

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

52nd

COMMENCEMENT

GOTHAM HALL, NYC | MAY 21, 2026 | 1:00 PM



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY®



Founded in 1971 and located in New York City, the State University of New York College of Optometry is a leader in education, research and patient care, offering the Doctor of Optometry degree as well as MS and PhD degrees in vision science. The College also conducts a robust program of basic, translational and clinical research. SUNY Optometry is regionally accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; its four-year professional degree program and residency programs are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association. All classrooms, research facilities and the University Eye Center, which is one of the largest optometric outpatient facilities in the nation, are located on 42nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in midtown Manhattan. In 2027 the doctor of optometry program will also be offered in Syracuse, NY.



Dear Graduates,

Today marks both the culmination of your formal studies and the beginning of an exciting new chapter in your lives and careers. It is a privilege to celebrate this milestone with you as you join the proud community of SUNY College of Optometry graduates.

During your time with us you have developed the clinical skills, scientific knowledge, and professional judgment needed to lead in a rapidly evolving field — but just as importantly, you have shown compassion, curiosity, and a deep commitment to serving others.

Whether you have earned an OD, MS, or PhD degree, you are entering professions that improve lives. The work you do will help people see more clearly, live more fully, and better understand the extraordinary complexity of vision and its value to the human experience. That is meaningful work, and it matters.

At SUNY College of Optometry, we often speak about community, collaboration, innovation, and service. I hope those values remain with you as you move on. The relationships you built here — with classmates, faculty, staff, patients, and researchers — are part of what makes our community so special, and they will continue to support and inspire you throughout your careers.

On behalf of the College community, thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey. You have already left your mark on this institution, and we look forward to welcoming you back as alumni, colleagues, and friends.

Congratulations, Class of 2026. We are very proud of you and excited to see where your journey takes you next.

Warmest best wishes,

David Troilo, PhD
President

ORDER OF EXERCISES

Academic Procession

Music by The Chamberlin Brass

The National Anthem

Carlie C. Stalker

*O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O say does that star spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.*

Welcome

Dr. David Troilo
President, SUNY College of Optometry

Greeting from the Class President

Nicholas Premnauth

Commencement Address

Dr. David C. Rhew
Microsoft

Presentation of the Presidential Medallion

Dr. Troilo

Presidential Medallion Recipients

Jerome Sherman, OD, FAAO
David A. Bowers, MBA, MPH

Conferral of the Honorary Degree Recipients

Dr. Troilo

Honorary Degree Recipients

John G. Flanagan, PhD, DSc, FCOptom, FAAO, FARVO
James Charles Winans

ORDER OF EXERCISES

**Presentation of Candidates for the Degree of
Master of Science in Vision Science**

Dr. Stewart Bloomfield
Vice President and Dean for Graduate Studies and Research

**Conferral of Candidates for Degree of
Master of Science in Vision Science**

Dr. Troilo

**Presentation of Candidates for Degree of
Doctor of Optometry**

Dr. Melissa Trego
Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs

**Conferral of Candidates for Degree of
Doctor of Optometry**

Dr. Troilo

Recitation of Optometric Oath

Oath included on next page

Dr. Nicholas Premnauth

Closing Remarks & Congratulations

Dr. Troilo

Recessional

Guests are asked to remain in their seats

OPTOMETRIC OATH

With full deliberation I freely and solemnly pledge that:

I AFFIRM that the health of my patient will be my first consideration.

I WILL practice the art and science of optometry faithfully and conscientiously, and to the fullest scope of my competence.

I WILL uphold and honorably promote by example and action the highest standards, ethics and ideals of my chosen profession and the honor of the degree, Doctor of Optometry, which has been granted me.

I WILL provide professional care for those who seek my services, with concern, with compassion and with due regard for their human rights and dignity.

I WILL place the treatment of those who seek my care above personal gain and strive to see that none shall lack for proper care.

I WILL hold as privileged and inviolable all information entrusted to me in confidence by my patients.

I WILL advise my patients fully and honestly of all which may serve to restore, maintain or enhance their vision and general health.

I WILL strive continuously to broaden my knowledge and skills so that my patients may benefit from all new and efficacious means to enhance the care of human vision.

I WILL share information cordially and unselfishly with my fellow optometrists and other professionals for the benefit of patients and the advancement of human knowledge and welfare.

I WILL do my utmost to serve my community, my country and humankind as a citizen as well as an optometrist.

I HEREBY commit myself to be steadfast in the performance of this my solemn oath and obligation.



David C. Rhew, MD

*Global Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and
VP of Health & Life Sciences for Microsoft*

As Microsoft's Global CMO, David has led efforts around COVID-19 (working with WHO, CDC, and U.S. States), responsible AI (as co-founder of the Trustworthy Responsible AI Network [TRAIN]), and rural health (as co-founder of the Rural Health Transformation Collaborative).

He has pioneered the development of evidence-based order sets in EHRs while at Zynx Health and home-based cardiac rehab while at Samsung. He holds six U.S. technology patents that enable authoring, mapping, and integration of CDS into electronic health records. He has sat on NQF's Executive CSAC Board; is Chair-emeritus for Consumer Technology Association's Health Technology Board; and serves on the Executive Advisory Board for AdvaMed Digital Health and NESTcc (advisory to FDA, CMS and NIH regarding RWE/RWD safety and efficiency studies on medical devices).

He is an Adjunct Professor at Stanford and has been recognized as one of the 100 most influential people by Modern Healthcare.

PRESIDENTIAL MEDALLION RECIPIENTS



Jerome Sherman, OD, FAAO

SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor

A distinguished educator, clinician and researcher, Jerome Sherman, OD, FAAO, has been with SUNY Optometry since its founding. Two decades later, Dr. Sherman rose to the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor. A leading voice in the field, he is the author of over 800 clinical articles, research manuscripts, and book chapters as well as four books and 2 CDs. He worked closely with more than 300 OD students and graduates on their first publications.

Dr. Sherman is well respected for his pioneering vision in co-founding a number of optometric-related bodies including: The International Foundation for Optic Nerve Disease; the Optometric Retina Society and Retina Revealed – where he has served as Editor in Chief since 2010.

In 2025, the *Review of Optometry* recognized Dr. Sherman's legacy with the Dr. Frank Fontana Career Achievement Award. His private sector experience includes clinical care and research at the Eye Institute and Laser Center and Omni Eye Surgery. Dr. Sherman received his OD from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1970.



David A. Bowers, MBA, MPH

VP for Administration & Finance

Mr. Bowers joined the College of Optometry in May 1988 as Vice President for Administration and Finance and continues to serve in that capacity as well as acting as the College's Internal Control Officer. He holds graduate degrees in both business administration and urban planning. He is a past president of the State University of New York Business Officers Association and remains a member of that organization's Board of Directors. In 2013, he received the Robert J. Wagner Business Officer of the Year award.

He served as Officer-in-Charge of the College from July 2006 to June 2007 while a presidential search was being conducted.

Prior to joining the College of Optometry, he held positions as the Associate Dean for Administration and Finance in the School of Medicine at Stony Brook University in Stony Brook, New York, the Assistant Dean for Administration and Finance in the School of Medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia and as a Research Associate in the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C.



John G. Flanagan PhD, DSc, FCOptom, FAAO, FARVO

Professor and Dean Emeritus

*Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science,
University of California, Berkeley*

John G. Flanagan was the eighth dean of Berkeley Optometry and Vision Science from 2014 to 2025. He graduated in Optometry and Vision Sciences from Aston University, Birmingham, UK, where he also earned his PhD. Previously, he was Professor at the School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Waterloo and in the Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences, University of Toronto, Canada, where he was Director of the Glaucoma Research Unit, Toronto Western Research Institute and a

Senior Scientist at the Toronto Western Hospital, University Health Network.

He has held continuous federal research funding for over 39 years with additional foundation research funding. He has supervised 47 graduate students and authored over 190 peer-reviewed publications, numerous book chapters, and 3 books. His research interests include basic mechanisms of human glaucoma and neurodegeneration, ocular imaging, clinical psychophysics and vascular reactivity. Awards include Certificate of Merit for Research Excellence, Glaucoma Research Society of Canada; Claire Bobier Lecture, University of Waterloo; the Glenn A Fry Award from the American Academy of Optometry; and the Outstanding Performance Award.

Dr. Flanagan was a founding member and prior president of the Optometric Glaucoma Society. He served as President of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry in 2020/21. He has been honored by a number of institutions including Aston University, British College of Optometrists, University of Indiana, California Optometric Association, National Optometric Society, American Optometric Association, and the Glaucoma Research Foundation. In 2022, he was inducted into the American Academy of Optometry's Hall of Fame.



James Charles Winans

President & CEO

The Bowery Mission

As President & CEO of The Bowery Mission, James Winans leads a team of staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who meet essential needs and foster transformative community, continuing a 153-year legacy of service to New York City neighbors in need.

James first encountered the realities of homelessness and the promise of transformation through a life-changing volunteer internship at The Bowery Mission more than 25 years ago. He later served as Chief Development Officer, building and guiding teams that successfully raised more than \$120 million over 15 years.

He became CEO in 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Mission faithfully kept its doors open while much of New York was shut down, caring for New Yorkers with nowhere to “stay at home.” The Mission emerged from the pandemic with a deepened resolve to serve every person who walks through its Red Doors, including thousands newly experiencing homelessness and many who have recently arrived in New York.

Before joining The Bowery Mission, James served as Education Director at Family Promise and has contributed as a consultant, board member, or volunteer leader with several other nonprofits. A native of Maryland and a graduate of Drew University, James resides with his wife, Anna, and their daughters in Elmhurst, Queens.

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE, MASTER OF SCIENCE IN VISION SCIENCE

Shaoheng Chen

The Impact of Molecularly Altered Müller Glia in RD10 Mouse Model

Advisor: Dr. Stefanie Wohl

Claire Constance Goucher

Safety, Repeatability, and Accuracy of Low-Coherence Interferometry (LenStar) in Experimental Myopia

Advisor: Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Pérez

Rena Shilian

Feasibility of a single contrast functional assessment of glaucoma based on predictions from lab-based, multiple contrast level, psychometric functions

Advisor: Dr. Mitchell Dul

Hanyang Wang

Comparison of peripheral defocus measured with Grand Seiko Autorefractor and OPD-Scan III aberrometer

Advisor: Dr. Xiaoying Zhu

Melissa Zhong

Digital Eye Strain: 20-0-20

Advisor: Dr. Mark Rosenfield

RESIDENCY CANDIDATES FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED CLINICAL COMPETENCY*

Sarah Dina Ahdut
Laura Baldino
Donna Bayat Fard
Sheewani Bhugwansing
Christina Faith Canellos
Annie Chan
Xiao Tong Chen
Shaoheng Chen
Alexander Curreri
Joy McFadin Deshmukh
Andrew Deron Dohanich
Kylie Donohue
Shaila R. Emani

Ashley Frenette
Taylor Alexis Greaves
Brianna J. Hairston
Vishwa Jain
Simrit Kang
Jessica Kao Zhang
Katarina J. Kozer
Jennifer Liang
Joy Lin
Kelly Lu
Ann Boby Mathews
Juliana Mazzotta
Arden Hope Niedfeld

Vanna Lam Vy Nguyen
William Doan Nguyen
Evaudie M. Paul
Perla Giselle Reyes
Jannah Said
Stephen Erasmo Sanabria
Amanda Tran
Ina Wang
Toby Raquel Werberger
Simon Wong
Mike Yuan

* to be presented during residency ceremony

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE, DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY

Samia Ahmed +^°	Grace Haemmerle	Lauren Afsana Quadir
Amro Mohamed Mahmoud Ali	Claire Elizabeth Hatala	Jennifer Rakhimov
Bisma Fatima Ali	S. Page Hazen **+°	Ryan Raynaud
Farah Azam	Isabella He	John Joseph Redden IV
Omade Aziz	Julia Marie Jager	Ariella Yafa Sassoon
Victoria Rose Basciano	Hyo Seo Jang	Emily Amira Seodat
Ishira Bharadwaj	Inji Kang	Jacqueline Marie Shannon **
Niyati Boghani **°	Tahmina Jahan Keya **	Rena Shilian
Daipaul Royale Brown	Sharmin Khan	Abirami Shiyamsaran
Jewel Hope Brown-Crosswell	Spogmai Khan °	Gabriella Sinoway **
Jailine Valeria Carrion	SeongEun Kim **	Carlie C. Stalker °
Christina Chan	Maylynn Lee	Lorenzo Gianluca Stampone *
Andrea Chang	Crystal Liu ^	Iza Taher
Karen Chen	Jocelyn Liu °	Meriam Tayar
Karen Chen	Vicky Lu °	Rachael Elizabeth Tevis °
Conor Chickos	Cindy Mai	Lauren Tong
Russell Bayan Chin °	Kaur Mandeep	Rebecca Marie Treen +
Constance Cho	Princy Mathew	Monica Van Duyne **
Ildoo Cho	Mary McArtor °	Vicki van Thoor
Shamimara Chowdhury	Lucille Meier **°	Dixie Vasquez +
Alyssa Clemente **°	Melinda Cleopatra Wijetilleke-Morvai °	Hanyang Wang *°
Anastasia Amalia Dakis+	Naela Naasan	Jenny Wang
Muriel Reid Dawson **°	Esther Nasser	Sarah Yatong Wu
Andrew Delk	Ciara Lan Phuong Nguyen	Jessica Yakubova
Olivia Rae Ethé	Kaitlyn Nguyen +°	Melissa Zhong
Michael Sidney Feldman	Adanna Ursula Obidiegwu	Jessie W Zhu +
Priya Sheeba Felix **	Grace Oh	Diane Zou
Tzvi Friedman	Aungaung Oo	
Man Yi Gao **+^°	Shivani Yogesh Patel	
Elana Goldstein	Stuti Patel **	
Claire Constance Goucher **	Nicholas Premnauth +°	
Esther Grinberg	Jovon Steven Pryce	

** 4-year BSK member

HONORS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

* **Beta Sigma Kappa (BSK)** is an international optometric honor society founded in 1925 to recognize academic excellence, research, and dedication to the profession. With chapters at schools and colleges of optometry across the United States, BSK honors students who demonstrate outstanding scholastic achievement and a commitment to advancing vision care. Membership reflects a high standard of academic performance and professional promise.

+ **The Gold Key International Optometric Honor Society** is the premier leadership honor society in optometry, established in 1965 to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional leadership, service, and professional integrity. Membership is limited to a select group of students who have made meaningful contributions to their class, institution, and the profession. This distinction represents the highest honor for leadership a student of optometry can achieve.

◦ **Micro-Credentials** SUNY College of Optometry recognizes students who pursue advanced, specialized training beyond the core curriculum. Through targeted coursework, clinical experiences, and skill development, students gain additional expertise in focused areas of optometric care. This distinction highlights a commitment to lifelong learning, professional growth, and excellence in patient care.

^ **AHEC Scholars** is a program of the Area Health Education Centers that prepares health profession students to serve in rural and underserved communities. Through additional training in interprofessional practice, cultural competency, and community-based care, along with hands-on experiential learning, participants develop the skills needed to address health disparities. This recognition reflects a strong commitment to service, leadership, and improving access to care.

CHANCELLOR'S AWARD

for Student Excellence

Claire Constance Goucher

S. Page Hazen

BETA SIGMA KAPPA AWARD

for Academic Excellence

Monica Van Duyne

DR. FREDERICK W. BROCK MEMORIAL AWARD

for Outstanding Clinical Performance in Vision Training

Samia Ahmed

COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS IN VISION DEVELOPMENT AWARD

for Excellence in Vision Training

Jocelyn Liu

COLUMBIA CLASS OF 1936 AWARD

for Academic & Clinical Achievement
in Ocular Disease

S. Page Hazen

CLASS OF 1991 PACESETTER AWARD

for Excellence in Primary Care

Lorenzo Gianluca Stampone

DR. STANLEY EISENBERG MEMORIAL AWARD

for Excellence in Practice Development
and Administration

Kaitlyn Nguyen

DR. WILLIAM FEINBLOOM MEMORIAL AWARD

for Outstanding Clinical Proficiency in Low Vision

Lucille Meier

IRA GOLDFARB MEMORIAL AWARD

for Excellence in Low Vision

Sarah Yatong Wu

DR. LOUIS HERRMANN MEMORIAL AWARD

for Outstanding Compassion in Patient Care

Samia Ahmed

MR. AND MRS. IRVING UNGER AWARD

for Excellence in Optometry

Lorenzo Gianluca Stampone

THE JOSH WALLMAN, PHD MEMORIAL RESEARCH AWARD

Shaoheng Chen

ESTHER J. WERNER MEMORIAL AWARD

for Academic Excellence

SeongEun Kim

DR. MAX COHEN MEMORIAL AWARD

for Volunteer Commitment to Community Service

Anastasia Amalia Dakis
Man Yi Gao
Melinda Cleopatra Wijetilleke-Morvai

DR. BENJAMIN FREED MEMORIAL AWARD

for Community Service

Created by Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation

Dixie Vasquez

MORTON L. KIMMELMAN MEMORIAL AWARD

for Student Leadership in Organized Optometry

Rebecca Marie Treen

BILLIE M. LYONS MEMORIAL AWARD

for Distinguished Service to the College Community

S. Page Hazen
Nicholas Premnauth

**NEW YORK STATE OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION
AUXILIARY AWARD**

for Outstanding Service to the Class of 2026

Lorenzo Gianluca Stampone

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by the Office of Diversity,
Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Jovon Steven Pryce
Samia Ahmed

ABRAM A. HUBAL, OD, STUDENT SERVICE AWARD

Sponsored by The New York State Optometric Association (NYSOA)

Christina Chan

**COOPERVISION 4TH YEAR CONTACT LENS
CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD**

Kaitlyn Nguyen

GP LENS INSTITUTE CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD
for Outstanding Clinical Proficiency in Contact Lenses

Omade Aziz

DR. WILLIAM M. EISENBERG MEMORIAL AWARD
for Excellence in Ocular Disease

Russell Bayan Chin

GOOD-LITE PEDIATRIC AWARD
for Excellence in Pediatric Optometry

Carlie C. Stalker

ESHENBACH LOW VISION AWARD
for Excellence in Low Vision

S. Page Hazen

JOHNSON & JOHNSON EXCELLENCE AWARD
for Excellence in Clinical Contact Lenses Patient Care

Lorenzo Gianluca Stampone

OPTELEC LOW VISION AWARD
for Excellence in Low Vision

Rachael Elizabeth Tevis

GREETINGS & CONGRATULATIONS

The College Council extends our deepest congratulations to the Class of 2026. We are proud of all you have accomplished to reach this pivotal milestone in your academic journey. As Doctors of Optometry and vision scientists armed with the finest professional education, you will play a vital role in our healthcare system, and in doing so, change lives for the better. We salute you and all the good work you will do in the years to come. Congratulations!

Gretchen Stone, MAT

Chair, SUNY College of Optometry College Council

Today you join the alumni family of nearly 4,000 members who offer you their best wishes as you celebrate Commencement. This marks the beginning of your journey as part of the alumni community – our newest colleagues – and we are so proud to welcome you. We hope you enjoy this profession as much as we do, and encourage you to become involved in advancing the profession and continuing to be leaders as alumni.

Mary Botelho, OD '17, R'18

President, Alumni Association

Class of 2026, congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone! Your dedication, resilience, and compassion have carried you to the finish line—and into a future where you'll impact many lives. The Foundation is proud to have walked beside you on this journey, supporting your growth and potential. As you step forward into your profession, we hope you'll carry that spirit of support with you—and one day, consider giving back to help the next generation see their way forward. Wishing you much success, fulfillment, and continued purpose in all you do.

Richard Soden, OD '79

President, SUNY College of Optometry Foundation

ACADEMIC REGALIA

The academic gowns that you see today represent a tradition inherited from the universities of the Middle Ages. Those institutions were founded by the Church; the students, being clerics, were obliged to wear clerical gowns and caps at all times.

Throughout the ages, this regalia has been altered to accommodate both fashion and fancy. The once round caps were transformed into square mortarboards and the cowls, originally attached to the gown and used for warmth as a shoulder cape and bag for the collection of alms, became a separate garment that was fashioned into the colorful hoods currently worn.

These gowns are usually black or the official color of the institution in the United States. The way they are worn and their cut distinguish the wearer's academic degree.

The hood is the most outstanding and colorful feature of the regalia. It is lined with the color of the institution from which the wearer received the degree. Its size and shape indicate the wearer's degree; and its collar is the color of the academic discipline: Liberal Arts, white; Fine Arts and Architecture, brown; Science, golden yellow; Music, pink; Divinity, scarlet; Law, purple; Engineering, orange; Philosophy, blue; Medicine, green; Public Health, salmon; Forestry, russet; and Nursing, apricot.

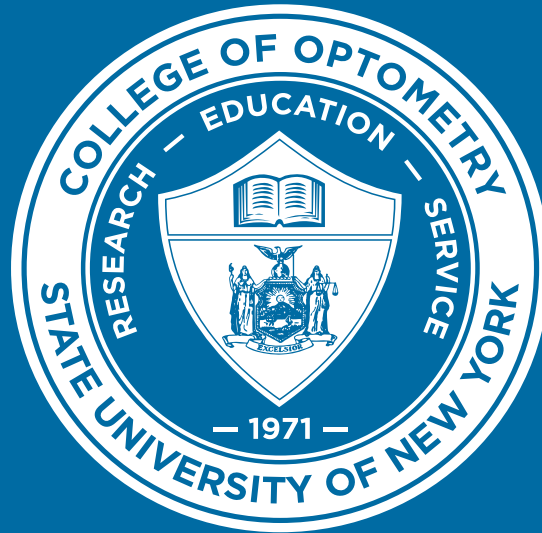
Seafoam green is the color adopted by the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry and filed with the Collegiate Bureau of Academic Costumes. The velvet trim on the hood is seafoam green. The blue and gold satin lining of the hood represent the traditional colors of the State University of New York.

CEREMONIAL MACE

SUNY College of Optometry commissioned a ceremonial mace in honor of the College's 50th anniversary. The mace reflects the three pillars of our mission – education, research, and service. It further incorporates elements related to optometry and the patients we serve in the heart of New York City.

The ceremonial mace is used by Colleges and Universities to symbolize scholarship and integrity. It signifies that the proceedings of an event have an official sanction and it is only present when the president and other presiding dignitaries are in attendance.

The mace was designed and fabricated by Preston Jones.



Congratulations Graduates!
Welcome to the Alumni Family!

