

14TH ANNUAL CAREER SYMPOSIUM

**From Clinic to Community:
How Optometry
Affects All of Us**



Sunday, April 19, 2026

11:00am - 3:30pm



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

WELCOME



Hi Attendees,

Thank you all for attending our 14th Annual Career Symposium!

This is always one of our most exciting events of the year, as we welcome optometrists from diverse practice settings to lead engaging sessions on topics such as trailblazing careers, public health, and more. The symposium also provides our students with valuable opportunities to connect with optometrists and engage directly with employers in a face-to-face setting.

To our employers and doctors, thank you for taking the time to participate and for offering our students the opportunity to begin thinking thoughtfully about their professional lives after graduation.

To our students, we encourage you to fully engage in today's sessions and take advantage of every opportunity to speak with the optometrists and employers present. You never know which conversations or connections may play an important role in shaping your future.

Finally, to our Career Symposium Committee, thank you for the tremendous effort and dedication you have put into this program throughout the academic year, which has helped bring this event to life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Wang'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Deborah Wang, O.D.
Director of Career Development

14TH ANNUAL CAREER SYMPOSIUM FROM CLINIC TO COMMUNITY: HOW OPTOMETRY AFFECTS ALL OF US

A G E N D A

Session	Time	Location
Registration/Breakfast	9:30 AM – 11:00 AM	3rd Floor
Introduction	11:00 AM -11:15 PM	Schwarz Theater
Concurrent Session 1	11:20 AM-12:20 PM	Schwarz Theater OR Room 103
Break	12:25 PM – 12:55 PM	3rd Floor
Concurrent Session 2	1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Room 101 or 103
Student to Doctor Session	2:05 PM – 3:05 PM	Rm 101/103
Job and Networking Fair	3:10 PM -5:00 PM	3rd Floor
Reception	3:10 PM - 5:00 PM	3rd Floor
Headshots	3:10-6:00 PM	2nd Floor (By sign-ups)

Concurrent Sessions

Activity	Pick One	
Concurrent Session 1	Acing the Recruitment Process	Non-Traditional Pathways in Optometry
Concurrent Session 2	Specialty Practice Opportunities within Optometry	Public Health and Optometry
Student to Doctor	Final Session: Student to Doctor Panel	

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Topic 1: Acing the Recruitment Process

Speakers: Ms. Allyns Melendez (Moderator), Dr. Patrick Curran, Dr. Michael Hosford and Dr. Joshua Rogers

What do employers want in future optometrists? This interactive session connects you with hiring experts to receive personalized advice on elevating your job application to the next level. Gain an insider perspective on in-demand skills and key competencies that allow you to demonstrate unique value. This will immediately be followed by a networking session with top hiring companies. Come away with tailored recommendations to help you stand out from other applicants and put your best foot forward in today's competitive job market.

Topic 2: Non-Traditional Pathways in Optometry

Speakers: Dr. Karena Wong, Dr. Meg MacMillan, Dr. Jing Huang

This panel will discuss a wide range of diverse career pathways in optometry apart from the traditional corporate or private practice. Panelists will share their unique individual journeys from optometry school to their respective careers. They will discuss opportunities available to students and how to best use their clinical and patient skills to succeed. This session aims to inspire students to use their O.D. degree to its full potential by seeking impactful careers that shape their communities.

Topic 3: Specialty Practice Opportunities With Optometry

Speakers: Dr. Amy Lam, Dr. Caryn Nearnberg, Dr. Shelby Kruse

This session provides an in-depth look at the specialty areas that define advanced optometric care. From managing complex ocular disease to delivering pediatric, vision therapy, myopia control, specialty contact lenses, low-vision rehabilitation – just to list a few, specialty practice allows ODs to serve patients with higher-level clinical needs while differentiating their professional identity. Students will hear from experts across multiple disciplines to learn what specialized practice looks like day-to-day, what skills and training are required, and how specialization can be integrated into various practice models.

Topic 4: Optometry Through a Public Health Lens

Speakers: Dr. Maciel Cruz, Dr. Joy Harewood, Dr. Roheena Malik

This session explores the vital role optometry plays within the broader public health landscape. This panel will highlight how optometrists contribute to population health, address health disparities, and advocate for patients' public health rights. Students and future optometrists will also learn about meaningful ways to get involved in public health initiatives, advocacy efforts, and community-based programs.

Topic 5: Student to Doctor

Speakers: Dr. Caroline Hao, Dr. Taylor Greaves, Dr. Alex Martin, Dr. Zachary Zlatin

Join us for an insightful discussion on navigating the transition from student to practicing optometrist. This event will cover key aspects of early career development, including the shift from working in the UEC to various practice modalities such as hospitals and private practice. Participants will also gain valuable insights into the job search process, the power of networking, and strategies for balancing career growth with financial planning. Additionally, we'll explore the meaningful community outreach initiatives fellow ODs engage in and how you can get involved. Don't miss this opportunity to gain practical advice and connect with emerging ODs in the field!

SPEAKERS



Dr. Maciel Cruz, OD is a New York-based optometric physician at NYC Health + Hospitals/Metropolitan Hospital. She is a graduate of MCPHS University College of Optometry and completed an ocular disease and primary care residency at the Orlando VA Medical Center. Dr. Cruz has extensive experience in glaucoma management, ocular disease, and hospital-based eye care. She is actively involved in community outreach through vision screenings with the Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and serves as Chair of the ¡Salud! Latinx/Hispanic/Chicanx Special Interest Group of the American Academy of Optometry, where she advocates for health equity and culturally competent care. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, her dog Juno and reading.



Dr. Patrick Curran, OD is a partner optometrist in Johnson Curran Optometry in Roanoke, Virginia. Johnson Curran Optometry is a 6 office private practice that specializes in high volume primary care optometry. He graduated from the Indiana University School of Optometry in 2008 after serving externships in Pensacola, FL, Chicago, IL, and Louisville, KY. He received his biology degree from Augusta State University (GA) in 2004.

Dr. Curran practices general optometry, emphasizing disease diagnosis and treatment, contact lenses, dry eye disease, routine vision care services, and glasses. Dr. Curran also oversees Low Vision & Myopia Management Clinics. Dr. Curran is a member of the Board of Trustees within the Virginia Optometric Association as well as a member of the American Optometric Association.



Dr. Taylor Greaves, OD '25 is a NYC-based optometrist and mentor. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University at Albany and her Doctor of Optometry degree from the SUNY College of Optometry. Dr. Greaves previously served as the National Vice President of the National Optometric Student Association, where she helped advance diversity, mentorship, and leadership within the profession. She is also a strong advocate for bridging the gap between quality eye care and underserved populations. Dr. Greaves is currently completing a residency in ocular disease at SUNY College of Optometry and Woodhull Hospital.



Dr. Caroline Hao, OD '20 graduated from SUNY Optometry in 2020. After one year at a private practice, she has been working for Warby Parker since the summer of 2021 at various locations. She currently resides in Queens, NY with her husband and two young children.



Dr. Joy Harewood, OD, R'12 is the Chief Diversity Officer at State University of New York (SUNY) College of Optometry, where she also holds the title of Associate Clinical Professor. She is a graduate of Trinity College at the University of Toronto and received her Doctorate of Optometry at the University of California at Berkeley School of Optometry (Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science). Dr. Harewood completed a residency in ocular disease at the SUNY College of Optometry and a Masters in Public Health at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. She achieved her Fellowship of the American Academy of Optometry and is a Diplomate in the American Board of Optometry. Dr. Harewood spent almost a decade working in hospital-based academic medical centers in medically underserved areas of New York City prior to transitioning into academia.

Dr. Harewood's research interests include ocular manifestations of systemic disease and access to eye care. She was a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (AAO) Task Force on Disparities in Eye Care and won the AAO Secretariat Award for her contributions. She was recognized as the "Optometrist of the Year" by the National Optometric Association in 2024. She also was awarded the President's Merit Award in Excellence in 2022 for her significant contribution to the SUNY Optometry community. Dr. Harewood lectures nationally and internationally on a wide range of topics including the ocular manifestations of systemic disease and access to eye care. She has published and been quoted in numerous articles and is a leading voice in the push for health equity in eye care.



Dr. Michael Hosford, OD is a Senior Manager with EssilorLuxottica Licensed Recruiting and Professional Services. In this role, Dr. Hosford's team is responsible for the recruiting of Optometrists for nearly 500 practice locations in the Northeast region of the US. Dr. Hosford attended Michigan State University for his undergraduate work before earning his BS and Doctorate from the Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University.

Dr. Hosford started his career with EssilorLuxottica as a practicing Associate Optometrist. During his time with EssilorLuxottica, Dr. Hosford has expanded his career development and training as a practicing Optometrist to include roles in Market and Regional Operations Management, co-chair of the Optometric Advisory Council and as a Doctor Recruitment Specialist with the EyeCare team.

Dr. Hosford has a great passion for networking and most enjoys helping new and experienced Optometrists in their search for the right practice. His work also includes partnering with the EssilorLuxottica brand leaders and field teams to ensure the success and access of care to patient focused doctors who deliver personalized, quality care to their patients across many EssilorLuxottica practice locations.



Dr. Jing Huang, OD, R'19 is an optometrist who works alongside corneal specialists at Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital. Originally from California, she earned her Doctor of Optometry degree from UC Berkeley and completed a Primary Care Residency at SUNY College of Optometry. Driven by her passion for flexible work and better work-life balance in optometry, she and her husband co-founded Peared — a fill-in platform that connects optometrists and practices, streamlining the entire process from search to payment.



Dr. Shelby Kruse, OD, R'20 earned her Doctor of Optometry degree from the Southern College of Optometry before completing a residency in Primary Eye Care and Ocular Disease at BronxCare Health System. Following her residency, she practiced in a comprehensive ophthalmology clinic in Athens, Georgia, before returning to New York City to join a private practice specializing in glaucoma and neuro-ophthalmology. Dr. Kruse currently practices at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia Irving Medical Center. She is a past president of the Optometric Society of the City of New York (OSCONY) and remains actively engaged in the profession through attending conferences and presenting continuing education lectures.



Dr. Amy Lam, OD '15, R '16 graduated from SUNY Optometry with Beta Sigma Kappa honors. She completed a SUNY residency at the Northport VA Medical Center in Low Vision/Rehabilitation/Primary Care. She is currently the Director of Low Vision Services at the Institute of Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences at University Hospital, the teaching hospital for Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. She splits her time between low vision and non-surgical ophthalmology care for an underserved population in a tertiary clinical setting. She teaches ophthalmology residents and medical students clinically and didactically and has established partnerships with local nonprofits dedicated to helping those who are visually impaired. Her complex disease management experiences have led her to presenting at the state and national level. Dr. Lam is passionate about organized optometry and is currently an NJSOP board member. She is involved in state and federal advocacy efforts. In her free time, she enjoys skiing, paddleboarding, hiking and being a foodie.



Dr. Megan Macmillan, OD, DPL-ABO is a Senior Medical Science Liaison ("MSL") in Medical Affairs for Sun Pharmaceutical, based in Princeton, New Jersey. Meg is a board-certified optometrist, residency trained in ocular disease. She moved into industry a few years ago and brings over 20 years of clinical experience to the pharmaceutical industry, including being the Regional Medical Director for a large, multispecialty co-management center in New Jersey and Manhattan. Dr. Macmillan received the Medical Affairs Rookie of the Year Award in 2022 and MSL of the Year Award in 2023. She is an active member of the American Optometric Association, American Academy of Optometry, and the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians and has served as adjunct faculty for both the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and the SUNY College of Optometry. Over the years, she has lectured students, interns, residents, and colleagues as well as published research on glaucoma in collaboration with the renowned Bascom Palmer Institute. Megan currently lives in Bernardsville, New Jersey with her husband and 12-year-old boy/girl twins.



Dr. Roheena Malik, OD is an optometrist who works as a public health advocate and a systems-change leader to improve vision equity and increase access to care in communities. Dr. Malik has completed a challenging Ocular Disease/Refractive and Ocular Surgery Residency at Omni Eye Services. Dr. Malik has extensive knowledge in many areas of care, including glaucoma and cataract co-management, retinal diseases, corneal

disorders, perioperative care, and multidisciplinary decision-making.

Dr. Malik is currently serving as Clinical Outreach Director for The Richard J. Favreau, OD Health Foundation and as Lead Clinical Director for Special Olympics Opening Eyes – New Jersey. She oversees statewide screenings, volunteer training, and the development of quality vision pathways for athletes with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Dr. Malik is also active in organizations such as the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians and the New Jersey Public Health Association, where she contributes to statewide clinical standards, advocacy priorities, and health equity initiatives.

Dr. Malik believes that health is a fundamental human right; she consistently seeks to offer more than just eye care during exams. Dr. Malik has engaged in numerous national and international leadership programs, including the World Council of Optometry's Advocacy and Leadership Program, the VSP Future Leaders Academy, the AOA Leadership Institute, the Wasafiri Systemcraft Essentials, the IAPB Advocacy to Action, the Prevent Blindness ASPECT, and the Global Health Corps Fellowship. These programs focus on the overlap of advocacy, public health, optometry, and leadership.



Dr. Alex Martin, OD '24 is a residency trained optometrist, dedicated to providing comprehensive primary eye care to patients of all ages in the Brooklyn area. After graduating from the SUNY College of Optometry in 2024, he completed his residency at the Veterans Affairs NY Harbor Healthcare System, specializing in primary care and ocular disease. He values increasing health outcomes through quality patient education.

Outside the office, he likes trying new creative hobbies and staying connected to friends and family. His current role is practicing as an associate doctor at Perspective Family Eyecare, an optometrist owned private practice located in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.



Allyns Melendez brings over 25 years of expertise in human resources and business management. She holds an MBA from Temple University's Fox School of Business and is certified in multiple workplace behavior systems, as well as having certification in leadership and flow coaching. Allyns has also completed leadership courses at Cornell's ILR School, Harvard Business School, and MIT. She is the Founder and CEO of HR

Transformed, serves on the Professional Advisor Committee at SUNY College of Optometry, serves on the CCNY Ad/PR's Building Bridges Advisory Board, and is the Board Secretary for the East Fishkill Soccer Club. Based in New York's Hudson Valley, she enjoys cycling, dance fitness, rock climbing, and spending time with her family.



Dr. Caryn Nearnberg, OD earned her Doctor of Optometry degree from the New England College of Optometry in 2015. Since then, she has been practicing in private practice on the Upper East Side, where she specializes in contact lens fitting and the management of dry eye disease. Dr. Nearnberg currently serves as President of the Optometric Society of the City of New York (OSCONY).



Dr. Joshua Rogers, OD, MBA, FAAO is a passionate optometrist and campus relations leader at National Vision, one of the largest optical retailers in the U.S. With experience in both clinical care and industry leadership, Dr. Rogers travels nationwide to connect with optometry students, offering insights into career paths, innovation in eye care, and how to thrive in the profession. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees at the Illinois College of Optometry and is working toward his diplomate in the American Academy of Optometry. Outside of work, Josh is a proud girl dad to two amazing daughters, and his wife is the Chief of Optometry at the Buffalo VA — so optometry runs in the family. Dr. Rogers is committed to supporting the next generation of ODs with real talk, practical advice, and just enough fun to keep things interesting.



Dr. Karena Wong, OD '09, MBA is a seasoned New York based optometrist, bringing sixteen years of clinical expertise across a range of practice modalities. Since July 2025, she has served as the New York Metro Medical Science Liaison at Tarsus Pharmaceuticals. In this role, she leverages her clinical knowledge and broad industry connections to promote scientific partnerships, build relationships with KOLs, and enhance medical education for eye care professionals. She continues to be committed to enhancing health outcomes through her work as an MSL.



Dr. Zachary Zlatin, OD '23 earned his Doctorate and Master's degrees at SUNY Optometry, where he conducted research in myopia control. He earned his International Academy Certification in Myopia Management (IACMM) from the American Academy of Orthokeratology and Myopia Control (AAOMC) in 2024. With dedication to advancing patient care, Dr. Zlatin is an active member of the American Optometric Association (AOA) and the New York State Optometric Association (NYSOA). He currently works at Eye Q Optometrist, a family run private practice with a focus on myopia control in both Manhattan and Westchester County.

THANK YOU

To the Career Symposium Planning Committee: Dr. Deborah Wang, Dr. Gui Albieri, Daria Harrison, Adriana Gutierrez Rubio, Emily Gao, Hannah Naseer, Jaliza Cancino, Jessica Jara, Jessica Yanovsky, John Varamo, Millan Khadka, Pam Lederman, Rachel Gilburd, Dr. Richard Soden and Tiffany Leung



Also, a special thanks to our College Community who contributed to the success of our event – Louie Bacosa, Jan Gonzalez, Sarah Didier, Adam Shiri, Christine Butler, Ruth Vieri and our internal departments: Facilities, SUNY College of Optometry Foundation, Institutional Advancement, Student Affairs, IT and UPD.



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