moved steadily upward from merely outfitting corrective eyewear (supplied in spectacles or monocles boxes) to scientifically probing and diagnosing scores of optical and related diseases, disorders, damages, or disjointed vision. Along the way, this craft has evolved into a fully recognized and respected profession, but not one yet embraced wholeheartedly by their medical counterparts or, in turn, by the government purveyors of universal health care coverage.

Swedberg-Kohli, a highly accomplished national communicator and journalist, was commissioned by the Canadian Association of Optometrists to write the definitive account of the organization’s rise, including the main leaders and pivotal events. *Lucto et Emergo* covers them well and will be of interest to readers wanting to see how optometry took its place in the realm of modern health care, particularly during stressful times. This includes the two world wars in which optometrists pushed hard for acceptance into armed forces recruitment and treatment roles on one hand, and to have their value seen and acknowledged by the Royal Commission on Health Services (1961-66) on the other. Equally vital became the matter of higher education for optometrists – “university trained” in other words – to improve practitioners’ critical skills and knowledge while increasing the public’s confidence in optometry.

It is a book with many stories, analyses, and anecdotes. Coupled with scores of historical images or details, this volume reveals both the author’s dedication to the fullest possible narrative and the fascinating past of a field one might never expect to be as colourful or dramatic. Here we note sections on quackery, charlatanism, egomania, oddball diagnoses, useless (or dangerous) cures, ruthless competition, commercial gouging – during the early years, naturally. After all, optometry was a business from its outset. Swedberg-Kohli handles these aberrations deftly, humorously, and always by linking them to the optometrists ongoing and upwards struggle for relevance, respectability, and universal acceptance.


This new and excellent book may be purchased from the CAO Head Office at info@optom.ca. Cost $35.00 plus shipping.