

EMPOWER

An OWL Magazine



spring 2023

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Erin Schallhorn Powers

“So Hot Right Now”

Few sentiments so closely describe OWL today. Our reach is growing, our impact is expanding, and our passion is engaging more and more individuals to support diversity, inclusion and develop leadership skills across eyecare.

Our year started with the largest-ever OWL-WIO Reception at Hawaiian Eye, demonstrating collaboration and continuity with our surgeon and industry partners. And we enhanced these partnerships with OWL's expanded local reach, creating new touchpoints for our members to connect:

We celebrated our inaugural Florida Chapter event, joining established local chapters in Southern California, Texas, New York and North Carolina.

Our newly established Virtual Programs Committee hosted our first impactful program of 2023 focused on Emotional Intelligence as part of our Leadership Lessons series (all of which can still be accessed via the OWL membership database!)

A continued 'Member Mixer' virtual networking series grew to a quarterly event, combining small groups with OWL leadership to help orient and welcome new members into the variety of resources and programs we offer – as well as connecting longtime members.

“But wait, there's more!”

Two enormous initiatives for OWL are currently in development, to be launched this year!

Bridging the Os: OWL is expanding into Optometry!

As a core mission, we want to ensure we provide support throughout eye care. We have a newly appointed Optometry Committee, with Co-Chairs Rutvi Doshi and Desiree Owen, who are helping to navigate the best approach for this unique audience and membership base. Look out for

our inaugural event at the American Academy of Optometry in New Orleans, this October!

European Focus: OWL is expanding into Europe! We want to hold true as Ophthalmic World Leaders and are delighted that Sally Tucker and Louise Veenhuis are Co-Chairs of our European Committee. Collaborations with the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS) have been extremely productive, and we are thrilled to announce our first official program taking place on Sunday, September 10th, in Vienna!

You'll see articles from both of our committee co-chairs in this edition of EMPOWER. Both initiatives represent an important step forward in the expansion of focus and resources to driving professional and personal development in eye care, to audiences that touch millions of patients worldwide. And additionally, our optometric and European membership will help to enhance the larger OWL team, providing unique insights and greater awareness. For as the principal organization dedicated to diversity and leadership in eyecare, it is imperative that our own leadership evolves, and we maintain an open, collaborative and accepting approach to change.

None of these accomplishments could be possible without our incredible group of volunteers, and of course our generous and thoughtful supporters. OWL is an organization with a collective mission; regardless of corporate identity or functional expertise, we all believe that diverse leadership results in better outcomes. Better outcomes for business, and more importantly, for patients. Thank you all, sincerely, for coming together to help eye care, to help others ●

Erin Powers

2023 LEADERSHIP -SUMMIT-



September 21-22, 2023 - Austin, TX



The OWL Leadership Summit is back on September 21-22, 2023, at the Omni Downtown in Austin, Texas.

The OWL Leadership Summit is targeted at mid-career professionals who have their sights set on growing into inclusive, informed, and effective leaders. You'll walk away from the Summit more equipped to:

- **Develop and lead teams no matter what your current position is**
- **Define and establish your executive presence**
- **Improve your communications and presentation skills**
- **Make an impact on the ophthalmology community**

With 100% of last year's survey responders rating the Summit as 'excellent' or 'very good,' you're sure to leave feeling inspired and energized about the opportunities ahead of you.

“Dynamic & inspirational presenters, extremely relevant topics, applicable advice, phenomenal networking, very well organized and beautiful location.”

The Summit is an investment in yourself and your career path.



Considering if this Summit is Right for You?
Find out more on our website: owlsite.org

Champion Members are advocates and champions of the OWL Mission, Vision, and Values; they are leaders in their organizations; they actively recruit new OWL members; and they contribute significantly in OWL by attendance, and leadership at Board or Committee levels.

Learn more | www.owlsite.org

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OWL
OPHTHALMIC WORLD LEADERS

OWL at ASCRS
Signature Event

**Integrity, Initiative & Influence:
Female Leadership in the Military**

A panel discussion with top female military leaders

When: Sunday May 7th 5.30-7.00 pm
Where: Marriott Marquis, San Diego Marina

Find out more and register: www.owlsite.org



Desiree Owen



Rutvi Doshi

Bridging the O's

By Desiree Owen & Rutvi Doshi



OWL: Advancing Diversity in Leadership is delighted to announce the Bridging the O's initiative, bringing together eye care by expanding our mission and vision into the optometric space.

The Bridging the O's initiative came about from a strong internal push to provide value to our optometric community, as well as a robust external pull from both the optometric industry and optometrists alike. With all parties being passionate about the same objectives, we are coming together to develop a pathway to success.

OWL's Optometry Committee Co-Chairs Desiree Owen and Rutvi Doshi share their insights about this exciting initiative.

How has your professional journey led you to OWL and what does OWL mean to you?

Desiree: My professional journey is one reason I appreciate the work of OWL. My journey began with and continues to benefit from the mentorship and collaborative relationships of a diverse group of leaders in the ophthalmic space. As a young girl I was fortunate to have a mentor, Millicent Knight, OD, who encouraged me to follow my dream and ultimately work alongside her after graduating from optometry school. Millicent was one of the first African American women to graduate from the Illinois College of Optometry and recognized the importance of surrounding herself with strong leaders and mentors but also being a mentor to others.

I've served as Medical Director for a large optometry/ophthalmology practice, helped launch an integrative eye and wellness center and treated patients. After completing my MBA, I made the switch to industry and have worked on the ophthalmic portfolios at Shire, Novartis, Kala and AbbVie Pharmaceuticals, working in various capacities such as Medical Science Liaison, National Director of

Field Medical, Executive Director of Clinical and Medical Affairs, and now my current role as Global Medical Director of AbbVie's posterior segment portfolio.

As I've grown in my professional journey I've continued to benefit from the diversity of my peers, industry leaders, and the connections I've made across all partners in the ophthalmic space. Since making the leap to industry, Steven Zhang, MD, PhD, an OWL Member, whom I met in my first role at Shire, has been pivotal to my growth and continues to not only be a mentor, but someone I bounce ideas off and collaborate with even though we no longer work together. I believe these types of connections are exactly the experiences that align with OWL and why it means so much to me.

Rutvi: OWL has been an incredible source of inspiration and motivation for me throughout my professional career. As a clinical optometrist turned industry professional, I have been incredibly fortunate to have the support and mentorship of leaders and peers in the ophthalmic space. What's even more exciting is that at Tarsus Pharmaceuticals, I am surrounded by many OWL leaders and mentors who prioritize diversity and inclusion daily. My passion for ongoing learning and growth, as well as my commitment to advancing diversity and inclusivity, have been fueled by my involvement with OWL. It has inspired me to give back to the Optometric community and continues to be a powerful motivator as I pursue my career journey.

What is the OWL Mission and how does it align with the optometric community?

Rutvi: OWL's mission is to provide professional and personal development and create opportunities for collaboration across Ophthalmology, and now Optometry. Members of OWL include clinicians, researchers, entrepreneurs and industry leaders, who are all committed to supporting one another and mentoring future leaders in eye care. OWL is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in the ophthalmic industry and Optometrists can be part of a community that values and celebrates diversity, a cor-

nerstone for innovation. OWL provides opportunities for networking and mentorship programs, designed to help members achieve their personal and professional goals.

How do OWL's values align with the optometric community?

Desiree: OWL's values are to respect the contributions of all professionals within industry and clinical care; believe diverse leadership results in better outcomes; value a positive environment that inspires, support and connect individuals; and believe that when members reach their potential, they maximize contributions to their organizations.

Whether you are a practicing clinician or are working in industry, we all benefit when we work collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes for patients and our companies, while also benefiting both professionally and personally.

Why do you want to be a part of the Bridging the O's initiative and bringing OWL to Optometry?

Desiree: Through my involvement in OWL and having taken part in programs offered such as the Fellows program, I recognize the importance and benefit of surrounding yourself with a diverse group of leaders. As I mentioned my own professional experience is one that directly aligns with OWL's vision, mission and values, and because of that I see great value in bringing OWL to my optometric colleagues, to work collaboratively across the ophthalmic industry to advance innovation and patient care and to provide opportunities for professional and personal development through OWL's large network of clinicians and professionals.

Rutvi: Joining OWL has been invaluable for me. Through OWL, I have met

inspiring mentors and leaders who have guided me in my career journey. OWL's mission to promote diversity and inclusivity aligns perfectly with my values. I am excited about the Bridging the O's initiative and the collaboration between OWL and optometry, which will provide a unique forum for networking and leadership development opportunities. I am certain that this collaboration will help optometrists reach their professional goals, in ways it has for me.

Why should ODs get involved in OWL?

Desiree: ODs should get involved with OWL to surround themselves with colleagues and leaders with diverse backgrounds in eye care to learn, collaborate and advance innovation. In my opinion there is only an upside to growing your network and having access to diversity in thought and contacts. Not only does innovation flow from our ability to work collaboratively as clinicians and industry professionals, but also our professional growth can flow from that same ability.

Rutvi: OWL is a valuable resource for ODs looking to expand their professional network and be part of a community that is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in the ophthalmic industry. Collaboration among clinicians and industry professionals is critical to driving innovation, and it also creates opportunities for professional growth. Therefore, I highly encourage OD colleagues to become involved with OWL, to cultivate these benefits and to make enduring friendships along the way.

Desiree and I are thrilled to collaborate with the OWL Optometry Committee on this initiative. Our thanks to: Joe Boyd, Marcy DeWalt, Maria Sampalis, OD, Radhika Tunstall, MD, PhD, Ravaghn Williams and Nivine Woods for all they do. ●

SAVE THE DATE

Join us at AAOpt in New Orleans this Fall!
Save the date for OWL's first Signature Event at the American Academy of Optometry

Thursday,
October 12
5:30pm



in EUROPE

BRINGING MORE OF THE 'WORLD' TO OPHTHALMIC WORLD LEADERS

By Louise Veenhuis and Sally Tucker

OWL: Advancing Diversity in Leadership was established in the US in 2004 and up until this time has predominantly focused its activities within the US. Earlier aspirations for an intentional expansion across the pond were put on hold once the pandemic hit.

As you may know, OWL's mission is "to provide professional and personal development and create opportunities for collaboration" with a vision to "promote and develop diverse leadership to advance ophthalmic innovation and patient care."

OWL had been receiving requests from current and potential OUS members to consider a European presence, to help



in EUROPE

strengthen their networks and expand opportunities for diverse candidates in much the same way as OWL does in the US. OWL's European Committee was formed to help lead the way with committed volunteers who believe in OWL's mission and have attended events at major congresses such as ASCRS and AAO. **We offer sincere thanks to our fellow Committee members:** Amanda Carones, Jana Dallmann, Marisley De Almeida, Neil Hanley, Ana Neves, Erin Schallhorn Powers, Bernie Ursell and Stefanie Volland.

OWL not only recognises current ophthalmic world leaders, but also the importance of supporting and developing those leaders of the future. Our legacy is to ensure continuous collaboration with the ultimate goal of benefitting advances in eyecare. Our committee members have made significant contributions within this field and are passionate in support-



Gaynor Fries

OWL's Executive Director

“The OWL Board felt it was crucial to have our European presence be led by European-based members, to ensure that our programming is on point and relevant to the audience and the European climate - and not just be an extension of what is going on in the US.”

ing OWL's cause to facilitate optimised cohesion and collaboration across the community, to benefit those who we all serve and who most need it: our patients. We recognise that this is most likely achieved if we work together, and we believe OWL offers a unique opportunity to support this and to maximise our success collectively.

The question is, how this is best achieved in Europe, having had the benefit of learning from the incredible successes in the US? We recognise and appreciate differences in culture and needs across regions. To this end, we would like to ask for feedback from our eyecare colleagues - members and interested parties outside the US - in a brief survey. The results from this survey initiative will empower us to scope our activities according to the needs of our stakeholders, so we can develop relevant educational programmes and networking opportunities, bringing together the eyecare community across Europe.

If you are located outside of the US, please take the survey:



SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE

Help us to share this brief, user-friendly questionnaire to everyone involved in our field (ophthalmologists, optometrists, industry, service providers, health care professionals, etc.) and based within Europe. We would love to hear from you - what would you like to see more of? And how could an organisation such as OWL support these needs to foster and optimise collaboration industry wide?

OWL PROGRAMME AT ESCRS 2023, AUSTRIA

Although OWL has held smaller networking receptions in Europe, as we look ahead, we want to see events increase in size, include programme discussions and have potential for impact - so that OWL can become recognised as a global community with networking and personal/professional development opportunities that support the ophthalmic community as a whole.

We are very excited about the event we are planning for ESCRS in Vienna. We see this as an inaugural programme for OWL in Europe, during which we will be presenting our



Louise Veenhuis and Sally Tucker, OWL European Committee Co-Chairs

vision for the future, and showcasing a keynote speaker that we are hugely excited about. We invite you to join us for this event on **Sunday 10th September at 7pm** and look forward to sharing the next steps for OWL in Europe.

Louise Veenhuis and Sally Tucker feel honoured to represent OWL as the Co-Chairs for the European Committee but are indebted to the time, support and expertise that the Committee provides as a whole. “The talent, enthusiasm and dedication of everyone in the committee makes for an opportunity for growth and impact that we both feel honoured to be a part of.”

Both Louise and Sally both started their careers as optometrists, with Sally going on to complete a PhD in ophthalmology and with them both diversifying further with business qualifications. They are both working mothers and wives, investing in the development and growth of 3 children each, and as such are also passionate advocates for equality

and equity within the workplace, as well as at home! “Education and setting an example are essential, starting at home - encouraging mutual respect, equality in stature, empowerment and self-love in our sons and daughters alike.”

They are excited to be working with OWL and the valued members of the European Committee: “We are hugely invested and passionate about eyecare, having dedicated our careers to this in the past and committed to do so for the foreseeable future. We admire the value that OWL has brought elsewhere and would love to see this expand across Europe, where we have so much talent and dedication within eyecare. We believe that through collaboration, respect and cohesion we can work to make a positive difference across the industry, putting the patient at the centre. We look forward to your feedback, shaping the scope of our next steps to make this vision a reality.” ●

“The support for OWL from the ESCRS leadership has been amazing. We look forward to September and to future collaborations to strengthen our relationship and provide an opportunity for their members to learn more about OWL and what we represent.”

Erin Schallhorn Powers OWL's President

SAVE THE DATE

OWL@ESCRS in Vienna, Austria

7:00-8:30 pm

Sunday, September 10

Watch for more details at www.owl-site.org

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While content is produced independently by OWL, our programs are supported by industry partners. Their support means that OWL is able to provide an expanding menu of programs in the spirit of its mission, vision, and values of advancing diversity in leadership. We thank our financial supporters for their leadership and for the critical role they play in our organization.

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