

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRYSM

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

CREATING A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT DAVID A. HEATH, OD, EDM

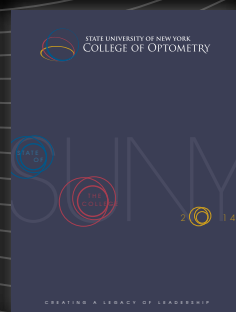
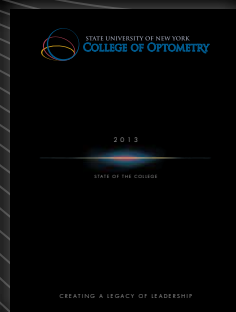
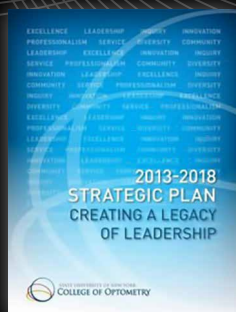
The State University of New York College of Optometry is once again engaged in a dynamic conversation about our priorities for the next five years as the completion of our Strategic Plan 2013-2018: Creating a Legacy of Leadership draws near. We have made enormous progress towards achieving each of our current strategic goals and are examining the changes occurring in the world around us as we establish a renewed vision for the College.

During the past five years, we met our expanded enrollment target while increasing the quality of each incoming class. More critically, we continue to reform our core curriculum to better prepare our optometry graduates for future practice, while expanding our educational offerings to provide them with value-added opportunities that uniquely enhance their professional readiness as they begin their careers. We expanded elective coursework, developed new externship opportunities, implemented the OD/MBA option in addition to the existing OD/MS and OD/PhD and increased the number of residency training slots from 35 to 41.

Members of the graduating class of 2017 expressed immense satisfaction with their SUNY Optometry education (98%), 83% were positive about the College's non-curricular opportunities – an increase from 50% five years ago – and 40% are participating in residency education to gain advanced competency in special areas of interest. This percentage is well beyond the national average of approximately 25%.

Our students and graduates have never been better prepared to assume leadership roles within their profession and their communities than they are today. Creating such an innovative and challenging educational, research and patient care environment requires the commitment and support of the broader College community, including our faculty, staff, alumni, friends and community partners. We would not have been nearly as successful in meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018: Creating a Legacy of Leadership without everyone's participation.

This year's Annual Report includes reflections from members of the College's senior management team on our accomplishments of the last five years. You will hear more about our emerging 2018-2023 Strategic Plan in the coming months and I invite you to participate in that conversation as we work for SUNY Optometry's future.



R E F L E C T I O N S



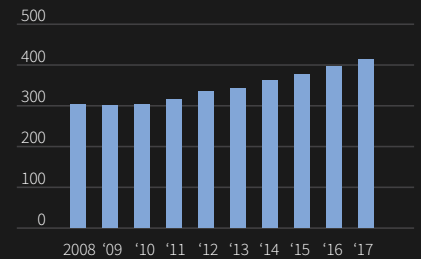
GUILHERME ALBIERI, PHD

Vice President for Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer

The Office of Student Affairs worked to create a vibrant sense of community; enroll a highly qualified and diverse student body; and provide students, residents and alumni with services to succeed in their careers. We have worked closely with the student council, Academic Affairs, Clinical Administration and other departments to establish a supportive environment and promote personal growth and development. The College now offers many services to ensure students' success that were not previously available.

We have successfully increased the class size from 75 to 100—a 33% increase—while maintaining the quality of the student body. Our office also collaborated with Academic Affairs to create an advanced standing program for internationally trained physicians. There are currently seven students in the program and we will graduate our first cohort next spring. I am also very proud of the implementation of the Academic, Clinical and Professional Excellence Initiative and our increased international reach and reputation through our collaborations in China, on the African continent and in the Middle East.

ENROLLMENT IN PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS



DAVID TROILO, PHD

Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs

We sought to enhance our educational and research programs while offering faculty opportunities to develop their interests. We created and delivered a customizable professional degree experience, including value-added options like the OD/MS and MBA certificate programs, to ensure active integrated learning, deliver core competency clinical training, teach on evidence-based practice, and establish effective academic support systems for our students. These programs all came from our faculty, who created them and make them work, reflecting how much we care about making our students the best optometrists they can be.

In research, we enhanced the College's intellectual impact by developing new areas of research and strengthened and expanded our programs that train vision and clinician scientists. The Clinical Vision Research Center brings all parts of the College's mission together – research, education and patient care. We increased external funding for clinical research and implemented various patient recruitment strategies to create a sustainable facility that will elevate the College's reputation and drive the profession and eye care forward.



LIDUVINA MARTINEZ-GONZALEZ, MS

Vice President for Clinical Administration and Executive Director, University Eye Center

The changing health care environment continues to challenge us to expand access, lower costs and enhance the quality of our services. But we focus on what we can do instead of focusing on what we cannot do. The integration of new technologies, implementation of an electronic health record integrated with our diagnostic and testing capabilities, integration of evidenced based care and research—along with the capital projects underway and planned replacement of aging clinical equipment—highlight just a few of the improvements and enhancements we have made over the course of this strategic plan.

Visits to our Center steadily increased to 70,000, and the referral service contributed more than 13,000 visits to our total annual volume. Our community outreach services evidenced a 30% increase in the last year, including activities for the homebound, vision screenings and health-related fairs and events. The addition of a community outreach coordinator allowed us to expand our services and enhance public health awareness in general. We also prioritized programs directed at promoting and supporting values centered on patient satisfaction and focused on the continued professional development of faculty and staff.



RICHARD SODEN, OD

Director of Health Care Development

I focused on expanding our community relationships, developing new external partnerships, strengthening existing affiliations and preparing for the changes in health care, from new treatment modalities to Medicare and Medicaid redesign.

The College agreed to help run the eye care clinic at the Gouverneur Health Medical Center – we started with one full-time optometrist in 2016 and recently filled two additional positions. We also expanded the clinical extern program for fourth-year students, filled two new positions at Woodhull Medical Center and added a student rotation to our affiliation with the School Health Clinic at New York University.

Our collaboration with Community Healthcare Network (CHN) will fund and design a mobile eye care van to serve patients at each of the CHN’s twelve community health centers. Our students also rotate to The Bowery Mission and the College is part of the Medicaid Redesign Project and Performing Provider Systems.



DAVID BOWERS, MP, MBA

Vice President for Administration and Finance

Most notably, I believe, is the completion of several major capital improvement projects, including the Center for Student Life and Learning and the building’s ground floor and lobby. The challenges in completing these capital improvement projects included making steady progress on all fronts with limited resources, while also carrying out major renovations in fully occupied spaces.

With the numerous capital improvement projects completed, the physical environment for students and everyone else who enters our building was significantly upgraded. There has also been remarkable progress made in the provision of information technology services for students and campus-wide community.

Tenth floor concept study



ANN WARWICK, MA

Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Executive Director, Optometric Center of New York

We successfully completed the Optometric Center of New York’s first major campaign, The Vision and The Promise, in 2014 with a total \$10,150,000 raised—exceeding our \$10M goal and raising more funds than any other five-year period in the foundation’s history. There were 1,385 total donors, 614 of whom were new, and an unprecedented 58% participation rate among faculty and staff. We created 18 new scholarships, bringing the total amount awarded annually to students up to \$161,050. The campaign also offered donors the opportunity for naming opportunities, such as the Essilor Eyewear Center.

We also prioritized creating new pathways for alumni, industry partners and potential donors to engage with the College community. We introduced SUNY Eye Network, a virtual space for alumni to connect, and attracted support from new sources, including the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Hoffman Foundation and George Link Foundation. The 2016 Eyes on New York Gala was the most successful to date, raising more than \$338,000.

E D U C A T I O N



OD students attend the 2017 Career Symposium

***We develop the highest quality practitioners
by providing the most progressive and adaptive education available.***

SUNY Optometry welcomed its 46th class, the Class of 2021, to the College community.

This class and its key indicators are among the top in the nation.

AVERAGE GPA: 3.6

AVERAGE SCIENCE GPA: 3.5

OAT ACADEMIC AVERAGE: 345

OAT TOTAL SCIENCE AVG: 350

RESIDENCY:

New York State **48**

Out of State **47**

International **5** (Canada **4**; China **1**)

UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITIES: 9

Hispanic **5**

African American **4**

GENDER: 65 Female; **35** Male

ADVANCED STANDING:

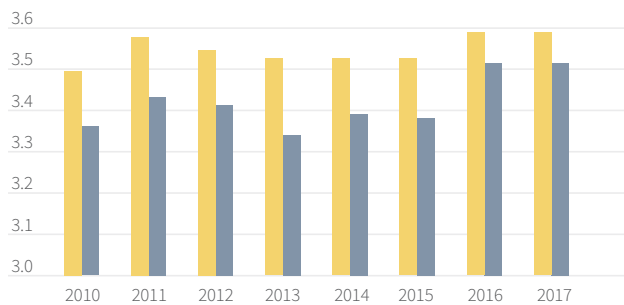
2 enrolled (3rd year/Class of 2019)

FINAL YIELD:

65% accepted students attending

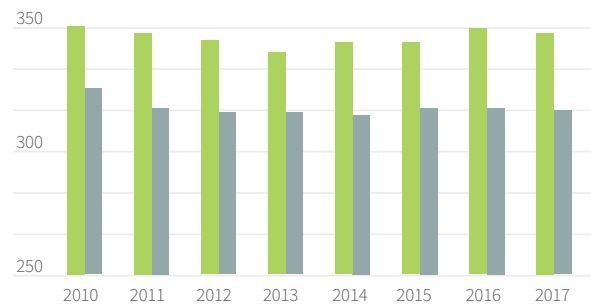
ENTERING GPA AND SCIENCE GPA

■ GPA ■ Science GPA



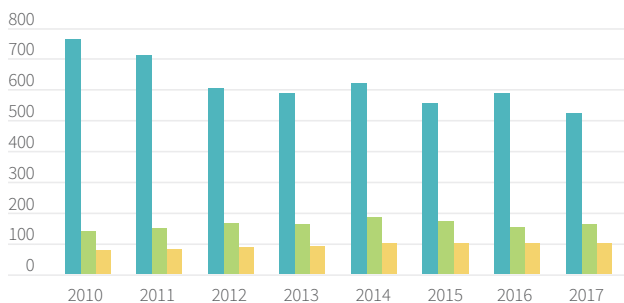
ENTERING OAT TOTAL SCIENCE SCORES PER YEAR

■ SUNY ■ National Average



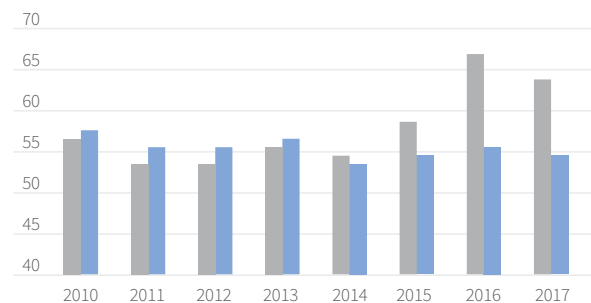
APPLICATIONS, ACCEPTANCES AND FIRST YEAR ENROLLMENT (OD PROGRAM)

■ Applicants ■ Accepted ■ Enrolled



YIELD PER YEAR

■ SUNY ■ National





Building a More Diverse Student Population

In a culture where the word “diversity” gets bandied about a lot, SUNY Optometry is certain of one thing: Diversity is not enough.

Without a sense of inclusion, diversity is simply people of different backgrounds being in the same space, often without an exchange of ideas or interests. “We want to make sure that students, faculty and staff feel that this is a community where they can thrive and succeed,” says vice president for student affairs Dr. Guilherme Albieri about what the College hopes to achieve after it builds a diverse population.

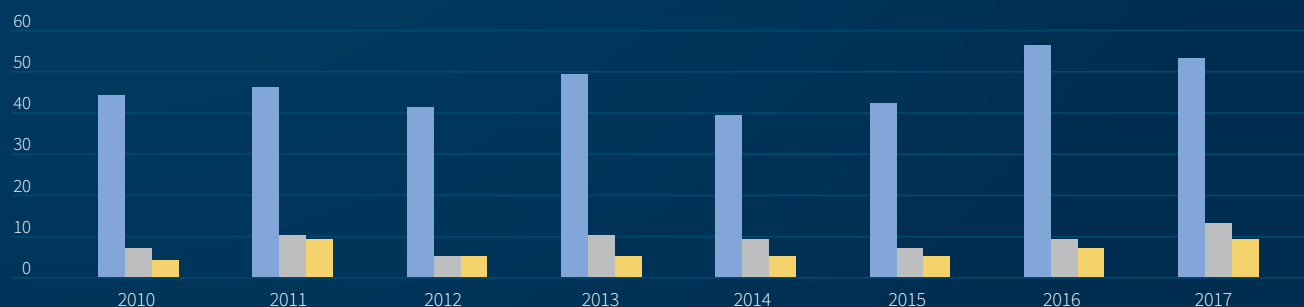
The College created the Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan to address the SUNY system’s goal of becoming the most diverse university system in the country. The first section of the two-part study looks at the race and ethnicity of the College’s student body, faculty, staff and administration—comparing the stats to other optometry schools and health professions.

While the findings showed that there is a lower percentage of students of color in optometry than other health professions (prompting the College to set a five-year goal to shift enrollment demographics), the Student Climate Survey indicated that there is actually a high degree of inclusion and satisfaction amongst the student body. Says Dr. Albieri, “Maintaining and building upon the vitality of current programs that boost engagement and morale is critical.”

There is a four-prong approach underway to increase diversity and inclusion at the College. The components are the Explore Campaign (designed to encourage prospective students to investigate the field of optometry), the IDEA initiative (focused on preparing high school students to become successful applicants to the College), targeted recruitment (focused on schools that serve students of color) and the CSTEP program (aimed at increasing representation of underrepresented groups in STEM fields).

UNDER-REPRESENTED MINORITY STUDENTS

■ Applicants ■ Acceptances ■ Matriculants



SUNY Opt-In Puts Incoming Students on the Digital Fast Track

Any student attending SUNY Optometry knows that the College provides innovative approaches to education and learning. Now, thanks to SUNY Opt-In, those who have been admitted can experience the institution's commitment before even stepping onto campus. Launched in April 2017, SUNY Opt-In is what associate director of admissions Christian Alberto calls a "one-stop shop," where incoming students can figure out housing, secure financial aid and lay the foundation for their life at the College.

"We've captured elements of our institutional values—excellence and innovation—while promoting the warm, supportive and exciting community that is SUNY Optometry," says Mr. Alberto. "We want our newly committed students to have a digital platform that they can refer to for their questions, required steps and overall general interests throughout the year leading up to August enrollment."

SUNY Opt-In is particularly beneficial considering the College's rolling admissions policy; some incoming students can have as long as a 10-month wait from acceptance to the start of classes. That is nearly a year of unknowns and potential anxiety about their academic future. Incoming students now interact live with the College's admissions team, current students and future classmates to guarantee a very human outcome: calm and confident students from day one—or sooner.

Levy, Radich Receive Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence



Karen Levy

Karen Levy and Derek Radich received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence on April 5 at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, N.Y. The award acknowledges students' distinguished achievements and is the highest honor bestowed upon a student by the University. This year, 256 students from 64 campuses received the recognition.



Derek Radich

"Students selected for the Chancellor's Award have demonstrated that not only are they excellent students, but

they go above and beyond – developing their talents and skills to contribute the best of themselves to their campuses and communities," said SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher. "And their achievements reflect not only their hard work and dedication, but the support of their families and friends and SUNY's world-class faculty and staff."

Levy, a Beacon, N.Y. native, excelled academically and graduated as valedictorian in May. She was secretary of Beta Sigma Kappa, the optometric honor society, and served as a tutor of class and clinic material. She volunteered annually as a student representative for VisionWalk to fundraise for retinal research.

Radich proved his natural leadership abilities as president of Beta Sigma Kappa. The Newburgh, N.Y. native volunteered with Genesco First Response and provided optometric services to Special Olympics athletes. He was on the Dean's List and attended the Alcon Academy for Eye Care Excellence.

New Student Advising Program Seeks Greater Academic Success

SUNY Optometry has always prioritized student success. Yet even with dedicated faculty and administrators, there are still some new students whose transition into the College is difficult. To address their needs—and get them on the road to achievement—Academic Affairs launched its new Student Advising Program (SAP).

The program aims to enhance the didactic and clinical success of SUNY Optometry students through coaching, mentoring, tutoring and advising from faculty members. “Our goal is to identify students who require additional support early and provide them with educational and psychosocial support throughout their academic and clinical careers,” says Dr. Kimberley Poirier, an academic advising coordinator for the program.

Dr. Poirier is joined by fellow academic advising coordinators Dr. Ann Beaton and Ms. Focrun Nahar. While it’s too early to document success stories, the ultimate goal is for the program to actually make itself obsolete. “If successful, we aim to have the number of students requiring remedial services decrease over time,” says Dr. Poirier.

A more immediate marker of achievement will be an increased number of students doing well in the College’s new Clinical Enhancement Program. “With the goal of early intervention and mentorship, we hope to create a seamless transition for our students from the classroom to clinic in their third year,” Dr. Poirier explains.

Clinical Enhancement Students to Become Confident, Career Optometrists

A career as a successful optometrist requires more than executing a battery of tests—it involves patient-doctor communication, high levels of professionalism and, of course, confidence.

To that end, the College operates the Clinical Enhancement Program (CEP), an advising system that pairs students with faculty coaches who work with them to craft a customized plan—one that highlights a student’s greatest assets while working to strengthen areas in need of extra attention.



“In the past, attempts at clinical remediation only focused on additional patient care encounters,” associate clinical professor Dr. Julia Appel says about the program, which is tailored for students entering their third year of the optometry curriculum. “While clinical experience is an important aspect of professional growth, it does not specifically address improvement in the areas of clinical reasoning, organization, professionalism and communication. Our aim is to help our interns excel in all aspects of patient care and not simply pass their rotations.”

Currently, there are approximately five faculty enhancement coaches working with about 10 students. Faculty use the College’s new grading guidelines to assess students who would benefit from the program. Some students who are able to self-assess have even asked to participate.

“I think of the Student Advising Program and Clinical Enhancement Program as complementary,” says Dr. David Troilo, vice president and dean for academic affairs. “The SAP is aimed at assisting students navigate through the didactic parts of the curriculum more effectively...[while] the CEP becomes relevant later in the curriculum, when students move into the clinic, which brings other complex expectations and pressures.”

Academic, Clinical and Personal Excellence Initiative Makes Better Doctors

In the caffeine-fueled world of academia, SUNY Optometry decided to nurture student success with something gentler: tea and thinking. Those are two of the guiding ideas behind T-Chat sessions, the central component of the Academic, Clinical and Personal Excellence Initiative (ACPEI), a program designed to assist students become the best doctors and community members they can be.

Launched in August 2016, ACPEI is a partnership between the offices of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, as well as Beta Sigma Kappa (BSK). It is funded by a grant from the Optometric Center of New York.

All students are welcome to participate, and last academic year, approximately 240 attended T-Chat sessions, which are workshops or informal conversation around specific topics. Past discussions have covered topics such as stress management, test anxiety, debt management, study strategies, sleep hygiene and career planning and are led by faculty, outside speakers, Student Affairs staff and BSK members.

ACPEI will launch an assessment tool—the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory—to measure students’ learning strategies and methods. Available for free, it will help predict student success and indicate how the school can enhance its educational interventions.

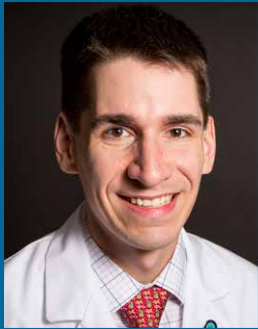


RESIDENCY CERTIFICATES AWARDED



*projected

S T U D E N T S



Tristan Barrueco

The fourth-year student is passionate about providing eye care services to underserved communities.

After completing a degree in biomedical engineering at the University of Rochester in 2010, Tristan Barrueco attended U.S. Navy's Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy. An unexpected medical discharge left him wondering what to do next.

"A friend who had recently graduated from optometry school started teaching me about the field," says the Basking Ridge, New Jersey native. After shadowing an optometrist, Barrueco was all in. "The more I shadowed, the more I became convinced that optometry was the career for me. I loved learning about the medical aspect of optometry. I relished the satisfaction of helping people see."

He especially enjoys working with patients with ocular disease and those who require contact lenses. In fact, his first rotation in his fourth year was in specialty contact lenses. "No two eyes are alike and I really enjoy analyzing each situation and working out a solution to it," explains Barrueco, who won the National Board of Examiners in Optometry Certificate of Commendation for securing the highest score at SUNY on the national board exam. "And it's incredibly rewarding when you place a contact lens on the eye of a patient and see their face light up when they are able to read the letters on the chart."

But it's his work as the treasurer of Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity that has perhaps changed Barrueco the most. It took him to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua in January, where he served at a free clinic that saw more than 4,400 patients who don't have access to eye care. And in May, he helped see 3,500-plus people at an OneSight Vision Care Clinic in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



Kathleen Hoang

The second annual Student Innovator Award winner created a diabetes management tool.

Kathleen Hoang, a fourth-year OD student at SUNY Optometry, won the second annual Student Innovator Award. The award, which is sponsored by Rick Bay and Essilor, recognizes innovative and creative ideas of current optometry students to support the profession's next generation of leaders.

Hoang's winning idea, track DM, is a tool for diabetes management to improve health, educate diabetics regarding relevant updates in the field and engage users in a social community.

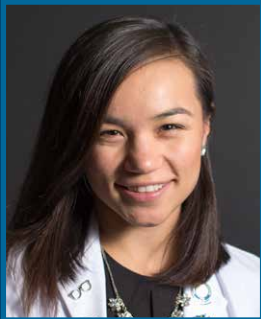
According to Hoang, newly-diagnosed diabetics often find it challenging to keep track of their meals, doctor's appointments, blood glucose levels and physical activity.

"With so many things to keep track of, a lot of people fall into this vicious cycle in which they are not on top of all the things they need to manage," she says. "Diabetes has the ability to affect multiple systems in your body and it's really important to realize that the bad things that happen due to diabetes are really bad if they are not kept under control."

Her track DM app's features include appointment reminders, glucose monitor and fitness tracker integration, engagement with other diabetic app users and the latest information on the disease.

Hoang presented her idea during the 2017 Vision Monday Global Leadership Summit in late March and received a grant of \$5,000 to further develop her app.

We cultivate, engage and nurture the next generation of leadership.



Kirsten Madeline Johnson

The president of Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity is excited about chipping away at preventable blindness.

Even before Kirsten Madeline Johnson decided to attend SUNY Optometry, she knew that she wanted to work with Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (SVOSH). Now, as president of the organization—which helps bring eye care to people in developing countries—fourth-year student Johnson assists in identifying locales that need care and works with optometrists and students who donate their time and resources.

“As future optometrists, we are in a prime position for humanitarian work that chips away at the immense world problem of preventable blindness. The skills we are honing can benefit millions of people around the world,” she says. “I am lucky to have been in a leadership position where I could directly see the impact of my work and see the lives that were changed for the better.”

While Johnson says she has enjoyed all the clinical settings she’s entered, pediatric eye care has her heart. “I will be the first to admit that pediatric eye exams can be difficult. You have to have extreme patience and energy for these exams, but the reward of helping children achieve their best possible vision is absolutely worth the effort,” she says.

The El Dorado Hills, California-native is set to graduate in Spring 2018. She plans to pursue a pediatric residency after graduation, and is interested in the new VOSH Corps program, which helps optometrists start optometry schools in countries that don’t have them.



Meredith Stallone

From political advocacy to research, the OD/MS candidate aims to carry on the legacy of those who came before her.

Meredith Stallone’s academic career has been filled with many triumphs, from her induction into Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society to winning the Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation and Charles and Mildred Schnurmacher Foundation Merit Scholarship for being at the top of her class. But it was her first day of working in the clinic that stands out as her proudest moment.

“Towards the end of second year, my mom came to school to sit as my first patient in clinic. That felt like a proud moment for both of us,” says the dual Doctor of Optometry and Master of Vision Science candidate. “It was exciting to finally put into action everything I had worked hard to learn in the classroom and it was a way to honor my mom for her unending support throughout my years of school.”

It was also a formative moment for the Sayville, New York-native, one that cemented her commitment to the field. A shadowing experience during her undergraduate tenure at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill pushed her toward optometry. “I shadowed health care practitioners in a multitude of settings, but optometry seemed like the right fit for me,” she says.

Stallone chose SUNY Optometry because of its stellar reputation and location. “My favorite part of the SUNY community is the camaraderie within my class. It has been a unique and special experience to go through the trials of a rigorous optometry school program with a small group of about 95 people,” she says.

She is working on her master’s thesis with her advisor Dr. Tracy Nguyen. The paper is based on two of her abstracts that were accepted for publication, both of which explore dry eye inflammation.

P A T
I E N T
C A R E

Dr. Jennifer Hue



We deliver effective and compassionate eye and vision care in an innovative and accessible way.

EyeConnect Patient Portal Helps Patients Become Active Partners in Their Care

The internationally recognized optometrists, ophthalmologists and ophthalmic dispensers who work at the University Eye Center (UEC) have added a new tool to their kit: the EyeConnect Patient Portal.

The free, secure online platform makes patients active partners in their care, letting them message their doctors, schedule appointments, request refills, pay bills and access their health records. Liduvina Martinez-Gonzalez, vice president for clinical administration and executive director of the UEC, says the portal was an inevitable addition to center's offerings.

"The increase in consumerism and patient adoption of technology solutions in health care has made patient portals a natural extension of the services we provide to our patients," says Ms. Martinez-Gonzalez. "We expect EyeConnect to provide patients with a convenient and user-friendly method to have access to their health care information and communicate with their doctor—anytime, anywhere."

Talks about the portal began in earnest in 2015, but it couldn't go live until additional technology was in place. "We did not implement our patient portal until the first quarter of 2017 to ensure that several other technology driven solutions were implemented, such as our e-prescribing capability and picture archiving system, which provides access to diagnostic images from all examination rooms and facilitates the care process with advanced analytics," says Ms. Martinez-Gonzalez.

The portal is available to all registered UEC patients, and they can enroll at reception desks through the facility or ask for an enrollment key that can be used to enroll at home. "We are looking forward to providing parental access to children's records, proxy access for caregivers and interactive forms that can be completed online prior to visits," Ms. Martinez-Gonzalez says. "The use of this technology supports the UEC's endeavor to enhance its clinical information systems, promote research studies and improve our patients' health care outcomes and experiences."

In addition, Ms. Martinez-Gonzalez says the launch of EyeConnect provided lessons that will inform development moving forward. "The implementation process highlighted how important it is to continually engage our community and patients in the development of programs and technology solutions," she says. "We can't forget that these solutions are intended to provide a convenient and secure mechanism to facilitate communication and access to information for patients. If it doesn't work for them, they won't use it."



The graphic is a promotional poster for the EyeConnect Patient Portal. At the top, it features the 'EYE CONNECT PATIENT PORTAL' logo. Below the logo is a photograph of a smiling woman with curly hair using a laptop. To the right of the photo are logos for 'Available on the App Store' and 'GET IT ON Google play'. Below the photo are five circular icons with corresponding text: 'Email your doctor' (envelope icon), 'Book an appointment' (calendar icon), 'Refill a prescription' (pill icon), 'Pay your bill' (dollar sign icon), and 'View your medical records' (document icon). The main text reads 'Your doctor is online at UniversityEyeCenter.org/EyeConnect'. Below this, it states: 'EyeConnect is a free, secure, confidential, and easy-to-use health management tool that gives patients 24/7 access to our practice. EyeConnect is available on your desktop, laptop, tablet, and smartphone. Simply tell the receptionist you would like to enroll and you are on your way!' At the bottom, it says 'Sign up today!' and includes the University Eye Center logo and name.



Inside University Eye Center's Myopia Control Clinic

In the 1970s, one in four children had myopia, the medical term for nearsightedness. Fast forward to today and that number has jumped to 40 percent of kids—nearly one in two. Studies estimate that by 2050, half of the world's population will have myopia.

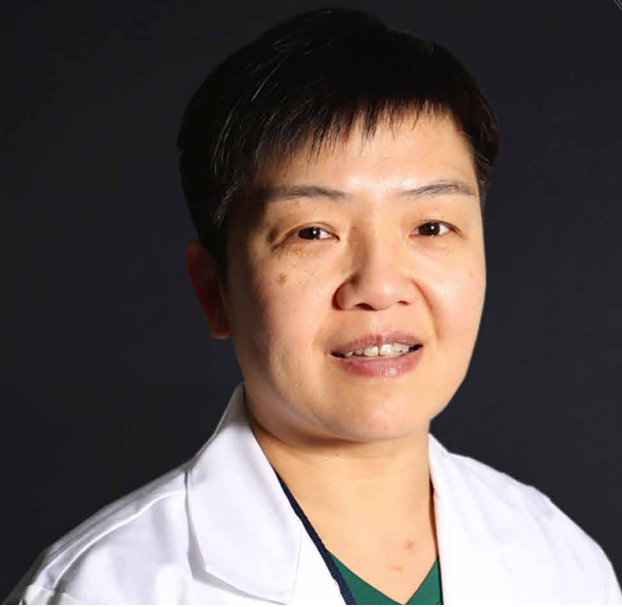
SUNY Optometry believes that while there may not be a cure for the condition, there are ways to minimize the likelihood of it getting worse. So the College opened the Myopia Control Clinic to give children immediate help and provide their parents with information they can use to make the best long-term decisions for their kids' vision. "The clinic was established to treat children who either developed myopia at an early age, or whose prescription is increasing at a faster rate," says Dr. Xiaoying Zhu, the assistant clinical professor who leads the clinic.

Conventional thinking often attributes the rise in myopia to children spending an increasing amount of time looking at screens. While doctors at the clinic know this is one factor, they stress that there is actually a more complicated set of reasons for nearsightedness. "While prolonged near work (including using various electronic devices) has been shown to be associated with the increasing prevalence of myopia, there are certainly other factors involved, such as genetic factors (e.g., family history of myopia), and lack of time outdoors," says Dr. Zhu.



Children who visit the clinic may be fit with contact lenses, prescription glasses, atropine eye drops and even orthokeratology – contact lenses worn overnight – to help the condition. In an effort to help even more young people, the clinic recently launched an outreach effort, contacting local schools and newspapers.

The clinic also provides internship opportunities for students at the College. "[Students] play a crucial role in the clinic: They are very much involved in every aspect of patient care, from history taking, examination, contact lens fitting, to formulating assessments and plans under the supervision of the doctor."



Dr. Xiaoying Zhu

How Childhood Curiosity Led to the Career of Dr. Xiaoying Zhu

The professor says she has never stopped trying to answer a question she first asked herself in high school.



The Myopia Control Center was featured by CBS New York's "Health Watch" in August 2017.

Anyone in the SUNY Optometry community who watched CBS New York "Health Watch" this August may have seen a familiar face: Xiaoying Zhu OD, MD, MS, FAAO. While her position as head of the Myopia Control Clinic is the reason behind the televised appearance, Dr. Zhu's dedication goes back much further, all the way to her teenage years.

Growing up in China, Dr. Zhu noticed something that she found strange. "The majority of my classmates did not wear glasses when we first started high school, and only two students

stayed that way when we graduated," she says. "I was one of those two students." She wanted to know what had caused the mass loss of perfect vision—and what could be done about it.

Dr. Zhu joined the SUNY Optometry community in 2015. In the classroom, she focuses on more than the syllabus, structuring lessons in a way that encourages student engagement. "I try to teach lectures in an integrative fashion, and labs with lots of hands-on experience," she says.

Dr. Zhu is also researching the etiology of axial myopia. "Specifically, I am studying some intrinsic factor within the eyes that might be involved in eye growth and emmetropization," she explains.

While there is no cure for myopia, under Dr. Zhu's direction, the Myopia Control Clinic strives to curb its progression. It is, she says, work that brings her great fulfillment. And though she may not have fully solved the riddle that first came to her in high school—there is no permanent fix for some vision conditions—her work continues to contribute necessary scholarship to the field, improving the lives of every child who walks through the doors of the clinic.

Dr. Jennifer Gould is SUNY Optometry's Biggest Cheerleader



One day, Jennifer Gould got it. Completely.

“I was being quizzed by one of my preceptors about a certain disease,” she recalls. “I’d never taken all of the basic science information and the clinical and pulled it together. He asked me a question and suddenly, all the threads came together and it made sense to me.”

If she had been Oprah, she would have flung her arms wide and announced operatically, “Ahaaaa!” Instead, being a fourth-year student at the SUNY College of Optometry, Gould filed it away as a moment to return to again and again to help herself and others.

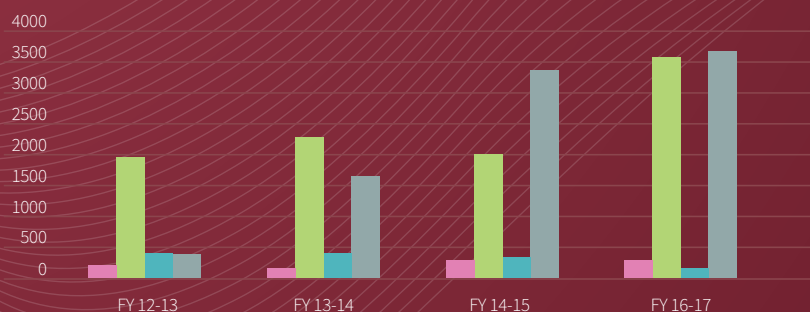
That was in 2013. Four years later, Dr. Gould is an assistant clinical professor at the College. Now, she uses that moment in fourth-year clinic to teach her students. “One of the advantages of being a recent alum is that I remember what it was like being a student. I remember what I struggled with and try to teach what I did to understand those things,” she says.

The story also symbolizes Dr. Gould’s journey to optometry: various threads that suddenly pulled together into one resonant aha. First, there was her desire to help people—a desire left unfulfilled in her initial career as a mechanical engineer. Thread number two: Dr. Gould believed that if she was going to return to school, it would only be at the very best place. “I wanted to make sure I got a good education and had a great clinical experience,” she says. “And where we are, in New York, means we get to work with an amazing cross-section of people. I knew it would be exceptional.”

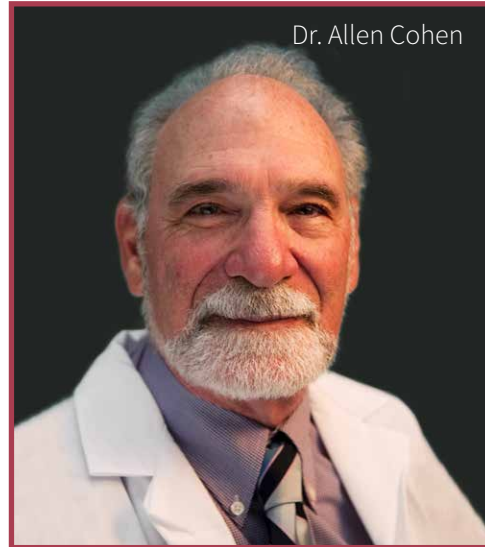
From nearly day one as a student, Dr. Gould knew she wanted to teach. Today, she teaches Clinical Optometry 1 and 2 and portions of the Ocular Disease 2 course. In addition, she is the interim chief of Advanced Care Services, holding administrative duties to keep the service operating optimally.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Homebound Visits Screenings Support Groups Events



Community Capital Assistance Program Grant for Vision Rehabilitation



The College received a \$125,000 grant from the New York State Assembly’s Community Capital Assistance Program. The funding will upgrade diagnostic and therapeutic equipment for examination and therapy rooms in the vision rehabilitation service of the University Eye Center (UEC).

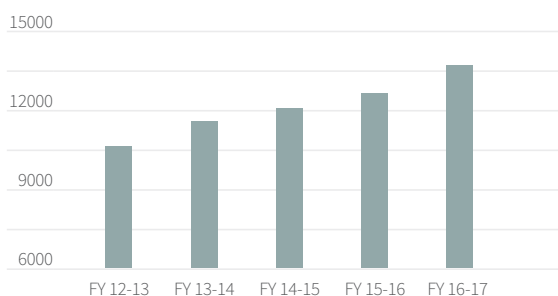
Neuro-optometric rehabilitation focuses on eye and vision care and therapies for people who have experienced visual problems as a result of acquired brain injury and other neurological conditions, according to Dr. Allen Cohen, supervisor of the unit’s residency program.

“The specialized equipment will enhance the College’s ability to provide more effective care and improve patient outcomes by applying the newest neuroscience research in brain processing to clinical therapy procedures,” says Dr. Cohen.

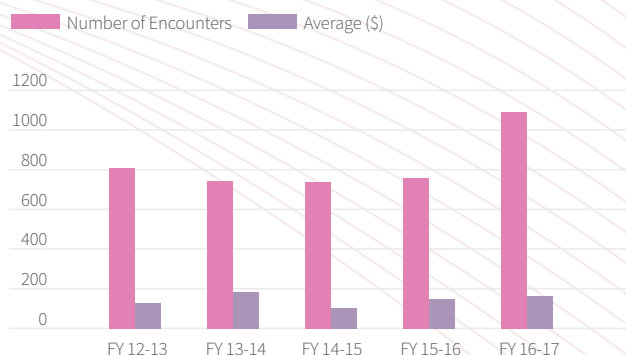
The Community Capital Assistance Program provides grants to promote community improvement within New York State, including education, transportation and economic development projects.

“I’m glad that I could help [University Eye Center] sustain and expand its services,” says New York State Assemblymember Aravella Simotas, who secured the grant for the College. “They provide exceptional care to underserved communities and treat patients regardless of their ability to pay and that is a very worthy mission.”

REFERRAL VISITS



CHARITABLE CARE



R E
S E A
R C H

Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Pérez receives Zeiss Young Investigator Award.



We create the next generation of researchers and continue to be a global leader in vision science and clinical vision research.



SUNY Optometry Earns AAHRPP Accreditation

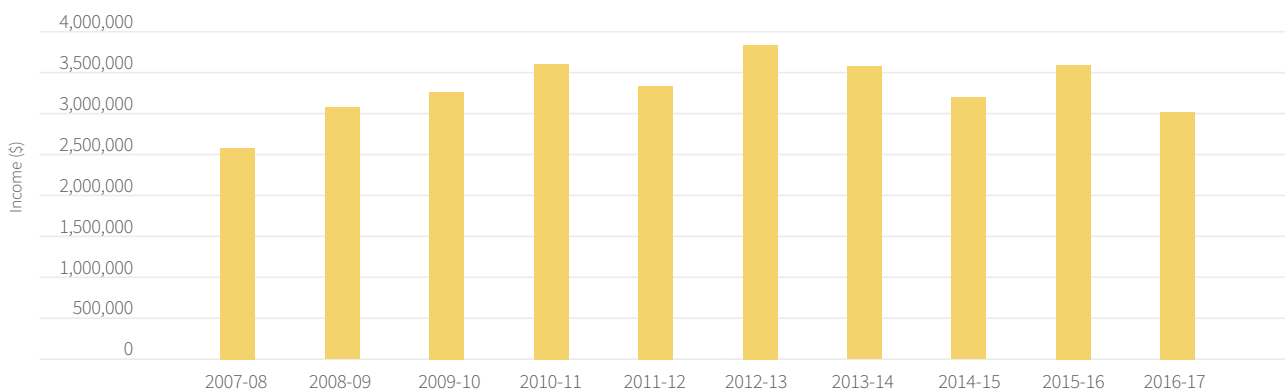
The Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) accredited the College's human subject research program in March.

AAHRPP provides accreditation for organizations that conduct or review human research, demonstrate that they have built extensive safeguards into every level of their research operation and adhere to high standards for research. The National Institutes of Health, the world's largest public funder of research, has earned accreditation, as has Pfizer, Inc., the largest industry sponsor of clinical research.

"The standards set by AAHRPP form the benchmarks that human subject research programs across the world strive for," says Dr. Stewart Bloomfield, associate dean for graduate studies and research and director of the Graduate Center for Vision Research. "This achievement indicates that faculty and staff at the College offer the highest standard of care and protection for the people who serve as subjects in our clinical research program."

The College is only the fourth campus in the State University of New York system to earn this distinction; the University at Buffalo, Binghamton University and Stony Brook University are also accredited by AAHRPP.

GRANT ACTIVITY



Empire Innovation Program Award to Develop Translational Research Center

SUNY Optometry was awarded \$750,000 through the SUNY Empire Innovation Program (EIP) to recruit an investigator with expertise in molecular genetic vision research focusing on eye disease.

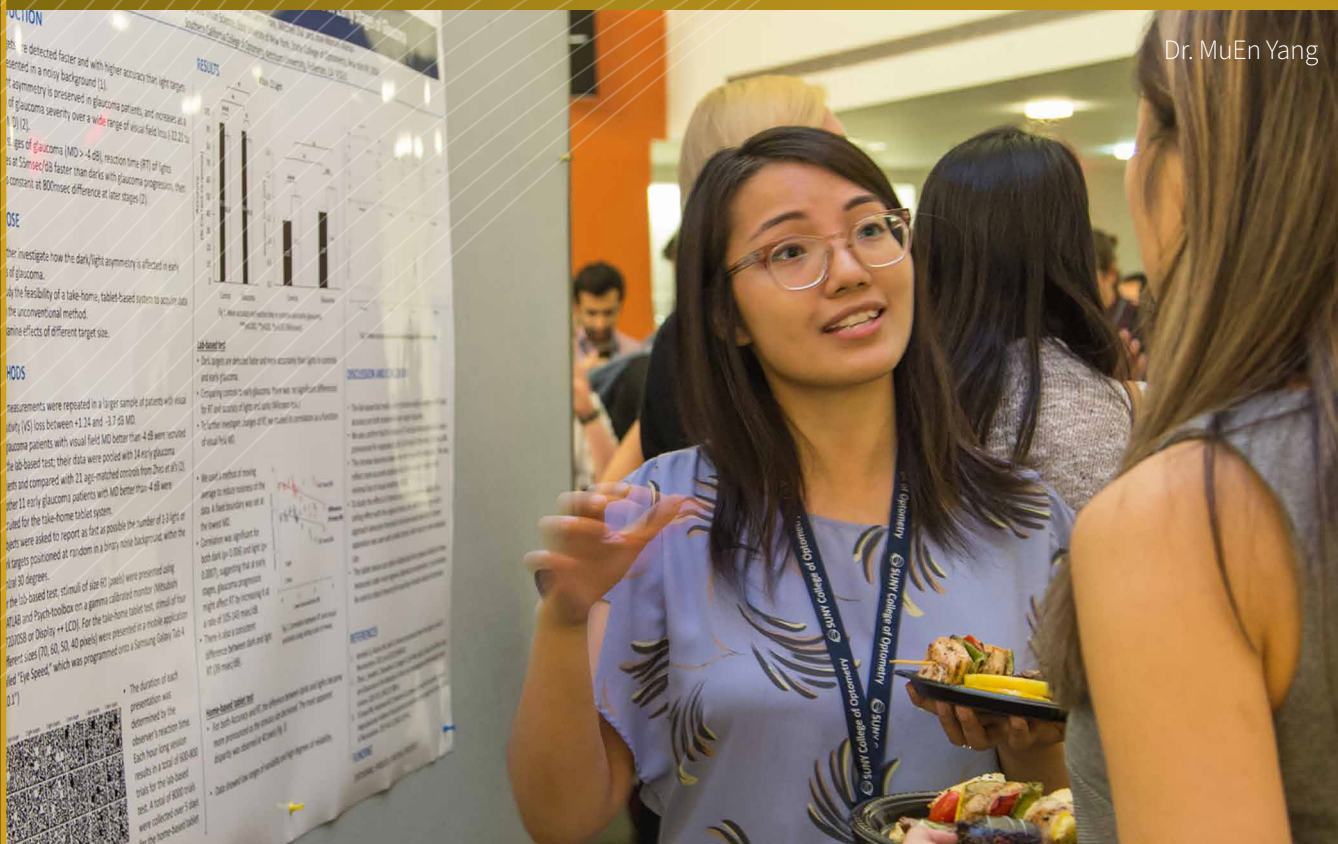
EIP is a state-funded competitive grant program dedicated to recruiting and retaining world-class faculty at SUNY. The new position is part of a larger effort at the College to establish a Center for Translational Vision Research.

Translational studies, defined as the translation of basic research findings to clinical applications, will form a comprehensive research platform at the College as an incubator for new therapies and technologies that will eventually be tested at the Clinical Vision Research Center.

“Translational research fills the gap between our basic and clinical research programs and informs them both,” says Dr. David Troilo, vice president and dean for academic affairs. “This grant will provide an important element to research efforts at the College and will help us advance the profession of optometry as we help more patients.”

Current translational research at the College focuses on neurodegenerative diseases of the eye, glaucoma, refractive errors (myopia), amblyopia, corneal disease, angiogenesis, traumatic brain injury and cataract.

Dr. Stewart Bloomfield, associate dean for research and graduate studies, led the College’s effort to secure the EIP grant and serves as director of the College’s Graduate Center for Vision Research. “[This award] will significantly increase the College’s competitiveness for federal research and training funding,” he says. “Recruitment of an EIP scholar and creation of the Center for Translational Vision Research will transform the overall experimental program at the College.”



Dr. MuEn Yang



Dr. Kristen Fry

Clinical Vision Research Center Creates the Future of Eye Care

There's certainly no shortage of ingenuity at the College's Clinical Vision Research Center (CVRC). Back in 2013, the Graduate Center for Vision Research's Dr. Stewart Bloomfield joined forces with vice president and dean for academic affairs Dr. David Troilo and faculty member Dr. Kathryn Richdale to create the CVRC, which partners with industries, foundations and the government to conduct research dedicated to advancing eye care.

"The ability to collaborate with the various faculty researchers on myriad projects is exciting," says Kristen Fry, OD, MS, FAAO, director of the CVRC. "The SUNY community, faculty, staff and students are supportive of our research efforts and refer prospective study participants. Many personally get involved in our research studies."

Dr. Fry—who graduated from SUNY Optometry in 1998—took over as director of the Center in 2016 after a two-year stint as associate director. She oversees staff research and manages relationships with faculty researchers and industry sponsors. It's a position that is tailor-made for her career. "I have always been interested in research, and the opportunity to influence patient care through participation in a clinical trial has seemed an ideal way to utilize my optometry degree," she says.

Before SUNY Optometry, Dr. Fry concentrated her efforts on investigator-initiated, NIH-funded and multi-center device and drug clinical trials. She spent more than a decade as a sub-investigator/coordinator for investigator-initiated and FDA-sponsored clinical investigations at the Cornea and Laser Eye Institute in Teaneck, New Jersey, and served as director of clinical research at Ophthalmic Consultants at New York Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Dr. Fry's priority is to use the CVRC to improve patient care. "I would like to take advantage of my human research background to help oversee the research process so it is conducted ethically and within the confines of the regulations and that the results of such research activities may ultimately lead to benefits in patient care," she says.

The CVRC has already conducted more than 40 studies in cornea, contact lenses, lens care products, dry eye medication and ophthalmic devices. And its database includes more than 2,000 people who are game to participate in research.



Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Pérez

Passion Drives Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Pérez to Advocate for the Vision Science Community

“We need to stand up for science and defend the institutions that support us, like the National Institutes of Health and National Eye Institute.”

As many stories do, the tale of how Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Pérez came to be a member of the SUNY Optometry family starts long ago.

“Being quite nearsighted, as a kid I spent many hours at my local optometrist in Spain. I initially wanted to become a chemist, but when I found out that there was a new university degree in my hometown to become an eye doctor, I didn’t think twice,” she explains.

She went on to earn her BS in optometry and optics from University of Valladolid in her hometown in Spain, her MS in investigative ophthalmology and vision sciences at University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, and her PhD in vision sciences at Aston University in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

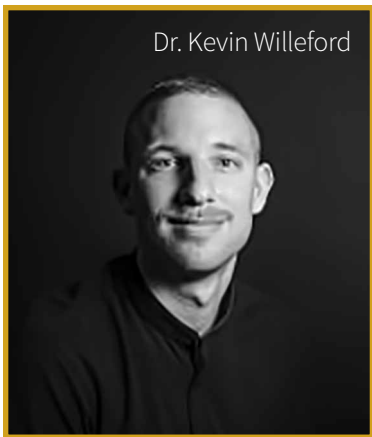
Her research focuses on myopia development, visual control of eye growth and the ocular haemodynamics in health and disease. “From experimental studies, we know that eyes use visual information to adjust their growth and how they are focused. My main research interest is to understand the visual signals that trigger these eye growth changes that eventually lead to nearsightedness,” she explains.

Dr. Benavente-Pérez began her SUNY journey in 2009 as a post-doctoral research associate and adjunct assistant professor after meeting vice president and dean for academic affairs Dr. David Troilo. She moved into the role of assistant clinical professor and member of the faculty at the Clinical Vision Research Center in 2012, and she was promoted to associate clinical professor earlier this year. She also serves as the instructor of record for the elective course Spanish for Optometrists.

In September, Dr. Benavente-Pérez delivered the Josh Wallman Memorial Lecture and received the ZEISS Young Investigator Award during the International Myopia Conference in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

She is passionate about advocacy work and serves as an elected member of the annual meeting planning committee of The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology. “This year more than ever, I felt the need to fight for research. As a female, Hispanic, clinician, scientist and immigrant, I cannot sit back and watch how our work is misinterpreted, disavowed or misused,” she says.

Dr. Kevin Willeford Receives Ezell Fellowship



SUNY Optometry OD/MS alumnus and current PhD student Dr. Kevin Willeford has been named a 2017-18 John H. Schoen Ezell Fellow by the American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF).

The Ezell Fellowship Program was established by the AAOF, a philanthropic organization which develops and provides financial support for optometric research and education, in 1949. The award recognizes and supports talented students who are pursuing advanced degrees in optometric research and education. Former Ezell Fellows have become deans and presidents of optometric schools and colleges and faculty members.

Dr. Willeford is currently studying visual processes and psychological states with electrophysiological methods. His work with Dr. Robert McPeck, an associate professor of biological sciences, aims to elicit the role(s) of the superior colliculus and frontal eye fields in programming of attentional processes and saccadic eye movements.

In addition to his SUNY Optometry degrees, Dr. Willeford received his BS in neuroscience with minors in chemistry and English from the University of Miami and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry.



Schnurmacher Institute for Vision Research Colloquia

Bringing world renowned scientists to the College to promote intellectual exchange

GABY MAIMON

The Rockefeller University
Quantitatively Tuned Efference Copies During Gaze Changes in Drosophila

WEIJI MA

New York University
The Representation of Uncertainty in Visual Cortex

PAULINE KANG

University of New South Wales
Myopia Control with Orthokeratology

JOHANNES BURGE

University of Pennsylvania
The Lawful Imprecision of Human Tilt Estimation in Natural Scenes

ARTHUR SHAPIRO

American University
Illusions: Studying the Weird to Gain Insight on the Ordinary

CECILIA CHAO

SUNY College of Optometry
Do Contact Lens Wear and LASIK Induce Inflammatory Response

EYAL SEIDEMANN

The University of Texas at Austin
Decision Related Activity and Top-down Attentional Modulation in Primate V1

STEPHEN TSANG

Columbia University
Precision Genome Surgery for Imprecision Medicine

JUAN CARLOS LETELIER

Universidad De Chile
ECG and Random Noise: Envelope Analysis of EEG Traces

HUAIYU HU

Upstate Medical University
A Role of Ciliary Pocket Matrix in Maintaining Photoreceptor Survival

MANAS BISWAL

University of Florida
Objective Assessment of Retinal Ganglion Cell Damage in Glaucoma

CATHERINE CHENG

The Scripps Research Institute
Dissecting the Mechanisms for Lifelong Homeostasis and Transparency in the Eye Lens

ICHIRO KURIKI

Tohoku University
Representation of Color Information in Human Visual Cortex

STEFANIE WOHL

University of Washington
The Role of miRNAs in Muller glia Maturation and Function

COM MUN ITY



University Eye Center's Health and Wellness Expo 2017

We celebrate diversity in the College community and make our programs broadly accessible to all populations.



Hundreds Attend University Eye Center's Health and Wellness Expo 2017

More than 700 New Yorkers attended Health and Wellness Expo 2017, the University Eye Center's open house, on August 5.

Attendees of all ages, including children and senior citizens, had access to free vision, dental, podiatry, audiology, blood pressure and diabetes screenings, wellness activities and public health information to promote healthy behavior changes and reduce risk factors for disease.

"While eye and vision care is the University Eye Center's passion, our Health and Wellness Expo brings together a variety of community partners to improve and enhance the lives of others," says Liduvina Martinez-Gonzalez, executive director.

Exhibitors included New York Sports Club, 42nd Street Dental, New York College of Podiatric Medicine, Columbia Presbyterian Audiology, Lifeways Nutrition, Essilor Eyewear Center and the Sports and Performance Vision Center. There was also face painting, storytelling and back-to-school supplies for children.



Commencement 2017



Dr. Paul Sieving, President David A. Heath and Dr. Max Gomez



Dr. Andrea Thau



Allison Kay LaRue, Class of 2017

Hundreds gathered at the Roosevelt Hotel in midtown Manhattan to witness the College grant 101 degrees and certificates, including the OD, PhD and MS in vision science, MBA in health care leadership and advanced certificate in optometry business management.

Keynote speaker Dr. Paul Sieving, an internationally renowned clinical neurophysiologist and director of the National Eye Institute at the National Institutes of Health, commended the graduates for completing the rigorous SUNY Optometry curriculum.

“This school is difficult to get into and you have worked hard to get out,” he said to the amusement of the audience. “However, I hope you are not done.”

Dr. Sieving, who also received an honorary Doctor of Science during the ceremony, endorsed continued learning, professional growth and extensive collaboration with colleagues. He urged the Class of 2017 to be observant in their practices and alert for new and unknown conditions to expand the profession’s knowledge base.

“Society places great trust in you. Always keep your patients first and foremost in your professional lives.”

Honorary degree recipient Dr. Max Gomez, an award-winning medical reporter for WCBS-TV, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. He also encouraged the Class of 2017 to continue to learn after Commencement and specifically addressed service as one’s duty.

SUNY Optometry
held its 43rd commencement ceremony
on May 25.



Dr. Paul Sieving



Dr. Julia Appel



Dr. Max Gomez



President David Heath and Dr. Ralph Gundel



Dr. Denise Whittam

“You’ve been given something that many in this country and indeed the world can only dream about – the ability to make a difference,” said Dr. Gomez. “You owe us, all of us, a difference. Aspire to leave this world a little better than when you arrived.”

SUNY Optometry President David A. Heath acknowledged that the Class of 2017 enters their professional careers during both a time of increasing demand for their knowledge, skills and compassion and a period of great uncertainty regarding the future of the health care delivery system.

“The fundamental question of what kind of society we want to be is being debated daily in Washington, in our state houses, and in our communities nationwide,” said President Heath. “I truly hope that as you go forth you will lend not only your talents as providers, but your voices as passionate advocates for your patients and their right to care.”

The Presidential Medallion was presented to Dr. Ralph Gundel, an alumnus and associate professor whose teaching, research and patient care have focused on contact lenses. Dr. Gundel retired this summer after 28 years as a member of the College faculty.

Dr. Andrea Thau, president of the American Optometric Association, associate clinical professor emerita and alumna, received the Benjamin Franklin Society Award for her contributions to the profession of optometry and the College.

The New York State Optometric Association’s Optometric Educator Award was presented to Dr. Julia Appel, an associate clinical professor, adult primary care practitioner and alumna.

Retirement celebration for Officer Wilford Charles



8th floor staff celebrates Halloween



China Optometry and Ophthalmology Resources Development (COORD) initiative



Dr. David Troilo and student scholarship recipients



Dr. Ken Sorkin '92, NYSOA president and 2017 Alumnus of the Year, President David A. Heath and Alumni Association president Denise Whittam attend the Envision New York Alumni reception



Assistant Chief of Police Dapo Adurogbola receives recognition for outstanding service to SUNY Police Chiefs Association



World Sight Day 2017



White Coat Ceremony



National Wear Red Day 2017



Faculty and Staff Recognition Awards recipients



Pediatric faculty



Our Vision for Children faculty and staff launch event featuring SaQuan Herring and his daughter, Anyiah



University Eye Center stocks the Guttman Community College student food pantry

P E
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L E

SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson
tours University Eye Center



We invest in a diverse community of health care professionals dedicated to lifelong learning and the advancement of visual health.

Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson Visits the College



Dr. Kristina M. Johnson, 13th chancellor of The State University of New York, visited SUNY Optometry on December 13. She met with the College's senior administration and faculty and toured teaching and patient care facilities.

Chancellor Johnson emphasized her passion for research, teaching and outreach and discussed her focus on SUNY's innovation and entrepreneurial impact during her visit to the College.

"You have to have a certain amount of resources in order to get onto the curve where every dollar and every person is making an incremental difference within the organization," said Chancellor Johnson, who is recognized for creativity and innovation in modern optics and co-founded ColorLink, Inc., which was sold to RealD, and is responsible for the 3D movie glasses technology used for films such as *Avatar* and *Gravity*.

The chancellor toured the University Eye Center's patient care floors, including its vision rehabilitation and pediatric services. She was also introduced to the Clinical Vision Research Center team and stopped by the College's virtual reality simulation laboratory after reviewing floorplans for the new Center for Pediatric Eye Care.

Chancellor Johnson joined The State University of New York in September 2017 and is visiting the system's 64 campuses.

"I am trying to understand, across the system, where's the highest quality and where's the highest opportunity to make the highest impact," she said.

Immediately prior to joining SUNY, Chancellor Johnson was co-founder and CEO of Cube Hydro Partners, LLC, a clean-energy infrastructure company focused on building and operating hydropower plants in North America. She has also served as Under Secretary of Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Johns Hopkins University and dean of the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University.

Meet Dr. Delaram Shirazian



New SUNY Optometry assistant clinical professor Dr. Delaram Shirazian did not intend to become an optometrist. As a college student at University of Missouri in Columbia, She was planning on life as a physician—until junior year when she shadowed an optometrist and shifted her focus.

She also took a detour during her time in optometry school on Mizzou’s St. Louis campus; she spent a month in Ghana as a volunteer with Unite for Sight to provide eye care for people in remote villages who sometimes traveled hours to reach the clinic. “The biggest lesson I learned in Ghana was that all individuals, regardless of their income or social status, deserve compassionate, quality eye care,” she says.

Dr. Shirazian also experienced firsthand how critical patient-doctor communication is to the medical encounter. This realization about the necessity of communication has shaped everything about how the expert in low vision rehabilitation and ocular disease doctors and teaches. It may be a surprise for her students—this semester she is working with third-year students in the adult primary care clinic and teaching a first- and second-year clinical optometry lab—but the greatest lessons she will impart will be about humanity.

“We spend countless hours in the classroom on didactic education and countless hours sharpening our clinical skills in order to be great doctors for our patients, but we often neglect one of the most vital tools in caring for patients: our ability to create trusting, lasting relationships with them,” she says. “I am working on developing lectures that focus on how we communicate with our patients and the impact that has on patient satisfaction, our career satisfaction and improving clinical outcomes.”

Schwartz, Austin Receive 2016-2017 Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence

Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher announced the names of 361 faculty and staff from throughout the university system as recipients of the 2016-17 Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence, including SUNY College of Optometry’s Dr. Steven Schwartz and Ms. Gaea Austin.

The Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence are presented annually to faculty and staff in seven categories: Faculty Service, Librarianship, Professional Service, Scholarship and Creative Activities, Teaching, Adjunct in Teaching and Classified Service. The honor provides system-wide recognition for consistently superior professional achievement.

Dr. Schwartz, who received the honor for teaching, is a professor in the College’s Department of Biological and Vision Sciences and director of institutional research and planning. He previously served as vice president and dean for academic affairs. He teaches integrated optics, visual function, ocular disease, contact lenses and personal financial planning for new optometrists.

Ms. Austin, who received the honor for professional service, serves as both the College’s environmental health and safety officer and assistant internal control officer. She develops, implements and oversees environmental, health and safety programs that will positively impact working and learning conditions at the College and ensures compliance with all regulatory mandates.

Meet Dr. Shephali Patel



Call it a homecoming: Shephali Patel, OD, MS '10 has returned to her alma mater to work with the Vision Rehabilitation Service, providing low vision and head trauma services.

“The right tools and techniques make it easier for people to function in their daily lives,” Dr. Patel says. “I enjoy low vision, head trauma and vision therapy, as these are places where I can affect overall physical and mental health, in addition to ocular health.”

It's a mission that has guided the Lodi, New Jersey-native throughout her career, starting with clinical rotations that took her from Wenzhou Medical College in China to Lawton Indian Hospital in Oklahoma to SUNY's own University Eye Center. After stints with several commercial optometry locations, she joined the Northport Veterans Affairs Medical Center in 2011. There, she provided primary eye care in a hospital setting, working with patients with ocular disease, low vision and traumatic brain injuries and collaborating with physical therapy and audiology colleagues to rehabilitate patients with vestibular disorders. She also lectured and provided clinical instruction.

In 2013, Dr. Patel took her talents to the Lake City VA Medical Center in Florida, where she served as the director of low vision services and a staff optometrist before moving into the associate chief of optometry position. In that role, she was the VICTORS program coordinator and developed a binocular vision and traumatic brain injury sub-clinic that operated out of the low vision clinic.

She is excited to return to New York City. “Being at SUNY is like coming home again,” Dr. Patel says. “While it is nice to write papers, lecture at meetings or earn fellowships, working with externs and residents is by far the most fulfilling part of my job, and I look forward to being able to work with future generations of optometrists.”

Dr. Richard Madonna Receives Vincent Ellerbrock Clinician Educator Award

SUNY Optometry's Dr. Richard Madonna received the 2017 Vincent Ellerbrock Clinician Educator Award by the American Academy of Optometry. The Ellerbrock Award is presented annually to a distinguished clinician who is widely recognized by both Academy peers and the profession for their clinical expertise and willingness to share their knowledge for the benefit of improved patient care.

Dr. Madonna is a professor and chair of SUNY Optometry's Department of Clinical Education and director of the Office of Continuing Professional Education. He previously served as chief of the ocular disease and special testing services of the University Eye Center, director of the optometric residency program for the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System and chief of optometry at the VA Medical Center in Castle Point, N.Y.

Dr. Madonna received his Doctor of Optometry degree from SUNY Optometry in 1985 and also holds an MA in biology from SUNY State College at New Paltz. He lectures nationally and internationally on glaucoma, therapeutic drugs, retinal diseases, ophthalmic imaging and other topics.

A L U M N I

Dr. Ashish Sharma and
Dr. Herminder Boparai attend the 2017
Alumni Reunion reception



*We create a vibrant sense of community that promotes alumni engagement
and the development of personal and professional competencies.*



Stronger Together: The Union of the Optometric Center of New York and the Alumni Association

The saying goes that good things come to those who wait, but in the case of the merger between the SUNY Optometry Alumni Association and the Optometric Center of New York (OCNY), it was diligence and foresight that got the job done.

It all started in 2014, when the Alumni Association board proposed a melding of the two nonprofit organizations. The board and the OCNY, the College's affiliated foundation, were unintentionally duplicating efforts, and coming together would make them more effective. "The merger was proposed to clearly delineate fundraising and relationship-building responsibilities and combine the resources and strengths of both organizations," explains Mrs. Jennifer Kelly Campbell, associate vice president of alumni and government relations. After vetting the idea, the school hired the law firm of Manatt, Phelps and Phillips in September 2016 to begin the long merger process.

Mrs. Campbell joined SUNY in August 2016 and jumped into the role of project lead and attorney liaison for the merger, bringing together all relevant parties and compiling the wide-ranging documents related to the incorporation, including everything from tax returns and bylaws to lists of officers. After securing approval from both boards and getting 95% of voting alumni to agree to the change, the project is on track for completion in early 2018.

"The merger will allow for a close partnership between the Alumni Association and the OCNY," Mrs. Campbell explains. "They will be working together to support the goals of the College and contributing their unique strengths to maximize resources. And the Alumni Association board will be able to concentrate on creating the types of events, programs and services our alumni have requested."

The College hopes that the new arrangement—which brings the Alumni Association under the OCNY umbrella—will result in more engagement opportunities for alumni and increased participation in events and programs.

Next up on the agenda is spreading the news and engaging alumni. "The organization will raise awareness about the work it does to support the College," Mrs. Campbell says. "The leaders will develop clearly defined opportunities for alumni and others to participate in the preservation of the College for future generations of students."

SUNY Eye Network Connects Alumni and Students

The virtual meeting space launched in September.

A school's community is only as strong as the alumni it sends out into the world, and a new SUNY Optometry initiative aims to flex some major muscle.

SUNY Eye Network is a virtual meeting space for alumni to connect with each other and the entire College community, including students, faculty, staff and board members. "It opens the alumni network for enhanced professional development. This did not exist before and is essential for mutually beneficial relationships," says Mrs. Jennifer Kelly Campbell, associate vice president of alumni and government relations. "We hope it will increase alumni engagement, increase awareness of alumni success stories and increase connections between alumni and students.

The platform was created via a partnership between the Office of Alumni Relations and the Career Development Center in response to requests the offices field: "The primary requests alumni have is to connect with each other, their favorite professors and source talent for their organizations. The primary request students have of the alumni relate to professional development guidance," Mrs. Campbell says.

She proposed the Gradway-supported platform as a counterpart to the Family of Mentors program. "The director of career development, Dr. Quy Nguyen '13 and I built the platform together. We spent 15 to 20 hours a week for eight weeks constructing the framework and determining desired outcomes for all end users," she explains. It took nine months to create with assists from the President's Office, Institutional Advancement, Student Affairs, IT, Communications and the Alumni Association board.

The community seems to be excited about connecting. "We receive positive comments from alumni about the network every day," Mrs. Campbell says. And more than 90% of alumni indicate they are willing to help fellow alumni and students with professional development."

Learn more at SUNYEyeNetwork.org



Alumnus of the Year: Dr. Ken Sorkin



Alumni Association president Dr. Denise Whittam congratulates Dr. Ken Sorkin

When Ken Sorkin, OD, FAAO, graduated from SUNY Optometry in 1992, he received more than a degree—he also got what he calls a “professional parent.” And to nurture his end of the relationship, he has been an active alumnus, most recently speaking at this year’s orientation for the incoming class. “You thank your parents on a regular basis—or at least you should. You should also thank and appreciate your school in the same spirit,” says Dr. Sorkin, who served as class president for three years when he was a student.

Now, to thank Dr. Sorkin for more than a decade of giving back, he is being honored as the 2017 Alumnus of the Year. The award has been granted since 1998, with members of the Alumni Association Board voting on who has shown outstanding service to the school.

Dr. Sorkin is an associate at the two offices of Long Island Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus in Plainview and Port Jefferson, New York, where he focuses exclusively on eye care for children and adolescents.

“I truly think it was the comprehensive and broad scope of the didactic and clinical experience that SUNY provided that best prepared me for my career,” he says.

In addition to his work at the practice, Dr. Sorkin is president of the New York State Optometric Association. Alongside a team of executive officers and regional trustees, he works to ensure legislative protection for optometrists, as well as expansion of the field’s scope. He became president this year, following stints as treasurer and vice president.

Alumna Dr. Jillia Edris Bird Helps Barbudans See Clearly After Hurricane Irma



When Hurricane Irma hit Barbuda on September 6 with winds in excess of 180 miles per hour, it leveled the Caribbean island, damaging more than 90% of the homes, taking out the power grid, interrupting the flow of running water and forcing the mandatory evacuation of all 1,800 residents.

SUNY Optometry alumna and 2013 Alumna of the Year Jillia Edris Bird, OD, MS ’89 is witnessing the impact of the storm firsthand in her native St. John’s, Antigua, where she is attending to the evacuated residents of Barbuda in the free clinic she opened at her office. There, she is doing everything from replacing lost glasses to providing glaucoma medication to removing foreign bodies from the eyes of children. “We are feeling eternally blessed in Antigua as we work to settle our displaced Barbudans,” Dr. Bird says.

She lent her talents to the people of Barbuda, Antigua’s sister island, long before the storm, joining with her pediatrician twin sister, other medical community colleagues and a local Pentecostal church to host gratis vision and health screening clinics. And as the island has no resident eye care providers, she sees many Barbuda residents in her regular practice; they would take a ferry or plane to traverse the 39 miles to her practice in Antigua for care.

As the president of the World Glaucoma Patient Association and founder of the Antigua and Barbuda Glaucoma Support Group, Dr. Bird has dedicated her life to service. “I was raised by parents who dedicated their lives to social work and service, so I grew up knowing nothing else. I’ve learned that giving back to the community that nurtured you enriches your life in unimaginable ways,” she says.

CON TRIBU TORS



*We create new pathways for alumni, industry partners
and potential donors to engage with the College community.*

Optometric Center of New York Hosts 14th Annual Eyes on New York Gala

The Optometric Center of New York (OCNY), the affiliated foundation of SUNY Optometry, hosted its 14th annual Eyes on New York Gala on March 31 at The Plaza in New York City.

Bob Colucci, president of the Independent Distribution Division of Essilor of America and chairman of the Essilor Vision Foundation, and Jerry Warner, president, Americas, CooperVision, were honored during the signature event. Dave Sattler, former director of professional relations for Alcon Laboratories Inc., served as honorary chair and was recognized as a champion for optometry and optometric education.

OCNY board president Barbara Saltzman welcomed the 300 attendees and highlighted the importance of establishing a more comfortable, efficient and effective experience for the University Eye Center's youngest patients and their families.

"The College's vision care services for children will take on a wonderfully enhanced and exciting new direction in the next year thanks to a \$1.5M dollar grant from the State of New York's [NYSUNY] 2020 initiative," said Mrs. Saltzman.

Martin L. Bassett, chief executive officer of Walman, and Guy Guglielmino, vice president of marketing for Bausch + Lomb, served as corporate co-chairs and introduced Colucci and Warner, respectively.



Mrs. Barbara Saltzman and Mr. William Moran



Honoree Jerry Warner, Mrs. Barbara Saltzman and Mr. Guy Guglielmino



Judge Lewis and Mrs. Greichen Stone



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Honoree Bob Colucci, Mr. Martin L. Bassett and Mrs. Barbara Saltzman



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Our Vision for Children

Vision helps children reach developmental milestones, connect with loved ones and understand the world around them. The University Eye Center's pediatric service is staffed by nationally recognized, residency-trained specialists, many of whom are actively engaged in clinical research. It is one of few facilities in the New York City metropolitan area dedicated to providing comprehensive vision care for children from infancy through adolescence.

A \$2.5M investment will ensure that the College will have a pediatric service unlike any other in the nation. Plans for a new **Center for Pediatric Eye Care** are well underway with construction expected to begin in mid-2018. The Optometric Center of New York's **Our Vision for Children** fundraising effort in support of the Center is now nearing \$2M with the help of a \$1.5M grant from the State of New York.

The new Center will consolidate clinical services in 3,500 sq. ft. of the College's 10th floor to more conveniently and efficiently accommodate the growing number of children requiring basic and advanced eye care, including low vision, vision rehabilitation and special populations, and infants and children with special needs and learning disabilities. There will be eight new exam rooms, a "quiet room" for children with special needs and their families and a child-friendly waiting area that will be bright and cheerful, with interactive activities.

We appreciate the generosity of our alumni, faculty, trustees, staff, friends and parents, which will help expand the capacity of the pediatric service, advance quality of care and furnish the spaces with diagnostic and treatment technology tailored for our youngest patients.*

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*as of December 20, 2017



Contributor Profile: Mrs. Barbara Saltzman

When Barbara Saltzman thinks about the College's planned new Center for Pediatric Eye Care, she knows she did the right thing in dedicating major funding for a facility that will benefit two vulnerable populations about which she shares a particular concern: children and the visually impaired. She has made a leadership gift to name the Center's reception room, a colorful, welcoming space that will feature an interactive play area for pediatric patients waiting for their appointments.

Mrs. Saltzman, board president of the Optometric Center of New York (OCNY), is herself a mother of three who has devoted her entire career to the health care industry. In 1999, after selling her New York City-based contract pharmaceutical sales firm, she left the world of business for service on the boards of nonprofit organizations and discovered she had a passion for vision-related causes. After serving on several other boards, she was introduced to the OCNY board and learned of the eye and vision care, education and research conducted at SUNY Optometry. The result? Mrs. Saltzman joined the OCNY board in 2008 and was named president in 2015.

"I've seen for myself how much of an impact vision has on the quality of life for children, including my own granddaughter. At OCNY, we're well aware of the effect that has on their social, cognitive and academic growth, and that's why the University Eye Center (UEC) sees anyone — regardless of ability to pay. I'm enormously grateful to President Heath, whose record of accomplishment inspires not only me, but a totally committed board of trustees who are passionate about the UEC and its goals and achievements."

A native New Yorker who earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of New Rochelle, Mrs. Saltzman eagerly anticipates the opening of the new Center for Pediatric Eye Care: "We've already got a staff of truly first-rate doctors and now we'll have room for more. They'll be able to serve a larger population of children with state-of-the-art equipment with which to conduct ongoing research. When I think about it, it's really extraordinary."

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FINANCIALS

SOURCES OF FUNDS

YEAR	2016-17	2015-16
State Appropriation – Core Budget	\$ 9,747,400.00	\$ 9,790,000.00
Appropriation based on Tuition, Fees	\$ 11,777,665.00	\$ 11,296,800.00
Appropriation based on Clinic Pledge, Pooled Offset	\$ 3,228,935.00	\$ 3,208,800.00
Campus Generated Revenues in Excess of State Appropriation	\$ 8,187,373.00	\$ 7,189,600.00
Research Foundation	\$ 3,058,834.00	\$ 3,624,981.00
From (To) Fund Balance Reserves	\$ (2,240,438.00)	\$ (1,524,843.00)
TOTALS	\$ 33,759,769.00	\$ 33,585,338.00

EXPENDITURES

2016-17	PAYROLL (REGULAR)	PAYROLL (TEMP)	OTHER THAN PAYROLL	TOTAL
State Core Budget	\$ 19,468,065.00	\$ 573,916.00	\$ 4,498,319.00	\$ 24,540,300.00
Campus Generated	\$ 4,333,958.00	\$ 177,793.00	\$ 1,873,448.00	\$ 6,385,199.00
Research Foundation	\$ 2,068,050.00		\$ 766,220.00	\$ 2,834,270.00
TOTALS	\$ 25,870,073.00	\$ 751,709.00	\$ 7,137,987.00	\$ 33,759,769.00

2015-16	PAYROLL (REGULAR)	PAYROLL (TEMP)	OTHER THAN PAYROLL	TOTAL
State Core Budget	\$ 18,879,423.00	\$ 631,676.00	\$ 4,580,501.00	\$ 24,091,600.00
Campus Generated	\$ 3,936,068.00	\$ 168,021.00	\$ 1,693,719.00	\$ 5,797,808.00
Research Foundation	\$ 2,366,055.00		\$ 1,329,875.00	\$ 3,695,930.00
TOTALS	\$ 25,181,546.00	\$ 799,697.00	\$ 7,604,095.00	\$ 33,585,338.00

RESEARCH FOUNDATION

SOURCES OF FUNDS	2016-17	EXPENDITURES	2016-17
Sponsored Programs – Direct	\$ 2,164,060.00	Sponsored Programs – Direct	\$ 2,164,060.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	\$ 882,304.00	Indirect Cost Recovery	\$ 670,210.00
TOTAL	\$ 3,046,364.00	TOTAL	\$ 2,834,270.00

SOURCES OF FUNDS	2015-16	EXPENDITURES	2015-16
Sponsored Programs – Direct	\$ 2,698,839.00	Sponsored Programs – Direct	\$ 2,698,839.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	\$ 926,142.00	Indirect Cost Recovery	\$ 997,091.00
TOTAL	\$ 3,624,981.00	TOTAL	\$ 3,695,930.00

College Council

The College Council is appointed by the governor; one member is elected by and from among the students of the College. Its members advise the president on the operations and affairs of the campus in accordance with statutes and policies established by the State University of New York Board of Trustees. They serve an essential role in the selection of the College's president and receive no compensation for their services.

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The President's Council engages in wide-ranging discussion of issues important to the short- and long-term future of the College as the president's senior advisory group. Areas of importance may include institutional planning, budgets and resources, state, federal and external relations, operational policies and procedures, assessment and quality controls, and other issues. The President's Council includes members of the senior administration and other appointees.

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