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Student procurement

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Student procurement

Abstract
This optometric survey was suggested by the fact that last year 402 students graduated from all optometric institutions in the United States, while some 800 to 1000 practicing optometrists were lost to the profession because of retirement or death. This survey is an attempt to isolate a portion of the problem by student procurement as it pertains to the individual practitioners and alumni of Pacific University. This isolates only one aspect of the problem arising in a program of obtaining students for the profession of Optometry; but we feel it is the most important one. In point, we wanted to find out what portion of the man in the profession are taking or spending time getting students into their profession. The question of this survey represents the major areas of endeavor in which the individual practitioner can participate in order to help alleviate the problem that exists at the present time.

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STUDENT PROCUREMENT

FIFTH YEAR THESIS

By

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Purpose:

This optometric survey was suggested by the fact that last year 402 students graduated from all optometric institutions in the United States, while some 800 to 1000 practicing Optometrists were lost to the profession because of retirement or death.

This survey is an attempt to isolate a portion of the problem of student procurement as it pertains to the individual practitioners and alumni of Pacific University. This isolates only one aspect of the problem arising in a program of obtaining students for the profession of Optometry; but we feel it is the most important one. In point, we wanted to find out what portion of the men in the profession are taking or spending time getting students into their profession.

The questions of this survey represent the major areas of endeavor in which the individual practitioner can participate in order to help alleviate the problem that exists at the present time.
Procedure:

On the following page is a sample questionnaire which was sent out to all Optometry Alumni of Pacific University, excluding the graduates of 1961 and 1962. We felt the 1961 and 1962 graduates would not have been established long enough and would not have had enough time to contribute to the community in a manner we deemed necessary for this survey.

The questionnaire was designed to include the major areas of endeavor which are as follows:

1. Public speaking about the Profession of Optometry as a career.
2. Personal contact with an individual interested in the profession.
3. Distribution of optometric literature to groups or organizations.
4. Literature available in the office of the practitioner which introduces patients to the profession of Optometry as a career.
5. Practitioner's knowledge of state or local organization procurement activities.
6. Attitude of practitioner towards his individual responsibility for student procurement.

The questions were designed so that they could simply be answered yes or no to avoid confusion, yet specific enough to gather information in the desired areas.

In the analysis of returned information, each area and question are to be presented graphically as to the number of
responses, year of graduation, affirmative or negative response, and written discussion of each area.

If question was not answered either yes or no on returned questionnaire it was assumed to be negative.
Dear Alumnus:

Last year 462 students graduated from all optometric institutions in the United States, while some 800 to 1000 practicing optometrists were lost to the profession because of retirement or death. Each day our national population increases as our optometric population decreases.

As students we are concerned about the overall decline of enrollments in optometry, especially here at Pacific.

The following questionnaire is part of a thesis project under the direction of Dr. James F. Wahl. Your full cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

YES NO Have you spoken to any service or social group in your community about optometry as a career?

YES NO Have you personally been responsible for getting a student into a school of optometry?

YES NO Have you presented any optometric literature to any educational institution in your area?

Grade school
High school
College
Other

YES NO Do you have optometric literature in your office which is designed to interest students in Optometry as a career?

A.O.A. Was this material supplied by the state association or State Assoc.

A.O.A? Was it published by state association

A.O.A.

other

YES NO Do you have an active student procurement committee in your state association?

YES NO Do you feel that student procurement is your personal obligation?

Year of graduation

Respectfully yours,

James F. Wahl
Gregory Eisen
Roger Knutson
Gary Slaugh
Question Analysis

Area 1: Public speaking about Profession of Optometry as a career.

Question 1:

Have you spoken to any service or social group in your community about Optometry as a career?

Public speaking affords the Optometrist with the opportunity of introducing the Profession of Optometry to large assembled groups of people. In many instances this is the only time the individual or group will ever hear about Optometry. Although public speaking may not be presented directly to the prospective students it is possible for an individual attending such a group to relay the subject matter to someone else not in attendance.

The graphical results of this first area are obvious. There is a sad lacking on the part of the individual Optometrist to present Optometry to the public in the form of group speaking.
Bar graph representing yes and no answers to question #1.

Yes - represented on graph in blue.
No - represented on graph in red.

n = 219
Yes - 59 = 27%
No - 160 = 73%
Area 2: Personal contact with the individual.

Question 2: Have you personally been responsible for getting a student into a school of Optometry?

Personal contact with prospective students is of prime importance, because here the practitioner has an opportunity to individually discuss the merits of his profession. It is here that the greatest influence will occur in helping the individual student to make a decision.

From our returns, here again even on an individual basis, the men in the field are not carrying out their responsibility to perpetuate their profession by interesting new young men and women in their field.
Bar graph representing yes and no answers to question #2.

Yes - represented on graph in blue.
No - represented on graph in red.

n = 219
Yes - 87 = 40%
No - 132 = 60%
Area 3: Distribution of optometric literature to groups or organizations.

Question 3:

Have you presented any optometric literature to any educational institution in your area?

- Grade school
- High school
- College
- Other

The two main areas of contact here would seem to be high school and college. The high school student is already beginning to plan his education towards a goal. The profession should be well represented in the form of literature available so that Optometry can be one of the student's possible choices.

At the college level, especially those in the first two years the student should be more capable of making a critical analysis of the career he has chosen previously. Here again is a great opportunity to have information available to this group for their consideration.

The returns indicate that the practitioner considers this area of some importance since 50% have made available information to educational institutions in their areas.
Grade school

High school

College

Others

No response

n = 219
G.s. - 24 = 19.5%
H.s. - 92 = 42%
Col. - 25 = 10.6%
Others - 17 = 7.75%
No - 112 = 51.7%
Area 4: Literature available in the office for his patients.

Question 4:

Do you have optometric literature in your office which is designed to interest students in Optometry as a career?

To have this material available in his office would seem to require little or no effort on the part of the practitioner. However, a large majority of the people that populate the office already have some knowledge of the profession. 75% of the offices from the survey have material of this nature available to their patients.

The greatest bulk of this literature is supplied and published by the American Optometric Association.
Bar graph representing yes and no answers to question #4.

Yes - represented on graph in blue.
No - represented on graph in red.

n = 219
Yes = 168 = 76%
No = 51 = 24%
Question #5

Supplied by A.O.A.

State Assoc.

Published by A.O.A.

State Assoc.
Area 5: Practitioner's knowledge of state and local organizational procurement activities.

Question 5:

Do you have an active student procurement committee in your association?

As an organized body the state association should have a program of student procurement. From our survey it would be quite questionable if any state represented has an active procurement program. In any given state - some answered yes - some no, indicating perhaps some question of whether the program was active or not. It is the responsibility of the state association to make it known to each member of the group that there is an active procurement committee.

With an organized body at a state level the individual practitioner has an immediate source of additional information which can answer questions concerning financial aid, detailed information related to each school of optometry and other specific answers to questions which could not be handled by the individual Optometrist.
Bar graph representing yes and no answers to question #6.

Yes - represented on graph in blue.
No - represented on graph in red.

n = 219
Yes - 103 = 47%
No - 116 = 53%
Area 6: Personal attitude of practitioner towards his individual responsibility.

Question 6:

Do you feel that student procurement is your personal obligation?

We feel that student procurement should primarily be the effort of a large group, but the interest and success of such a program stems from the individual practitioner.

From our survey the majority seem to be in agreement with this philosophy.

If it were possible to carry this general agreement amongst the men in the field over into an active form of centralized activity we would have a real stepping stone toward a possible solution to the existing problem.
Bar graph representing yes and no answers to question #7.

Yes - represented on graph in blue.
No - represented on graph in red.

n = 219
Yes - 146 = 62%
No - 73 = 38%
Conclusion

A total of 717 questionnaires were mailed to the Optometry Alumni of Pacific University and 238 responded. This represents a 30.13% return. With this percentage of return from the practitioners we feel we can draw some positive conclusions from our data.

It is assumed that the graduate of 10 or more years should be doing more along the lines of student procurement compared to the more recent graduate. From our information there is nothing to substantiate this assumption. This would seem to indicate that this is a long standing problem the effects of which are being realized by the present student enrollment.

The groundwork for student procurement must begin with the individual practitioner. Only by individual effort can we hope to alleviate the problem that exists today, and save Optometry from extinction.