

AOCLE History

As AOCLE changes and grows, many new faces have come to join us. Some may not know the beginnings of the Association of Optometric Contact Lens Educators (AOCLE). We present a summary of the past three decades of the AOCLE so that all may benefit from its rich history.

1970's

In 1972, Bausch & Lomb invited contact lens educators from the Schools and Colleges of Optometry to Rochester, New York to introduce a new lens. It was at this meeting that Paul White, Marty Gelman and Woody Kolb among others, discussed the idea of forming a contact lens educators group. Several of the group informally got together at an Academy meeting, probably in 1972 and again at a B&L National

Research Symposium in Washington, DC in 1973 to plan the formation of the Association of Optometric Contact Lens Educators (AOCLE). Paul White acted as unofficial Chair during these formative years. Under the sponsorship of Wesley-Jessen, the first official meeting of the organization took place at the John Hancock Towers in Chicago in 1974. Maury Poster was elected as the first Chair of the association. The only item of substance on the agenda was to collate all the class notes from the Contact Lens Syllabi of the schools. They were photocopied into 12 massive packages and distributed to each school to use as desired.

The 1975 meeting in Rochester, New York was the first AOCLE annual meeting

sponsored by Bausch & Lomb (B&L) and held in conjunction with their National Research Symposium, later to be known as the North American Research Symposium (NARS). When B & L stopped having their Research Symposiums, they continued to sponsor an annual AOCLE August meeting, held in Rochester or a relatively nearby location, up until 1996. Mort Sarver was elected as the association's second Chair in 1976 and Jerry Lowther, the third chair in 1978. The original by-laws were amended in 1977 in order to comply with the Internal Revenue Code, as described in Section 501 (C) (3) establishing the Association as a non-profit organization for the purpose of education.

Officers

The AOCLE is headed by an executive board, elected for a two year mandate. Here is a historical perspective of past AOCLE Officers.

Year	Chair	Vice-chair	Secretary/Treasurer	Secretary	Treasurer
1974-1976	Maury Poster	Mort Sarver			
1976-1978	Mort Sarver	Jerry Lowther			
1978-1980	Jerry Lowther	Woody Kolb	Jim Paramore		
1980-1982	Woody Kolb	Jim Paramore	Sarita Soni		
1982-1984	Jim Paramore	Sarita Soni	Gary Andrasko		
1984-1986	Marc Piccolo	Jan Jurkus	Les Caplan		
1986-1988	Ed Bennet	Roger Boltz	Les Caplan		
1988-1990	Tim Edrington	Joel Silbert		Gina Sorbara	Les Caplan
1990-1992	Joel Silbert	Chris Snyder		Jan Jurkus	Les Caplan
1992-1994	Chris Snyder	Jan Jurkus		Lisa Badowski	Les Caplan
1994-1996	Jan Jurkus	Lisa Badowski		Harry House	Les Caplan
1996-1998	Lisa Badowski	Harry House		Julie Schornack	Ron Watanabe
1998-2000	Julie Schornack	Gary Gunderson		Neil Pence	Ron Watanabe
2000-2002	Gary Gunderson	Neil Pence		Jenny Smythe	Ron Watanabe
2002-2004	Neil Pence	Jenny Smythe		Etty Bitton	Ron Watanabe
2004-2006	Jenny Smythe	Ron Watanabe		Etty Bitton	Corzine/Watanabe
2006-2008	Watanabe	Etty Bitton		Vinita Henry	John Corzine
2008-2010	Etty Bltton	Vinita Henry		Bruce Morgan	John Corzine

Initially, only one contact lens educator from each school was invited to the annual meeting, but by the 1979 meeting in San Francisco, twenty four contact lens educators were in attendance.

1980's

At the annual meeting in Dallas in 1982, several members expressed disappointment with the association's progress and its limited involvement in improving contact lens education in the Schools and Colleges of Optometry. Paul White and Bob Mandell suggested that the association hold a workshop to discuss research and contact lens related problems. A resolution was passed to take steps to develop and plan such a workshop at one of the schools of optometry in the summer of 1983. Berkeley was chosen as

Annual Workshop

The AOCLE holds an annual 3-4 day workshop as a means to exchange ideas and share new teaching modalities in the field of cornea and contact lenses. This industry-sponsored workshop is hosted by a different school each year. Topics of interest are identified and serve as a theme for the workshop. As well as the contact lens educators from each school, industry representatives are also active participants. A separate time is allotted during the workshop for members of industry to share with the educators the latest industry news. Here is a historical perspective of some of the themes of the past workshops.

Workshop Location and Themes

1983	UC Berkeley	Demonstrating & Teaching CL Related Research
1984	NEWENCO	Teaching Methodologies, CL Curriculum
1985	Ferris State	Computer Use in Education
1986	Pacific	Innovative Concepts in CL Education, Research Review
1987	Houston	Computer Applications, PMP & Clinical Simulations, Research Techniques
1988	Indiana	Ocular Microbiology Techniques, Statistics, Video Taping of CL Fitting
1989	PCO	Clinical Assessment Techniques, Procedures in Diagnosis and Management
1990	UAB	Research Techniques, Computer Support Systems, Writing for Publication
1991	UMSL	Audio-Visual Aids, Development of Soft Lens Video Tapes
1992	TOSU	Clinical Teaching Methods, Student Evaluations, Teaching Specialty Lenses
1993	Montreal	Interactive Video, Specular Microscopy, Tear Analysis
1994	Waterloo	Interactive Educational Media, Computer Communications, Imaging & Teaching Tools
1995	SCCO	Teaching Clinical Problem Solving, Providing Effective Supervision to Students
1996	NSU	Therapeutic and Refractive Lasers, Theory and Hands-on Workshop
1997	ICO	Teaching Clinical Concepts in a Didactic Setting
1998	SCO	Enhanced Development of Multiple-Choice Examinations
1999	NOVA	Web Page Design and Distance Learning Course Design
2000	Waterloo	Advances in Technology for Clinical and Didactic Education
2001	Inter-American	Computer-Assisted Teaching Tools
2002	SUNY	Residency Based Training
2003	Pacific	Specialty CL design and Leadership Skills Development
2004	SCCO	StrengthFinders, Prosthetic Eye Laboratory, Definition of Entry Level CL Curriculum
2005	MCO	Lifelong Learning Through Interactive Technologies
2006	Montreal	Aberrometry, eLearning, Immersive Reality and Virtuality, Building Relationships
2007	Berkeley	Case report writing
2008	NECO	Mentorship in an optometric setting

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the site for the first workshop and Bob Mandell, Mike Harris and Jim Paramore were appointed to the Workshop Committee with Paul White working on the funding, as he had done for other projects since the association's inception. Although a two week workshop was initially suggested, budget limitations resulted in a four day workshop. Funds were received from seven contact lens companies and in 1983, the first AOCLE Workshop was held at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Optometry with Contact Lens Research as the primary topic. Slides that had been submitted by the contact lens educators in attendance, for use at this meeting, were later duplicated and distributed to all the schools. As a result of the success of this first workshop, it was decided at the 1983 annual business meeting in New York City that annual, three to four day workshops should be held, with every school eventually acting as host. Subject matter was to be determined by member recommendations and based on the particular strengths of the host institution. New England College of Optometry volunteered to host the second workshop in Boston in 1984.

Also, in 1984 through a grant from Cooper Vision, three members of AOCLE; Les Caplan (UAB); Mike Harris (UCB) and Don West (Pacific) participated in a faculty exchange program that was known as the John DeCarle Visiting Professorship. Each one spent two to three weeks in Great Britain lecturing at many of its Schools of Optometry (City University of London, Cardiff, Glasgow, Manchester, Bradford etc.). Two members from the British Contact Lens Educators Group (BUCKLE), were to visit U.S. schools, but only one, Martin Watts, participated and visited USML, TOSU and SUNY Schools of Optometry. A continuation of the grant by Cooper for another year, to be known as "Hands Across the Ocean" was planned, but it never came to fruition.

At the association's third workshop at Ferris State School of Optometry in 1985, most of the contact lens educators received their first exposure to computer utilization in administration, clinical record keeping and computer-assisted instruction. Jerry Lowther demonstrated one of the earlier Video Disc Players and the first Video Disc Software Program in Optometry, which he had developed, with assistant Glenn

Hammack. A number of the participants were so excited by the technology and its perceived value in the classroom and potential impact on individualized instruction, they immediately purchased the hardware and the software package for their own schools. Due to budgetary limitations at the time, this was the only workshop restricted to one member only from each institution.

Industry Participants & Partners

Over the past 30 years, the faculty members of the AOCLE have been able to enhance contact lens education in our schools/colleges of optometry. Part of the success is due to the help and support of our partners in the contact lens and pharmaceutical industries. We would like to acknowledge the following companies who have worked with the AOCLE over the years.

AOCLE Sponsorship		
Over 30 years	<10 years	New sponsors for 2008
Bausch & Lomb (33)	X-Cel Contacts (8)	Art Optical
	American Hydron (6)	Lens Dynamics
	Barnes-Hind (6)	Contamac
	Ocular Sciences (6)	
	Menicon (6)	
15-25 years	Sola/Barnes-hind (5)	
Ciba Vision (26)	Specialty Ultravision (5)	
Alcon (21)	Pilkington Barnes-Hind (4)	
Cooper Vision (20)	Concise (2)	
Allergan/AMO (19)	Synergeyes (2)	
Vistakon (17)	American Optical (2)	
	Dow Corning (2)	
10-15 years	Fisons (2)	
Paragon (14)	Teague Training Group (2)	
Wesley-Jessen (13)	Syntex (2)	
Polymer Technology (11)	Advance Vision Research (1)	
Sunsoft (10)	CTL Labs (1)	
	CLMA (RGPLI) (1)	
	Summit Technology (1)	

During the first few years of the workshops it was difficult to get schools to volunteer to be the host school but by the late eighties, there was fierce competition for future sites. Some schools came prepared not only with school and university promotion materials, but also with brochures from their local Visitor's Bureau.

George Mertz New Educator Travel Award Recipients

To honour Dr. George Mertz, Director of Professional Affairs at Vistakon, who passed away in 2003, the AOCLE wanted to commemorate his memory by establishing a travel award to allow new contact lens educators to attend their first AOCLE workshop. His dedication to contact lens education was truly remarkable.

Year	Recipient	Institution
2004	Wanda Lam Sri Thota	ICO Houston
2005	Jean-Sebastien Dufour Earlena McKee	Montreal NSU
2006	Jason Chin Josh Lotoczky	NECO MCO
2007	Matt Lampa	Pacific
2008	Nicky Lai Eunice Myung Lee Mika Moy	TOSU SCCO Berkeley

1990's

In 1991 the AOCLE first sent a representative to the annual meeting of the International Association of Contact Lens Educators (IACLE) in Europe. Chris Snyder (UAB), as the Vice-Chair, was the first AOCLE representative, attending the 1991 meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. An official representative was not sent to the 1992 meeting in Bordeaux, France, but Gina Sorbara (Waterloo), a member of both organizations acted as a liaison for the AOCLE. The Vice-Chairs attending meetings were Jan Jurkus (ICO) in 1993 in Prague, Yugoslavia; Lisa Badowski (TOSU) in 1994 in Terrassa, Spain; Lisa Badowski (TOSU) in 1995 in Munich, Germany. Although a representative was to attend the 1996 meeting in Seville, Spain, schedule complications prevented participation. At its annual meeting in 1992, the AOCLE passed a resolution inviting four representatives of the IACLE to attend its annual workshops. A joint workshop with IACLE (The First World Congress on Contact Lens Education),

was held in 1994 in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

In 1993, under the leadership of Chris Snyder (UAB), the first mid-year meeting of the Executive Committee was held at Chicago's O'Hare Hilton. Attending this meeting were the four officers (Chris Snyder, Jan Jurkus, Lisa Badowski, Les Caplan), plus the newsletter editor/communications officer (Bill Edmonson), Ed Bennett (Video Special Project) and Howard Purcell, as a representative of the newly added member to AOCLE, the Southeastern University College of Optometry, later to become NOVA Southeastern. Four important action items came out of this meeting, all of which have played a significant role on the future of the association. An initial Mission Statement was recommended, which was presented and approved at the 1993 Annual Meeting. A revised Mission Statement was adopted at the 1995 annual meeting. Chris Snyder suggested that a Workshop Handbook be developed and although the minutes state that "little response was generated", the acceptance of the next action item led to the formulation of a handbook document. This third recommendation was to invite the past, current and following year's workshop leaders to attend the mid-year Executive Committee meeting and its meeting just prior to the annual meeting. The result of this action made for a much improved workshop planning process. The last action item to come out of the meeting was to have yearly mid-year meetings of the Executive Committee. The second mid-year Executive Committee meeting was held in Jacksonville, Florida in February 1993, under the sponsorship of Vistakon in conjunction with their annual contact lens educators meeting. Vistakon has sponsored the Executive Committee's mid-year meeting until 1999.

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In April, 1992, Chris Snyder (UAB), as Vice-Chair, put together the first AOCLE Newsletter. At the 1992 annual meeting, as the incoming Chair, he appointed Bill Edmondson (NSU) to be the first official Editor of the Newsletter. Ety Bitton (Montreal) began assisting Bill in 1994 and became his co-editor with the Spring 1995 issue. The newsletter has grown in size and content and has become a valuable and readily available resource for not only contact lens educators but other educators, administrators and industry people. The Fall 1996 Issue (#10) had a distribution of well over 200 copies and contained information on the association's workshops and annual meetings, contact lens residencies, job

opportunities, industry information (programs and products), web sites, internet addresses, membership addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses, listing of industry resources and other informative articles.

At the 1996 annual business meeting in Orlando, the members approved a pilot program for contact lens faculty development. The grant is for the purpose of encouraging faculty and program development for the association's member institutions, to enhance contact lens experience of students in the classroom and the clinic, and to increase the use of AOCLE members as a resource for institutions other than their own.

Many contact lens and solution manufacturers have been strong supporters of the AOCLE over the years. Some pharmaceutical companies, laser companies, and contact lens institutes have intermittently supported the association. A list of the years of sponsorship for the annual AOCLE workshop is included and a special mention needs to be made for long time sponsorship from B&L, Ciba, and Alcon.


A new millenium (2000-)

A new logo was designed for the AOCLE and was introduced in the newsletter (#14-February 1999) and all communications that followed. The newsletter, which was becoming a valuable networking resource for educators as well as industry members, due to its updated e-mail listing on the last page, was printed twice a year, following the American Academy of Optometry meeting and following the annual workshop held in the summer. Summaries of the workshops along with pictures as well as latest news from the industry enabled educators who cannot attend to stay abreast of new developments. Sections summarizing events

of other CL organizations such as IACLE, AAO-Cornea & CL Section and the AOA-CL section was also included as a way to keep readers aware of the many meetings and educational tools available by other organizations.

The AOCLE website (www.aocle.org) was launched in 2000 with technical assistance by Neil Pence and housed at the Indiana University server. The site includes a directory of the north american schools/colleges of optometry, a phone/fax/e-mail directory of educators and industry representatives, the AOCLE

AOCLE Achievements	
1983	Debut of workshops to enhance CL educational exchanges
	Bank of CL-related exam questions created and distributed to schools (Berkeley)
1985	Contribution of numerous slides from many schools to the creation of a video Disc
1991	Development of Soft Contact Lens Fitting videocassette
	IACLE and AOCLE representatives at respective annual workshops to enhance CL education globally
1992	Case and slide compendium produced and given to each school for CL teaching support
	Debut of biannual AOCLE Newsletter
1994	Participation at the 1st World Congress on CL Education (Waterloo)
1996	Article compendium (a diskette of frequently-referenced CL-related articles) (Chicago)
	CL faculty Development grant Program
	E-mail listing appears in AOCLE Newsletter
1997	AOCLE Information pamphlet
1998	Creation of Computer-based patient simulations on CD-ROM (Memphis)
1999	AOCLE Website (www.aocle.org)
2000	Participation at the 2nd World Congress on CL Education (Waterloo)
2001	AOCLE Living Library
2002	Electronic format of the AOCLE Newsletter
	Soft Toric Fitting CD
2003	Establishment of the George Mertz New Educator Travel Award
2006	AOCLE CL Clinical Pocket Guide (Montreal)
2007	Establishment of the Lester E. Janoff Memorial Award
2008	AOCLE CL Pocket Guide (2 nd ed)



Mission Statement and goals, Cornea and CL-related websites, electronic versions of previously published newsletters and hyperlinks to useful and valuable resources are also included.

During the annual business meetings, it was felt that AOCLE should promote its activities. An information poster was presented at the 1999 AAO meeting in Seattle by Bill Edmondson (NSU) and Etty Bitton (Montreal). The poster highlighted annual workshop themes, hosting schools, goals and achievements of the AOCLE, a time-line of educational tools developed for the advancement of contact lens education in North America and recognition to industry sponsors that have supported AOCLE over the years. Handouts promoting the website were also handed out during the meeting.

In 2000, Ciba Vision sponsored the mid-year planning meeting for the first time. They've been a sponsor of that meeting ever since. The second World Congress on Contact Lens Education, co-joint venture of IACLE and AOCLE was once again held in Waterloo in June 2000. The workshop focused on technological advances, such as web-based learning, digital technology and electronic didactic teaching. For the first time, the business meeting of the AOCLE was held in conjunction with the annual workshop, a trend that continues to date.

At the 2001 workshop, held for the first time in Puerto Rico, several industry sponsors were offered special recognition certificates/plaques for their years of continuous support to AOCLE. Gary Gunderson (ICO), chair at the time, recognized B&L for 27 years of continuous support, Ciba Vision for 20 years of continuous support, Alcon for 14 years of support and Vistakon for 10 years of continuous support.

By 2002, the movement towards the electronic form of communication, prompted the editors to consider publishing the newsletter in an electronic format. The last printed newsletter (#17) was in April 2002 and the new electronic format of the AOCLE newsletter was distributed in November 2002 (#18). The newsletter remains in electronic format to date and continues to be a valuable resource.

The idea of a Living Library was first discussed in 2000, and formalized in 2001. Neil Pence (Indiana) and Jenny Smythe (Pacific) acted as editor and co-editor respectively for the project. The Living Library would entail compiling short summaries or overviews of the current thinking on the etiology, clinical appearance, and best management of various conditions, along with an extensive reference list of best sources of information for the topic. The authors of that topic would then be responsible for keeping the page updated and current, by reviewing all pertinent new developments and articles on the topic. The idea was for educators to use the Living Library as a quick resource for students/residents to update them on current topics. The Living Library is presently housed on the AOCLE website.

In 2002, the AOCLE created a Soft toric fitting CD-ROM enabling educators once again to possess an educational tool for its students/residents. A list of AOCLE achievements is included to provide a timeline of educational tools available to the AOCLE.

In 2003, the AOCLE was shocked with the news of the passing of Dr. George Mertz, Director of Professional Affairs at Vistakon and long time friend of the AOCLE. Dr. Mertz had developed close relationships with many people at the AOCLE and was a strong advocate of contact lens education. His dedication and passion in the area of contact lenses was tremendous and to honor his memory the

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AOCLE felt that they wanted to continue promoting contact lens education in his honor. The AOCLE established the George Mertz New Educator Travel Award, to allow new contact lens educators to attend their first AOCLE workshop. Eligibility criteria were quickly established and two recipients attended the next workshop held at Southern California College of Optometry (SCCO) in 2004. A list of recipients is included.

At that same workshop Harue Marsden and Julie Schornack (SCCO, 2004) began the daunting task of defining the entry level “cornea and contact lenses skills and knowledge” base required for optometric practice. It was felt that the AOCLE was in a unique position to tackle this age old question. Attendees of the 2004 workshop were asked to complete an exhaustive survey which highlighted three main areas; Procedures, Knowledge and Conditions. Attendees were also asked to identify whether a particular skill and knowledge should be entry level or more advanced. A brief result of the surveys were presented at the 2005 workshop and attendees were divided up into workgroups to study the questions further. The project is still ongoing to date.

At the 2006 workshop in Montreal, the AOCLE CL Clinical Pocket Guide was launched. The guide covers key case history questions, lens fitting characteristics, lens markings and FDA lens material classifications. It was designed as a clinical reference tool for students and residents. Information regarding overnight wear, colored lens options and contact lens calculations are included as well. The guide contains sections detailing soft, gas permeable and specialty contact lenses. The guide was distributed to all

3rd, 4th year optometry students, residents and CL related faculty at all of the 19 North American Optometry institutions.

The 2007 workshop in Berkeley focused on Case Report Writing. The editors from Optometry, Optometry and Vision Science, Contact Lens and Anterior Eye, and Contact Lens Spectrum comprised an expert panel with whom the attendees could discuss their case reports and revise their manuscripts. As a result of this workshop, several attendees submitted and published articles in one of these journals.

Lester E. Janoff Memorial Award Recipients

To honour Dr. Lester Janoff, long time educator, administrator and contact lens researcher, who passed away in 2006, the AOCLE wanted to commemorate his memory by establishing an award to an optometric educator that has demonstrated excellence in education, publication and research.

Year	Recipient	Institution
2008	Luigina Sorbara	Waterloo

Also established at the 2007 workshop was the Lester E. Janoff Memorial Award. The idea for this award was presented by Drs. Joel Silbert and Michael Spinell of PCO in honor of one of their mentors, Dr. Lester Janoff. Dr. Janoff was an optometric educator, administrator, contact lens clinician and researcher. His professional career encompassed private practice, contact lens research for industry, and contact lens education at three optometry schools (Pennsylvania College of Optometry, New England College of Optometry and Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry). He was a Diplomate in the Cornea and Contact lens Section of the American Academy of Optometry and Associate Dean of NSUCO. The award committee, which consisted of Dr. Silbert, Dr. Spinell, and Dr. Andrea Janoff, daughter of Lester Janoff, made its first presentation at the 2008 workshop in Boston.

Over the past three decades, the AOCLE has maintained a continuous communications forum for its constituent schools and its individual members. The camaraderie that has been established between the well over 100 contact lens educators that have been involved, at one time or another, has allowed an exchange of teaching methodologies and technologies, teaching aids, evaluation techniques, administrative expertise and in countless other areas of mutual interest. No other group of clinical optometric educators have had the advantage of such a long and stable relationship. The benefits to its individual members and thereby to the schools and colleges of optometry that they represent have been immeasurable.



Acknowledgements

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