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## Ophthalmologist the Younger

When I was in grade school and my parents still regarded long hair on men as a statement of rebellion, we visited San Francisco. I was deeply curious about the colorful hippie protestors and a bit in awe of them. The musicians of the counterculture included Bob Dylan and the Grateful Dead. However, when my husband and I saw the Rolling Stones a few years ago, Mick Jagger seemed darling rather than daring. In retrospect, some of the ideas and values of the '60s aren't so revolutionary after all. Perhaps we've learned to listen to our young people.

Professional culture has shifted as well. Instead of waiting to "climb the ladder," younger physicians want to have a voice and to be involved and effective at every career stage. In the early 1990s, the Academy recognized the importance of engaging ophthalmologists at the beginning of their careers and established the task force that morphed into the Young Ophthalmologist Committee. Our Young Ophthalmologists (or YOs, as we call them) are ophthalmologists in residency, fellowship, or their first five years of practice. They are well-trained physicians with expertise and experience.

Academy President Tamara Fountain notes, "The Academy was the first to lean into this demographic and [the YO Committee] became the model for all other YO efforts." Gary Schwartz, a member of the first Leadership Development Program (LDP I) in 1999, created a YO section of the Minnesota Academy of Ophthalmology. The group met for social and educational events and coalesced around practice management and work-life balance issues.

Since then, ophthalmology organizations around the globe have implemented programming for young ophthalmologists. Under the leadership of Anthony Khawaja, the European Society of Ophthalmology held its first YO program in 2009 and now has a sophisticated YO committee. In Morocco, Imane Taribe says, "We organized just two years ago, and YOMorocco is an emerging powerhouse." And during the pandemic, Marcus Ang of Singapore organized young ophthalmology leaders in the Asia-Pacific region to create the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology YO Social Media Committee. The group already has a private Facebook page with 650 members, an Instagram account, and a logo. Many subspecialty and state societies also have YO sections.

The Academy's YO Committee has a vibrant and influential presence in our organization. Over a decade ago, when community-generated content was a new idea, YOs advocated for an EyeWiki. Today, our EyeWiki has over 8 million views per year and engages YOs around the globe to create and curate its content. Our YOs pushed for an app—and the Academy's Ophthalmic Education App now has over 37,000 users. Because our younger voices are so highly valued, an increasing number of committees of the Academy include a YO member, and YO reps attend Secretariat meetings.

The Academy also has resources dedicated to meeting the needs of younger ophthalmologists. At the annual meeting, the YO Committee puts on the YO program, hosts a popular YO Lounge, and throws the ever-popular Global YO Reception.

*YO Info* is a monthly newsletter packed with news, advice, and clinical pearls. The Advocacy Ambassador program partners with state and subspecialty societies to provide advocacy training to residents and fellows during the Mid-Year Forum. It's accompanied by the L.E.A.P. Forward program, which introduces trainees to Academy leaders with expertise in leadership, engagement, advocacy, and practice management.

I'm proud of our young ophthalmologists. They have developed remarkable camaraderie and community, and they have infused our profession with ideas, energy, and excellence. As Tamara points out, "We need the YO voice, which is often the most important perspective in the room because it's fresh and unaffected." In this 25th anniversary year of the Academy YOs, YO Committee Chair Janice Law will accept the Special Recognition Award at the opening session of AAO 2021. And while the music will likely be New Orleans jazz, I still think '70s rock is the best of all time.



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