

APME Graduate Survey: 2002

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to update the AMPE Graduate Surveys conducted in 1991 and 1996. It is our goal to update current practice management statistics to graduates of the class of 2001 and to follow up on the previous information provided by the class of 1991. The survey for the class of 2001 asks specific questions concerning mode of practice, location of practice, financial well being and future plans. The survey for the class of 1991 revisits the questions and responses that were given in the 1991 AMPE questionnaire. These surveys will provide more current and accurate information concerning the present state and future direction of the optometric profession.

Methods

The original AMPE survey used for the study in 1991 and 1996 was revised and sent to all members of the graduating class of 2001 from the Michigan College of Optometry (MCO). The survey to the class of 2001 is very similar to the original AMPE surveys so that statistical comparisons and conclusions can be made. The survey was given in multiple choice/fill in the blank format with a final section for additional comments. All questions dealing with mode of practice, location of practice and influence on decision making asked for specific answers from each of the responders. Questions concerning income and timing of current and past modes of practice were scored according to a range. The survey was mailed on two separate occasions in order to increase response numbers. A similar survey was sent to the class of 1991 that asked questions that would reflect any change in mode of practice, location, and financial well-being for practicing optometrists in the first decade of their careers.

Results

Forty-six out of the sixty-four surveys were completed; 20 from the class of 1991 and 26 from the class of 2001. All responses to the individual questions have been tabulated and are included in the following table.

APME Graduate Survey

Age

21-25
26-30
31-35
36-40
41 & up

Total

Sex

Male
Female

State of Origin

MI
WI
NY
SD
WY
IA

Race

White
Black
Asian
Hispanic
Native American
Other

State of Practice

MI
WI
FL
GA
CO
NY
IN
IA
WY

City Size

Small
Medium
Large
Metropolis

Class 1991		Class 2001	
#	%	#	%
		24	92%
2	10%	2	8%
18	90%		
Total	20	26	
11	58%	10	38%
8	42%	16	62%
16	84%	21	81%
1	5%	1	4%
2	11%		
		2	8%
		1	4%
		1	4%
15	83%	26	100%
3	17%		
14	74%	19	73%
1	5%	2	8%
1	5%	1	4%
1	5%		
2	11%		
		1	4%
		1	4%
		1	4%
		1	4%
4	21%	2	8%
8	42%	16	64%
4	21%	4	16%
3	16%	3	12%

APME Graduate Survey

When Practice Chosen

1-2 Yr of School
 3-4 Yr of School
 Immediately After Graduation
 1-4 Yrs
 5-9 Yrs
 > 10 Yrs

Who Influenced Decision of Practice

Optometrist
 Classmate
 Faculty Member
 Relative
 Spouse
 Other

Current Employment Status

Self-employed:
 Sole Practitioner
 Partnership
 Prof. Corp.
 Employed by:
 Optometrist
 Ophthalmologist
 Optical Co.
 University
 Fed Serv
 HMO
 Other

Who Influenced Decision of Status

Optometrist
 Classmate
 Faculty Member
 Relative
 Spouse
 Lack of Opportunity
 Other

Role of School in Decision of Status

Very Important
 Important
 Not Important

Class 1991		Class 2001	
#	%	#	%
		4	15%
		13	50%
8	42%	9	35%
10	53%		
1	5%		
		10	38%
		1	4%
		7	27%
		8	31%
5	26%	1	4%
2	11%		
1	5%	4	14%
	0%		
1	5%	8	29%
2	11%	7	25%
8	42%	5	18%
		1	4%
		1	4%
		1	4%
		8	32%
		1	4%
		3	12%
		1	4%
		3	12%
		9	36%
		1	4%
		11	42%
		14	54%

Discussion

The first topic of comparison deals with mode of practice. More Optometrists are self-employed from the class of 1991 versus the class of 2001. This difference is not unexpected given the financial situation/debt of most new graduates. Comparing the number of employed optometrists we find that more graduates of 1991 are employed by optical chains (42%) while more graduates from 2001 are employed by Optometrists (29%), Ophthalmologists (25%) instead of optical chains (18%). Fifty three percent of the class of 1991 reached their present mode of practice within one year, while 74 percent indicate they are practicing in their desired mode.

Eighty percent of the graduates surveyed from the Michigan College of Optometry named Michigan as their state of origin and over 70 percent are presently practicing in Michigan. The class of 1991 showed a more even distribution among city sizes, while the class of 2001 located primarily in medium sized cities (10,000 – 100,000). Those graduates who located in states other than Michigan show a random pattern of distribution.

Most graduates (70 %) of the class of 1991 anticipate being in their current mode of practice for five or more years. Only 35 percent of the graduates from 2001 anticipate being in their current mode of practice for 5 or more years. For their ultimate mode of practice the class of 1991 indicated that 64 percent wished to be self employed, while 36 percent desired employment by others. Fifty eight percent of the 2001 graduates desire to be in some form of private practice, while 42 percent desire to be employed. Half of the total number surveyed anticipates reaching their ultimate mode of practice in five or more years.

For the first year after graduation the class of 1991 reported an average annual income of \$60-\$70,000, while the class of 2001 reported an average annual income of \$80-90,000. For the last year in practice the class of 1991 reported an average annual income of \$100-110,000. Sixty eight percent of this class reported their salary as a good indicator of responsibility.

Conclusion

The prevailing mode of practice continues to be self-employment; however, the initial mode of practice data indicates a shift from corporate employment toward associate and multi-disciplinary practices. Graduates from the Michigan College of Optometry continue to locate and practice in Michigan.

Ultimately a majority of graduates from both classes desire self-employment and anticipate practicing in that mode in four or more years. Conversely, the graduates from both classes seeking employment primarily prefer optical chains as their ultimate mode of practice. The average annual income has remained relatively stable given a decade of economic change. In general those Optometrists who responded to the survey reported a high level of personal and professional satisfaction.

APME Graduate Survey
(Class of 1991)

1. Age _____ 2. Sex _____ 3. State of origin _____
4. Which best describes your race?
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. White | <input type="checkbox"/> d. Hispanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Black | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Native American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Other (specify) _____ |
5. In what state do you practice? _____
6. In what size city do you practice? _____
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. small (under 10,000 people) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. medium (between 10,000 and 100,000 people) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. large (over 100,000 but less than 1 million people) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. metropolis (over 1 million people) |
7. When did you choose this opportunity?
- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. immediately post-graduation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. 1-4 years after |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. 5-9 years after |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. greater than ten years after |
8. What is your current employment status? If you are working in more than one practice, select the one in which you spend the MOST time.
- Self employed: a. Sole Practitioner
 b. Partnership
 c. Professional Corporation
- Employed by: d. Optometrist
 e. Ophthalmologist
 f. Optical company
 g. University/College of Optometry (faculty or staff)
 h. Federal service (HIS, VA, Military, Civil Service)
 i. HMO/Multidisciplinary Clinic
 j. Other (specify) _____
9. Which of the statements below BEST describes your practice? If you are working in more than one practice, please select the ONE in which you spend the MOST time.
- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Leasing an office in an office building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Owner of the office building in which your practice is located |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Owner of the regional optical franchise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Owner of the national optical franchise |

- e. Located next to a regional optical chain
- f. Located next to a national optical chain
- g. Located next to a local optical dispensary that you own
- h. Located next to a local optical dispensary that you do not own
- i. Located in a retail store
- j. Located in a school or college of optometry
- k. Located in a facility owned by the federal government
- l. Located in a multidisciplinary clinic not affiliated with a school or college of optometry

10. How long did you anticipate being in this mode of practice?

- a. 1 year
- b. 2 years
- c. 3 years
- d. 4 years
- e. 5 years of more
- f. remainder of career
- g. uncertain

11. Are you satisfied with your present mode of practice?

- a. very satisfied
- b. satisfied
- c. neutral
- d. unhappy

12. What was the annual income you received for your first year of practice? Please include salary, benefits, and bonuses from all modes of practice.

Salary \$ _____
 Benefits \$ _____
 Bonuses \$ _____
 Total Income \$ _____

13. What was the annual income you received for your last year of practice? Please include salary, benefits, and bonuses from all modes of practice.

Salary \$ _____
 Benefits \$ _____
 Bonuses \$ _____
 Total Income \$ _____

14. I feel that my present salary is a _____ indicator of my responsibilities as an OD.

- a. great
- b. good
- c. fair
- d. poor

15. How long after graduation did it take for you to reach your present mode of practice?

- a. 1 year
- b. 2 years
- c. 3 years
- d. 4 years
- e. 5 years of more

16. Are you presently practicing in the mode you desired when you began your career?

- Yes
- No

17. How many different modes of practice have you experienced in your career?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5 or more

18. What do you anticipate will be your ultimate employment status?

- Self employed:
- a. Sole practitioner
 - b. Partnership
 - c. Professional Corporation

- Employed by:
- d. Optometrist
 - e. Ophthalmologist
 - f. Optical company
 - g. University/College of Optometry (faculty or staff)
 - h. Training program (residency, fellowship, graduate school)
 - i. Federal service (HIS, VA, Military, Civil Service)
 - j. HMO/Multidisciplinary Clinic
 - k. Other (specify) _____

19. Describe what the school could have done to better prepare you for the mode of practice you have chosen.

APME Graduate Survey
(Class of 2001)

1. Age _____ 2. Sex _____ 3. State of origin _____ 4. School _____
5. Which best describes your race?
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. White | <input type="checkbox"/> d. Hispanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Black | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Native American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Other (specify) _____ |
6. Have you decided where you intend to practice?
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. No (<i>If your practice plans are undecided, go to question 17</i>) |
7. In what state do you plan to practice? _____
8. In what size city do you plan to practice? _____
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. small (under 10,000 people) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. medium (between 10,000 and 100,000 people) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. large (over 100,000 but less than 1 million people) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. metropolis (over 1 million people) |
9. When did you choose this opportunity?
- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. first year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. second year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. third year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. fourth year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e. after graduation |
10. Who of the individuals listed below MOST influenced your decision to choose this opportunity? (*choose one*)
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Optometrist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Classmate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Faculty member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> e. Spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> f. Other (specify) _____ |

11. What is your current employment status? If you will be working in more than one practice, select the one in which you anticipate spending the MOST time.

Self employed: a. Sole Practitioner
 b. Partnership
 c. Professional Corporation

Employed by: d. Optometrist
 e. Ophthalmologist
 f. Optical company
 g. University/College of Optometry (faculty or staff)
 h. Training program (residency, fellowship, graduate school)
 i. Federal service (HIS, VA, Military, Civil Service)
 j. HMO/Multidisciplinary Clinic
 k. Other (specify) _____

12. Who of the individuals listed below MOST influenced your decision to enter this employment status? (*choose one*)

a. Optometrist
 b. Classmate
 c. Faculty Member
 d. Relative
 e. Spouse
 f. Other (specify) _____

13. In reaching this decision, the role of the school and/or faculty was:

a. Very important
 b. Important
 c. Not important

14. Which of the statements below BEST describes your practice? If you will be working in more than one practice, please select the ONE in which you anticipate spending the MOST time.

a. Leasing an office in an office building
 b. Owner of the office building in which your practice is located
 c. Owner of the regional optical franchise
 d. Owner of the national optical franchise
 e. Located next to a regional optical chain
 f. Located next to a national optical chain
 g. Located next to a local optical dispensary that you own
 h. Located next to a local optical dispensary that you do not own
 i. Located in a retail store
 j. Located in a school or college of optometry
 k. Located in a facility owned by the federal government
 l. Located in a multidisciplinary clinic not affiliated with a school or college of optometry

15. Who of the individuals listed below MOST influenced your decision to enter this mode of practice? (choose one)

- a. Optometrist
- b. Classmate
- c. Faculty Member
- d. Relative
- e. Spouse
- f. Other (specify) _____

16. How long do you anticipate being in this mode of practice?

- a. 1 year
- b. 2 years
- c. 3 years
- d. 4 years
- e. 5 years or more
- f. for my career
- g. uncertain

17. What is the annual income you expect to receive for your first year of practice? Please include salary, benefits, and bonuses from all modes of practice.

Salary \$ _____
Benefits \$ _____
Bonuses \$ _____
Total Income \$ _____

18. What do you anticipate will be your ultimate employment status?

- Self employed: a. Sole practitioner
 b. Partnership
 c. Professional Corporation
- Employed by: d. Optometrist
 e. Ophthalmologist
 f. Optical company
 g. University/College of Optometry (faculty or staff)
 h. Training program (residency, fellowship, graduate school)
 i. Federal service (HIS, VA, Military, Civil Service)
 j. HMO/Multidisciplinary Clinic
 k. Other (specify) _____

19. Which of the following statements BEST describes your ultimate practice?
- a. Leasing an office in an office building
 - b. Owner of the office building in which your practice is located
 - c. Owner of the regional optical franchise
 - d. Owner of the national optical franchise
 - e. Located next to a regional optical chain
 - f. Located next to a national optical chain
 - g. Located next to a local optical dispensary that you own
 - h. Located next to a local optical dispensary that you do not own
 - i. Located in a retail store
 - j. Located in a school or college of optometry
 - k. Located in a facility owned by the federal government
 - l. Located in a multidisciplinary clinic not affiliated with a school or college of optometry
20. How long after graduation do you anticipate it will take for you to reach your ultimate mode of practice?
- a. 1 year
 - b. 2 years
 - c. 3 years
 - d. 4 years
 - e. 5 years of more
 - f. for my career
 - g. uncertain
21. Describe what the school could have done to better prepare you for the mode of practice you have chosen.