

Chair, Department of Biological and Vision Sciences

The chair of the Department of Biological and Vision Sciences provides strategic, academic, and administrative leadership for the department, which is foundational to the optometric curriculum at SUNY College of Optometry. The Chair promotes excellence in teaching, scholarship, innovation, and faculty development while ensuring that the basic and vision sciences curriculum equips students for contemporary optometric practice, board success, lifelong learning, emerging technologies and the ethical integration of artificial intelligence (AI) across education, research, and clinical care. The chair works collaboratively across departmental programs to align departmental goals with the College's strategic plan, accreditation standards, and evolving educational models.

Reporting Structure and Governance:

- Reports to the Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs
- Serves on the Dean's Council and the Clinical Education Council
- Partners closely with the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, the Chair of the Department of Clinical Education, the University Eye Center leadership, and the Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research to ensure coordinated planning and communication related to on space allocation, faculty workload, course scheduling, teaching, and clinic assignments

Leadership and Administration:

- Provides leadership and oversight for all departmental operations, planning, and program development
- Facilitates regular department meetings and leads departmental governance
- Plans, proposes, and manages departmental budgets, including faculty development and travel resources
- Reviews, evaluates, and authorizes faculty travel, faculty development projects, plans, and leave requests.

Faculty Mentorship, Development, and Evaluation:

- Advises departmental faculty on research and scholarly activity, including navigating institutional research authorization and federal requirements (IRB, IACUC), working closely with the VP and Dean for Graduate Studies and Research
- Oversees faculty searches for open positions in the department and provides recommendations to the Committee on Professional Qualification and the Dean/VPAA on hiring, appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure
- Regularly evaluates faculty performance using student feedback, peer evaluation, scholarly productivity and teaching and service contributions
- Supports clinical and translational research within an academic health environment
- Recruits, mentors, and develops faculty across academic ranks

Curriculum and Educational Innovation:

- Supports and facilitates the integration of basic and vision sciences within the professional OD curriculum

- Facilitates the connection of foundational scientific knowledge to clinical application and contemporary optometric practice
- Recommends Instructors of Record (IOR) and lecturers to the Dean/VPAA
- Works with IORs to ensure that the didactic curriculum is scientifically rigorous, clinically relevant, coordinated, and up to date
- Align with NBEO preparation and contemporary optometric practice
- Ensures course syllabi, learning objectives, assessments, and materials are current, clearly articulated, and maintained on the learning management system.
- Facilitates continuous improvement of teaching methodologies, including active learning, hybrid and asynchronous models, and evidenced-based pedagogy
- Supports faculty in leveraging AI tools to enhance teaching, learning assessment, and student engagement while maintaining academic integrity
- Collaborates with faculty, Dean/VPAA, and the Department of Clinical Education to align AI use with institutional policies, accreditation standards, and best practices in health professions education

Collaborative Leadership and Communication:

- Coordinates with the Department of Clinical Education and the Curriculum Committee to ensure curricular coherence and avoid redundancy
- Works with University Eye Center, Graduate Center for Vision Research, Clinical Vision Research Center, and the Department of Clinical Education on space allocation, scheduling, faculty workload, and instructional resources
- Contributes to institutional initiatives related to curriculum innovation, student success, faculty development, and strategic planning
- Provides team-oriented leadership grounded in active listening, respect for diverse perspectives, and thoughtful consensus-building
- Engages with varied personalities, disciplines, and learning styles while fostering a collegial and inclusive departmental culture
- Models openness to constructive debate, innovation, and continuous improvement