

Peak Performances at the American Academy of Optometry in Denver, CO

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The annual American Academy of Optometry (AAO) meeting had another record-breaking year in Denver this past November. A total of 6,323 attendees made this meeting the largest on record, despite the sub-zero temperatures and biting winds. Among the attendees were 218 Canadian optometrists and 71 students, residents, and librarians from both Canadian schools. Overall student attendance hit a record high this year, with 995 optometry students attending in total. The faculty and students from the two Canadian schools were once again very involved in the meeting, presenting posters, research talks, and CE lectures and being honoured with awards.

Tenue en novembre dernier à Denver, la rencontre de l'American Academy of Optometry a, encore cette année, connu une participation sans précédent : malgré le froid intense et les vents cinglants, 6323 personnes y ont assisté, dont 218 optométristes canadiens et 71 étudiants, résidents et bibliothécaires des deux écoles d'optométrie canadiennes. Au total, 995 étudiants en optométrie étaient présents, établissant un nouveau record de participation étudiante. Comme dans le passé, les facultés et les étudiants des deux universités canadiennes, en plus de recevoir des prix, ont beaucoup contribué à la rencontre en présentant des affiches ou en donnant des conférences et des exposés de formation continue.

OPTOMETRY STUDENTS

In just its third year, the student fellowship program offered by the AAO had a record number of students register (559) and complete the program (419). The student fellowship program offers first-time students the chance to collect points by attending different aspects of the conference program, including courses, papers, posters, symposiums, award ceremonies, and business meetings, as well as by volunteering. By attending these events, students have an opportunity to see what the AAO is all about. Fifteen students from the École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal, obtained student fellowship this year, so please congratulate them on this accomplishment when you see them wearing their lapel pin in clinic!

In addition to the annual student-networking luncheon, where students can receive information on residencies and graduate programs, the AAO held a students-only session in the exhibit hall. During this two-hour session, students had exclusive access to exhibitors and were encouraged to visit many booths by participating in an exhibit-hall treasure hunt. All students who completed the treasure hunt received an entry into a draw for a Zenlens™ scleral trial lens set, generously donated by Alden Optical. The students who participated enjoyed the individual attention they received from the industry representatives; it was a great opportunity for the students to jumpstart their networking.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

The AAO has always opened its arms to graduate students by providing them with the opportunity to present their work as posters or short research talks and by providing travel fellowships that make it possible for them to attend the meeting. This year there were eight graduate students from the School of Optometry and Vision Science at the University of Waterloo who presented posters and papers at the AAO, two of whom were supported by travel fellowships of \$750 (Ali Almustanyir and William Ngo). A summary of optometry and graduate student presentations are presented in Table 1.

William Ngo, OD, a PhD candidate from Waterloo, was awarded the American Academy of Optometry Ezell Fellowship at this year's meeting. Ezell fellowships are the flagship program of the American Optometric Foundation; they're designed to encourage students who are enrolled in a full-time program of study and training in vision-related research that leads to a Master's or PhD degree to pursue full-time careers in optometric research and education. Fellowships are awarded based on students' research experience, scientific publication record, academic achievement, professional accomplishments, and recognition from mentors. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Ngo on the award.

Table 1. Optometry and Graduate Student Presentations at the AAO Annual Meeting in Denver, CO

Author (s)	Presentation Title	
Almustanyir AH*, Hovis JK (graduate student, Waterloo)	Comparison of a prototype ColorDx and printed pseudoisochromatic color vision tests.	Poster
Babaei Omali N, Subbaraman L, Heynen M, Thangavelu M, Dare E, Canavan K, Fadli Z, Jones L (post-doctorate, Waterloo)	Protein deposition on senofilcon A contact lenses in symptomatic and asymptomatic lens wearers.	Poster
Babaei Omali N, Subbaraman L, Schulze M, Heynen M, Canavan K, Fadli Z, Jones L (post- doctorate, Waterloo)	Clinical signs, symptoms, tear film, and meibum composition in asymptomatic senofilcon A contact lens and spectacle wearers.	Poster
Babu RJ, Clavagnier S, Bobier W, Thompson B, Hess RF (post- doctorate, Waterloo)	Mapping of peripheral suppression in amblyopia.	Paper
Boucher J, Roy E, Quesnel NM, Giasson C (optometry student, Montreal)	Does the freezing of disposable contact lenses affect their power and water content or the visual acuity or comfort of patients wearing those lenses ?	Poster
Guilbert C, Philie MP, Marinier JA (optometry student, Montreal)	Central scotomas detection with the Octopus-900 perimeter and the Amsler Grid in low vision.	Poster
Haines L, Sorbara L (graduate student, Waterloo)	Complications related to mini-scleral contact lens wear: case series.	Poster
Hui, A, Jones, LW (graduate student, Waterloo)	Uptake and release of myopia control drugs from commercial contact lenses.	Paper
Leger S, Lacroix Z, Bitton E (optometry student, Montreal)	Conjunctivochalasis: the other reason for dry eye.	Poster
Ngo W*, Luensmann D, Srinivasan S, Feng Y, Keir N, Simpson T (graduate student, Waterloo)	Comparison of two sensory panel selection strategies for beginning and end of day lens discomfort.	Paper
Perugino C, Bitton E (optometry student, Montreal)	Demographics of a dry eye clinic.	Poster

*Supported by an AAO Student Travel Fellowship



Figure 1. American Academy of Optometry Ezell Fellow William Ngo (third from left) surrounded by former Ezell Fellows from Waterloo (from left to right: Lakshman Subbaraman, Kristine Dalton, Alex Hui, Vidyapria Sreenivasan, and Sruthi Srinivasan).

RESIDENTS

Each year the AAO hosts a dedicated residents' day, where optometry residents from across Canada and the US have the opportunity to present posters and talks based on cases they have seen in clinic and to participate in a resident-practitioner networking luncheon, as well as unique education seminars exclusively designed for them. A highlight of this year's meeting was the special residents education event, Clinical Problem Solving and the Study of Diagnostic Expertise, by Gurpreet Dhaliwal, MD, Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. The event focused on the current understanding of how clinicians arrive at diagnoses and strategies that could be used to improve this vital skill. In addition to a lecture, students had the opportunity to participate in breakout groups to put their new knowledge into practice solving eye-specific cases in an evidence-based manner.

This year was a great year for Canadian optometry residents, with five of them attending the meeting and four presenting posters (Table 2). Chelsea Bray from the School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo, was also the recipient of a Cornea, Contact Lens, and Refractive Technologies Resident Travel Fellowship, which helped her attend and present at the meeting.

Table 2. Residents' presentations at the AAO, Denver 2014

Author (s)	Presentation Title	
Arthurs M, Canuto T, Marinier JA (Montreal)	Visual rehabilitation for the achromatic patient: challenges and solutions.	Poster
Bray C, Yeung D, Haines L, Sorbara L (Waterloo)	Case report: management of keratoconic patient with neovascularization due to low Dk lens wear.	Poster
Mailanson-Tremblay S, Tremblay J, Michaud L (Montreal)	Comparative study of two strategies to reduce contact-lens- related eye dryness.	Poster
Pham MT, Marcotte R, Bitton E (Montreal).	Volume of tears in the inferior gaze: Schirmer versus the cotton thread test.	Poster

OPTOMETRISTS

Every year, the AAO continues to grow and offer an increasing number of opportunities for attendees to participate in and obtain continuing education (CE) credit. This year the meeting included nearly 300 hours of CE courses in addition to company-sponsored breakfast courses to highlight new products, topic-specific symposia hosted by various optometry special interest groups (SIGs), clinical workshops and leadership programs, and a robust scientific program consisting of oral presentations (paper sessions) and poster sessions presenting the latest in research and/or clinical case reports that could be attended by all. Nearly all of these events offer CE credits to optometrists.

FELLOW OF THE AAO (FAAO)

Every year at the annual meeting, clinicians and researchers can sit for their oral examination to become a Fellow of the AAO (FAAO). Candidates who have successfully completed the registration process and submitted the required body of written work are invited for a peer-review interview process, which is held annually at the meeting. Candidates who successfully complete this last step (the interview) obtain their fellowship and are inducted at the annual Fellowship Banquet. This year 242 new Fellows were inducted, including 15 Canadians (Table 3). Among the Canadians were four from the École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal (Drs. Marie-Eve Corbeil, Anne-Josée Gauthier, Elise Kramer [presently in Florida], and Rim Maklouf [presently in Florida]), and five from the School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo (Drs. Alex Hui, Alison Leung [presently in British Columbia], Christina E. Morettin [presently faculty at Illinois College of Optometry], Annie Valerie Micucci [presently in Ontario] and Averi Van Dam [presently in Manitoba]).

Table 3. New Canadian Fellows

New Fellow	Alma Mater
Jim P Ng Cheong Tin, OD	Pacific College of Optometry
Marie-Eve Corbeil, OD, Msc	École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal
Anne-Josée Gauthier, OD	École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal
George Hanna, OD	Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry
Alex Hui, OD, PhD	University of Waterloo
Elise Kramer, OD	École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal
Andrea N Lasby, OD	Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry
Alison Leung, BSc, OD	University of Waterloo
Rim Maklouf, OD	École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal
Annie Valerie Micucci, OD	University of Waterloo
Christina E Morettin, OD	University of Waterloo, Illinois College of Optometry
Sunni Raman Patel, PhD, BSc (Hons Optometry)	Aston University
Annie Valerie Micucci, OD	University of Waterloo
Averi Van Dam, OD	University of Waterloo
David A Wilkinson, OD	Illinois College of Optometry



Figure 2. New Fellow Alex Hui, OD, PhD, University of Waterloo, proudly displaying his new Fellow yellow ribbon.



Figure 3. New Fellows (from left to right) Drs. Elise Kramer, Marie-Eve Corbeil, Anne-Josée Gauthier, École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal, proudly displaying their Fellowship certificates at the Fellowship Banquet.

MAINTENANCE OF FELLOWSHIP

Since 2010, the AAO has introduced a new resolution for fellowship maintenance. To encourage new FAAOs to remain active and continue to be at the forefront of information, a maintenance of fellowship (MOF) program was initiated. The MOF includes elements such as attendance to the annual meeting, presentation of a paper or poster, giving a course, publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal, and more. Each of these elements offers one point towards the 15 points that are required every 10 years. Practitioners and researchers who have obtained their FAAO prior to 2010 do not need to participate in this program; however, all Fellows can track their MOF status on the AAO website under “My MOF” and submit their contributions directly to their profile.

FACULTY

Once again, the faculties from both Canadian schools were very involved in the annual meeting, making impressive contributions in leadership roles within the AAO as CE course presenters, clinical and basic vision science paper and poster presenters, and award recipients. A summary of the presentations from each school is included in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Presentations by faculty from the École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal

Author (s)	Presentation Title	
Bitton E.	Yellow, green or red: understanding ocular staining.	CE lecture
Gresset J, Marinier JA.	Cost and demographic trends in visual rehabilitation services in the province of Quebec, Canada, over a 12-year period (1999–2010).	Poster
Michaud L, Brazeau D.	Understanding the basic and not-so-basic essential tips in fitting scleral lenses.	CE lecture
Selvin G, Downie L, Hinel E, Michaud L.	Ellerbrook presents: grand rounds II.	CE lecture
Wittich W, Johnson A, Overbury O.	Comparison of reading speed in persons with low vision using CCTV and iPad.	Poster

Particular mention this year goes to Dr. Susan Leat and Dr. Sarah MacIver from the University of Waterloo, who had important roles within their respective Special Interest Groups (SIGs) at this year's annual meeting.

Dr. Leat, now immediate-past chair of the Vision in Aging SIG, was acting chair of this SIG in Denver and was responsible for organizing the Vision in Aging Grand Rounds: Multidisciplinary Health Care and Insights symposium held on Saturday morning. This symposium comprised several speakers discussing the importance of multidisciplinary health care for our patients, challenges that can be encountered implementing this approach, and insightful solutions for working through them. With our aging population and the increasing rate of co-morbidities in individuals, this was a very timely and important symposium to be part of.

Dr. MacIver is a member of the AAO Nutrition SIG and was instrumental in conducting the “Feed your Eyes” study in the exhibit hall this year. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between macular pigment, visual function, and diet. For the study, investigators asked participants to complete a short nutritional habits questionnaire online, in addition to measuring their contrast sensitivity and macular pigment density. The study was a joint effort by the Nutrition SIG and the Fellows Doing Research SIG. The booth was staffed by faculty, students, and residents from Waterloo, as well as by a number of faculty and students from other universities. It was a great success; no doubt the results will be very interesting!

The Fellows Doing Research SIG was created to attract interested Academy Fellows to become involved in active clinical research; they have been conducting annual studies in the exhibit hall at the AAO for the past three years.

Dr. Etty Bitton, in her second year as chair of the Faculty-Student Liaison Committee, welcomed the students at the student fellowship orientation breakfast and students' networking luncheon and presided over the liaison's meeting. Direct interaction with faculty and student liaisons from each school allowed for new initiatives to continue improving the student experience prior to and during the annual meeting and for mentorship through the fellowship process.

Contributors to the CE program included Dr. Etty Bitton and Dr. Langis Michaud (Montreal) and Dr. Susan Leat and Dr. Thomas Freddo (Waterloo).

Table 5. Presentations by faculty from the School of Optometry and Vision Science

Author (s)	Presentation Title	
Dalton K, Cinelli M, Khaderi K, Willms A.	Visual characteristics of varsity athletes.	Poster
Dalton K, Hutchings N.	Visual characteristics of precision air pistol and air rifle shooters.	Poster
Freddo T.	A logical approach to differential diagnosis of peri-orbital lesions.	CE lecture
Freddo T.	Medical work-up of the Red Eye.	CE lecture
Hovis JK, Almustanyir AH, Reimer S.	Validity and repeatability of the color vision response time test.	Poster
Irving EL, Yakobchuk-Stanger C.	Myopia Progression Control (MPC) lens design reverses previously induced myopia in chicks.	Paper
Jones L.	Soft lenses: so much more than just a piece of plastic.	Glenn Fry Award Lecture
Lorentz H, McCanna D, Subbaraman L, Jones L, Salapatek A, Soong F.	Changes in cytokine expression for dry-eye and non-dry-eye subjects exposed to a low humidity environmental exposure chamber.	Paper
Luensmann D, Situ P, Fonn D, Jones L.	Evaluation of the performance of a new silicone hydrogel colour contact lens.	Poster
Paudel N, Jacobs R, Thompson B, Yu TY, Chakraborty A, Anstice N.	Do age appropriate clinical vision tests at 2 years predict visual outcome at 4.5 years?	Poster
Richdale K, Sorbara L, and CLAY Study Group.	Contact Lens Assessment in Youth (CLAY): case-control pilot study of patients with symptomatic corneal inflammatory events.	Paper
Schulze M, Luensmann D, Hickson-Curran S, Toubouti Y, Cox S, Plowright A, Nichols J, Morgan P, Jones L.	Analysis of lid wiper epitheliopathy in habitual soft lens wearers.	Paper
Sorbara L and CLAY Study Group.	Multi-center testing of a risk assessment survey for soft contact lens wearers with adverse events.	Paper
Srinivasan S, Pucker A, Jones-Jordan L, Li W, Kwan J, Sickenberger W, Marx S, Lin M, Jones L.	Meibomian gland atrophy rate in pre-presbyopic contact lens and non-contact lens wearers.	Paper
Stahl U, Luensmann D, Lemp J, Moezzi A, Schulze M, Varikooty, Dumbleton K, Jones L.	Determination of higher order aberrations with two silicone hydrogel toric lenses.	Poster
Subbaraman L, Babaei Omali N, Heynen M, Lakkis C, Morgan P, Bertsen D, Nichols J, Jones L.	Impact of different lens care solutions on protein deposition on various soft contact lenses: a multicenter study.	Paper
Leat S.	Catching up on falls: vision and falls in older adults and the optometrist's role.	CE lecture
Leat S, Sheppard K, Newton L, Swanson M, Kaminski J.	Vision in aging grand rounds: multidisciplinary health care and insights.	Symposium

AWARDS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Every year the AAO, the AOF, and industry sponsors offer several student travel awards that partially alleviate the costs involved in attending the annual meeting. These travel awards are often competitive in nature, and some require that the student present at the meeting to be eligible. Industry sponsors and the AOF are to be congratulated in their continued efforts to provide travel grants for optometry students, residents, and graduate students. Award recipients are detailed below.

AOF-VSP/FYI [DOCTORS Student Travel Scholarship

Zoé Lacroix (Montreal)
Ashala Mah (Waterloo)
Diane Sayah (Montreal)
Diana Trieu (Waterloo)

Essilor Private Practice Student Travel Fellowship

Judy Brescott (Montreal)
Stéphanie Leger (Montreal)
Alan Ng (Waterloo)
Wylie Tan (Waterloo)

Student Travel Fellowship

Ali Almustanyir (Frank W. Weymouth Student Travel Fellowship; Waterloo)

Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses, and Refractive Technologies–Resident Travel Fellowships

Chelsea Bray (Waterloo)



Figure 4. Danne Ventura, director of professional relations, Essilor of America, is flanked by Montreal student travel scholarship recipients Judy Brescott and Stephanie Leger.



Figure 5. Dr. Jean-Louis Blanchard accepting the Founder's Award from the Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses & Refractive Technologies at the annual meeting in Denver, CO.

In addition to providing students with travel fellowships, the AAO also honours people who have made significant contributions to the profession of optometry. Among this year's distinguished honorees were Dr. Jean-Louis Blanchard (Montreal) and Dr. Lyndon Jones (Waterloo).

Dr. Blanchard received the Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses and Refractive Technologies Founder's Award for his pioneering, innovation, and dedication leading to the establishment of one of the eminent contact lens manufacturing labs in Canada and North America: Blanchard Laboratories. The Founder's award was established in memory and honour of Academy Fellows who were pioneers in the contact lens industry. Dr. Jean-Louis Blanchard graduated in 1946 from l'École d'optométrie, Université de Montréal, and started a private practice in Sherbrooke, Quebec. He quickly became interested in contact lenses as an option for optical correction, exploring scleral lenses and PMMA lenses, and later became one of the first practitioners to introduce soft lenses in Quebec. His interest in contact lens design motivated him to sell his practice and open VERACON lab in 1963 to produce contact lenses. The company grew to become Blanchard Laboratories in 1986, which remains the premier gas permeable and specialty lab in central and eastern Canada. Four decades later, Blanchard Laboratories has become a leader in specialty contact lenses. Dr. Jean-Louis Blanchard leaves a legacy we can be proud of.

Dr. Jones (Waterloo) received the Glenn A. Fry Lecture Award, sponsored by the American Optometric Foundation (AOF). The award is given annually to a distinguished scientist or clinician scientist in recognition of the quality, significance, impact, and relevance to optometry of their current research contributions. Dr. Jones' lecture on innovations in contact lenses highlighted a significant number of major developments in contact lens use over the past two decades and provided an exciting glance into the future of the industry. As director of the Center for Contact Lens Research (CCLR), Dr. Jones and his team of dedicated researchers and graduate students continue to push the boundaries of contact lens care, developing innovative new materials and furthering our understanding of how contact lenses interact with the human eye.



Figure 6. Dr. Lyndon Jones accepting the Glenn A. Fry Lecture Award from Dr. Kathy Dumbleton, president of the AOF.

We heartily congratulate both honorees for their prestigious awards!

Dr. Kristine Dalton (Waterloo) was the recipient of two Beta Sigma Kappa Research Fellowships awarded this year at the AOF celebration luncheon. These fellowships are sponsored by the Beta Sigma Kappa International Optometric Honor Society and the AOF and benefit individuals early in their career whose academic curiosity has them asking professional questions covering a wide area of vision science, clinical practice, or eye-related public health. Congratulations on this achievement!

THE LOST FACULTIES

Attendees of the AAO in Denver were treated to the final performance of The Lost Faculties (Waterloo) at the Australia Party on Friday night. Faculty members at the School of Optometry & Vision Science, University of Waterloo, founded the band in 2000 for the annual student skit night competition. This year they said their final goodbyes to a fabulous crowd in Denver and will be remembered fondly. Thank you for 14 amazing years of music and entertainment and good luck to you all!



Figure 7. The "Lost Faculties" play for the last time at the famous Australian party of the AAO.

Next year's meeting is scheduled for October 7–10, 2015, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Mark your calendar now so that we can set new records in the home of Mardi Gras!