

*“During your years as editor of *Optometric Education*, what did you set out to accomplish? What were the significant issues of the time for the profession in general and for optometric educators in particular? What are your thoughts about the journal during your time compared with the journal of today?”*

I had the pleasure of serving as the editor of what was then titled the *Journal of Optometric Education* from the fall issue 1978 until the winter issue 1985. To place this time period in some perspective, the journal published its first issue in 1975, so it was relatively new as a publication. The primary challenge of this time period was ensuring there was a sufficient number of quality manuscripts submitted for review and publication. This required the editor, editorial board members and managing editor to continually be encouraging individuals and, in particular, faculty members to write articles related to optometric education. It should be remembered this was a time when faculty were not necessarily writing articles specifically about optometric education and there were fewer schools and colleges and, of course, faculty than today.

This encompassed a time in which optometric education was beginning to embrace new teaching methodologies, optometric residency programs were still relatively few in number, and some schools and colleges did not have significantly developed externship programs. Similarly, many clinic programs were structured more as teaching laboratories than as self-sufficient entities.

During the past 30 or more years there has been great change in technology available for optometric education and this has greatly impacted all aspects of the optometric enterprise. Even so, a

quick review of the journal issues that appeared during my time as editor showed that the publication was addressing some of the same topics that are being addressed today in current issues of the journal and by optometry as a profession. These included such topics as manpower, the need for relevant practice management education and continuing competency. At least two topics have changed significantly from this time period: perceived barriers for women in optometry, and pharmacology training in optometry. In contemporary optometric education there are more women than men students enrolled in schools and colleges, and pharmacology has been inculcated in a meaningful manner into almost every aspect of optometry.

Based on the quality of articles that appear in current issues of *Optometric Education* there is greater interest in sharing ideas and information related to all aspects of optometric education. There have been significant changes in professional program curricula, substantial growth in optometric externship and residency programs as well as continuing education. These changes, together with the increase in optometric education institutions, appear to provide a more abundant source of quality articles. These changes have all contributed to a more vital publication for the profession.

John F. Amos, OD, MS
1978-1985

It seems remarkable to me that we are celebrating 36 years for the journal *Optometric Education*. As I take the long view and look back on the journal's history, many of the challenges have remained the same. I believe that all of us who have served as editor have sought to publish articles that meet the standards of quality research and scholarship, and, indeed, which will have a positive impact on optometric education and ultimately the abilities of our graduates.

As in any scholarly endeavor, the publication of new knowledge that benefits the community is of the highest priority, but, as *Optometric Education* is a very specialized journal, attracting true educational research articles has been and may always be a challenge. Acknowledging this is important as it leads one, as an editor, to embrace the power of the journal to be a thought leader and a bridge to new knowledge, trends and practices from the larger healthcare education community.

If I reflect on my own tenure as editor from 1987 to 1991, I believe the true value of the journal was in its power to introduce novel concepts and to articulate emerging challenges to our educational community. During those years, we helped to introduce the schools and colleges of optometry to the challenges of teaching critical reasoning, establishing life-long learning, developing new and more effective clinical assessment tools, and managing a curriculum be-

ing overwhelmed by new knowledge and the expanding scope of optometric practice. Optometry's integration into our healthcare delivery system is accelerating, and *Optometric Education's* role in stimulating educational innovation and reform is destined to increase.

David A. Heath, OD, EdM
1987-1991

As editor, my most important goal was to strengthen service to the readership by providing opportunities for publication and a forum for relevant issues. I had the opportunity to introduce some new formats for features including "Think Tank" and "My Best Day in Optometric Education," both of which are opinion-based and designed to be provocative, inspirational and diverse in perspective. Working with Dr. Barry Kran from the New England College of Optometry, we were able to introduce the Teaching Case Report format, which was designed to encourage clinical educators to share their expertise, while also providing readers with materials that could be used to enhance their own teaching. I also had the opportunity to work with a number of first-time authors to help them through the review and publication process. What a thrill to see your name in print for the first time!

The biggest change that occurred during my time as editor was not something that I initiated or envisioned. In fact, it was a change about which I was uncertain and hesitant. That was the move away from an in-print format to an online only journal. On the plus side, we are optimistic that the online availability has increased readership access and made the journal available to new audiences. Early tracking of the Web page hits supported the idea that more people were linking into the journal than the previous mailed distribution. Support for the indexing of articles on the Website provided by Transitions Optical has made it even easier to find topics of interest. Hopefully, this has been a positive change in keeping with current trends in technology.

Elizabeth Hoppe, OD, MPH, DrPH
2005-2010

Our focus during my editorship was singular, and that was to develop and enhance the scholarship of the contributions to the publication. We actively recruited submissions and developed theme issues to allow more authors to contribute their work within a framework where their colleagues both assisted and supported good scholarship. And, it worked out really well. Authors who had little experience got to work with more experienced writers, and more experienced contributors had the opportunity to help their colleagues. While that was all good, and it met our goals and objectives for the publication, the most interesting articles we published during my tenure were not scholarly at all. I did a series of interviews with deans and presidents of schools and colleges of optometry, and I found the different personalities to be instructive for educators, as well as interesting studies on how leaders in our profession think. Each person interviewed was forthcoming with insights and perspectives that I found illuminating and humanizing at the same time. I still remember a response Sylvio Dupuis, OD, gave me to a question about the varied aspects of his career. He said that you should contribute as best you were able and when you have done so it is then time to move on. Don't look back. Don't rest on your laurels, but move on to other challenges and opportunities, and you will have a great life. I was really impressed by his comments and have told the story hundreds of times over my life in the profession.

I have tried to live that life as best I have been able because of that insight, and I have had a great life. It pleases me greatly to say that the journal is much better today than when I was the editor, which is as it should be. The articles are more scholarly and more varied in their subject matter, and it makes me especially proud to have been a small part of the publication.

John W. Potter, OD, MA
1985-1987

During my term as editor, 1999-2002, my emphasis was on promoting the validity of academic publications in the area of educational process and teaching methodologies. My premise was that we needed quality publications by and for professional optometric educators to advance teaching and learning. We also needed recognition that these types of papers were indeed a form of scholarship that mattered. My "gold standard" for papers on professional education was the journal *Academic Medicine*, and I wanted our journal to be of the same caliber. I felt that optometry's education journal should be the "go-to" place for professional educators to seek knowledge and information, and with a lot of work we could get there.

In my opinion, the recognition of work efforts of teachers, and the translation of their work into various forms of scholarship, is critical to an institution's success. This is particularly true for faculty who choose a clinical career. So with the journal my constant worry was grounded in the reality that when I attempted to solicit papers from thought leaders in optometric education there was a resounding pushback that their work did not "count" toward promotion and tenure, especially if it were published in this journal. So my first effort was to restructure the editorial review board and bring rigor to the peer review process by adopting and applying the dreaded "S" word, STANDARDS. Then I hit the road with bragging rights about the blue ribbon panel of experts who then comprised the review board.

Next I undertook a review of the accreditation standards for optometric institutions. I found that the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) standard on research did not appear to encourage scholarship in education and teaching. I say this because it was vague and not substantive. While this standard is deliberately written to be broadly interpreted, the perception of many faculty leaders and institutional leaders in optometry was (and I feel still is) that the research standard favors original discovery rather than all forms of scholarship, including the scholarship of teaching, reporting of educational methods, and the outcomes of

applying certain teaching strategies.

I recall writing a letter to ACOE leadership to that effect, expressing my concerns that the scholarship of the profession would suffer if the work of our teaching colleagues was not clearly outlined as important. I urged ACOE to encourage institutions to support faculty in this area by modifying the standard to include commentary about educational research. By supporting this form of research the ACOE would be

providing the institutions with a framework to support their teaching faculty and also provide evidence that this accreditation standard was being met. I felt then and still feel today that the solution to gaining appropriate recognition for teacher-clinician scholars is to change the standard, and prominently name research in education and teaching as an institutional requirement in the accrediting process.

Roger Wilson, OD, FAAO
1999-2002

Send Us Your Comments

Do you have any thoughts or insights related to the journal Optometric Education over the years? Send your comments to Dr. Aurora Denial at deniala@neco.edu, and we will publish them in a future edition of the journal.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE UPCOMING THEME EDITION

Scholarship

Scholarly contributions by faculty are a critical component of faculty development, promotion/tenure and delivery of optometric education. Most optometric faculty have minimal formal training in professional writing, research and publication. Scholarly contributions move education forward and can significantly impact the profession. *Optometric Education* is announcing a future theme edition, which will focus on scholarship. The theme edition is scheduled for publication in 2012. We are sending out this invitation early to allow for adequate time to design appropriate studies. **We invite all educators and administrators to participate in this theme edition.**

For additional information on theme editions, contact Dr. Aurora Denial, deniala@neco.edu.