Editorial

International Education – Broadening Our Vision

Timothy Wingert, OD, FAAO, Guest Editor



Timothy Wingert, OD, FAAO

Numerous authors have discussed the benefits of international education. They have noted its impact on student's cultural understanding, comprehending of public health issues, diversifying clinical education, and solidifying basic concepts in providing optometric care. Faculty members participating also have a broadened view of the world and experience new approaches that they may incorporate into their normal instructional activities.

In October 2019, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), and the World Council of Optometry (WCO) jointly put on a global summit on optometric education. In attendance were representatives from each of these organizations, including individual representation from the six regions of the WCO. The Summit had three goals:

> **Goal 1:** To assemble representatives from optometric academic institutions around the world and identify issues facing optometric education globally.
>
> **Goal 2:** Share current best practices in optometric education.
>
> **Goal 3:** Share ideas on future developments in optometric education**.**

After 4 hours of discussion, one of the conclusions arrived at was that many of the issues in optometric education are not isolated to one country or geographic region, they are shared by institutions around the world. In the spirit of advancing optometric education globally, ASCO printed a report from the

Summit[1] and has put forth these two theme issues of *Optometric Education* that is entirely related to international optometric education. The intent was to highlight some of the activities going on around the world and to report the results of research within optometric educational institutions outside of North America.

As you will see from the diversity of articles in this issue, there are many organizations involved in international optometric education and in furthering the optometric profession around the world. We hope these articles will allow readers to better understand some of those perspectives and contributions and hopefully inspire efforts of collaboration. Perhaps this issue will inspire readers to reach out to others involved in similar efforts and not work within silos but instead find ways to form partnerships that provide synergy to what they do.

1. Vitek MA, Wingert TA. Special Report: Results of an Optometric Education Global Summit, Optometric Education. 2002 Nov; 48(1).

Timothy Wingert, OD, FAAO, is the Retired Dean at University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry.