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Middle East Africa Council of Ophthalmology (MEACO) /
Jordanian Ophthalmological Society
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Young Ophthalmologist Jordan/Young Ophthalmologists MEACO*

Purpose: The Jordanian Ophthalmological Society and MEACO don't have a Young Ophthalmologists chapter to cater to the scientific as well as career needs of ophthalmologists in training and early in their career. This project aims to establish Young Ophthalmologists chapters in Jordan and MEACO to address the unmet needs of YOs of the region, creating platforms for communication and opportunities for representation in scientific meetings held by the Council.

Methods: Starting during the pandemic the Young Ophthalmologists of Jordan (YOJO) began by creating an online platform on social media. Using it as a starting point, polls were created to get to know the demographics and needs of our YOs as well as establishing contact with them. A core committee was established, and subcommittees were drafted focusing on three main aspects: scientific, social and outreach. Scientific committee held regular webinars as well as in person meetings dedicated to Young Ophthalmologists, focusing on Board reviews and hot topics. The outreach committee organized and executed screening days for underserved areas in Jordan and liaised with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to recruit YOs in their nationwide campaigns.

The MEACO chapter recruited a core committee/representatives of multiple member societies, met with the MEACO leadership and drafted an annual plan for MEACO-YO to be represented in all MEACO affiliated scientific meetings by having a YO dedicated program.

Results: The focus of the MEACO-YO is to overcome the underrepresentation of YOs on the podium and lack of formal presence in scientific meetings, which is mostly due to lack of funding (75%), and lack of formal support by leaderships (20%) which would be overcome through the support and endorsement by MEACO leadership and subsequently member nations. Around 65% of the members of both YOJO and MEACO-YO felt the need to have dynamic partnerships with international YO societies as well as international foundations which would be an asset for them during and after training. MEACO is working on a partnership with the International Foundation of Ophthalmology to have a dedicated annual fellowship awarded to a Young Ophthalmologist through the MEACO Council. The first MEACO-YO program will be held in lieu of the Iraqi Ophthalmological society annual meeting in Erbil with two free training courses for YOs and a dedicated YO symposium.

Conclusion: The need for a MEACO-YO chapter was well demonstrated and evident to the leadership of the MEACO which was endorsed by the council accordingly. we identified the needs and the challenges ahead and are actively creating programs within the council to address the needs of young ophthalmologists in training and early in their career.



Cynthia L. Beauchamp, MA, MD, FAAP
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *All Children See*

Purpose: The purpose of All Children See (ACS) is to address the problem of millions of children who are uninsured or under-insured and who require medical care for an ophthalmological issue. The goal of ASC is to eliminate preventable blindness in this vulnerable population through the care of pediatric eye disease. ACS aim is to pair children in need of care with a local ophthalmologist, prioritizing those children that have failed a vision screen and to provide free eye exams and care for a one-year period.

Methods: We identified 3 separate areas of focus: website development, volunteer physicians, and marketing. For each area of focus, we have formed work groups which are functioning independently and within the full committee for ACS.

A website has been designed to allow online volunteering for physicians, online registering for patients, and easy access to information about the project. We have engaged in significant search engine optimization to help more patients find the program with a variety of search terms.

ACS has sought to recruit physician volunteers through email campaigns, personal outreach, and promotional efforts both at the annual AAPOS meeting and at the annual Children's Eye Foundation Gala. We have reinforced the recruiting effort with gifts for volunteers and a thank you VIP reception at the Gala. We have designed packets for volunteers with pertinent information regarding scheduling patients and providing feedback to the program.

We are outreaching to patients and their families through multiple avenues. We are working with state pediatric societies, nurses' associations, community papers, regional organizations that serve children, Recreational Centers, and parents' groups to raise awareness of the program. Qualifying children must be American residents under age 18 who cannot afford the cost of a physician visit nor their co-pay.

Finally, we are reaching out to companies who can provide free glasses and patches and we have solicited donations from companies and individuals. In 2021, we created the ACS Critical Resource fund with financial support from an anonymous donor, providing funds for services not covered by the program.

Results: We have started to provide free eye care in several pilot regions such as Northern Virginia/ Maryland/ Washington DC, New Hampshire, Indiana, and Dallas/Fort Worth. We have cared for 33 qualifying patients since the roll out. Patients have had a wide variety of diagnoses including amblyopia, strabismus, refractive error including anisometropia, diabetic retinopathy, and panuveitis. We have an ACS database which we will continue to fine tune to facilitate data collection to collect the impact data needed to demonstrate results. We have 193 volunteer pediatric ophthalmologists. We have formed a committee including 10 physicians and three invaluable team members. The website is up and running and is undergoing updates to streamline and improve the patient and volunteer experience. Several companies have partnered with our effort to provide free glasses and patches and the Lions Club has given a generous donation to ASC. Significant donations were made to the project at the annual AAPOS meeting, including 12,220 in individual donations.

Cynthia L. Beauchamp, MA, MD, FAAP
All Children See

Conclusion: This is a program that is in the nascent stages and methodically moving forward to provide a framework to provide quality medical care to children in need. Post pandemic, many children have missed screenings and may have experienced worsening of myopia with extended screen time. Therefore, ACS is needed now more than ever. The impact of the program is best measured by the impact it has had on an individual child's vision; in the words of one grateful parent whose child was seen through ACS, "Without the All Children See program, I could not have my child's eyes checked... I am so happy that this program exists because without it, my son wouldn't have gotten the treatment he needs to see." Going forward we will focus on the key initiatives: continuing to refine our patient and volunteer interface with improved online functionality, expanding our marketing through strategic partnerships, and increasing physician and patient enrollment.



Mary T. Champion, MD
Kansas Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (KSEPS)
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Revitalizing KSEPS*

Purpose: The purpose is to engage new members of KSEPS and to re-establish our Board of Directors.

Methods: After a 2020 scope of practice challenge, several member and non-member ophthalmologists in the state of Kansas became involved in KSEPS and the advocacy efforts. With this renewed sense of purpose and urgency, the KSEPS board was expanded to include new members to conduct society business and to participate as delegates to the Kansas Medical Society (KMS) and AAO Council.

Results: Over the last several years, in-person meetings of the KSEPS Board and members had decreased, which was further disrupted by Covid-19 Pandemic meeting restrictions. New membership in the Board of Directors had declined. Between 2020-2022, member engagement increased as KSEPS launched new fundraising efforts and enlisted the help of lobbyists. Newly interested members were surveyed and offered roles on the Board of Directors. The Board met and expanded officer positions, and we added five new members to the Board of Directors who had never previously served as officers.

Conclusion: With a new active Board, KSEPS is looking ahead as we transition into new executive directorship, consolidate our lobbying efforts, and integrate our dues mailings with the AAO. We look forward to continuing to engage members by revamping our Spring state meeting and creating subcommittees and task forces to direct our PAC and fundraising efforts.



Matilda F. Chan, MD, PhD
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Improving Participation and Quality of Journal Manuscript Review*

Purpose: To develop an editorial pipeline of well-trained reviewers and editorial board members for ophthalmology and vision research journals. Goals of the initiative are to: 1) Identify qualified individuals to become 'go-to' reviewers and eventually editorial board members for the entire ophthalmology/optometry journal community; 2) Provide strong training for review skills for these individuals; and 3) Provide 1:1 mentoring for these individuals.

Methods: Editors-in-chief of several ophthalmology journals were contacted about their interest in improving the pool of manuscript reviewers. A working group was formed consisting of Editors-in-chief of ophthalmology journals and the Director of the National Eye Institute at the National Institutes of Health to design a pilot program. Topics considered in the editorial pipeline initiative design included the target group, a didactic program, a mentoring program, participating journals, and participation recognition.

Results: A pilot program has been designed for future implementation. The target participant group will consist of senior NEI K08/K12/K23/K99/R00 awardees. A didactic program will consist of online modules and a live reviewer bootcamp session at the annual ARVO meeting. A mentoring program will consist of participants (mentees) agreeing to perform a set number of critiqued reviews each year paired with mentors who will discuss/critique reviews by the participants. Participating journals will include an initial group of 7 major US-based generalist journals. Participation recognition will include both a general recognition of participation as well as specific recognition at journals for participation.

Conclusion: Improving the pool of manuscript reviewers is of significant interest to all Editors-in-chief of ophthalmology journals that were contacted, as well as the Director of the National Eye Institute. Implementing a pilot program focused on training and mentoring early career NEI/NIH awardees was identified as a novel strategy to develop well-trained reviewers who may eventually become editorial board members for ophthalmology and vision research journals.



Jasmine H. Francis, MD, FACS
The Macula Society
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Web-based Searchable Encyclopedia of Retinal Toxicity from Cancer Therapies*

Purpose: There is a growing number of cancer patients on chronic novel cancer therapies many of which have ocular toxicity and varying degrees of visual impairment. This project will provide an online, accessible reference and educational resource for the ophthalmic and retina community on the retinal toxicity of cancer therapies. Many of these new drugs will have been developed after ophthalmologists have completed their training. Therefore, the encyclopedia will attempt to bridge the gap in knowledge about new cancer therapies and their potential toxicity on the eye, and will specifically start with the retina.

Methods: To achieve this mission, there were a number of tasks: 1. To thoroughly query the published database for reports on retinal toxicity from cancer drugs and to generate a database of findings 2. To secure an entity with web-based infrastructure to build and host the Encyclopedia 3. To design the online Encyclopedia with accessible, searchable interface for the user 4. To script the Encyclopedia content so it is straight forward to understand and includes appropriate legal disclosures with respect to the content 5. To generate a mechanism to periodically update the Encyclopedia so it adequately reflects new published data.

Results: The following tasks have been accomplished: 1. Through the SCORE (Summer Clinical Oncology Research Experience) program at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK), a medical student mentored by the Principal Investigator, worked in tandem with a research librarian to perform a comprehensive literature search of cancer drugs and retinal toxicities and generated a database to capture this information. 2. The Macula Society graciously agreed to host the online Encyclopedia on their society website. The society recently acquired an Information Technology specialist to lead these web-based projects. 3. MSK had established a precedent called "About Herbs": an online resource on natural remedies. The infrastructure of this web-based encyclopedia served as a model in the creation of the current retinal toxicity encyclopedia. 4. With the aid of legal counsel, the appropriate legal disclosures with respect to the encyclopedia content have been obtained. A prototype of the Encyclopedia has been developed and following critical evaluation and revisions, it will be rolled out on a larger scale. 5. Through a collaborative effort with The Macula Society, periodic queries of the published literature will be performed and new content used to update the drug toxicity website.

Conclusions: The goal of this project is to address the unmet need to bridge the gap in knowledge regarding new cancer drugs and their potential for ocular toxicity. This was achieved through developing an online accessible encyclopedia of new cancer therapies and their known retinal toxicities. As we unveil this encyclopedia to the ophthalmic community, we hope to broaden the impact of the drug-toxicity encyclopedia to include other ophthalmic toxicities and to expand the readership from health providers to patients by generating a version with patient-focused content.



Nina A. Goyal, MD
Illinois Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Grassroots Ophthalmology Engagement Sustainability Project*

Purpose: To engage Illinois Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (ISEPS) Board members as well as state society constituents, including Advocacy Ambassadors and Young Ophthalmologists (YO's, those within 5 years of training) in statewide advocacy efforts. The goal is to form relationships with legislators in key geographic regions and on key political committees. These political touchpoints were targeted with the aid of monthly reports from our lobbyist team.

Methods: Board members were divided into geographic regions based on home and office addresses. All board members were required to meet with their legislator and attend a fundraiser. A meeting could comprise of in-person, Zoom, or a personal phone call. In addition, they were asked to involve a non-board member with them, to engage members-in-training as well as state society constituents. These engagement opportunities were shared with the entire board and a plan was formulated to provide maximum ISEPS coverage at these events. A formal "How To Meet with Your Legislator" handout was created and circulated. Board members and constituents were encouraged to take photographs with legislators.

The goal was to create maximum targeted legislator engagement touch points, with the larger goal to build long-term relationships. The secondary goal was to broaden our reach by including members other than board members. Ideally, this cycle would continue resulting in overall growth in our member engagement and legislator outreach, over years. It was essential to keep our lobbyists apprised of any and all interactions, so that they could provide local follow up with these legislators downstate in Springfield, at our State Capital.

Results: We have 11 board members who were in contact with 27 different legislators. This was an average of 2.45 interactions per board member. Some fundraisers had multiple legislators present. In addition, we had 3 non-board members who were in contact with 7 legislators, with an average of 2.3 interactions per non-board member. Overall, this resulted in 34 different legislator encounters from January 2022 through August 2022. This meant that 21% of our engagements came from non-board members, and both board members and non-board members engaged at a similar rate.

Of the 14 ophthalmologists who participated, 6 qualify as YO's (42%). Three of them are resident members on the board, 2 of them were Resident Advocacy Ambassadors at Midyear Forum 2022, and 1 is a YO Attending in private practice.

Included in the legislator meetings was our State minority leader, Senate President, Speaker of the House and the Governor of our State. There were also interactions with key members of the healthcare licensing committee.

Conclusion: Over the years it has become evident that while ophthalmologists feel strongly about patient care and protecting sight, we have fallen behind in getting to know our local legislators, who create healthcare policy, legislate scope of practice, and create zoning which can affect patient access to care.

Nina A. Goyal, MD

Grassroots Ophthalmology Engagement Sustainability Project

In previous years, all fundraisers and legislator engagement was commonly conducted by the same 2-3 board members. This year, we obtained 100% engagement by our board, more than tripling board involvement. This was in a year when fundraisers and meeting opportunities were still limited due to COVID restrictions.

We were able to get many YO's involved, highlighting the importance of advocacy at an early career state. Many of our resident board members and YO members were then able to share these experiences with their programs and fellow co-residents and teaching attendings, aiding our efforts at academic centers. There are a few board positions that will be vacant at the end of this calendar year and early engagement can help us with board legacy planning by getting YO's involved early.

By encouraging non-board members to attend and engage, we were able to grow our regional reach. Ideally, this cycle will perpetuate and grow again next year, involving even more new constituents. This should, create a doubling effect of potential exponential growth in terms of engagement. We are hopeful that this level and these types of engagements will help us advocate for patient care and scope of practice.

We faced several challenges throughout our advocacy endeavors including limited number of fundraisers and ability to meet in person due to COVID regulations. Previously members have found it daunting to reach out to legislators but with our 'How To' handout and pairing up seasoned members with new members, we were able to overcome this hurdle. Another challenge most state societies face is the short notice when fundraisers will be occurring, adding further challenge to the ophthalmologist's already complex clinic and surgical schedule. We overcame this by staying in touch with our lobbyists and planning as far in advance as we could. We also paired physicians up in terms of geography which helped them to attend more events.

Advocacy efforts at the state level can be challenging and demanding on the ophthalmologists' demanding schedule. With assistance, organization, and direction from the state society, many members can step up and form relationships with their legislators and learn that advocacy engagement isn't difficult. Over time and with continued effort, this will help our society build sustainable relationships with our legislators, and have a voice in patient safety and care issues.



**Jason Hsu, MD
Retina Society
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract**

Title of Project: *Retina Society Underrepresented in Medicine (RESOURCE) Research Mentoring Program*

Purpose: To create a research mentoring program for ophthalmology residents who are underrepresented in medicine (URiM). URiM minority groups make up ~30% of the U.S. population. Given the growing eye care needs of minority populations in the U.S. and issues with treatment adherence, having physicians who share similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds helps bridge the gap and may improve health outcomes. However, only 6% of practicing ophthalmologists identify themselves as URiM minorities. In the retina subspecialty, it is estimated to be even lower at about 4%.

Methods: Members who helped develop and/or oversee the American Academy of Ophthalmology minority ophthalmology mentoring (MOM) program, American Society of Retina Specialists minority mentoring program, and Rabb-Venable Excellence in Ophthalmology Program were consulted for feedback on the design of this program. Given the Retina Society members' research strengths, the concept of creating a targeted research mentoring program evolved to complement existing diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in ophthalmology with the goal of increasing diversity in the retina subspecialty. A proposal for the program was generated with additional input from an ad hoc committee of Retina Society members.

Results: The RESOURCE program received approval from the Retina Society Executive Board. Funding of \$5000 was approved for two mentee candidates (\$2500 each) in the inaugural year of the program to cover research expenses and travel expenses to the annual meeting. Starting on July 1, 2022, a call for applications was sent to various sources, including contacts at the Rabb-Venable Program/National Medical Association, Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology/Program Directors' Council, and Latino Medical Student Association. A call for mentors was also sent to Retina Society members. Mentee applications will be due mid-September 2022. The two candidates will be selected and paired with mentors by an ad hoc Retina Society committee by October 1, 2022. A research project proposal will be due by mid-November and additional secondary mentor(s) may be added to support the candidate's project based on expertise and interest. The candidate will be expected to submit the project for presentation at the Retina Society Annual Meeting in the fall of 2023.

Conclusion: The RESOURCE program represents the first retina research mentoring program for URiM ophthalmology residents. By providing this experience, we hope to interest these residents in pursuing retina fellowship training, increase their chances of matching, and thereby improve diversity in the retina field.



Jennifer C. Larson, MD
Wisconsin Academy of Ophthalmology
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Development of the Young Ophthalmologists of Wisconsin*

Purpose: To increase membership and participation in the Wisconsin Academy of Ophthalmology (WAO) by developing the Young Ophthalmologists (YO) of Wisconsin; to engage the YO's as well as their statewide mentors in the state society; to provide practice management education to the YO's not formally taught in residency programs; to recruit YO's to practice in WI.

Methods: 1) Private practice ophthalmologists throughout Wisconsin were recruited to serve as mentors to the YO's at the University of Wisconsin Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science (UWDOVS) and the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). 2) Statewide speakers (physicians, coders, clinic managers) were recruited for quarterly YO Practice Management virtual lectures. 3) A YO Poster Session was added to the WAO Annual Symposium to encourage attendance of the meeting and associated social event. 4) Industry partners were recruited to assist with YO Advanced Surgical Skills Wetlabs.

Results: 1) Twenty WI ophthalmologists were recruited to serve as YO mentors and matched with UWDOVS and MSW residents starting in June of the 2022-2023 academic year. The YO mentorship program will allow WI YO's to gain invaluable practice management advice from private practice physicians, and for WI ophthalmologists to network with and recruit residents. 2) The quarterly virtual lectures will begin after the annual WAO symposium which is scheduled in November 2022. 3) The WAO Symposium YO Poster Session has already received four poster abstract submissions. This will be an annual addition to the WAO Symposium. Resident registration is free for the symposium. There are also no dues for a Resident WAO membership. 4) No YO Advanced Surgical Skills Wetlabs have been planned due to space and COVID19 restraints.

Conclusion: It is too early to determine if the WI YO group will increase WAO membership and/or attendance of the WAO symposium. Likewise, it is too early to determine if the WI YO group and specifically the mentorship program will help recruit UWDOVS and MCW ophthalmology residents to stay and practice in WI. However, we expect WAO membership, WAO symposium attendance, and recruitment of UWDOVS and MCW residents to increase as a direct effect of the WI YO group. Continued efforts and resources are needed to expand future WI YO activities, including YO Advanced Surgical Skills Wetlabs, YO social events geographically distributed throughout the state, and YO advocacy awareness and participation including in the annual Wisconsin Medical Society Doctor Day.



R. Grant Morshedi, MD
Arkansas Ophthalmological Society
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Maximizing Retention of Ophthalmology Residency Graduates in Arkansas*

Purpose: To increase the number of ophthalmologists practicing in Arkansas by forging strategic, mutually beneficial connections between ophthalmology learners (both residents and ophthalmology-bound medical students) and community-based ophthalmologists in Arkansas. Arkansas is a medically underserved state, and many ophthalmologists are nearing retirement age, particularly among those in private practice. It has been difficult in recent years to recruit ophthalmologists to practice in Arkansas, even among residency graduates in Arkansas. However, there has been more success with Arkansas medical school graduates who leave the state for residency and return afterward to practice in the state. We believe focusing more efforts on connecting with medical students before they leave for residency will maximize our returns.

Methods: *Short term goals:* 1) The state society by-laws will be changed to allow for permanent medical student and ophthalmology resident representation on the society board. 2) We will foster involvement of community-based ophthalmologists in local residency teaching activities (grand rounds, resident lectures, journal clubs) as well as the medical school's Ophthalmology Interest Group. 3) We will work within the residency program's existing framework to help with a lecture series focused on topics germane to the new residency graduate in private practice. *Longer term goals:* 1) We will match each resident with a private practice mentor for the duration of their residency. 2) We will strive to have a private practice ophthalmologist on the local residency selection committee, with the goal to help prioritize the matching of applicants who will be most likely to stay and practice in the state.

Results: The next scheduled state society meeting is in October 2022, and we will have the by-laws changed by then. From discussions thus far, minimal barriers are expected for this goal. We have met with both residents and medical students and received positive feedback and excitement for this project. We also met with the residency program director and discussed goals for this project, and based on that discussion we anticipate there will be some barriers and philosophical opposition to implementing some of the project goals. Further work needs to be undertaken to understand the reasons behind these feelings, and to work to build mutual trust and understanding.

Conclusion: There are several relatively easy steps that can be taken to build a network of connection and support for ophthalmology learners in Arkansas, which will hopefully have the long-term effect of identifying good matches for open ophthalmology positions. The ultimate success of these efforts will be difficult to judge immediately given the duration of the ophthalmology training cycle. Given that medical students are more likely to be Arkansas natives than those who have matched here for residency, we hope that focusing more attention on medical students than has historically been done will prove to be fruitful.



D. Wilkin Parke III, MD
Minnesota Academy of Ophthalmology
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Creating a Pathway to IRIS Research via State or Specialty Societies*

Purpose: To develop a new opportunity for American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) members to perform IRIS Registry research with the support and participation of their state or specialty society. The program would enable state and specialty societies to nominate research proposals from their memberships, and a select number would be approved by the AAO for IRIS Registry research. The intent would be to broaden access to IRIS Registry research, to enable state and specialty societies to advance research projects that addressed the needs of their members, and to strengthen the scientific relationship between the AAO, the state and specialty societies, and their members.

Methods: Feedback on the project was solicited from a variety of state and specialty organizations as well as the AAO IRIS Registry and OMIC leadership. Different structures and sizes for the program, ways to integrate the sponsoring state and specialty organizations into the research projects, and funding options were considered.

Results: Enthusiasm for the project was high among state societies, with the caveat that funding the projects from state society budgets or foundations would be difficult. General consensus suggested that a structure similar to the LDP application process might be effective; each state and specialty society could choose on an annual basis to nominate a single research proposal from one of its members, and the AAO would choose a select number, based on funding and capacity, to move forward. Funding is still undetermined, and different options are being considered.

Conclusion: There is interest among state society leadership in a means for state societies to become involved in and advance IRIS Registry research. Particularly appealing is the opportunity for state societies to select research that benefits their members, and the opportunity to promote the society's involvement in the process. Funding the costs of the research is a concern for the state societies, and the financing may need to come from other sources if the project proceeds. The project is ongoing and attempts will be made to develop a workable and sustainable model.



**Christina Rapp Prescott, MD, PhD
Eye and Contact Lens Association
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract**

Title of Project: *Improving Contact Lens Education for Ophthalmology Residents Using an Online Learning Program*

Purpose: Ophthalmology resident contact lens education varies significantly among programs, so that many ophthalmologists do not feel comfortable prescribing/managing contact lenses. Therefore, few ophthalmologists are comfortable teaching residents about contact lenses which exacerbates the problem. This is becoming more of an issue, since contact lens technology is evolving, but ophthalmologists are not staying up to date. Eye and Contact Lens Association (Michelle Rhee, MD) has developed the Contact Lens Curriculum for Ophthalmology Residents (CCOR) to address this issue. Though the CCOR program is free, dissemination has been a problem, so the purpose of my project was to increase awareness and utilization of this program.

Methods: The CCOR program consists of 7 modules with quizzes and each module has a primary objective. The objectives are: 1 - Be familiar with the wide variety of contact lens types, technologies, and terminology 2 - Be able to choose and prescribe from among the contact lens types to effectively address patients' individual vision needs 3- Understand how materials and fitting promote optimum contact lens comfort and sustainable use 4 - Be familiar with insertion and removal techniques 5 - Be able to instruct patients regarding storage, disinfection, and safety 6 - Become familiar with therapeutic uses of contact lenses, as well as other special applications such as cosmetic use and for myopia control 7 - Understand the role of specialty contact lenses in addressing ocular surface disease.

To increase awareness of these modules, we sent out two announcements via AUPO to encourage residency program directors to distribute the program to their residents. I also contacted individual program directors to make them aware of the program. The Eye and Contact Lens Association sent out multiple email blasts to all members with links to the program. Additionally, I incorporated the program into our official residency didactic program at NYU, and made it a requirement for all residents.

Results: From January to May 13, 2022, 75 people enrolled into the CCOR program, and 48 of those enrolled in March (when the NYU didactic session occurred) and shortly after I contacted individual program directors. Of the 75 people who enrolled, 15 completed the entire program and 58 completed less than half of the modules.

Conclusion: The most effective way to distribute the online learning modules is to make them a mandatory part of the residency curriculum, as I did at NYU. In terms of broader distribution, a personalized approach (emailing individual program directors) was more effective than organizational email "blasts". Most of the people who enrolled in the program did not complete the modules, which suggests that they might need to be modified to better accommodate the learners' needs.



Maria A. Woodward, MD, MS
The Cornea Society
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Diversity among Cornea Physicians*

Purpose: Women and minorities are not choosing corneal fellowship nor are achieving leadership positions in Cornea in proportions that reflect the number of those populations in medical school graduates (>50% of graduates) and in residency (40%). First, there is no formalized strategy within Cornea to create professional growth for women or members of underrepresented groups. Second, there is not a “deep bench” of diverse leaders in cornea for representation at forums, in leadership roles, or for policy initiatives.

Methods: Our first goal is to create opportunities for education and professional development for trainees from minority backgrounds to explore cornea subspecialty for their careers. Dr. Fasika Woreta and I created the Mentoring URiM Rising STars in Cornea Program (MUST) program. This program supports ophthalmology residents from under-represented minorities to attend the 2022 World Cornea Congress & 2022 Eye Bank Association/Cornea Society meetings with a plan to support annual meeting participation. This program has sponsorship by EBAA for up to five scholars. The residents will attend both meetings at meet with Cornea Society board members and Cornea journal Senior editors. The application process, meeting events, and program evaluation are ongoing. Dr. Woodward’s AAO Minority Ophthalmology Mentoring program mentee, Ms. Mikhayla Armstrong, will lead program evaluation as an independent research study of mentorship for trainees.

The second goal was to understand the scope of issues faced by women and minorities in Cornea (within the Society and outside of the Society) through a structured survey collaborating with Cornea physician leaders (namely, Drs. Jennifer Li and Jennifer Rose-Nussbaumer). We have created the survey and are working to finalize the survey and work the Cornea Society to distribute the survey.

The final goal is to create ongoing education, professional development, and networking for women and minorities in Cornea. We will use the result of the survey to inform programing. In addition, we will identify and publish leadership opportunities relevant for this group and distribute this information to all Cornea Society members via Cornea Society University.

Results: The impact is to build future leaders in cornea from diverse background, to support diverse cornea specialists, to improve representation of leadership, and to grow the Cornea Society membership. The leadership of the *Cornea Society* and affiliated *Cornea* journal has supported this initiative and work is ongoing.

Conclusion: The Cornea Society leadership has emphasized long-term commitment to this initiative with support and guidance. The results of work will create facilitate the growth of members and provide meaningful high-value content to persons who have had less of a voice in leadership historically.



Fasika A. Woreta, MD
National Medical Association, Ophthalmology Section
Leadership Development Program XXIII, Class of 2022
Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Disparities In Promotion Rates of Underrepresented in Medicine Faculty in Academic Ophthalmology*

Purpose: The three objectives of this project were to 1) characterize the rates of faculty promotion and attrition of underrepresented in medicine (URiM) faculty within U.S. ophthalmology departments 2) assess barriers to promotion 3) develop a faculty development group within the National Medical Association (NMA) to support URiM faculty career advancement.

Methods: Using data obtained from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), we examined the promotion rates of full-time assistant and associate professors appointed to ophthalmology departments from January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2010, stratifying by race/ethnicity. Through the NMA, we also created a faculty development group (FDG) to focus on professional development and career advancement of URiM ophthalmology faculty. For our baseline needs assessment, we distributed a 17-item survey on barriers to promotion between February and May 2022. In addition to an email listserv in which information regarding opportunities are shared among the FDG, we designed panel discussions/workshops which will be held every 3 months, in which senior faculty members share experiences and advice on faculty development.

Results: Our AAMC data demonstrated a total of 1,436 Assistant Professors, with 8.3% being URiM (3.1% Black, 5.1% Hispanic, 0.14% Native American) and 680 Associate Professors, with 4.4% being URiM (1.76% Black, 2.64% Hispanic, and 0% Native American). Black faculty had lower promotion rates from Assistant to Associate Professor compared to White faculty (33% vs 37% $p < 0.001$). Faculty identifying as URiM were more likely to leave academic medicine compared to White faculty (42% vs 33%, $p < .001$). Our FDG currently consists of 69 members. A total of 26 participants completed the survey (response rate: 37.7%), with 84.6% of respondents identifying as Black. The majority (73.1%) felt that there were not currently sufficient resources to support URiM faculty development at their institution. The most significant individual-level barriers to promotion were academic productivity (18.6%), research funding and grants (17.0%), and leadership experiences (13.6%), while the most significant systemic barriers to promotion were lack of time to pursue scholarly endeavors (20.8%) and extra burden placed on URiMs to contribute to institutional diversity efforts (20.8%). Our FDG has completed two workshops this year on topics related to obtaining opportunities in academics and the minority tax. Future sessions will focus on topics such as contract negotiation, CV building, leadership development, grant writing, and leadership development.

Conclusion: Black ophthalmologists are less likely to be promoted from assistant to associate professor and URiM ophthalmologists are more likely to leave academic medicine. Given the majority of faculty felt that current institutional support is inadequate, increased efforts to support the promotion and retention of URiM faculty are warranted.

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Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Restoring a Regional Ophthalmology Meeting to Viability in the Era of COVID-19*

Purpose: To restore the annual Southern Eye Congress (SEC) meeting, held in Destin, Florida, to long term financial viability while maintaining its educational quality. The meeting was cancelled in 2020 and suffered a financial loss in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: Analysis of costs, lecturers, topics, attendee types, demographics, sources of revenue, virtual learning, vendors and marketing was performed.

Results: Cost analysis revealed that lecturer related expenses were a significant variable cost. By surveying other smaller meetings across the country, we found that some high-quality meetings offered comparable numbers of CME hours with 40% fewer lecturers. This was accomplished by narrowing the range of topics to a few areas of interest such as cataract, oculoplastics and glaucoma then alternating topics in successive years. Defined limits were also placed on food and travel expenses for lecturers and staff based on data from other meetings. Historically the SEC meeting had 3 educational tracks: physician, technician and administrator. Analysis of the historic financial data revealed that the administrator track was poorly attended and was not cost effective, so it was dropped. Variable costs with the venue such as audio-visual and food were evaluated and optimized. Audio-visual costs were reduced by 40%.

The two sources of revenue were attendee registration fees and venter income. They were also evaluated and optimized. Physician registration fees were found to be below average and were raised 26% to a cost of \$30 per credit hour. Market research revealed that Dallas Texas and Atlanta Georgia had the largest numbers of regular visitors to Destin, Florida, so mailings were sent to offices in Georgia and East Texas. Marketing efforts were also extended to the states of Kentucky and Arkansas in addition to the co-sponsoring states of Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee and Mississippi. Vendor booth rental rates were found to be lower than comparable meetings, so they were raised 38%. Active efforts were made to increase the number of vendors, and corporate sponsorship was sought to offset costs to the extent that it would not compromise CME or meeting integrity. Virtual meeting paradigms were evaluated, and the costs associated with producing a live virtual meeting this size were found to be prohibitive. Total meeting attendance in 2022 was up 26% from 2021. The meeting was held a week prior to this abstract submission, so final financial results are not yet available, but preliminary results indicate that net income will be near a ten-year high.

Conclusion: Regional and Statewide Ophthalmology meetings have historically played an important role in the education, collaboration and networking opportunities for ophthalmologists at all stages of their careers. In the era of COVID-19, the viability of the traditional meeting paradigm has been challenged at both the state and national levels. Critical analysis and rethinking all aspects of meeting models and finances is needed to ensure the viability of smaller meetings going forward. A collaborative platform for state meeting organizers to share information is needed as well as an effective means to provide small scale virtual meeting services.



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Project Abstract

Title of Project: *Engaging Oregon Ophthalmologists Virtually*

Purpose: Virtual conferencing became a necessity during the statewide Covid emergency in Oregon over the past two and half years. I chose to evaluate the effect of Zoom conferencing on Oregon Academy of Ophthalmology (OAO) Board member engagement, geographic diversity, and participation in OAO ongoing business and legislative initiatives. I also wanted to determine the best option for future meetings absent the statewide Covid emergency.

Methods: A computerized survey was created to determine OAO perceptions of Zoom conferencing versus in person meetings. Follow up interviews were performed to review survey results and create an action plan.

Results: Twenty-four (24) OAO board members were sent electronic surveys, 16 (66%) responded to the survey questions. 63% either agreed or strongly agreed they preferred zoom meetings over in person meetings at the time of the survey (March 2022). However, 56% reported they would prefer or strongly prefer to return to in-person meetings with lessening of Covid pandemic restrictions. 100% agreed or strongly agreed that virtual meetings allowed for greater geographic representation of our state society. 100% agreed or strongly agreed that virtual board meetings allowed for better coordination and interaction with legislators and colleagues with regards to legislative initiatives with our recent scope battle as an example. 94% of respondents reported they were likely or more likely to attend future OAO board meetings if they are held virtually. In follow up interviews, most respondents reported that while they preferred virtual meetings for convenience, broadening geographic diversity, and improving communication and coordination during legislative sessions, they preferred in person meetings to connect and network with their colleagues. Some newer OAO board members noted that while they preferred the convenience of virtual meetings, they lamented that they had yet to meet their fellow board members in person.

Conclusions: Based on survey results and interviews with OAO board members, virtual meetings were preferred for convenience, broadening geographic representation on the board and the ability to communicate and coordinate more efficiently during legislative initiatives. Most OAO board members acknowledged the practical benefits of virtual meetings but strongly missed the personal connections and networking opportunities afforded by in person meetings. After discussion of survey results and comments, the board chose to adopt a hybrid approach to future meetings. Two times a year the entire board will meet in person with a virtual option, acknowledging the limitations of this hybrid meeting approach particularly for those members not attending in person. The board meets quarterly, and every other meeting will be held in person going forward. Virtual meetings can be held for executive board member sessions (which occur monthly) and for rapid response to legislative initiatives.