The Association of Vision Science Librarians: A Worldwide Information Network

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HISTORY

The idea of forming an organization of vision science librarians began at the 1965 meeting of the American Academy of Optometry in Denver, where representatives from all the Optometry Schools, met to discuss the idea. The informal gathering was repeated the following December, and at the 1966 meeting of the American Academy of Optometry in Beverly Hills, California, the Association of Vision Science Librarians (AVSL) was officially founded. A Statement of Purpose was formalized in 1969. This year we are celebrating over 40 years of service to the vision community.

PUBLICATIONS

Opening Day Collection – is a compilation of recommended books, journals, and digital resources for a vision science collection. It identifies materials that should constitute a basic or “opening day” collection for all types of vision science libraries. AVSL librarians use reserve lists, book reviews, expert opinions, faculty recommendations, usage statistics, and other criteria to make their selections. Additions/deletions to the list are reviewed by members present at the AVSL mid-year and annual meetings. Final selections are decided upon by the compilers. The Opening Day Collection is updated periodically.

Standards for Vision Science Libraries – describes the minimum levels of staffing, services, budget, and technology that should be provided by a library specializing in vision science. The Standards also include the scope and coverage of what materials vision science libraries should contain. These Standards may be used by institutions establishing libraries or by accrediting bodies reviewing existing libraries. AVSL librarians have maintained the Standards since 1976.


Union List of Vision-Related Serials – Lists more than 1,100 journals and the volumes/issues to which libraries own/subscribe. Thirty-four member libraries from around the world contribute to this Union List.

WHO WE ARE:

AVSL is an international organization composed of more than 150 professional librarians, or persons acting in that capacity, whose collections include the literature of vision. Among the current members are individuals who work within libraries that serve educational institutions, eye clinics and hospitals, and private companies with an interest in eye or vision-related products and services.

WHAT WE DO:

• Facilitate cooperative activities among member librarians throughout the world.
• Share our resources through loans of books, videos and journal articles.
• Work to improve access to vision information.
• Partners with NLM, NEI, ASCO, AAO and others to access information.
• Develop and promote standards and guidelines to improve vision libraries and the services they offer.

HOW AVSL HELPS – excerpts from satisfied users:

“I’ve lost count of all the ways AVSL has helped the AOA, especially now that the library has been eliminated.”

“AVSL helps colleagues in the field make international connections to access the literature!”

“Our colleagues from down under were able to provide an article from an obscure Australian publication.”

“I can’t begin to count the times that one of my researchers needs an obscure chapter (harder to find than articles) STAT and gotten it within 30 minutes of sending out the request... The ability to make an informal request rather than going through the more cumbersome red tape of ILL. This is especially important when Dr. X doesn’t have a complete citation... chapter number, yes, page numbers, no; ILL/OCLC hates that, AVSL thrives on it.”

“There are “information scavenger hunts” where someone has a patron with figure & legend but doesn’t know where it came from. Post it to the list — one person comes up with a suggestion or two, someone else takes those suggestions, thinks of something else, posts that to the list and with several people working on it, we come up with the answer. The synergy is amazing — it might have taken one person hours to find it (if ever), the group narrows it down in the space of an hour at most.”

AVSL Hall of Fame

The Association of Vision Science Librarians Hall of Fame honors members who have retired from ophthalmology, optometry, and vision science libraries.

Patricia Carlson, Southern California College of Optometry
Nancy Clemmons, University of Alabama at Birmingham
*Maria Dougherty, International Museum & Archives of Optometry
Gerald Dupke, Illinois College of Optometry
*Elizabeth Egan, Indiana School of Optometry
Doug Freeman, Indiana University
Nancy Gatliff, Southern College of Optometry
*Alison Howard, University of California-Berkeley
Cindy Hutchins, New England College of Optometry
Beverly Taugher, American Academy of Ophthalmology
Judith Quilter, Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital
Ray Price, Carl Zeiss Vision
Rosa Rosato, InterAmerican University of Puerto Rico
Beverly Taugh, American Academy of Ophthalmology
Dolores Taylor, Pennsylvania College of Optometry
*Graeme Warner, New England College of Optometry
Maureen Watson, Michigan College of Optometry
Peter Weil, Illinois College of Optometry
*Grace Werner, Los Angeles College of Optometry

* indicates that the person is deceased

Promote open access to the vision literature
Maintain a vital Website that contains our publications and resources