



Dr. Heather Anderson



Dr. Jason Marsack

University of Houston College of Optometry (UHCO) faculty members Dr. Heather Anderson, Dr. Jason Marsack and Dr. Julia Benoit received a \$1.67 million dollar grant from the National Eye Institute to develop novel spectacle prescribing strategies for patients who have Down Syndrome. In pilot studies, their proposed strategies, which take into account the elevated levels of optical distortions found in the eyes of DS patients, have demonstrated a potential for multiple lines of acuity improvement over standard clinical techniques. The grant runs from September 2014 through August 2019 as a collaboration between UHCO and the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics.

Also at UHCO, student training now includes a first-of-its-kind Optometric Clinical Skills Simulation Lab

featuring virtual patients. The patient simulators in the lab allow students to visualize a retina that exhibits whatever patient demographics or ocular condition is programmed. The virtual patients even react as real patients would, for example, shedding a virtual tear when the examiner spends too much time exposing the retina to the ophthalmoscope light. The technology was developed by VRMagic, a provider of virtual reality medical training simulators for eyecare professionals.



*Assistant Professor Dr. Heather Anderson supervises Kristen Bowles as she examines a virtual patient.*