



# ANNUAL REPORT

OPHTHALMIC WORLD LEADERS



## OWL'S REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP - October, 2024

**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF OWL** - 2024 marks the 20th Anniversary of OWL, and what an incredible journey it has been! Our main celebration took place at ASCRS in April, where we reflected on the organization's origins and its growth over the years. In addition, we collected inspiring stories from members whose careers and lives have been positively impacted by OWL. Another highlight of the event was a special dinner honoring our dedicated volunteers. We also proudly introduced our inaugural "President's Award," recognizing outstanding volunteerism – congratulations to Dr. Kate Fehlhaber!

Our programs and the 'Empower' magazine have paid tribute to OWL's 20-year journey. As part of commemorating our anniversary and investing in high-potential talent, OWL launched a special Grants Program this year, enabling young MDs and ODs to attend our Leadership Summit.

**GROWING MEMBERSHIP** - OWL's membership continues to thrive, with a 4% increase in revenue over the same period last year, bringing us close to 1,000 active members. We are especially pleased with the growth in Champion memberships, our sustaining members who represent 12% of our total membership and are passionate advocates of OWL's Mission, Vision, and Values. Looking ahead, we aim to further increase MD and OD representation, and this year, for the first time, OWL had a presence at the National Medical Association (NMA) Annual Meeting in New York.

We deeply value each of our members and strive to continually enhance OWL's offerings. If you have suggestions or feedback, please reach out to our Executive Director – we're here to support you.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY** - OWL remains in a strong financial position, committed to supporting our mission. As of September 30, 2024, unrestricted net assets have decreased slightly (3.8%) compared to the same time last year, in line with our budget expectations. With an increase in events and outreach activities, ongoing community support is essential. We are proud to have renewed partnerships with our corporate sponsors and also welcomed new sponsors this year in Amgen (following their acquisition of Horizon Therapeutics) and Ocular Therapeutix. We are grateful for the support of all our partners in helping us further our mission and vision.

### MEET OWL

OWL is the only non-profit in eyecare to unite every stakeholder: leading practice administrators, industry executives, consultants, media, PR, physicians and more. It is, inarguably, the best network in eyecare.

### VISION

OWL's vision is to promote and develop diverse leadership to advance Ophthalmic Innovation and Patient Care.

### MISSION

OWL works across Eyecare. Our mission is to provide professional and personal development and create opportunities for collaboration.

*"OWL is a connection point into the industry; a lifeline to connect me in. I've met so many different people and I'll run into them at various conferences. Having that network and that connection and helping to introduce me to the world of ophthalmology was really critical."*

**Joanna Williams**  
CEO, Voxeleron LLC



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**EVENTS** - We kicked off the year with our annual Networking Reception, co-hosted with WIO at Hawaiian Eye. This reception continues to grow and serves as a wonderful start to the year. Our Signature Event and Anniversary celebration during ASCRS in Boston was a special evening, officially marking OWL's 20-year milestone. We are also proud to continue our partnership with AECOS, hosting Networking Receptions during their Summer Symposium in Utah and, for the first time, at their European Symposium in Prague.

This year's Signature Event during ESCRS was particularly memorable, combining a thought-provoking program with the stunning backdrop of The Sant Pau Art Nouveau Site in Barcelona. These events provided valuable opportunities for education, growth, and connection, all of which were well-received by attendees. We are excited to host our upcoming Signature Event & Awards Ceremony during AAO, featuring a keynote on situational awareness when stakes are high.

**EUROPE** - We are continuing to expand OWL's presence in Europe, building greater awareness of our mission and vision. We had a strong showing at the inaugural Ophthalpreneurs meeting in Italy, the AECOS European Symposium in Prague, and at ESCRS in Barcelona. Beyond our Signature Event at ESCRS, OWL was proud to be part of ESCRS' new BOSS track; an initiative focused on building an inclusive and sustainable eyecare community where everyone belongs. We also created two virtual programs for the year.

We're excited to report that European membership has grown approximately 40% compared to last year. We look forward to continuing this upward trend with the support of our European Committee and members. A heartfelt thank you to our volunteers for their contributions to OWL's growth in Europe.

**OPTOMETRY** - OWL is establishing a significant presence and footprint in optometry, having partnered with the American Academy of Optometry (AAOpt) and the American Optometric Association (AOA) for signature events over the past year. We are eagerly anticipating our second event at AAOpt in Indianapolis next month and are thrilled to announce OWL's presence at SECO next spring where we'll host our first Signature Event and have a visible presence in the exhibition space.

Special thanks to our Optometry Committee for their dedication in helping OWL make an impact within the optometric community.





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## What Can You Do to Help OWL?

### 1. Spread the Word:

Reach out to colleagues who could benefit from OWL membership. Set a personal goal to recruit a certain number of new members each quarter!

### 2. Bring a Guest:

Invite a colleague to attend an OWL event with you as your guest and introduce them to our community.

### 3. Share Events:

Forward upcoming OWL event information to your network and encourage them to participate!

### 4. Engage on Social Media:

Follow OWL on social media to stay updated and help amplify our message by sharing posts with your own network.

### 5. Get Involved:

Volunteer on a committee or help out at the check-in desk during a physical event. Your time and efforts make a big difference!



*"I loved the caliber of speakers, ability to put concepts into different perspective, and provide actionable steps to improve leadership presence and working toward something bigger than oneself."*

**Attendee**  
**2024 Leadership Summit**

**LOCAL CHAPTERS** – We were pleased to host several successful local chapter meetings in Southern California, Florida and Texas this year, offering valuable networking opportunities and thought-provoking program discussions.

Our **Texas** chapter focused on “Bridging the O’s,” highlighting the crucial collaboration between ophthalmologists and optometrists to provide the best patient care. The **Florida** chapter featured a deep dive with ophthalmology pioneer Dr. Dee Stephenson, who shared her insights on resilience, mentorship, and creating supportive personal and professional environments. In **SoCal**, during Octane’s OTF, our chapter hosted an engaging discussion on “The Future of Work in Eyecare”, where panelists shared candid advice on recruiting and retaining talent in this era of remote work.

This summer, we also laid the groundwork for a new chapter in Missouri, and we’re thrilled to announce the launch of our New England chapter on November 19th!

**VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING** - In addition to our in-person events, OWL continued to offer a robust lineup of virtual programs throughout 2024. By the year’s end, we will have hosted six online events, ranging from Networking Connects to a conversation with the new President of ESCRS, as well as a compelling Eyes on Inclusion discussion about the importance of embracing diversity in eyecare.

We thank everyone who joined us online, and for those who missed any sessions, recordings are available ‘On-Demand’ in your membership account.

**OWL FELLOWS** – OWL’s mentorship program continues to make a difference for mentees and mentors alike. Now in its sixth year, our goal always is to ensure we have well-matched connections for the greatest impact. We are grateful to all of our members who have offered their time and experience as part of this program, and we look forward to continuing this impact for our members and expanding the program’s reach to our European colleagues. If you’re interested in volunteering to become an OWL mentor, please reach out and let us know. Applications will re-open in 2025.

**LEADERSHIP SUMMIT** – In September, OWL was proud to host our third annual Leadership Summit in New Orleans, gathering established and emerging leaders from across the eyecare industry. This year’s theme, Unleashing OWL Potential: Leadership for Growth and Innovation, sparked many dynamic discussions. The agenda featured keynotes and sessions on topics such as What Industry Seeks in Their Physician Collaborations, Communicating with Confidence, Beyond Mentorship: Sponsorship & Advocacy, and an interactive DEI workshop.

We concluded the Summit with a rewarding give-back event, partnering with Rise Against Hunger. Together, our participants packed over 7,100 meals for those facing food insecurity. We are already looking forward to next year’s Summit—stay tuned for location and date announcements!



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## OFFICERS FOR 2024-25:



**PRESIDENT:**  
Nivine Woods



**PRESIDENT-ELECT/  
VICE-PRESIDENT:**  
Renee Bovelleville, MD



**IMMEDIATE PAST  
PRESIDENT:**  
Erin  
Schallhorn Powers



**SECRETARY/  
TREASURER:**  
Matt Jensen

## LEADERSHIP CHANGES - Board of Directors



Lisa Kim

### Lisa Kim

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Lisa Kim, who steps down from the OWL Board after four years of dedicated service. In addition to her governance role, Lisa also led OWL's Digital Committee, where she played a pivotal role in enhancing our social media and online presence. Her efforts helped bring the "Digital Ambassador" program to life, providing a stronger digital footprint.

Lisa's keen marketing insights and behind-the-scenes support have been invaluable to OWL's strategy. Her quiet but impactful leadership will be greatly missed.



Ravaughn  
Williams, OD

### Ravaughn Williams, OD

We also recognize and thank Ravaughn Williams, who stepped down from the OWL Board earlier in 2024. Ravaughn's three plus years of service have left a lasting impact on our organization, particularly her work in expanding OWL's reach into the optometry space and supporting our strategic partnerships.

We are very grateful for all Ravaughn has done to advance OWL's mission.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024-25

OWL is excited to welcome two new Board Members to help shape the future of our organization. We look forward to their insights and collaboration as we continue to grow.

**Please join us in welcoming:**



Carla Mack, OD



Pierre Simon

*"There's no other industry like ophthalmology. OWL brings us all together, creating a network that is built on brilliance with people who truly care about improving the lives of others."*

**Laurie Ferguson**  
Chief Communications Officer,  
Neurotech Pharmaceuticals