



Department of Ophthalmology Newsletter

Fall 2021

Chairman's message

It is a pleasure for me to provide this department update for the Fall Newsletter. Our focus remains on collaboration and mentorship in the core missions of academic health care: patient care, education, research, and service where we continue to develop our strong relationships with alumni, clinical colleagues, and research partners at other institutions in Chicago, across the United States, and internationally. The [Richard A. Perritt Charitable Foundation](#) continues to provide the critical support for all of our programs.



We have expanded our [Patient Care Services](#) with the recruitment of [John Wilgucki, MD](#) from the University of Illinois Retina Fellowship and Laura Vrablic, our new Orthoptist from Children's Lurie Hospital. Our clinical volumes remained relatively strong through the COVID pandemic.

Our [Educational Programs](#) remain strong, with a sustained focus on our target audiences: medical students ([UME](#)), residents ([GME](#)) and practicing ophthalmologists and optometrists ([CME](#)). [Stephen Blatt, MD](#) has provided significant leadership in our Ophthalmology Wellness Program featured in this newsletter. Anuradha Khanna, MD, who serves as Vice Chair of Education, also serves as the Director of Simulation Innovation in the Advanced Procedure and Education Center (APEC) in the Stritch School of Medicine. Her interactive [3D technology](#) educational system "Ocusim[®]" was transitioned to Oculus VR headsets and this year. In addition to Ophthalmology residents, she trained 170 medical students, residents from ENT and the Emergency Department.

Currently we have 6 full-time and 1 part-time research faculty in the department. Our growing innovative [Research Programs](#), led by Vice Chair [Evan Stubbs, PhD](#), are reflected by the list of [publications and presentations](#) in which faculty and residents have been included. This year [Simon Kaja, PhD](#), was part the investigative research team of a \$10 million NIH grant (in collaboration with University of Illinois) to develop a broad-spectrum immunomodulatory eye drop to treat patients with severe dry eye and ocular surface disease due to inflammatory and systemic immune disorders.

Our tradition of [International Service](#) with our partnership with [Humanity First Guatemala](#) to serve patients in [Guatemala](#) since 2018 at [Nasir Hospital](#) which was the [site of our 2019 trip](#) and all future mission trips to Guatemala.

I look forward to spending time with those planning to travel to New Orleans for the AAO meeting. We have reserved [Bayona Restaurant](#) where we will host all alumni for a traditional dinner on Saturday November 12, 2021. Thank you for your continued interest in the department. I welcome your feedback and appreciate your continued support.

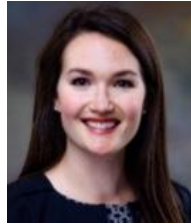
Meet our PGY 1, PGY2, and PGY3 Residents



Nolan Adams



Connor Baharozian



Meredith Furst



Briggs Hoyt



Evan Dackowski



Paul de Bustros



Sarah Griddin



Vishwaradh Reddy



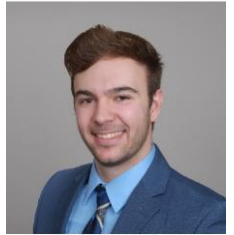
Nileema Patel



Elisabeth Sledz



Suzanne Kirk



John Zahour

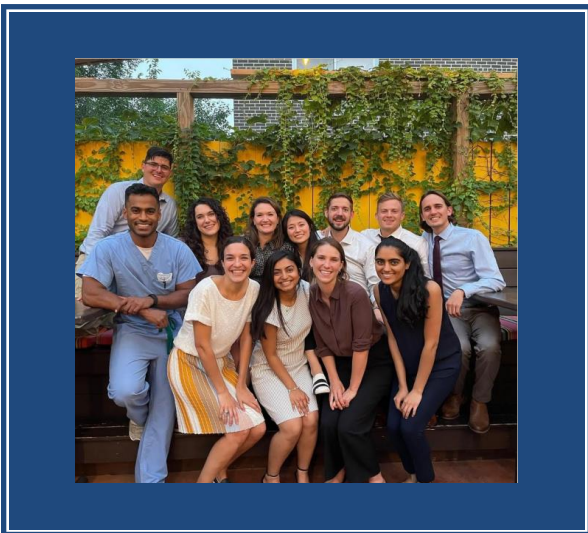
Class of 2023: [Nolan Adams](#) (Loyola U); [Connor Baharozian](#) (Boston U); [Sarah Griffin](#) (Loyola U); and [Vishwaradh Reddy](#) (Texas TechU).

Class of 2024: [Meredith Furst](#) (U of Texas SOM, San Antonio); [Briggs Hoyt](#) (Creighton U SOM); [Nileema Patel](#) (St. Louis U SOM); and [Elisabeth Sledz](#) (U of New Mexico SOM).

Class of 2025: Evan Dackowski (Albert Einstein), Paul de Bustros (Loyola), Suzanne Kirk (Loyola), John Zahour (St. Louis U)

Please click the following link, which will give you more detail on our residency program.

<https://loyolamedicine.org/gme/ophthalmology-residency?hcmacid=a0Z2M00000Izt7aUAA>



Robert J. Barnes Award for Best Alumni Day Presentation 2021

The Robert J. Barnes Award is presented to a Loyola Ophthalmology resident at the end of each academic year. Dr. Barnes established a scholarship fund to motivate residents to pursue further education in ophthalmology

Congratulations to Sheena Khanna, MD.



Presentation Title

"Lipid Layer Thickness and Blink Parameters in Patients with Dry Eye Disease"

Congratulations to our 2021 Graduating Class



Ophthalmology- Educator of the Year

Loyola University's Ophthalmology Educator of the Year award, chosen by our residents, honors faculty members for their excellence in providing a constructive learning environment and for the superior teaching and evaluative efforts they have offered during a given academic year.

2021- Paul Chiranand, MD



Departmental Biomedical Research Happenings

The research-intensive faculty within the Department of Ophthalmology are actively engaged at developing, evaluating, and advancing new and exciting next generation educational and therapeutic strategies for the improved management of their vision-challenged patients. Ophthalmic subspecialties currently being advanced by our ophthalmology research faculty are highlighted below and include cataract, cornea/refractive, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology, oculoplastics, optometry/low vision, pediatrics, retinovascular, and uveitis.

ISPB-Sponsored Research Grants

Consistent with ACGME educational recommendations, all Ophthalmology residents entering our program are required to actively participate in the advancement of faculty-mentored basic/clinical research programs. In association with our research faculty, many of our residents, medical, and graduate students enjoy their first taste of independent funding through the generosity of the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness (ISPB). We are both excited and proud to provide a listing of the 2021-2022 ISPB-sponsored research programs currently being conducted by Ophthalmology residents and faculty. We offer a hearty Congratulations to the following successful applicants!

1. Adams N., Iqbal O., McDonnell, J. The Effect of Blue-Light Blocking IOLs on Glycemic Control in Diabetic Patients.
2. Baharozian C., Vierling S., Gaynes B. Influence of vitreous detachment on the outcome of intravitreal injection for retinal disease.
3. Reddy V. and Blatt S. Resident Wellness Project.
4. Griffin S., Chaku M., Khanna A. An Enhanced Curriculum; Integration of Experiential Learning Opportunities for Ophthalmologic Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes.
5. Furst M., Bu P., Yoo D. The Effect of Rho Kinase Inhibitors on in-vitro Human Orbital Preadipocytes.
6. Ferris A. and Starnes T. Microbiome in Rosacea Blephariti.
7. Diulus S. and Bouchard C. Orbital Biomechanics in Patients with Sleep Apnea.
8. Yolyanuk M. and Kaja S. Efficacy of antioxidants in particulate matter-induced dry eye disease.

National Institutes of Health and Department of Veterans Affairs Sponsored Research Grants

The following Department of Ophthalmology research faculty have also been successful at competing for federally sponsored research grants:

1. Kaja S. Immunotherapy for Ocular Surface Diseases. R24, NIH
2. Stubbs Jr. E. Translamina Cribrosa Pressure Gradient Model of Normal Tension Glaucoma. BLR&D Merit, Department of Veterans Affairs
3. Stubbs Jr. E. Mitochondrial-Targeted Antioxidant-Encapsulating Nanoparticles as a Promising Therapeutic Strategy in Regulating Outflow Resistance. BLR&D Merit, Department of Veterans Affairs open encounter

Alumni News

Mark Daily, Robert Barnes and Anu Khanna shared in the Investiture ceremony for Rukhsana Mirza receiving the Ryan-Pusateri Endowed Professorship in Ophthalmology at Northwestern University.



Family Halloween Adventures



Doug and Nikki Salm "Ghostbuster"
Family Halloween



Ray and Heidi Areaux and "Harry Potter"
Family Halloween



Mackenzie and Nathan Sward Family
Halloween



Christine Mata and Alex Castaneda Family
Halloween



Michelle Sims Lisek and Ernst "Star Wars"
Family Halloween

CME Programs

Please see our link to the website which will outline all of our future CME programs.

<https://ssom.luc.edu/ophtha/education/cmeprograms/>

Education Programs

Please see link to Anu Khanna's Updated Ocusim Lab 2021 video using the VR headsets to teach SSOM Medical students with the help of the residents.

<https://ssom.luc.edu/ophtha/news/ocusim2021/>



Briggs Hoyt



Elizabeth Sledz



Featurette

Steve Blatt, Director of Wellness



Wellness Program:

- Loyola ophthalmology resident wellness program: We launched the resident wellness program in July 2020. During our first year, we successfully addressed residents' intrinsic stressors associated with taking weekend call and studying for the OKAP exam. Additionally, we were also able to address residents' extrinsic stressors by creating administrative wellness half-days to be used for self-care as well as a resident wellness stipend funded by the Perritt grant. Now, in our second year, we have expanded the components that residents enjoyed last year, and have also implemented their feedback to create new wellness program offerings. Our wellness sessions now include recorded knowledge transfer presentations that review the current research literature in burnout and well-being. Our in-person time together focuses on experiential activities like breathwork and discussions on identifying and overcoming self-doubt. Our current second-year residents have taken the initiative to set up a peer mentoring program with the first-year residents in order to ensure strong social connectedness and provide the reassurance of shared experiences. Lastly, in July 2021, we hosted our department's first ever Blue Coat Ceremony to welcome our new residency class of 2024.
- Local collaboration: In the spirit of learning about resident wellness best practices at institutions outside of Loyola and Hines VA, as well as sharing our own best practices with others, we established the Chicagoland Ophthalmology Resident Wellness Group with faculty members from each of Chicago's six ophthalmology residency programs. This collaborative group now meets to share ideas about creating a wellness curriculum and assessing residents' well-being needs and interests.
- National collaboration: Similarly, we have joined national dialogues among educators in ophthalmology about wellness and well-being. AUPO's working group on wellness has been a collaborative forum that we have taken an active role in, allowing us to further our familiarity with best practices as well as share our own. This collaboration has led to an invitation to speak at AUPO's 2022 Annual Meeting, *Adult Learning and "Mindset"* symposium. We have also been the driving force behind establishing a series of collaborative well-being webinars between AAO and the Association of VA Ophthalmologists (AVAO). This work has led to our being asked by AAO to formally review the Wellness section on AAO.org on an ongoing basis, as well as being part of a panel discussing physician burnout among ophthalmologists hosted by AAO and AVAO. Finally, adopting successful wellness initiatives elsewhere, we have introduced monthly breathwork stress reduction sessions for Hines VA eye technicians and medical support assistants (MSAs) in order to promote well-being for the Hines eye clinic team and, consequently, an elevated experience for our patients.