

# OPTICAL SCIENCE

## “PRIDE OF HER SCHOOL, PRIDE IN HERSELF”

Changing jobs is never easy, especially when transitioning from a deli manager to managing an academic department at the school from which you just graduated. Tammy Klette, department head of Brown Mackie College — Cincinnati’s Optical Science department, exemplifies how important career training can be for someone who wants to improve his or her life and succeed.

“After receiving an injury, I had to change careers after spending 17 years as manager of a deli.

I did not know any other trade, so I decided to attend Brown Mackie College — Cincinnati.” Klette enrolled in the Optical Science program in 1999 and, while completing her degree, she found work at a local eye care business as a pre-tester — at half the salary of her deli position. Klette, a self-described “sponge,” asked to be shown techniques and practices that she was learning at school.

Her previous experience in customer service was also useful at the eye care business, and after only two years, Klette was asked to manage the facility.

In 2001, Klette graduated summa cum laude from Brown Mackie College — Cincinnati and passed two optical licensure exams on her first try. Later that year, Klette was asked by one of her instructors to take over his position at the school — as coordinator of the Optical Science program from which she had graduated.

“I decided to take the position as program chair because I knew the experience and knowledge I possessed could be passed on to students,” says Klette. “I found that I was a teacher at heart. I absolutely loved the learning process.”

Wanting to help her students understand the importance of becoming a licensed optician, Klette instituted a month-long

review session free-of-charge prior to each licensure exam, followed by travel to Columbus, Ohio as a support group to visit the exam site.

Klette was later promoted to co-chair of the Allied Health department at the school. In 2004, Holly Helscher, academic dean of Brown Mackie College — Cincinnati, appointed her as chair of the Student Success Leadership Committee. Klette also is in succession training for a number of positions within the school.

Says Helscher: “Tammy is one of the most sincere and passionate instructors I have ever met. She brings real life into the classroom and, in return, students take their academic learning into their lives. You can’t ask more of a teacher.”



*Tammy Klette: Education made the difference for a career change.*

Klette is also heavily involved with community outreach. In 2003, she forged a relationship with Fight Blindness Ohio, a voluntary vision health and safety organization serving all 88 counties in Ohio. Optical Science students at Brown Mackie College — Cincinnati were able to interact with the community by providing free visual testing in elementary schools and at local city functions. In 2004, the students raised money school-wide for the organization’s “Light the Night for Sight” walkathon.

“When I left my job at the deli after 17 years, I was afraid of the unexpected. I can say with much pride that after the four short years since I left that job, I am honored to be in such a position where I can make a difference. I honestly love my career.”

***Personal Attention, Professional Growth***

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