



European Academy  
of Optometry and Optics

PRESS RELEASE

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**ACADEMY PRESENTS FIRST FELLOWSHIP TO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN BOARD OF OPTOMETRY, USA**

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The European Academy of Optometry and Optics awarded its first ever Fellowships at its recent conference in Prague (6-8 May 2011). Dr Jeffrey Weaver, Executive Director of the American Board of Optometry and President Elect of the Missouri Optometric Association in the USA, was one of the first individuals to be awarded Fellowship.

Following a year-long pilot scheme where volunteers had worked with the Academy to help finalise the Fellowship programme by trialling it, seven individuals were awarded Fellowship. Fellowship was presented to Dr Weaver for demonstrating a wide scope of influence in the field of optometry, both nationally and internationally.

Presenting the awards, outgoing President Dr Feike Grit told members that the award of Fellowship was an important step for the Academy as an organisation:

“Our fellowship programme was designed to create an attractive, flexible route to achieving fellowship, an important award which can help to advance the profession. The Academy’s Fellowship programme recognises and awards individual members of the Academy who have made a significant contribution to optometry and optics at a local, national and/or international level. Being accepted as a Fellow of the Academy entitles you to use the letters FEAOO after your name.”

Dr Grit went on to stress that Fellowship is a mark of achievement to which all members of the Academy can aspire. The award of Fellowship is held in high esteem but it is achievable through success in a variety of optometry or optic-related work and is accessible to many people. Fellowship was awarded to members who have made a significant contribution to the practice of optometry or optics, showing excellence and/or innovation in one or more of the following categories: clinical practice; the provision of visual or wider healthcare; optometric or optical research; optometric or optical education; the management of visual healthcare and higher qualifications in vision science. The Academy’s first Fellowships were also awarded to:

- **David Berkow** (Israel) – in recognition of his work as an individual practitioner, to raise the profile and profession of optometry in a country that is still working towards the establishment of a recognised and established profession.
- **Bryony Pawinska** (UK) – in recognition of the important role she has played in the development of the optometric profession nationally in the UK and also internationally through her work with the World Council of Optometry and Optics and in the establishment and development of the European Academy.
- **Dr Heiko Pult** (Germany) – in recognition of his extensive work combining research, science, teaching and clinical practice, raising the standards of clinical care for patients.

- **Helmer Schweizer** (Switzerland) – for excellence and innovation in the fields of optometric research, education and the management of visual healthcare
- **Karen Sparrow** (UK) – in recognition of Karen’s major contribution to Vision Aid Overseas at administrative, clinical leadership and strategic levels for her work to enhance the delivery and quality of optometric care in the UK and overseas.
- **Dr Cornelis Anton Verezen** (Netherlands) – in recognition of a life-long commitment to expanding the role of the optometrist in the important area of low vision.

**Life Fellowship** was also awarded to Dr Feike Grit (Netherlands), in recognition of his vision for the development of the European Academy of Optometry and Optics.

Commenting on the award Dr Weaver said:

“The launch of an Academy in Europe was a milestone for optometry and optics in Europe and one of the biggest developments in the profession for them. I’m absolutely delighted to become one of their first Fellows and honoured to have my work recognised in front of peers from across the world at their recent conference.”

The Fellowship programme will be formally launched following the conference.

Over 220 delegates from over 20 countries met at the European Academy’s third conference in Prague from 6 - 8 May 2011. The event incorporated the European Optometric Education Congress formerly held in Brno and focused around the themes of education, research and clinical practice.

Dates for the Academy’s next annual conference will be announced later this year.

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Notes to editors:

1. For further information or to request photography from this meeting please contact Ellen Colquhoun, Head of Marketing and Communications at the College of Optometrists on + 44 (0) 20 7766 4342 or email [Ellen.colquhoun@college-optometrists.org](mailto:Ellen.colquhoun@college-optometrists.org)
2. The secretariat for the European Academy is provided by the College of Optometrists, London, United Kingdom. For more information about the European Academy please go to [www.eaoo.info](http://www.eaoo.info) or contact:
 

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3. Dr Jeffrey Weaver graduated from the Pennsylvanian College of Optometry in 1985. Following a period on active duty with the US Army he moved to academia, teaching full time at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. As American Optometric Association Clinical Care Director he created policy and developed and implemented programmes

for the profession, managing committees related to clinical practice, ophthalmic standards and public health. Dr Weaver was recently named the first Executive Director of the American Board of Optometry and is overseeing the Board certification process for optometry. He holds an MBA from Drury College and an MS in Physiological Optics from The Ohio State University. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and a Diplomate in Public Health and Environmental Vision. He also serves on the Executive Council of the Armed Forces Optometric Society. He has authored numerous articles for optometric publications and has presented national and internationally. Dr Weaver has received numerous military commendations and the optometrist of the year award from the St Louis Optometric Society, the Missouri Optometric Association, the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States and the Armed Forces Optometric Association. Most recently he was named the Albert Fitch Memorial Alumnus of the year from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and was selected to the Order of Military Medical Merit.