**{for promotion to Clinical Associate Professor}**

**Sandra Fernando Sieminski, MD**

**Personal Statement**

**Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology**

# I am a Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology as well as the Clinical Vice Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University at Buffalo. I am seeking promotion to Clinical Associate Professor. After my medical training at the University of Pittsburgh, Internship in Internal Medicine at Washington Hospital Center, and residency in ophthalmology at Georgetown University where I served as chief resident, I completed my training with a fellowship in glaucoma at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. I started my career in Buffalo directly upon completion of my fellowship year.

I believe my career in the past ten years has been a continuous upward trajectory bound for leadership and scholarship. When I started my position in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University at Buffalo, there was no established glaucoma service, or full time glaucoma faculty. I built the subspecialty service from the ground up. My practice is busy and successful, and I have helped the Ross Eye Institute become a respected source for referrals in the subspecialty of glaucoma in Western New York, as well as nationally.

From an educational standpoint, I have been committed for over 10 years to teaching and mentoring residents and medical students in ophthalmology and the subspecialty of glaucoma. I have taught them in the clinic, in the operating room, and through lectures. I am most proud of a yearly board review that I developed, which is in a Jeopardy style format of glaucoma board review questions. I develop fifty original questions each year for the residents, and they compete as teams in a game show format. The residents look forward to this enjoyable annual review, and they consistently score highly in the glaucoma section of their boards. I also hold yearly glaucoma and cataract surgical training labs. I have collaborated with ophthalmic industries who have kindly donated microscopes, pig eyes, and surgical instruments, and I invite community ophthalmologists to help proctor the labs.

Without this training, the residents would not have the appropriate experience or the confidence prior to operating on patients.

I am committed to medical student education and have served as the Ophthalmology Clerkship Director for the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences since 2011. For each student, I carefully formulate a personalized schedule by assessing faculty availability, to ensure they have a balanced experience with adult and pediatric glaucoma.

From a research perspective, I have been publishing and presenting meaningful high impact research throughout my career. While in medical school, I presented my research on glaucoma imaging at one of the most prominent national conferences, and continued this research activity through residency, culminating in the prestigious G. Victor Simpson Resident Research Award in my final year. Under the guidance of my mentors at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary during fellowship, I focused my research mainly on a specific disease process termed pseudoexfoliation (or exfoliative) glaucoma as well as alternative therapies for glaucoma. This work was also presented at national and international conferences. Early in my career in Buffalo, I had to take a brief hiatus from intensive research activities while singlehandedly building the subspecialty practice at the Ross Eye Institute and raising two young children. Nevertheless, I was able to maintain an involvement in research. In the past few years I have become focused and I have been able to contribute significantly to my field.

The main focus of my research is in micropulse transscleral cyclophotocoagulation (MP-TSCPC). This type of laser therapy was introduced in 2016 and I was an early adopter of this technology. I have published several papers on this technology and was invited in 2020 to speak at the largest conference in our field, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, on this subject.

I am a leader in my department and as well as in my community. I have been appointed to numerous leadership positions within my field; these include the Medical Executive Committee and Ophthalmology representative of the Center for Ambulatory Surgery, the Chief of Service for Ophthalmology at the Erie County Medical Center, and the Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs of the Ophthalmology Department at the University at Buffalo. This has helped elevate my department on

a local, national and international level. I am in the process of developing a glaucoma fellowship program, which we will begin in 2021. This will be the first time in the department's history that our department will be able to offer a glaucoma fellowship.

I am also collaborating with basic scientists in my department. I am currently working on a retrospective study of the effectiveness of selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) after failed iStent trabecular bypass stent with Dr. Margaret DeAngelis, one of our new research faculty. We are planning future work with local Native American tribes to investigate clinical, genetic and environmental factors in underserved populations to help inform ocular health care delivery and policy. We are also collaborating on a project in the Veterans Administration Health System titled "Reducing Risk of Blindness: A model of genetic and patient characteristics predictive of medication glaucoma adherence", for which I plan to serve as a consultant.

I believe that in the time that I have been working in this department, I have contributed greatly to its advancement and success. From not only an academic standpoint, but from a clinical, service, and leadership standpoint, I have demonstrated ambition and growth, and will continue to do so in my career.