FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IUSO Researchers Receive National Institutes of Health Awards

The Indiana University School of Optometry (IUSO) is pleased to announce two new recipients in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Loan Repayment Program: Meredith E. Jansen, OD, MS and Erin Babinski, DPhil. These awards follow the NIH Loan Repayment Program renewal previously awarded to Dean A. VanNasdale, OD, MS.

Dr. Jansen’s research project, “Characterizing the Development, Progression, and Resolution of Contact Lens Related Corneal Infiltrates,” will be mentored by Dr. Peter Kollbaum from July 2011 to July 2013. Dr. Jansen received her Doctor of Optometry and Master of Science degrees from IUSO in 2009 and currently works as a Research Optometrist at Indiana University. She is a member of the Contact Lens Assessment in Youth (CLAY) study group.

Dr. Babinsky’s research project, “Visual Development and the Factors Contributing to Strabismus,” runs from October 2011 to October 2013. Her undergraduate degree in Brain & Cognitive Science was completed at the Center for Visual Science at the University of Rochester, New York. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Experimental Psychology degree at the University of Oxford in England. Dr. Babinsky is a Postdoctoral Fellow at IUSO with Dr. T. Rowan Candy.

Dr. VanNasdale, OD, MS, continues his project, “Early Retinal Disease Detection Using Standard and Novel Retinal Imaging Technique,” begun in July 2006 with Dr. Ann Elsner. After completing optometry prerequisites at the University of Michigan, Dr. VanNasdale earned an undergraduate Vision Science degree and a Doctor of Optometry degree at Ferris State University. Following an IUSO Cornea and Contact Lens residency in 2004, he earned his Master of Science in Clinical Research degree at IUSO in 2011. Dr VanNasdale is currently pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy in Vision Science degree at IUSO. His research interests include retinal imaging, with an emphasis on early detection of retinal disease in macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

About the NIH Loan Repayment Program:

The NIH encourages the pursuit of careers in biomedical, behavioral, social, and clinical research. Outstanding health professionals who commit at least two years to conducting qualified research funded by a domestic nonprofit organization or U.S. federal, state, or local government entity may be eligible for the repayment program. Recipients of NIH loan repayment awards may earn up to $35,000 toward the repayment of qualified student loan debt per year, up to a total of $140,000 (for four years of research). Most undergraduate, graduate, and medical school loans are included in the repayment program.

The NIH Loan Repayment Program has expanded to include clinical research, pediatric research, health disparities research, contraception and infertility research, and clinical research for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. For more information about the Loan Repayment Program, visit the NIH at http://www.lrp.nih.gov/about_the_programs/index.aspx.

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