

GUEST EDITORIAL

THE SUNY RESIDENCY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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The State University of New York, State College of Optometry (SUNY) has a long-standing history and dedication to residency education. In 1974, the College established the first year-long residency program dedicated to post graduate clinical education and training in vision therapy. In 1975, four individuals completed the program. This became the first residency class in the country to attain advanced clinical competency in this important area of the profession. It was also the third program to be accredited by the then Council on Optometric Education. Since its inception, 136 individuals have completed the program, now titled the Dr. Irwin B. Suchoff Residency Program in Vision Therapy. In the subsequent 24 years SUNY residency programs, located at or affiliated with the College, have grown to include a current total of 13 programs with 30 residents. This makes it one of the largest residency programs in the country. These residencies provide training in a variety of areas including: Vision Therapy, Primary Care, Cornea and Contact Lenses, Low Vision, Pediatrics, Urban Family Practice, Ocular Disease, and Vision Rehabilitation/Acquired Brain Injury. Most of these are based at SUNY, while clinical training of others are conducted at Veteran's Administration Hospitals, a community health care center and the United States Military Academy at West Point. Since the inception of these programs the College has awarded certificates of completion to 518 residents. In 2004, the Vision Rehabilitation/Acquired Brain Injury Residency became the College's most recently established and initially ac-

credited program. It exemplifies SUNY's commitment to be at the forefront of residency education, and is indicative of the College's recognition of the important and fast growing place this area of care is occupying in the profession.

Didactic and scholarly components are a part of all residency programs and are a requirement of the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) Standards. SUNY has distinguished itself in its residencies' curricula. All residents, both SUNY based and affiliated, attend a required number of hours of electives that include clinically based workshops and courses. Additionally, the residents attend mandatory workshops in public speaking and writing. The primary goal of these workshops is to provide the residents with the tools necessary to achieve proficiency in these areas. The Public Speaking Workshop initially videotapes each resident who gives a number of short, unrehearsed presentations. These emphasize various delivery components of public speaking. The Workshop is complemented by a prepared minor presentation on a clinically relevant topic, that is given to other residents and program supervisors who provide constructive feedback on various aspects of the presentation. Later in the year the resident is required to give a one-hour presentation that must be COPE approved. In the past five years these "Major Presentations" have become a College wide event that provides accredited continuing education to faculty, students and doctors from the Greater New York Metropolitan area and beyond.

Nationally, many residency programs have used writing a publishable quality

paper as a means to meet the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education's (ACOE) requirement for scholarly activity (Standard 2.4.6).¹ Typically the residency supervisor and/or other faculty provides guidance to the resident in writing the paper.

In 2006, Drs. Heiberger and Suchoff² sought to determine the number of papers nationally produced and published by residents between 1999 and 2003. With a 58% response rate from 75 programs, 411 papers were produced with 21% (89) submitted for publication and 67% (60) of these being published. The authors suggested that these numbers may actually be greater with a higher response rate from the programs surveyed. This, combined with the increased number of residency programs since 2003, would be expected to show a significantly higher number of papers written, submitted for publication and actually published.

At SUNY, writing a publishable quality paper has been a requirement for some thirty years. Similar to the goals set for the Public Speaking Workshop, two mandatory Writer's Workshops are conducted to give the resident the necessary tools for writing a publishable quality paper. The first workshop provides the resident with the fundamentals for writing the paper. Additionally, there are discussions about formatting the paper for the journal of choice, of the peer review and publication processes. The residents then write the paper, with review and oversight most often provided by the program supervisor and/or another faculty member. Appropriate rewrites are made until the paper is

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approved by the supervisor for submission to the second Writer's Workshop. Prior to this event, the resident exchanges the paper with another resident, who reviews and edits it for content, grammar, readability, and appropriate structure, and format for submission to a selected journal. Guidelines that were provided during the first workshop along with check off editing sheets are used for this review process.

At the second workshop, the residents meet with their partners to exchange reviews. This process is overseen by one of four assigned faculty team leaders, who also provide additional feedback and guidance. These individuals have had extensive experience in the publication of chapters and/or articles in peer reviewed journals. Additional rewrites result, with the final approval of the publishable quality paper coming from the team captain. The overall result is the development of the resident's ability to critically assess an article for its value to the literature and also to gain a foundation to writing a publishable quality paper. Optimally, the goal is to get the paper published.

Over the years SUNY residents have been frequent contributors of articles to this *Journal*. This is particularly true for the Vision Therapy and Pediatric programs. Most recently Dr. Buntay Chorn, a 2007 SUNY Vision Therapy resident co-authored that year's "Best Article" award.³ This trend is plainly evident in the current issue of this *Journal* where all articles have been authored by residents who have completed SUNY programs this year.

For many residents, the goal of publishing their residency papers in a peer reviewed journal seems unattainable. However, with the proper guidance, training, and support, this once seemingly unattainable goal can actually be achieved. The investment of programs in properly training their residents in the writing and eventual publication not only benefits residency education, but also the optometric literature, and ultimately the profession. For those who publish as a result of their residency training, the foundation is set for a lifelong commitment to actively being part of the optometric literature. This has been and continues to be a major intent of the College's residency programs and this issue of the *Journal of Behavioral Optometry* is a prime example.

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