



### College of Optometry hosts German students for a week of learning

More than 20 Aalen Optometry students took a sports vision course at Pacific

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"It's very nice for us to see a different kind of optometry." That's Simon Jakel, a master's degree candidate in optometry from Aalen, Germany, who echoed the thoughts of many of the 20-plus European students who visited Pacific's College of Optometry the last week of April.

The students came to Forest Grove as part of a decade-long joint venture between the College of Optometry and Aalen University in Germany. Spurred by a conversation between former Optometry Dean Willard Bleything and Aalen professor Dietmar Kuemmel in 1999 at an American Academy of Optometry meeting in Seattle, the program allows European students to gain knowledge of American optometric practices while earning a master's degree from Aalen.

The students took part in a week-long sports vision course at Pacific, taught by Professor Graham Erickson, which included visits to sport performance labs at Nike. The international students also visited private optometric vision therapy practices in Oregon, Washington and Colorado College of Optometry hosts German students for week of learning, insight after their stay in Forest Grove.

"German optometry is very different from American optometry," said Kuemmel, who accompanied the students to Forest Grove. He noted that Germans produce very high-quality eyeglasses and are skilled in highquality refraction practice. But, in general, he said, European optometrists are not allowed to do many of procedures involved in primary optometry in the U.S., such as medical drops in the eye. The vision therapy skills learned here is a benefit that gives the Europeans the ability to do some new things in their practices, he said.

"It's very, very good for optometry in Germany," said Kuemmel, adding that the program brings skills that "step-by-step" benefit primary eye care.