

**WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY
GENERAL DELEGATES MEETING
TO BE HELD IN MELAKA ON 5 JUNE 2009**

Report of the Acting Executive Director

1 Introduction

It is almost a year – just over eleven months to be exact – since the College of Optometrists in the UK took over the management and administration of WCO from Salus University (formerly PCO) in the United States.

It has been a baptism of fire in many ways, and although I had initially hoped to have a permanent Executive Director in post by the end of 2008, the longer timescale has enabled the College to put in place structures, systems and processes that will enable Caroline Hyde-Price, the new Executive Director, to focus on the development of WCO as a major international player in the public health arena. I hope that even if you are not attending the GDM, you will nevertheless read all of the reports, which collectively indicate a big agenda for WCO over the next few years – developing membership benefits, introducing a more accessible Fellowship programme, raising funds through WOF for special projects, providing global information on education, training and scope of practice (building on the work on developing WCO global competencies) and increasing WCO's lobbying power.

Caroline will start on 6 July, but is attending the GDM as an observer, which will enable her to meet those people who work so tirelessly for WCO and world optometry.

2 Communications

I sent regular monthly reports to all Governing Board members from August - December 2008 on the work of the Secretariat, which, as I have said above, was focused on the practical aspects of taking on the administration and management of a global membership organisation.

The main activities of the Secretariat from January – April 2009 were focused on the development of a draft Memorandum and Articles of Association that would meet with the approval of the Governing Board, and this document has been sent to you all as part of the GDM agenda.

Now that we have the structures, systems and processes in place, communications with all members must now take priority. To this end, Jane Lawrence has been commissioned to produce regular newsletters and to review the website content. You should receive the first of these new newsletters at the GDM (those of you who do not attend will be able to access it via the website) as well as an annual report of WCO activities in 2008.

3 Governing Board Meeting, Anaheim, 22-25 October

I will report separately on the key points from all GB meetings held since the last GDM in Mexico City under item GDM09/8,

4 Management and Administration of the GDM

In the past WCO commissioned a member organisation in the host country to manage and administer the GDM, WCOG and WCOE meetings. This year we are trying a different approach, and the College has been responsible for all aspects of the event, including the budget and the programme, working closely with the AMO. We will evaluate all aspects of this new way of working, and report to the next Governing Board meeting (to be held in early December in Toronto) on whether we should continue in this way. The next major event, WCOE6, will be run alongside the Durban Refractive Error Conference in September 2010, which will require a unique approach, with the College working alongside ICEE.

5 Membership

Our first job as the new Secretariat was to clean up and test all membership contact data. This task was completed in September 2008, and the database is now kept up to date. Under item GDM09/9 you will receive full details of current members, new members since the last GDM, and organisations whose membership has been de-activated since the last GDM. A new initiative has been the creation of a member benefit leaflet which was sent out with the subscription invoices.

At the Governing Board meeting in Anaheim it was agreed that non-paying members – that is organisations that remained on the list of WCO members but who had not paid their subscription for over four years - should be granted an amnesty and this offer was made to 46 organisations, resulting in payments being received and memberships re-activated for 4 organisations.

6 Case Statement

The Secretariat believes that the Case Statement can (and should) be used more extensively for lobbying by members, and we are in the process of identifying someone who can review and update the document. There is potential for the Case Statement to be used as part of the fundraising efforts of the new WOF Board.

7 Financial management

Financial management is a key responsibility for the Secretariat, and although the 2008 accounts were audited in the USA, from January 2009 WCO accounts have been kept by the College and will be audited in the UK. The College has set up three UK bank accounts for WCO, in \$, £ and Euros, and invoiced the membership subscriptions in all three currencies, depending on the geographical location of the member organisation. In this way WCO has mitigated some of the exchange risk in an unpredictable financial market, but we have gained by transferring current account balances from the former dollar accounts in the USA to the sterling account in the UK.

The audited accounts for 2008 are included in the report from the Treasurer (item GDM09/7).

8 Acknowledgements

It has been a huge pleasure and a great privilege to work with you all for the past year as Acting Executive Director. It has not always been easy, given that I have a busy 'day job' as Chief Executive of the College of Optometrists, but in reading all of the reports to the GDM I can see just how much has been achieved with the support of the President, Officers, Committee Chairmen, and regional Governing Board members. As WCO members you should be most reassured that the governance of WCO is in such good hands, with very committed and hard-working 'non-executive' Directors.

I would like to thank Laura Prieto, Executive Administrator, for her patience, attention to detail, hard work, and rapid Spanish translation. Laura has been appointed permanently as WCO Executive Administrator, and will continue to provide the high level of support to Caroline that I have enjoyed. Thank you Laura!

Bryony Pawinska
London
21 May 2009