Reflecting on the places we will go!

I want to thank all the members and friends of the Pan-American, for joining the 33rd Pan-American Congress of Ophthalmology in Lima, Peru. We are so grateful for your attendance and your support. It was wonderful to see so many of you attend the social events organized by the Pan-American Ophthalmological Foundation (PAOF): The Dinner and Fiesta at El Cascajal restaurant, the Eye Ball Party at the Victoria Bar, and the PAOF Tournament at the Country Club. We had tremendous success. Your support and attendance are making a difference as all the money raised through the PAOF goes to support the education programs of the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology (PAAO).

We have an opportunity to see a clear vision for the PAOF, to rearrange our reality according to the vision we set for ourselves, to make fundamental changes in the way we look at the Foundation, and the way we offer services. It's all about having the courage to create something new and better with your help, as together we can do more for our society.

We need to be looking critically at everything we do: long established practices, procedures, and vision. According to an old Japanese proverb, “if you sit on a stone for three years, you will get used to it.” What stones are we sitting on? What practices have we as a Foundation have gotten used to?

Our long-term success will depend on how well we add value to our services; that’s what generates real growth. The PAOF needs to have a clear and precise definition of what it does and communicate that in a clear fashion. We need to increase our donations and make the dollars available to the PAAO to reinvest in education, and leadership courses. As a Foundation, we need to do a better job of explaining the what, who, and why. What does it do? Who does it benefit? Why should you care?

Changes may make us apprehensive, but I think we have to remember that change is sometimes necessary. We need to move ahead, and that means having the courage to face much needed change. In the coming months, we will be looking at re-branding the PAOF, keeping the elements that have made it successful since 1959, but modernizing its image. Defining in a clear way the mission of the PAOF, and how the benefits ultimately go back to benefiting the professional community. As we examine how the Foundation can do better, it comes down to approaching our goals with the proper balance of analysis and action, of preparation and implementation, of caution and action.

Change is something we should welcome. It opens up new possibilities, it gives us new opportunities to create competitive advantages and achieve something new. We have recently hired Milena Razack, as PAOF Development Manager. She comes to the Foundation with a new fresh set of eyes and has the unique set of qualifications that will have a great positive impact on the Foundation.

The PAOF will continue to depend on people like you, because of your conviction that you could and would make a difference and that, despite the many demands on your time and resources, you do indeed have the power to do something about the vast and complex problems of our society.

We invite you to reach out to our office by contacting Milena Razack, milena.razack@paao.org, PAOF Development Manager, or Teresa Bradshaw, PAAO/PAOF Executive Director at teresa.bradshaw@paao.org, or calling the PAOF office at 817-422-9253 and asking about how you can become a Circle of Vision member.

I intend to pursue our strategy, and I urge you to the same so that the coming years will see a Foundation that is even stronger and more vibrant than it is today. We need to get excited about making good things happen. I’m thrilled beyond words to host you at the Circle of Vision members luncheon in New Orleans, at AAO.

Together we can make a difference, the Pan-American has been built on a culture of togetherness. So, stay tuned to the places we will travel together.

I will be looking forward seeing you soon in New Orleans.

Warm regards,

Liana Maria Vieira de Oliveira Ventura, MD PhD
Chairman, Pan-American Ophthalmological Foundation