

Invited Speaker



Dr. Anthony F. Di Stefano
OD, MEd, MPH
Salus University
Pennsylvania, USA

Biography

Dr. Anthony F. Di Stefano is Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Public Health at Salus University, Pennsylvania, USA. He was Dean of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus from 1989 to 2008. Dr. Di Stefano is responsible for all of the University's academic programs.

Dr. Di Stefano is a graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. He also has a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Biology from LaSalle University, a Master of Education (MEd) degree from Temple University, and a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from Johns Hopkins University's School of Hygiene and Public Health, all in the USA.

Dr. Di Stefano has extensive teaching and scholarly experience in the areas of community health, epidemiology, health care policy and organization, and optometric jurisprudence. His administrative experience includes the areas of international health care, externship clinical programs, institutional planning, research development, graduate and special educational programs, resources development, and institutional advancement.

Dr. Di Stefano was instrumental in the development of the College's Institute for the Visually Impaired, an interdisciplinary education, research and patient care center dedicated to the rehabilitation of individuals with severe visual impairment. This effort has led to the establishment of four new graduate programs in vision rehabilitation, orientation and mobility, and rehabilitation teaching and education of the visually impaired. In addition, Dr. Di Stefano spearheaded the College's research development programs from 1980 to 1989.

Dr. Di Stefano is very active in public health matters, especially those pertaining to the development of community-based clinics for interdisciplinary education of health professional students. Dr. Di Stefano has a particular interest in innovative strategies to improve access and quality care to underserved communities and special populations. He has published papers and given professional presentations in the area of public health optometry. He has served the optometric profession in a number of volunteer initiatives, most recently chairing the American Optometric Association's Workforce Project Team.

Most recently, Dr. Di Stefano has been very active in the development of international optometric educational programs. He has been instrumental in the establishment of the Master of Science program in Clinical Optometry for international ophthalmic practitioners who wish to advance their optometric knowledge base and clinical skills. He has promoted the development of both degree and non-degree international educational programs in optometry that promote self-sufficiency. He represents the institutional commitment of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry to advance international optometry through cooperative academic programs of excellence. He served on the Helen Keller Worldwide Medical Advisory Board and chairs the Technical Advisory Group of the ChildSight Program, which is designed to bring vision care to inner-city and rural needy middle-school children. Dr. Di Stefano also served on the Refractive Error Working Group of the World Health Organization (WCO), and was Executive Director of the World Council of Optometry and Secretary of the World Optometry Foundation from 1996 to 2006.

Dr Di Stefano's accomplishments have been recognized internationally. He recently became an Honorary Fellow of the College of Optometrists in the United Kingdom.

Global positioning for the profession of optometry

Abstract

Global positioning systems (GPS) are ubiquitous. They provide users with the information about where they are and, most importantly, how to get where they want to go. They can be used by anyone anywhere around the world to navigate their way around their community to other destinations around the world. The profession of optometry has developed its own GPS system to chart its journey toward continued global growth and professional impact. The author will offer an overview of WCO's Global Competency-Based Model for the Scope of Practice in Optometry and suggest strategies for using it as a tool to track and evaluate the evolution of the profession. This optometric GPS model must be linked to an integrated approach to educational, regulatory and public health transformation of the profession.