



# APOA Newsletter

## Issue 1 Volume 2

## APOA Updates

By Mandeep Banwait & Nikolay Boychev

### Bright Horizon's Program

**Main Goal:** The BHP's main goal is to establish an optometry shadowing system across the nation.

**Webinars:** In addition, partnering BHP optometrists will be asked to do webinars to provide important information to members.

**BHP Enhancement:** A collection drive of optical equipment will be in place to distribute them abroad to help developing countries build well stocked eye clinics. This will be done together with the eyeSIGHT INTERNATIONAL Sponsorship Program:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/sightforhumanity/what-we-do/the-eyesight-sponsorship-program>.

**BHP Outreach:** Leading community-based support organizations that help blind or visually impaired individuals in all areas will be contacted to offer volunteer placements related to specialized fields for students of all levels of their Optometric education.

BHP will ultimately be providing shadowing and volunteering opportunities for the development and growth of students

### EyeSIGHT

#### INTERNATIONAL Journal

If you have written or partaken in an interesting case study or research article, submit it to us for review by our editor board. If suitable, it will be published and promoted on our websites (including eyeSIGHT Intl.'s). Email: [americanpreop@gmail.com](mailto:americanpreop@gmail.com) or [eyesightinternational@gmail.com](mailto:eyesightinternational@gmail.com)

### Community Service Program

Anyone who has strong volunteering opportunities in their area is encouraged to spread the word through us and our website. You can also submit pictures, stories, and videos to spread your efforts

### New Board Positions

To further the development of APOA, we have added:

*Vice-Chairman of Board of Trustees:* will assist the chairman in maintaining communication between trustees and Board of Directors

*Philanthropic Outreach Chairman:* Establish partnerships with organizations that align with APOA goals

*International Affairs:* Establish partnerships with organizations, schools, and student groups internationally.

### Board of Directors

**Executive Director:** Dr. Angel Rivera

**Executive Secretary to Director:** Vanessa Meyerowitz

**President:** Nikolay Boychev

**Vice President:** Lindsay Fullam

**Chairman, Board of Trustees:** Linh Ngo

**Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustees:** Maryam Khan

**Treasurer:** Beomjy Kim

**Secretary:** Tammy Nguyen

**Historian:** Mandeep Banwait

**Philanthropic Outreach Chairman:** Monica Miles

**International Affairs:** Shezila Ali

### APOA Online

**Email:** [americanpreop@gmail.com](mailto:americanpreop@gmail.com)

**Website:**

<http://americanpreop.wix.com/apoa>

**Blogger:**

<http://americanpreop.blogspot.com/>

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/americanpreop](https://twitter.com/americanpreop)

**Flickr:**

[flickr.com/photos/84656224@No5/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/84656224@No5/)

**Pinterest:**

<http://pinterest.com/americanpreop/>

**LinkedIn:**

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/americanpreop-apoa/56/504/b77>

**Facebook Group:**

[www.facebook.com/groups/AmPOA/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/AmPOA/)

**Youtube:** [youtube.com/americanpreop](https://youtube.com/americanpreop)

# APOA Updates

## APOA Fundraising Goals

In hopes of raising enough money for a national conference this June, we are supported by VISION2020 through eyeSIGHT INTERNATIONAL and will be open to donations soon.

<https://sites.google.com/site/sightforhumanity/what-we-do/the-eyesight-sponsorship-program/vision-2020---the-right-to-sight>

## Pre-Optometry Club Advice

By Mandeep Banwait

### Optometry Club Advice

1. Help the disabled. Have your optometry club work with your school's accessibility services center to help those that need extra help.
2. Contact many schools! Optometry schools usually make recruitment trips in the fall and spring. Plan ahead of time and arrange a meeting
3. Bring in a variety of speakers. Contact optometry school advisors, optometrists, ophthalmologists, and alumni that attend an optometry school to visit.
4. Ask them questions. Ask regarding the future of optometry, financial info, specializations, and options.

## Application Advice

By Mandeep Banwait

OptomCAS opened June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Check individual school deadlines at:

[http://optomcas.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=38](http://optomcas.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=38)

1. Proofread your application.  
Read over your essay and have others edit it before sending.
2. Be yourself.  
The essay is your first impression to schools. Be honest.
3. Plan ahead.  
Many schools have rolling admissions which admit as applications come in. Apply as soon as you can. Work on your essay well before hand.
4. Some things can be turned in afterwards  
Your OAT scores and letter of recommendations are not required before submission. Note that letters are uploaded through OptomCAS first.



Lindsay Fullam working with Unite for Sight.

## Fun Facts about the Eye

By Tammy Nguyen

- People generally read 25% slower from a computer screen compared to paper.
- Babies' eyes do not produce tears until the baby is approximately six to eight weeks old.
- Your eyes blink over 10,000,000 times a year!

## Notable Research

By: Tammy Nguyen

### Artificial Retina Restored Normal Vision in Blind Mice

According to the August issue of Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), scientists have developed an artificial retina that could restore sight to the blind. Artificial retinas are not a new invention - however the one produced by Sheila Nirenberg and Chethan Pandarinath includes a retinal code that allows animals to detect facial images and track moving images unlike past development. The scientists have already started to test a similar device in monkeys, and hopefully design one for humans to help sight impaired people.

Credit: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-13/blind-mice-given-sight-after-device-cracks-retinal-code.html>





Photo provided by Lindsay Fullam

## Optometry News

By Vanessa Meyerowitz

### Scholars Program at Pennsylvania College of Optometry Postponed

The Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University has postponed the launch of its accelerated three year optometry program to June 2013. Portions of the Scholar's Program curriculum will be piloted with eligible Scholar's Program students of PCO's 2016 class.

### Legislation Fails to Allow Puerto Rican Optometrists to prescribe pharmaceutical agents

Puerto Rico is the only jurisdiction of the United States in which optometrists are not permitted to prescribe or use

therapeutic pharmaceutical agents (TPAs). In May, optometrists attempted to gain TPA privileges by submitting a bill to the legislature in San Juan – the seventh one in 15 years. The bill was voted down in June. Puerto Rican optometrists plan to continue petitioning for rights so as to "provide full-scope eye care to the many millions of people in Puerto Rico who desperately need it."

Credit: <http://www.sightnation.com/news/tpa-bill-fails-puerto-rico-again>

## eyeSIGHT INTERNATIONAL Sponsorship Program

By Nikolay Boychev

(<https://sites.google.com/site/sightforhumanity/what-we-do/the-eyesight-sponsorship-program>)

The Global Initiative to Eliminate Avoidable Blindness, as defined by the WHO, is aimed at creating alternative pathways to overcome the severe shortage of ophthalmologists in developing countries, specifically through the use of ophthalmic assistants. Thus, eyeSIGHT INTERNATIONAL's goal is to offer the means for obtaining formal ophthalmic education and allow the successful applicant, after course completion, to work with his/her home government, educational institutions, and ophthalmologists/optometrists to set up formal ophthalmic assistant training programs.

eyeSIGHT INTERNATIONAL is making the effort to allow people to enroll and complete a North American JAOMP accredited course for an Ophthalmic Assistant.

A successful completion of the course will permit the applicant to write a certification examination and attain the credential COA (Certified Ophthalmic Assistant), which then will permit the applicant to further study for the higher credentials of COT, COMT, and more. Program completion further gives access to various specialized CE courses.



# Spotlight on an Optometrist: Dr. Angel Rivera

By Vanessa Meyerowitz

*Dr. Angel Rivera currently practices optometry at the Tallahassee Outpatient Clinic VHA in Florida. He is the Externship and VHA/FSU Pre-Optometric Volunteer Program director and the Executive Director of the APOA.*

## Q: What drew you to a career in Optometry?

**A:** I was introduced to Dr Hector Santiago, Former IAUPR and AZCOPT School Dean on winter 1986. After discussing optometry and the school he suggested I join the school.

At the time, I was working for the Department of Economic Development and Commerce of Puerto Rico while finishing my Master Degree from the Medical Science Campus, University of PR.

I got the chance to meet a lot of friends, teachers and employees from the school. I was fascinated by the school and the enthusiastic environment. I remember a few friends were studying neuroanatomy and I was also captivated by it; however I knew that I can't see blood without passing out so optometry was a better alternative for me.

After giving optometry more thought I decided to leave my job, change careers and join the Optometry School in fall of 1987. After I joined I really got involved in the PR Student Optometry Association, as President and AOSA Trustee.

## Q: You've done a lot of optometry work as a federal employee. Why did you decide to go into this line of work and what opportunities did this provide you?

**A:** Once I decided to become an optometrist I knew that the armed forces would have scholarships available. As a teenager I was involved in the Marine Cadets and the Civil Air Patrol so I wanted to look into this opportunity. I applied for the scholarship and got it. I served eight years in active duty. It was a great experience and a positive

experience for my family. You have the opportunity to travel and meet a lot of people.

Depending on where you are stationed, you may have young patients, retired, geriatric patients or family members of service people. I had the opportunity to teach contact lenses and refraction to ophthalmology residents. As an active duty, GS and VA employee I always teach optometry externs and perform vision screening in elementary schools. In other places such as Fort Irwin, California, you are the only optometrist. Working in the army influenced me to work at the VA. Working face to face with veterans is amazing. As a fellow veteran it is a pleasure to serve the ones protecting us and our freedom.

## Q: What prompted you to get involved with APOA?

**A:** This has been a dream of mine for a long time. I always wanted to do something for our profession and APOA was it. Since my early college years I wanted to be in every social group and I became the Vice-President of the Beta Beta Beta National Biological Honor Society (TriBeta) <http://www.tri-beta.org> where I organized ecological field trips for high schools students and several conferences for college students. I believe we should start teaching the love for our environment as soon as possible.

Likewise with optometry, the "pre-optometric experience" is a unique opportunity to learn and teach about optometry, not only for the students joining the optometry schools but for anyone. This is the beauty of education. You spread the "opto-seed" and it matures to fruition. Through this education, the community will get to know optometrists better. We may want to get involved in the school visual screenings so we can teach about our great profession of optometry while service our community.

I see so many students by themselves. If they get together and communicate everyone can learn about optometry. Through the pre-optometry experience (volunteer and shadowing) more students will truly understand what optometry is about. I believe that APOA will actually allow ASCO to open more optometry schools. As more people want to get in, the existing schools won't be able to accommodate them. APOA gives students the opportunity to get involved, share ideas and learn about the profession of optometry.

*Special thanks to Dr. Angel Rivera for this interview.*

*American Pre-Optometric Association  
Newsletter  
Issue 1, Volume 2*

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