## Editorial

# Positive Changes in Applicant Pool Follow<br>ASCO’s Optometry Gives Me Life Campaign

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In the spring of 2019, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) launched the *Optometry Gives Me Life* campaign. The objective of this public awareness campaign is to develop a robust, diverse and highly qualified pool of applicants to ASCO member schools and colleges of optometry. Early results were promising, and the most recent data indicate the campaign’s success is continuing.

As ASCO previously reported, in the first 4 months of the campaign, its online ads were viewed more than 19 million times, 76% of its video views were to the end (a completion rate much higher than the 30% benchmark), and there were 50,000 visits to the campaign’s landing page FutureEyeDoc.org.[1] According to the latest data, after 2 years, more than 100 million ads have been viewed, the video completion rate is 79.19%, and there have been 331,576 visits to FutureEyeDoc.org.[2] In addition, 604,040 social engagements, such as likes, reactions, shares, comments or follows, have been made with ads.[2]

As of September 2021, the campaign has garnered 3,123 applicant leads and 172 verified applicants, the latter representing an 11% increase.[2] Other changes in the applicant pool since the launch of *Optometry Gives Me Life* are as follows.[2]

| | **2019-2020 OptomCAS application cycle** | **2020-2021 OptomCAS application cycle** |
|---|---|---|
| **Change in size of applicant pool** | +3.7% | +4.7% |
| **Change in number of Black and Latino/Hispanic applicants** | +10% (from 384 to 424 applicants) | +18% (from 424 to 499 applicants) |
| **Percentage of applicants with GPA ?3.0** | 83% | 81% |

To achieve its goals, *Optometry Gives Me Life* raises awareness of optometry as a career option among the key target audience of college juniors and seniors enrolled in a science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM) curriculum. The campaign presents online to individuals fitting this profile in response to their search history and age. It utilizes specialized and targeted social media outreach, publications, ancillary promotional materials, emails, direct mail and the landing page at FutureEyeDoc.org. It keeps prospective students engaged while supporting them in taking the first step in the application process. Videos highlight, through the experiences of three practicing Doctors of Optometry, what an optometric careers offers, including work-life balance, personal fulfillment and job security. The videos provide insight into the personal, social and professional lives of the doctors.

**Expect Additional Strategies and Initiatives in the Coming Months**

The *Optometry Gives Me Life* Campaign is ongoing, and ASCO says new strategies and initiatives are on the way. Connecting with and supporting future optometry students and graduates will always be important as they are essential to the viability of the profession.

**References**

1. Denial A. Reaching out to generation Z: ASCO launches Optometry Gives Me Life campaign. Optometric Education. Summer 2019;44(3).
2. Pence P. Recruiting the future doctors of optometry. Presentation to ASCO Student Affairs Committee; Oct. 6, 2021.

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