







Foundation 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Advancing Optometry's Future





Dear AAOF Donors,

Thank you to all our donors and industry partners who made 2023 a great year! The American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF) Board is pleased to share news regarding our programs and awards. Your generous donations expanded funding of research, scholarships, travel fellowships, and other programs and enabled the Foundation to provide more than \$1.2 million in awards and travel grants during the last fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Thanks to you, the Foundation bestowed 129 awards and 204 travel grants to 113 students, 41 residents, 20 researchers, and 6 faculty. The Foundation also extended its global reach presenting 14 awards to bring international students and clinicians to the annual meeting. A new Ezell Fellowship was funded by the Stan Yamane Family. Significant research funding was awarded through our partnership with Meta and the Allison Summers Pediatric Pilot Grant Program.

The Foundation attained significant milestones in other programs, as well. Since 2021, the Clinical Podcast Series presented the latest research via 9,607 downloads, the Clinical Investigator Certification program graduated 111 clinicians and more than 600 members previewed or enrolled in our Staff Training program. None of this would be possible without for your support and donations. Thank you again for your generosity.

We look forward to working with you in 2024!

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2023/2024

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Together We Will Advance Optometry's Future

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FOUNDATION UPDATE | 4 AAOF IMPACT | 5 EZELL FELLOWS | 6 AWARDS | 8 RESIDENT AWARDS | 9 TRAVEL AWARDS | 10 NEW ORLEANS HIGHLIGHTS | 12 PRESIDENTS CIRCLE | 13



A Foundation Initiatives Update

Approximately three years ago, the Foundation developed targeted programs to support the Academy's strategic plan and provide members with programs that improve patient care. Today, all six programs have been implemented.



a foundation initiative

Clinical Podcast Series distributes eight video podcasts a month discussing trending, clinically relevant research to improve patient care. The series had more than 9,607 downloads thanks to the participation of 31 Academy memebers in the role of hosts, editors and experts.

LISTEN HERE



Clinical Investigator Certification provides practicing optometrists with the training and skills to serve as a clinical investigator for sponsored research within their practices. Many of the 111 graduates surveyed indicated they are participating in a clinical trial or communicating with companies that sponsor clinical trials.

LEARN MORE



Staff Training Fundamentals helps train optometric staff though an online application developed for new employees in optometry practices and clinics. Modules of training provide an overview of ocular anatomy, lens types and materials, records and compliance and more. To date, more than 600 Fellows have previewed or enrolled.

ENROLL NOW



OD/PHD Scholarship Program provides funding for optometrists in pursuit of a PhD in a vision science field. Each awardee receives \$30,000 payable over two years. The inaugural scholarship was awarded Spring 2022. The Foundation awarded two scholarships this year for the 2023-2024 academic year.

LEARN MORE



Bright Ideas Pitch Competition encourages new ideas and innovative thinking. Five finalists pitched their ideas to a panel of five judges during Academy 2022 San Diego. The Bright Ideas competition will be held again during Academy 2024 Indianapolis.

LEARN MORE



Research Funding stimulates research through pilot grants totalling \$100,000 and partner collaboration such as Meta/ Reality Labs Research, who provided \$450,000 for research in augmented reality, virtual reality, and myopia. Since July, the Foundation with Meta/Reality Labs Research granted another \$250,000 for myopia research.

LEARN MORE

AAOF Impact

Each year, hundreds of optometric professionals benefit from the incredible generosity of our donors and sponsors. Below are just a few examples of the impact the Foundation has had on the profession.





William C. Ezell Fellowships have

been awarded since 1949 including

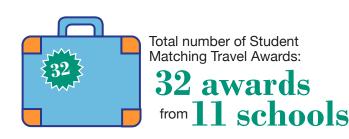
new Ezell Fellows this year.

1949

American Academy of Optometry Foundation

2023









in funding for scholarships, grants, awards, and special programs during fiscal year 2023



Clinical Podcast Series:

downloads since 2021

⁶⁶The American Academy of Optometry Foundation has been extremely supportive & encouraging all throughout my PhD education by providing prompt assistance for all their awards' applications. I am truly grateful & delighted to be the first Stan Yamane Contact Lens Ezell fellow. Obtaining such an award is of high significance and support as I continue my PhD education.

Justina Assaad

Stan Yamane Family Contact Lens Ezell Fellowship

66Being chosen for the Terrance N. Ingraham scholarship is a profound honor, and I am humbled to join the distinguished group of past recipients. This recognition reaffirms my dedication to pediatric optometry, and I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the generous donors for their support. "

Natalie Breau

Terrance N. Ingraham Pediatric Optometry Residency Award

66 I am extremely elated and honored to receive this great recognition and support toward my career goal as an optometry educator and vision scientist. I am grateful to my family and mentors, AAO Foundation, Dr. Michael G. Harris. "

Ellen Konadu Antwi-Adjei

Michael G. Harris Ezell Fellowship

⁶⁶I am grateful to the incredible individuals who have supported and mentored me along the way, exemplifying the immense power of collaboration and shared success.

Ebenezer Owusu

Joe and Janet Barr Early Career Cornea and Contact Lens Research Award



2023 Ezell Fellows

This year the Foundation awarded 16 prestigious William C. Ezell Fellowships. Named for founding president, William C. Ezell, OD, FAAO, this fellowship seeks to assist full-time students in their pursuit of advanced degrees in optometric research and education. Since 1949, 489 fellowships have been awarded to talented individuals in the field. The 2023 recipients received \$8,000 for the year-long fellowship.

They also were awarded two travel grants of \$750 to attend the Academy's annual meeting and the Association for Research and Vision in Ophthalmology (ARVO) meeting. Funding for these Fellowships is provided by leading optometric companies, private endowments, and other business organizations representing most sectors of the industry.

AAO Centennial Ezell Fellowship



Erin C. Jenewein, OD, MS, FAAO Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University

AAO Centennial Ezell Fellowship



Nicole Christie Ross, OD, MSc, FAAO New England College of Optometry

AAO Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses, and **Refractive Technologies** (CCLRT) Ezell Fellow



Sidra Sarwat, MSc, PhD, FAAO University of New South Wales

American Academy of Optometry (AAO) Ezell Fellow



Yvonne Adu-Agyeiwaah, OD University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry

Mike Daley **Ezell Fellow**



Kofi Asiedu, OD, FAAO University of New South Wales Fellowship funded by an educational grant from EssilorLuxottica

Optometric Glaucoma Society (OGS) Ezell Fellow



Janelle Tong, BOptom, BSci University of New South Wales

Rod Tahran Ezell Fellow



Mahmoud T. KhalafAllah, MSc University of Alabama at Fellowship funded by an educational

Birmingham School of Optometry grant from EssilorLuxottica

Meta Technologies Ezell Fellow



Zhi Da Soh, BSc, MPH, FAAO University of Manchester

"I am truly honored to receive the prestigious Ezell Fellowship, and I would like to acknowledge all my mentors and teammates who have been with me in my research journey. Special thanks to the academy and Meta Platform Technologies for the award!"

American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF) Ezell Fellow



Kierstyn Napier-Dovorany, OD, FAAO Indiana University School of Optometry

Irvin Borish Ezell Fellow



Emmanuel Kobia-Acquah, OD, MSc, FAAO Technological University Dublin, Dublin, Ireland Fellowship funded by an educational grant from EssilorLuxottica



Rachel Williams, OD, MS, FAAO University of Houston College of Optometry

Bert C. & Lydia M. Corwin Ezell Fellow



Pabita Dhungel, BOptom, MS University of California, Berkeley, Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science

"The American Academy of Optometry Foundation has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey through its prestigious awards and recognition. I am profoundly touched and immensely grateful for being awarded the Bert C. & Lydia M. Corwin Ezell Fellowship this year. This recognition holds immense significance for me. I extend my heartfelt gratitude for inspiring and motivating me to persevere in my research career. Thank you sincerely."

Danne Ventura Ezell Fellow



Sena Ayse Gocuk, BSc, MPhil University of Melbourne Fellowship funded by an educational grant from EssilorLuxottica

John N. Schoen **Ezell Fellow**



Marielle G. Reidy, OD, PhD, FAAO The Ohio State University College of Optometry

Merton C. Flom **Leadership Ezell Fellow**



Michael G. Harris

Ellen K. Antwi-Adjei, OD, MPH University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry

Stan Yamane Family Contact Lens Ezell Fellow



Justina Raouf Assaad, OD, FAAO University of Houston College of Optometry

Awards

In addition to the Ezell Fellowships, the American Academy of Optometry Foundation was able to provide the following grants, awards, and scholarships to optometrists in the US and abroad.



Meta Myopia Grant Safal Khanal, OD, PhD, FAAO University of Alabama at Birmingham College of Optometry



Pilot Grant Saleha Munir, OD, MS, FAAO University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Science



Career Cornea and Contact Lens Research Award Ebenezer Owusu, OD University of Houston College of Optometry



Korb - Exford Dry Eye Career Development Grant Maria Markoulli, PhD, MOptom, FAAO



Beta Sigma Kappa Research Award Rena Abbas Farishta, OD, PhD, FAAO



OD to PhD Fellowship recipients, Sharon Qui, OD, MS, and Sara Abboud, OD at Academy 2023 New Orleans.

AAO OD/PhD Fellowship

Sharon Qiu, OD, MS

University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision

Tony & Elna Adams OD/PhD Fellowship

Sara Abboud, OD

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

Resident Awards

We are pleased to share the seven residency award recipients in 2023, all of whom earned their Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry (FAAO) during Academy 2023 New Orleans.



Alfred A. Rosenbloom, Jr. Low Vision **Residency Award**

Kayle Edwards, OD, FAAO

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

George Mertz Contact Lens Residency Award

Emily Gottschalk, OD, FAAO

Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University

Hopkins Comprehensive Eye Care Award

Stephen Dellostritto, OD, FAAO

State University of New York, College of Optometry

Rhonda Robinson Contact Lens Residency Award

Sophia Lam, OD, FAAO

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

Sheldon Wechsler Contact Lens Residency Award

Cindy Lam, OD, ABOC, FAAO

Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University



Stan Yamane Family Contact Lens Residency Award

Jessica Liaw, OD, FAAO

Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University

Terrance N. Ingraham Pediatric Optometry Residency Award

Natalie Breau, OD, FAAO

Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University

INTERNATIONAL

Travel Awards

We were able to provide 14 brand new international travel awards for 2023. Because of the support of our donors, we can expand the Foundation's reach across the globe and provide opportunities for all to contribute to, and benefit from our mission to lifelong learning.



CooperVision International Travel Award Recipients

Samuel Sesah, OD Ghana

Bernadine Ekpenyong, OD, PhD. FAAO

Nigeria

Rajendra Gyawali, PhD, FAAO Nepal

Asantewaa Aboagye-MacCarthy, OD, FAAO

Ghana

Grace Ogbonna, OD, MSc, PhD, **FAAO**

Malawi

Obinwanne Chukwuemeka, OD, FLVPEI, FSLS, FAAO

Nigeria

Stephen Ocansey, OD, PhD, **FAAO**

Ghana

Rubina Shah, OD, FAAO

Pakistan

Narayanan Anuradha, BS, PhD, **FAAO**

India

Prema Chande, MOptom, PhD, **FAAO**

India

International Myopia **Institute International Travel Award Recipients**

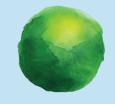
Amy Chow, OD, PhD, FAAO Canada

Emily Pieterse, PhD, FAAO Australia

Sandra Wagner, PhD, FAAO Germany

Grace Walther

United States



CooperVision®

"I am feeling particularly grateful to have received this travel grant. Not only was I given the opportunity to attend Academy, but the grant allowed me to prove sufficient funding to receive my travel visa. It is a great honor, and I am incredibly thankful to both the AAOF and CooperVision for helping to make it happen."

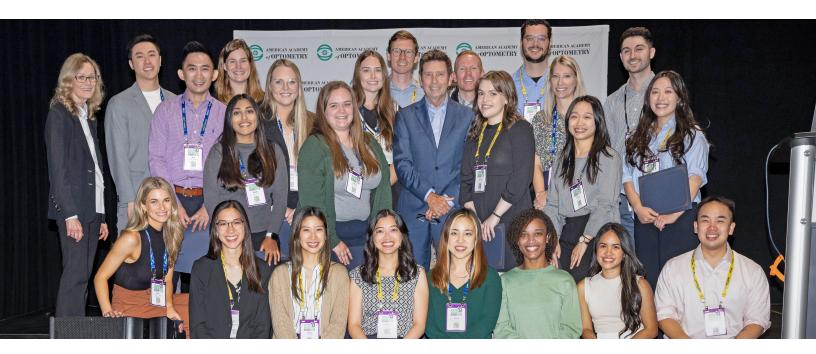
Grace Ogbonna



2023 new Fellow Grace Ogbonna pictured with Dr. Valerie Sharpe, Foundation President-Elect, after earning her Fellowship during Academy 2023 New Orleans. Dr. Ogbonna's travel was made possible by the CooperVision International Travel Award.

STUDENT

Travel Awards



Travel Grants

Sixty-five students and residents were awarded travel grants of \$750 each to attend the 2023 annual meeting. This \$48,750 is part of our ongoing commitment and dedication to welcoming the next generation into the Academy.

Thank you to the Low Vision Section for their inaugural David Lewerenz Low Vision Student Travel Fellowship. This award honors past Academy Fellow, Dr. David C. Lewerenz, who was a Diplomate and leader in the American Academy of Optometry's Low Vision Section. The travel grant was awarded to an optometry student for their work in the field of low vision.

VSP Vision

Since the 1980's VSP Vision has been providing students support through scholarships. We are so grateful this program continues today and that VSP Vision generously contributes \$3,250 to 46 US students and \$2,000 to 4 Canadian students annually, with the addition of \$750 travel grants for all 50 students. Pictured on the right are most of the 2023 recipients, and the generous VSP Vision team.





ACADEMY 2023 NEW ORLEANS

Highlights



CIC Networking Reception

During the Academy's annual meeting, the Foundation hosted a graduation reception for 111 optometrists who received Clinical Investigator Certification. Graduates also had the opportunity to meet and network with industry representatives who sponsor clinical trials. Nine industry partners participated in the networking event that is designed to provide CIC graduates with the opportunity to meet and exchange contact information with those sponsoring clinical trials. The next CIC class will be held in Winter 2024.

Thank you to our industry partners!

AbbVie Bausch+Lomb

Dompe Glaukos Sight Sciences Sterling IRB

Johnson & Johnson Vision CooperVision

Foresight Regulatory Strategies



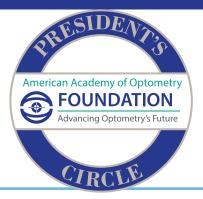
Foundation Booth

Thank you to all who stopped by the Foundation Booth in the exhibit hall to learn more about Foundation programs and awards. We look forward to seeing everyone again in Indy in 2024!

Future Focus on Optometry

The Future Focus on Optometry Committee hosted its second annual program for 23 high school and college students from diverse backgrounds during Academy 2023 New Orleans. Students listened to presentations from Dean Keshia Elder on the profession of optometry and her journey and advice from a Dean, Ms. Paige Pence (ASCO) on what to expect from the profession and the path to optometry, Dr. Suresh Viswanathan on the role of organized optometry and future doctor, and NOSA president Isa Prude on advice from a student and her path to optometry. The students then went on a tour of the exhibit hall to see the different aspects of the profession as seen through the different booths. A huge thank you to Zeiss, Topcon, Optos, and Hagg Streit who graciously allowed our groups of students to rotate through their booths to see the different technologies offered by their companies. Lastly, the students came back to have lunch with mentors Breanne McGhee, Jacobi Cleaver, Sherrol Reynolds, Joy Harewood, and 10 NOSA volunteers. The committee looks forward to hosting Future Focus on Optometry events at future Academy annual meetings.

A big thank you to the planning and implementation committee: Breanne McGhee, Jacobi Cleaver, Melissa Contreras, Sarah Kidd, Sherrol Reynolds and Suresh Viswanathan.



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