Berkeley
Optometry
Magazine

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Our newest class has arrived. Here are some quick stats to help you get to know them.

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Six Years of Impact
A timeline that features some of our most notable accomplishments.

On the cover: Our cover illustration, by Lincoln Agnew, captures the overwhelming onslaught of photos and videos that each of us are bombarded with everyday.
IN VIEW Optometry News

Training Grant Champions

42 and counting! That is the number of years that Berkeley Optometry’s Vision Science Graduate Group has received NIH funding through the T32 Training Grant program. It is an extraordinary record of continuous funding, and is a testament to the success and reputation of the Vision Science program at Berkeley.

The grant—the largest of its kind awarded, and the only training grant in optometry—is used to support first and second year PhD students as they develop independent vision research. In 2018, the Vision Science Group received a five year renewal for $3.4 million—an amount that is 3.4 times bigger than the median, and 6.0 times bigger than the next highest recipient. It’s also more than double what Stanford receives!

Reasons for the long record of training grant success? We graduate a lot of PhDs. Since 1970, when the Vision Science Group began, almost all students have received doctorate degrees in Vision Science. We also have success placing our graduates at the highest levels of industry and academia. Alumni are represented on the faculty of world-class universities—in medical schools, schools of optometry, and a wide range of disciplines spanning psychology, physiology, biomaterials, and ophthalmology. Others hold research positions in institutes and federally sponsored agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Still others are to be found in the research and development divisions of industry, from Samsung and Adobe, to Novartis and Allergan.

Berkeley Optometry professor Guilla Haegerstrom-Portnoy says, “the training grant is an absolutely essential component of the Vision Science Graduate program—it provides an opportunity for them to rotate through the labs, where they learn new experimental techniques, obtain experience in unique research laboratories, and ultimately to identify a lab in which to conduct dissertation research.”

DEAN’S MESSAGE

One of the greatest pleasures of being dean is getting to know and deeply appreciate our extraordinary alumni. As you will see in our new magazine, our alumni lead the profession, both at home and abroad. No less than six alums are currently leading top optometry schools across North America, and another—Dr. Abraham Bromberg, OD ’89—is part of a team of educators and healthcare professionals in Mexico working to change the way optometrists are trained. From closer to home, young alums such as Daphne Chan, OD ’13, who is Associate Chief of Optometry at UCSF Medical Center, have successfully transitioned from optometry students to professionals that are having a profound impact on our profession.

So it is the alumni above all else that gives me a sense of optimism about the future of our caring and essential profession. I wake up every day, sure in the notion that optometry will continue to thrive. Why? Because our skills have never been more needed and marketable—the percentage of medical optometry billing continues to increase, artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning will create extraordinary demands for primary eye care, and our alumni continue to lead, adapt and succeed.

Of course, we must not ignore the many challenges that we face. With respect to AI and its role in future diagnosis, we must take responsibility and demand that the applications work in the best interests of our patients, not just a way of inappropriately dispersing patients and increasing the profitability of insurance companies. We need to remain engaged in emerging technology and its proposed uses. Over the last year I have been involved in national and state initiatives on new technologies related to the profession. Applications as inevitable as automated diagnosis could generate many more referrals, and patient-centric technology will ensure we have ways of guiding and educating our patients to receive the treatment and care they need. Most software developers are yet to be so enlightened. Together we can help them. It reminds me of the lessons learned by organizations such as the WHO, that for global health initiatives to succeed they need to incorporate cultural awareness to scale their success. One size does not fit all!

As we celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni, we also need to be cognizant of the need to ensure a pipeline of future alumni. Next year will be the President of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), where I intend to continue to work on strategies for getting more young people to consider eye care as a career. For optometry to continue to thrive we must generate more interest in our profession. I am proud of the campaign ASCO has recently launched, Optometry Gives Me Life. Please visit the campaign’s website (https://futureeyedoc.org/), and please use the resources to promote optometry to continue to thrive. Why? Because our profession, both at home and abroad, needs more young people to consider eye care as a career. For optometry to continue to thrive we must generate more interest in our profession. I am proud of the campaign ASCO has recently launched, Optometry Gives Me Life. Please visit the campaign’s website (https://futureeyedoc.org/), and please use the resources to promote optometry to continue to thrive. Why? Because our profession, both at home and abroad, needs more young people to consider eye care as a career.

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Donor Impact

Total Giving for the past 4 years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Giving</th>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2018</td>
<td>$3,357,599</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2017</td>
<td>$1,418,564</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2016</td>
<td>$1,444,453</td>
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<td>FY 2015</td>
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*Including pledge payments

Total Endowment Payout: $679,159  |  Total Endowment Fiscal Year Close: $19,186,932

Donor Impact

- Generous support from leadership donors to the Innovation, and provide financial support to the Dean to make a difference
- 271 alumni donors have given for 20 or more years
- 344 donors increased their annual giving this year
- 164 donors have increased their annual giving by 10% or more
- New members were welcomed into the Leadership Circle in recognition of their increased annual giving
- Leadership Circle members joined the Leadership Circle in recognition of their generous support

All About You

- Just a few of the ways you are helping our students this year:
  - Berkeley Optometry Sports Vision Clinic
    - $80,000
    - Our students receive 100% of their clinical training in the Sports Vision Clinic
    - The clinic, which was endowed by Kalina Grimm, Class of 2001, is dedicated to the prevention and treatment of sports-related vision issues
- Research Support
  - $339,383
  - Research Support was given to support the research and discovery efforts of our world-class faculty, such as Dr. Maria Liu, who focuses on treatment and prevention-based research in the fight against eye disease
- Scholarships and Fellowships
  - Our new clinic faculty are Drs. Larry Banks and Austin Roorda. CIVO’s mission is to promote the development, use, and dissemination of innovative optical, graphics, and display technology for the healthy and diseased eye
- CIVO faculty include some of the world’s foremost experts in fields ranging from researchers who develop optical, graphics, and display technology to those who find innovative ways to translate their work into applications for basic and clinical research
- CIVO includes faculty from Optometry and Vision Science; Dennis Levi, Christine Wildsoet, Maria Liu, William Tuten, Emily Cooper, and Hany Farid
- The adaptive optics ophthalmoscope designed and built by Professor Roorda and his lab. The system is used to take pictures and measure retinal function in living eyes on a cellular scale

Your Gifts at Work:

- Berkeley Optometry Sports Vision Clinic: $80,000
- Scholarships and Fellowships: 100% of our students received scholarships or fellowships.
- Research Support: $339,383

Leadership Circle

- Leadership Circle members joined the Leadership Circle in recognition of their generous support

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Operating as a membership model, the Center provides CIVO faculty and students the chance to interact with CIVO industry partners, offering new opportunities for applied research as well as opening the doors to post-graduate career options. Funds raised through CIVO are being used to support new students, postdocs, and visiting scholars who work on projects decided by CIVO faculty, but that are in the general interest of CIVO industry partners.

Introducing CIVO!

The Center for Innovation in Vision and Optics

CIVO

Heads up by Berkeley Optometry professors Marty Banks and Austin Roorda.

Welcome

We are delighted to re-introduce Dr. Nancy McNamara as our new Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. Please also welcome Assistant Professor Jorge Otero-Millan, who is joining our Optometry faculty, and Professor Hanny Farid, who has joined our Vision Science group and who also has appointments with Electrical Engineering & Computer Science and the School of Information. Our new clinic faculty are Drs. Nancy Carteron, Patrick Clark, Joey Hsia and Nguyen Tran.

Development Associate Goldie Neglekar, is our newest Dalling, while new faces in the clinic include Nathan Moyo, Healthcare Systems Analyst; Peter Lu, Business Technical Support Analyst; as well as Cory Steen and Shirley Guinn, our new Patient Services Supervisors.

Welcome to the optometry family everyone—we are so happy you are here!
Iconic Frames

We got to thinking about how some of our favorite actors, musicians, politicians and other public figures have brilliantly used spectacles to create a look that is synonymous with their fame. There are so many to choose from! Here are our top ten. What are yours?

1. Bob Dylan
   Ray-Ban Wayfarers
   Bob Dylan put Wayfarers on the map. Yes, they were worn by Gary Grant, Andy Warhol, The Blues Brothers, and Tom Cruise (Top Gun), but no one rocks a Wayfarer like Dylan. Pictured here, Dylan is recording his album ‘Bringing It All Back Home’ in January 1965.

2. Audrey Hepburn
   Oliver Goldsmith Manhattan
   As Holly Golightly in the classic 1961 movie Breakfast at Tiffany’s, Audrey Hepburn’s oversized shades hid her true feelings—and hangovers! They are the signature accessory that came to exemplify her glamour and elegance.

3. Harry Potter
   Savile Row Warwick
   Rumor has it that the actor Daniel Radcliffe doesn’t actually need glasses yet, but when that day comes, he intends to sport clear of the round glasses that made the adorably nerdy wizard famous. Speaking to MTV News, he said: “It’s gonna be contacts or like triangular glasses or something just to really put some distance.”

4. Anna Wintour
   Chanel
   The Vogue editor-in-chief and glitterati head-of-state, Anna Wintour is rarely seen without her trademark sunglasses. One of the most famous people in the world of fashion, Wintour is seen sporting her heavy black frames to runway shows and other fabulous events. In an interview with Minutes these iconic frames: “They are seriously useful. I can sit in a show and if I am bored out of my mind, nobody will notice … At this point, they have become, really, armor.”

5. Malcolm X
   American Optical Sirmont
   El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, better known to the world as Malcolm X, was one of the most prominent civil rights leaders of the 20th century. He also had an excellent eye for fashion. Many of us here would use any means necessary to get our hands on these hip specs.

6. Billie Jean King
   Too many to list!
   Tennis legend Billie Jean King, who won 39 Grand Slam titles in her career (currently tied with Serena), posted recently on Twitter: “As a child, I was told I could never be #1 in the world because I wore glasses. That fueled my fire to become the best tennis player I could be.”

7. Bootsy Collins
   Funkentelechy Placebo Syndrome
   Parliament-Funkadelic bassist and lifelong funkateer Bootsy Collins, best known for his star glasses, is no stranger to higher education. In 1978 he launched Funk University (“Funk U”), an online-only bass guitar school in which he also serves as curator and lead professor. In 1992 Collins was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

8. Ali Wong
   Barton Perreira Valerie
   “Oh I’m busy making an eyewear (oh) face? That’s how the pregnant stand-up comedian and actress Ali Wong described her response to a request from her hubs to pitch in more with the household chores. Her converted red sunnies—and her sassy delivery—have become her trademark and helped launch a burgeoning career that now includes television specials and appearances in sitcoms and movies. Sidebar: Ali is a SF native and spent a summer working at Cafe Laird of the Golden Bear alumni summer camp!

9. Dalai Lama
   Bartoli
   “My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.” His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, one of the most beloved and recognized spiritual leaders in the world, has spent his life committed to benefiting humanity. In 1989, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent efforts for the liberation of Tibet and his concern for global environmental problems. The origin of his distinctive frames is a bit murky, but our best guess is that they are vintage Bartoli frames from the 1960s or 1970s.

10. Elton John
    Cutler and Gross, Dolce & Gabbana, Oliver Peoples + others
    Sir Elton John has sold more than 300 million records and has more than 50 Top-40 hits, making him one of the world’s best-selling musicians. Never one to tread cautiously when it comes to fashion, he’s also worn some of the most outrageously memorable glasses, featuring rhinestones, fur, and feathers. In a BBC Radio interview he claimed to own over 20,000 pairs of frames!
STUDENTS

Through Our Eyes

Introducing the class of 2023! 70 sets of eyes that will soon be focused on providing the best in eye care to their patients.
A look at the class of 2023: who they are, where they come from and how they got here.

Class of 2023

Applicants

- 184 Applications
- 68 Students matriculated
- 108 Interviews

Academics

- 3.4 Average GPA in Bio, Chem & Physics
- 3.5 Average GPA in undergrad
- 354 Average Score on the OAT

Overall GPA range: 2.67-4.0

Student Profile

- 18 Out-of-State
- 50 California
- 29 Number of students who entered directly from undergrad
- 39 Number of students who took at least a year off
- 13 Opto-Camp alumni

Undergraduate Institutions

- CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY - POMONA
- CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY - LOS ANGELES
- COLBY COLLEGE
- FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
- SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
- SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
- TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - COLLEGE STATION
- TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY
- UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
- UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - BERKELEY
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - DAVIS
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - IRVINE
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - LOS ANGELES
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - MERCED
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - RIVERSIDE
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SAN DIEGO
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SANTA CRUZ
- UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SANTA CRUZ
- UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON - UNIVERSITY PARK
- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - ANN ARBOR
- UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC
- UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
- UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON - BOTHELL CAMPUS/SEATTLE CAMPUS/ TACOMA CAMPUS
- WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
- WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY
Deep Fakes

Pushing the limits of human visual perception, and what we can do about it

BY ZAC UNGER

“We used to go to libraries. That’s how old I am,” says Dr. Hany Farid, Professor of Vision Science at UC Berkeley’s School of Optometry, as he recounts the old-school way he became one of the world’s foremost experts in the ultra-modern field of digital forensics and image analysis. While waiting in the checkout line he picked up a book—a 500-page insomnia cure called *The Federal Rules of Evidence*—that was languishing on a return cart. He flipped through randomly, landing on a page entitled “Rules for Introducing Photographs Into Evidence.” Farid was studying photo imagery as a postdoc, so his curiosity was piqued. “It was almost a footnote,” he recalls. “And this was in 1997, so film still dominated, though digital cameras were just coming around.” But the book said that for the purposes of the federal court system, they were treating a digital photograph and a 35 mm negative as exactly the same. And I thought, huh...I’m not really good at predicting the future, but this is going to be a problem.” With digital photography still in its infancy, Farid’s advisor was less than enthusiastic when Farid suggested that he dig into the question of how photos could be conclusively authenticated.

UC Berkeley professor Hany Farid is one of the world’s foremost experts in digital forensics and image analysis.
The human eye and cognitive system are not particularly good at detecting fakes. And why should they be? A tree is a tree is a tree and a snail is a snail is a snail, but a computer can see right through the harmless alterations that are unnoticeable to the human eye. People are trained to detect the face of a woman he knows onto an adult performer’s face, then terrorizes her by sending the resulting fake video clip to her parents or her employer. “A synthesizer algorithm generates the image and then a classifier, trained by looking for features that are unique to the real person never would. A widely-known politician such as Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton has thousands of hours of audio and video clips that could create a realistic video likeness of a person and then make that facsimile say or do something that the real person never would. The companies all say ‘well, this is a less profitable’ but they want their posts to be more visible on their follower’s news feed. They’ve solved a lot of hard problems over the years, so don’t tell me this is too hard.”
Alum Leads Change in Mexican Optometry Education

Berkeley is a model for new school and clinic

BY ANN BRODY GUY

Given this systemic absence of regular eye-health examinations, it’s not surprising that vision problems are the second biggest form of disability in Mexico, second only to mobility disabilities. That translates to about 2.4 million people with low vision or blindness, according to Global Disability Rights Now—often resulting from treatable conditions including cataracts, glaucoma, and, like in the United States, epidemic levels of diabetes.

Dr. Abraham Bromberg, ’69, who spent 20 years on the National Polytechnic Institute faculty before going into private practice in Mexico City, could see that the trend to forgo comprehensive exams contributed to the problem.

“It’s been shown that people have to be trained to conduct examinations and find eye disease in their patients,” Bromberg said. “Optometrists know this.” As head of the professional group pushing for more rigorous standards, Bromberg and his colleagues met with senators and influencers to lobby for change and they garnered support from the World Council of Optometry. After years of resistance from powerful groups invested in the status quo, the political climate changed in their favor. In 2015, by unanimous vote, the Health Act was amended to include optometrists.

With success came new demand. There are 4,400 licensed optometrists in Mexico, a country of 123 million people—roughly one optometrist for every 27,000 people.

“We need to graduate many thousands more to meet the need,” Bromberg said.

New school, new clinic

To help fill that gap, Dr. Enrique Graue, head of The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico’s leading public research university, launched a new optometry school in León, an up-and-coming city of 2 million. León already had a UNAM branch with several professional schools and is centrally located in the large state of Guanajuato. Graue, himself an ophthalmologist, called on his old friend Bromberg to start the school, instructing him to model it after optometry colleges at Bromberg’s American alma matters, UC Berkeley and University of Houston, where he completed a master’s degree.

It wasn’t Bromberg’s first time shaping an academic program. Back at Polytechnic, he and his colleagues expanded the three-year program to four years and established a clinic. That change set Mexico’s training standard long before the official rule change, which, unlike in the U.S., is a four-year undergraduate program resulting in a “licensed optometrist” professional degree.

Deconstructing Berkeley’s Clinic

Dean John Flanagan is proud that Berkeley Optometry was a model for the new school and that an alumnus is leading the push to create a new school so professors can look at the way you treat patients.

“If you’re studying to be a physician you start with a year in school and then you practice in a hospital. For optometry and dentistry, you have to have a clinic in the school so professors can look at the way you treat patients and solve their problems,” he said.

To prepare for the opening, this spring he took a delegation to observe Berkeley’s clinic.

“We wanted to see how it works—the ratio of students to teachers and how many hours they spend with patients,” he said.

Ana María Morín Mora, a licensed optometrist who teaches in the new León campus, was on the Berkeley visit, along with Dr. Norma Hernández, who worked closely with Bromberg to launch the school. “The group toured the facilities, visited classes and patient-care centers, and talked to faculty. They learned much more than Mora had expected.”

“The main objective was to see the infrastructure of the clinic. But the visit also helped us to understand how they integrate the students’ activities into the different patient-care centers,” Mora said. She observed how the faculty distribute their work, and “they explained the structure of consultation and follow-up in each case.”

The group took note of details like evaluating students on clinical procedures. She liked that student practice went beyond the campus. “The clinic’s satellite centers extend the experience that students gain on patient care,” she said.

Mora also noticed the students. “I was very impressed by their level of commitment,” she said. It makes sense, she adds, since in Mexico, students start the program at only 19 years old—straight out of high school; they can specialize by taking a related graduate degree later.

The new León program is already thriving, with 25 to 32 students in each year and recruitment that is on pace to double those numbers next year. Ultimately, the school is aiming for Berkeley’s standard of about 60 students per cohort. When the new clinic building opens for the next school year, it will accommodate up to 300 patients a day.

Those results make Bromberg’s task almost complete. It’s work he has performed pro bono, and happily so. “One of my dreams was for somebody to come and tell me, ‘Here’s the money. Make the ideal optometry school in Mexico,’” he said. “And that’s what happened.”
What originally inspired you to come to optometry school?

A The people! My dad is an optometrist (Dr. Alan Chan, OD ’74), so I originally wanted to follow in his footsteps and do something different than the traditional medicine path. My parents for sure. My mom has always been my role model: a strong work ethic (she is famous for saying that an A+ is not good enough!), and now that I am older I understand that this philosophy is not just about realizing the end result, but rather the sense of personal pride that one generates by challenging oneself and achieving goals through best efforts. As for my dad, I think I got it from him. He is very kind and generous to each other!

What do you think ophthalmology colleagues about your role in optometry at UCSF?

A Aside from direct skills transfer to the ophthalmology interns, I try to do my best to show that ophthalmology colleagues that ophthalmologists, in addition to being experts in correcting refractive errors, are also well-trained and competent in the treatment and management of ocular disease. Fortunately at UCSF, the relationship between optometry and ophthalmology is very positive and we are quite comfortable co-managing cases such that patients get the best care possible. This attitude is in large part thanks to the stellar examples that Dr. Berne Dolan and Dr. Andrew Mick at our sister hospital, SFVAH. They were always incredibly supportive colleagues and I recognize that we must maintain a high standard of care for our patients to continue to sustain this reputation.

You are already an Academy Fellow. What inspired you to take this accelerated approach?

A Pretty much all of my professors inspired me to obtain my FAO because of Dr. Berne Dolan and Dr. Dolan, former Academy president). I had also wanted to achieve this professional goal because UCSF is considered one of the Top Ten hospitals in the US and I wanted to have a bit of distinction and do my part to help elevate the division of optometry. It’s been rewarding because Fellowship is a completely optional thing you do after completing all formal training; it is an entirely self-motivated challenge, and once achieved, feels even better than passing a graded exam, because you set your own goal and met it!

What inspires you to give back your time, expertise, and philanthropic support to your alma mater?

A I have always been school-spirited, but Berkeley Optometry holds a special place in my heart because it is where I made my closest friends, and also developed the skills I utilize daily to earn a living! So the answer is both personal and practical. It seems quite logical that I should thank the institution that has helped build my career, and what better way to do that than by supporting future generations. Optometry school is not cheap, and luckily Berkeley Optometry has a robust professional student support fund, from which I benefited each year in school. Now that I have the ability to earn an income, I am happy to support my school with time and philanthropy.

What makes Berkeley Optometry faculty member would you most want to have dinner with, why would you choose them, and what's on the menu?

A Oh man, this is a really tough choice! I have admired all my ophthalmology professors. Before college I used to hang out and thank them personally one more time. Perhaps I would choose Dr. Guilla Haegerstrom-Portny—she probably does not remember me, but I would love to hear any stories about the challenges of being a female ophthalmologist, presumably in an era of more dominated optometric world. It would be fascinating to hear how she has balanced clinic responsibilities, didactic teaching, and all her administrative duties, so I can gain some inspiration on how to “work smarter.” As for what’s on the menu—well I love milkshakes, so we could chat over a cookies and cream milkshake! Dr. Kuni Kanai has been one of my favorite Berkeley Optometry faculty members, and she is also a Skit Night legend, so I would choose her because I would love to hear how she has balanced clinic teaching and forces you to stay sharp because young, teach the UCSF ophthalmology interns in one-on-one settings but are also extremely kind and generous to each other!

What are you most proud of?

A Professionally, it would be the team of bright, ambitious, and emotionally intelligent optometrists that we have built at UCSF over the years. We have grown to 13 now and are fortunate to have our tirelessly dedicated Chief of Optometry Dr. Taras Lavrin (OD ’99, PhD ’16), who was actually one of my most influential mentors while I was at school. I am so lucky to work amongst friends, who make even the roughest days laughable! And personally, I am proud of my baby niece, who is just over two months old but already “vings” (crawls along with you) and can grab toys by herself!

You are a Skit Night legend, tell us about that experience.

A Aww, I would not be so bold as to call myself a Skit Night “legend,” but… Skit Night! Our first year, the second years (Class of 2012) had pranked us and told us that their skit was to be 15 minutes max, and we naively believed them. We were shocked when their skit took probably an hour! It was also always hard to compete against the Classes of 2013 and 2014, of whom both had excellent concepts and robust class participation. We finally won “best individual skit” one year with the aforementioned dance-dares, where members of the class of 2013 danced without being noticed behind unsuspecting faculty members. We got Dr. John Corinne, Dr. A. Lee Scaife, Dr. George Lee, Dr. Robert D’Amato, and Dean Dennis Levi, amongst others. I love that everyone at Berkeley Optometry is a great sport and can laugh at themselves. Without laughter, what is there?

What is your favorite Berkeley Optometry memory?

A Everyone already knows I am a total Harry Potter nerd, but what surprises most people and often requires some explanation is that I absolutely adore Dolly Parton! I personally don’t think she needed all the plastic surgery because she’s already naturally beautiful, but I respect that she is very open and honest about her image. She is a witty, positive, and smart businesswoman, and despite growing up poor, she knew she wanted to be a star and worked hard to make it happen. Songwriting seems very difficult but she is prolific at it (“She wrote the song made famous by Whitney Houston, ‘I Will Always Love You’”). I notice in her interviews she only says kind things about others, and when she performs she always gives credit to her backup singers and her band. Who wouldn’t love such a successful yet humble person? My sister gave me a t-shirt for my birthday that says “What Would Dolly Do?”—a good reminder to us all to be kind and generous to each other!
Our recent grads are out in the real world making a big impact. See where they ended up.

Rebekah Lin, OD 2018

Where are you living now? New York City

What are you doing now for work? I work at the Center for Advanced Vision Care at ODA Primary Health Care Network. This is a community health care clinic where I specialize in Vision Therapy and Rehabilitation. My patient base ranges from kids with strabismus to adults with acquired brain injury. It is the most rewarding experience to help a patient improve their visual function; their gratitude is priceless.

What is the website address for where you work? ODAhealth.org

What bit of advice or wisdom would you have for students just beginning their degree program? Immerse yourself in the profession as much as you can during optometry school. Join clubs to figure out which aspect of the profession most interests you—practice management, legislative, academic, etc. Attend conferences where you will meet like-minded, motivated people who will share your passion for eye care and encourage you to think differently. Be inquisitive and a proactive learner so you can provide better quality of care. Get excited about your future; the people you will meet in this profession will truly enrich your lives.

Sloan Rajadhyksha, OD 2017

Where are you living now? New York City

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Meredith Turner, OD 2016

Where are you living now? Redding, CA

What are you doing now for work? I’m the owner of Meredith Turner OD, a solo private practice. I interviewed for the purchase of the practice from an OD who was retiring while on my final 4th year rotation at VA Palo Alto. Needless to say it was a stressful time! Then I spent my summer vacation after 4th year trying to get on the insurance panels so that I could start working in September. It is a general family practice, with an older demographic (mostly 60 and over). Mostly annual eye exams, with some glaucoma and AMD management, some refractive surgery co-management, and urgent care. I am as busy as I want to be, open Monday through Friday, closing at 1pm on Friday, which allows me to be involved with my kids’ activities. Volleyball season is starting so it’s just about to get crazy. Private practice is great because I can adjust my schedule to make it to my girls’ games.

What is the website address for where you work? Meredithturnerod.com

What bit of advice or wisdom would you have for students just beginning their degree program? It’s never a good idea to be disappointed, plus you will waste time! Also, find a good study partner/group. Having another perspective and approach toward a subject can be very helpful. Best of luck, you can do it!!

Aleksandra Polosukhina, PhD 2013

Where are you doing now for work? I currently work at Ad Scientiam, a startup that develops smartphone applications for medical devices and at home patient monitoring, as well as for phase II and III clinical trials. I work as a Scientific Advisor, where I help design digital tests that can monitor disease progression in real-time and predict disease evolution. These tests leverage smartphone sensors and enable patients to independently test their motor, cognitive, and visual functions. We currently focus on Multiple Sclerosis, depression, and a variety of other neurological diseases.

What is the website address for where you work? AdScientiam.com

What bit of advice or wisdom would you have for students just beginning their degree program? I think that the key to a successful PhD is not being afraid to ask for help. Research projects require continuous integration of new technologies and cross-functional expertise; thus, no one will expect you to do a PhD alone. Use the time at the beginning of your PhD to learn to ask questions, develop new skills during your rotations, and begin establishing your professional and personal network.
LOOKING BACK

Alumni Notes

We’ve tracked down all of your favorite classmates. Here’s what they’re up to.

1940
1. Elaine Chinn Jang, OD ‘40, celebrated her 100th birthday (Wow!) on October 14, 2018 with family and friends in San Francisco, CA. Dr. Jang, who was one of the first women—and one of the first Chinese-American students—enrolled at Berkeley Optometry, practiced in San Francisco and retired at the age of 65.

1944
Gordon Duffy, OD ’44, celebrated his 95th birthday this year. He and his wife Jean have 10 children, 15 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.

1968
2. Adi Adins, OD ’68, and wife Roberta have moved to a retirement community in Walnut Creek, CA, and recently traveled to South America.

1969
3. Stephen Chun, OD ’74, and his wife Doris Sze paddled for the Berkeley-based Dragonmax team at the last two IDBF Dragon Boat Club Crew World Championships held in Adelaide, Australia (2016) and Szeged, Hungary (2018). Paddling as a member of the Dragonmax men’s crew that was entered in the Masters Small Boat Open Division at the 2016 World Championships, Stephen won a silver medal and a bronze medal in the 500 meter and 200 meter sprints.

1972
Barry Weissman, OD ’72, PhD ’79, reports he is teaching part time at UCSC, having retired from UCLA’s Steim Institute faculty in 2012. His new favorite student is his grandson Noah, born in 2018.

1974
4. Stephen Chiu, OD ’74, and his wife Dora Stiegret paddled for the Berkeley-based Dragonmax team at the last two IDBF Dragon Boat Club Crew World Championships held in Adelaide, Australia (2016) and Szeged, Hungary (2018). Paddling as a member of the Dragonmax men’s crew that was entered in the Masters Small Boat Open Division at the 2016 World Championships, Stephen won a silver medal and a bronze medal in the 500 meter and 200 meter sprints.

1975
5. This year Lesli Handmacher, OD ’75, proudly celebrates her 40th year as a solo private practice doctor! Dr. Lesli is proud to announce that she found just the right doctor to pass on North Berkeley’s first and female-owned optometry practice to. Nadia Samii, OD ’10, is excited to take on the mission of continuing this wonderful practice, newly named “Your Two Eyes Optometry.”

1976
Page Yarwood, OD ’76, was recently elected for a second term as the president of the COA’s charitable organization, the California Vision Foundation. This year he also retired from his “retirement jobs” as the Legislative Director for the ASCSCC, and as the President of the Oakland Museum of California’s Docent Council.

1979
Greg Boomer, OD ’79, is closing his 75-year old practice in Susanville, CA in 2020. In preparing for his retirement, he is “giving away” his practice to the right OD. Please contact gregboomerod@gmail.com if you are interested in living where the deer and the antelope play.

1980
Caroline Guerrero Cauchi, OD ’80, was invited to speak at Vision Expo East 2019 on “The economics of myopia.” In May she was honored with the Outstanding Achievement Award presented by the American Academy of Orthokeratology and Myopia control, in recognition of contributions to the specialty contact lens industry and the advancement of Orthokeratology and Myopia control.

1982
5. This past June, Curt Simmons, OD ’82, and a group of nine Berkeley Optometry students joined the 8th annual medical mission to Jamaica organized by AOJAH (the Alliance of Jamaican & American Humanitarians). Consisting of close to 100 volunteers from many different health care disciplines, the mission team provided free medical care, surgeries, eye exams, glasses, and medications to over 2000 people!

6. Bob & Rosie Melrose, both OD ’82, want to introduce everyone to their first grandchild, Cassius “Cash” Melrose born on July 2, 2019.
1983
Nancy Shoji, OD ’83, George Patton, OD ’82, Leigh Owyang, OD ’83, and Mark Bowman, OD ’83 are now Opto-in-laws! George and Nancy’s daughter, Ariel Patton (Cal ’13), married Mark and Leigh’s son, Daniel Bowman (Cal ’13), at the Paguro Lavender Farm in Turlock, California. Contrary to popular speculation, the parents had nothing to do with putting the newlyweds together. Daniel and Ariel met on the Berkeley campus nearly 30 years after their parents met in optometry school.

1984
Ed Nuccio, OD ’84, is thrilled to welcome Steven Perry, OD ’18, as an associate to Stanislaus Optometric Center, Inc. in Modesto, CA. Steven also practices with Berkeley Optometry alumni at Livermore Optometry Group.

1986
Paul Jensen, OD ’86, the 2019 Doctor of the Year at their OPW Annual Meeting in June, 2019. His wife Kathy and two children are thriving—son Erik is at Harvard Law and daughter Allison is a current AOSA Board Member and will graduate from Berkeley Optometry in 2020.

1987
Celebrated eyewear designer and CFDA member, Blake Kuwahara, OD ’86, was awarded Best Fashion Frame and Best Sunglass Frame honors for his designs, “Larrabee” and “Moore,” respectively, by the LOFT x The Eyewear Forum (TEF) Magazine at the Spring LOFT show in New York.

1989
Deanna Alexander, OD ’87, named as the AOA Advocate of the Year for her many years of hard work advocating for optometry on the State Government Relations Committee and currently chairing the Alliance for Patient Safety.

1990
Phuong Thai from Texas and William “WJ” Hyatt, OD ’90, got married at Lover’s Point in Pacific Grove California on February 3, 2019. There was a break in the rain and a rainbow made for a picture perfect wedding!

1992
After 24 years in private practice in Healdsburg, Anthony “Tony” Soría, OD ’92, retired two years ago and now serves the community at Santa Rosa Community Health Center. In July, he will celebrate his 40th wedding anniversary to his college sweetheart, June, a kindergarten teacher with the Santa Rosa Archdiocese. Their eldest son is entering his senior year at UC Davis majoring in Economics and Political Science. Their younger son is entering his senior year at high school with hopes of attending UC Berkeley in engineering.

1994
Michelle Hoff, OD ’94, has been on the Berkeley Optometry faculty since 1990. She is passionate about community service, Berkeley Optometry Alumni Board, Project Homeless Connect, and the Mindful Eyes Foundation where she is executive director and founder. She and husband Chris celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary and have three children: Annalisa (Cal graduate and chef in San Diego), Tori (Seattle University graduate), and Andrew (current University of Colorado, Boulder student).

1996
As of January of this year, Susy Yu, OD ’96, was appointed to the Board of Directors for the national board of examiners in optometry (NBEO).

1997
Maxwell Cheng, OD ’97, received the David Lawrence Community Service Award for inspiring others to provide impoverished communities both locally and around the world with high-quality eye care. He recently took nine Berkeley Optometry students on a medical mission to Jamaica where they examined over 1700 patients and treated 200 people with glaucoma. Dr. Cheng gave these 2 patients (see photo) from the Andean mountains in Peru their first pair of glasses!

Hey Alumni! Do you have a story to tell? About your career or your life? We’d love to hear from you! Send us pics and details: optoalumni@berkeley.edu
Please visit our website to see more updates from our alumni: optometry.berkeley.edu/alumni-notes
Dan Harvitt, PhD '97, OD '00, was the student-elected Faculty Speaker for the 2019 Graduation. His epic speech will likely not be forgotten for some time.

Ursula Moonsamy, OD '97, and family published a book called “The 17th Suitcase: Vignettes from a South African Family” about the journey of a family navigating the system of Apartheid in South Africa, in a religiously diverse community, amidst racial tension and economic struggle. It is available on Amazon.

The Orinda Optometry Group of Kristine Eng, OD ’98, Weylin Eng, OD ’66, and Kelly Shintani, OD ’00, just completed a remodel of their office! The Eng family also received an Oakland legacy award in May!

Tanya Gill, OD ’99, was one of 10 individuals honored in the inaugural #GameChangers issue of Eyecare Business magazine in December 2018. The list includes, “independent female optometrists and opticians who are breaking down barriers, ushering in positive change, and shaking things up in the industry for good.”

Melissa Barnett, OD ’01, educates with iTavel CE, a destination continuation education company. Shown here with husband Todd Erikson OD, ’01 at an elephant sanctuary in Chang Mai, Thailand on a recent excursion.

Nasir Khan, OD ’03, was elected President of the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) in October 2018 and has been on the ACO council since 2013. Along with Dr. Hensel, he is the co-chair of a new organization for creating specialties in Optometry in Canada, called the Royal Canadian College of Optometry (RCCO).

Athena Brasfield, OD ’07, is President and CEO of Coachella Valley Optometry. Her dedication to helping the underserved recently earned her a spot in Palm Springs Life’s “40 Under 40” list of the most exceptional leaders in the Coachella Valley. Athena opened Coachella Valley Optometry in 2016, and has grown it to a seven-doctor practice, including fellow Opto-Bears Richard Phan, OD ’18 and Michelle Zaw, OD ’19.

Alex Baker, OD ’09, opened a new practice, Baker Optometry, in Davis CA in June 2019 with lots of support from his wife, Cara. His daughters, Cate and Violet, have been very enthusiastic about scrubbing the toilets in the office.

After serving in the United States Air Force in Colorado, Megan (Lee) Laine, OD ’13, moved to Seattle, Washington and helped open a small optometry office in Redmond, Washington. She will start a Master’s program in Clinical Informatics and Patient Centered Technologies through the University of Washington in Fall 2019.

Stephen Lundquist, OD ’17, and his wife Christyn welcomed baby boy Leo, and moved back to Salt Lake City to build a practice from scratch. The practice is called Vii, and is set to open Fall 2019. If you’re ever in Utah, stop by 8th and 8th to check it out!

Kristi Choy, OD ’19, and a group of 2019 graduates traveled to Bali after their graduation this spring!
In the hubbub of our busy lives, it's easy to forget the incredible success we have achieved over the last six years. This little timeline features some of our notable accomplishments. We're proud of these successes and vow to build on them—with our community's unwavering support—over the next five years. Bravo, everyone on a job well done!

Looking Back

Six Years of Impact

2014
- John Flanagan appointed Dean of the School of Optometry for a five-year term
- Renovation of the ground floor of Old Minor Hall begins
- The low vision residency is re-named the Ian L. Bailey Low Vision Residency in honor of Dr. Bailey’s 38 years of distinguished service as a lecturer, researcher and clinician
- Online appointments implemented for the Tang Eye Center
- Renovation and modernization of clinic seminar rooms in contact lens clinic and teaching module C

2015
- Austin Roorda’s lab receives $3.2 million Audacious Goals grant from the NIH
- Meredith Morgan Eye Center hits milestone of 70,000 patient visits
- New magazine launches; wins campus award
- Opto-Camp celebrates its 10th year
- The School of Optometry places 3rd among all schools and departments in UC Berkeley’s annual online fundraising event, The Big Give. The school also won the campus prize for most student contributors!

2016
- Berkeley Optometry wins NOA School of the Year award
- Sports Vision Clinic opens to the public
- Levi lab explores virtual reality devices to open new frontier in stereo vision recovery
- Launch of the Private Practice Immersion Program
- Berkeley Optometry launches new and improved website

2017
- 4th year internship with Stanford Ophthalmology begins
- Dr. Suzanne Fleiszig’s lab received a patent for a newly identified type of anti-microbial peptide that kills pathogens that cause infections
- Professors Teresa Putthussery and Rowland Taylor join faculty
- My Optometry Internship Abroad (MyOpIA) Research Exchange Program is piloted
- Gronert and Flanagan labs discover potential new treatment for glaucoma
- New optometry center opens in West Oakland Community Clinic
- Student Innovation Award launched

2018
- Launch of The Berkeley Outpatient Clinic in collaboration with UCSF and John Muir
- Dr. Emily Cooper and Dr. Will Tuten join faculty
- 98.4% student pass rate on national board exam
- Berkeley Optometry accredits over 22,000 hours of continuing education
- Opening of the Dr. Pamela P. Fong Learning Commons and Interactive Classroom
- Ten new assistant clinical professors join faculty
- Vision Science Training Grant extended for an additional five years for over $3M—not only the largest of the 37 awarded, but the only training grant in optometry

2019
- Marty Banks elected to the National Academy of Sciences
- New check-in kiosks improve patient experience
- Pre-Clinic equipped with new slit lamps, chairs, stands, stools, AV upgrades, and a demo lane via partnership with Haag-Streit
- UCOSA donates phoropters to pre-clinic
- Inaugural Alumni Student of the Year awarded
- Gift aid to students reaches $1.6 million; all students receive annual scholarships totaling at least $19,000 over the four years of the program
- Flannery lab develops gene therapy to restore sight to blind mice

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Elizabeth Lawler, PhD student
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