

ACADEMY NEWSLETTER



AMERICAN ACADEMY
of OPTOMETRY

Spring 2024

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ACADEMY 2024 INDIANAPOLIS

presented by the American Academy of Optometry

NOVEMBER 6-9

November 6-9, 2024
Registration and housing open
May 27, 2024

www.aaopt.org/2024

Generously sponsored by:

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For the first time ever, Indianapolis, Indiana, will host the Academy's annual meeting from November 6-9, 2024. Join us at the crossroads of America for an immersive experience filled with captivating speakers, thought-provoking research, cutting-edge CE, and an extensive showcase of the latest products and technologies in the dynamic exhibit hall. Registration and housing open on May 27, 2024.

EDUCATION

Academy 2024 Indianapolis will feature more than 300 hours of CE in a variety of formats beyond traditional lectures to suit all learning styles. Tune in for a Rapid Fire session, featuring fast paced 12-minute talks in a variety of subject areas. Consider attending Grand Rounds, where each session includes three case presentations designed to highlight newer Academy speakers. The Academy's Sections and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) will offer an assortment of symposia throughout the meeting discussing hot topics within their areas of expertise. Preview the symposia planned this year on page 6.

More than 40 hours of hands-on workshops to sharpen your skills and explore new techniques will be available at \$50 per credit hour. If you prefer a small group learning environment, consider attending an Academy Classroom Exchange (ACE) course for just \$25. You can add these sessions to your registration when you register online for Academy 2024 Indianapolis, but don't delay – space is limited!

It is not too late to be part of the 2024 education program! Consider submitting an abstract for the Scientific Program paper and poster sessions. The Scientific Program offers presenters the opportunity to exchange the latest information in optometry and vision science in two formats – research and case report presentations. The submission window will be open from May 1 to May 31, 2024.

2024-2025 optometry residents are invited to submit Grand Rounds cases for presentation as both

papers and posters. The resident must have been directly involved in the patient care of the case being presented. Submissions will be accepted from August 5 to August 19, 2024.

The American Academy of Optometry is accredited by COPE to provide continuing education to optometrists.

EXHIBIT HALL

At the heart of the meeting is the vibrant exhibit hall, serving as the central hub to connect and engage with over 150 esteemed industry partners. Stop by to speak with our exhibitors and explore what's new in optometry and vision science. The Academy's annual meeting offers multiple, convenient opportunities to explore the cutting-edge innovations and advancements showcased in the hall while networking with your colleagues and peers. Here's your first look at the tentative exhibit hall schedule:

Opening Night: Wednesday, November 6

Exhibit Hall Welcome Reception - 5:00 to 7:30 pm

Thursday, November 7

Hall hours: 11:00 am to 6:30 pm

Lunch in the Exhibit Hall – 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Attendee Reception – 4:30 to 6:30 pm

Final Day: Friday, November 8

Hall hours: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Student Focus Hour – 10:00 to 11:00 am

SPECIAL EVENTS

Beyond CE and the exhibit hall, Academy 2024 Indianapolis is jam-packed with special events and social affairs designed to elevate your experience. Whether you're circulating the many evening receptions, collaborating with industry partners, or reconnecting with fellow alumni at our legendary Alumni Receptions (now on both Thursday and Friday night!), there's an abundance of connection awaiting you.

Back again for 2024, join our sponsors on Wednesday, November 6 at 12:00 pm for the Industry Innovations Lunch & Learn sessions, featuring presentations on the newest innovations in the optometric profession. Discover the latest advancements in diagnosing eye conditions and innovative treatment options. Enjoy a complimentary lunch as you gain insight from experts in the field. Sponsoring companies will include Alcon, AbbVie, Bausch + Lomb, CooperVision, Inc., Dompè Medical Affairs, Glaukos, Johnson & Johnson Vision, Tarsus Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Viatrix, and more.

The theme of innovation continues at the Innovation Station on Thursday and Friday during the meeting from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. From practical diagnostic knowledge to hands-on demonstrations, don't miss this special opportunity to learn beyond CE in Indy.

Finally, tune in for Innovations in Vision and Eye Care (IVEC) in the exhibit hall, brought to you by the Academy's Communications Committee! These lunch time sessions on Thursday and Friday will feature the top highlights from our industry partners and the Scientific Program.

Friday night's schedule is overflowing with the cherished social events you know and love with a twist. The night begins with the Alumni Receptions, so plan to stop by, mingle, and show your school spirit after you finish your CE for the day. Following the receptions, the Academy will hold its annual celebration formerly known as the Saturday Fellowship Banquet/Closing Celebration, on its new night. When you register online, be sure to purchase your ticket for this extraordinary event recognizing the Academy's new Diplomates, Fellows, and volunteer leaders. The night will conclude with the Friday Night Party where all are invited to dance the night away. Keep an eye out for additional information about these special events and more as we get closer to the annual meeting. Join us on social media using **#Academy24**.



CONTRACTED HOTELS

JW Marriott Indianapolis (Headquarters)

10 S West St, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$269/night

Indianapolis Marriott

350 West Maryland Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$259/night

The Westin Indianapolis

241 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$259/night

Hyatt Regency Indianapolis

1 S Capitol Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$249/night

Omni Severin Hotel (AFOS)

40 W Jackson Pl, Indianapolis, IN 46225
\$249/night

Embassy Suites Hotel Downtown

110 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$259/night

Courtyard Marriott Downtown

10 S West St, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$239/night

Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Downtown

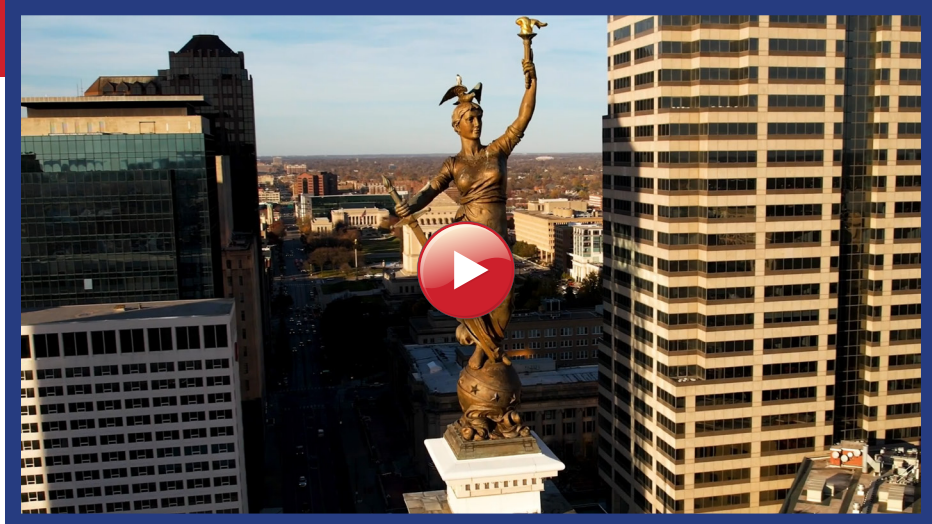
501 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$229/night

SpringHill Suites by Marriott Downtown

601 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN 46204
\$239/night

WHY INDY?

We cordially invite you to attend Academy 2024 Indianapolis, where you'll uncover why Indy stands as the Midwest's premier destination. Experience firsthand why Indianapolis has garnered acclaim as the region's Best Kept Secret. The city's vibrant momentum has [captured the attention of esteemed national media outlets](#), from Condé Nast Traveler to TIME Magazine. Additionally, Indianapolis has been honored by USA Today as the "#1 Convention City in the U.S." Watch the video for a snapshot of the robust and memorable experience this destination offers.



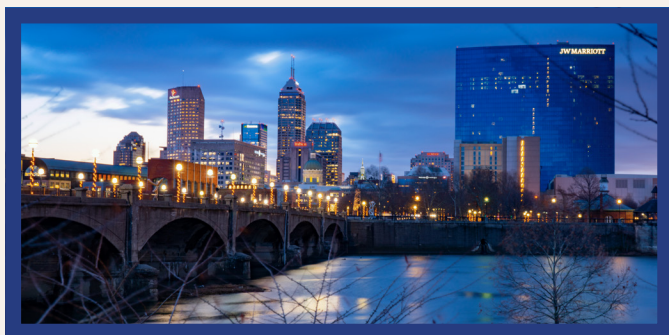
STRATEGIC CENTRAL LOCATION:

Indianapolis boasts exceptional connectivity by air, road, and rail, with the renowned Indianapolis International Airport anchoring its transportation network. This accessibility not only facilitates seamless travel but also ensures convenience for all attendees in reaching the convention area.



IMMERSIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES:

Discover the vibrant cultural landscape of Indianapolis, where a plethora of enriching attractions awaits! From captivating museums and world-class theaters to eclectic dining establishments, attendees will find ample opportunities for leisurely exploration and networking.



EXCITING ACCOMMODATION OFFERINGS:

The Academy has secured exclusive partnerships with some of Indianapolis' most remarkable accommodations, all conveniently located and walkable to the Indiana Convention Center. This selection of properties guarantees a delightful blend of comfort, convenience, and diverse price points, ensuring an unforgettable stay for every attendee.



EXPERIENCE CULINARY EXCELLENCE:

Prepare your taste buds for an extraordinary culinary adventure in Indy, where the food scene is nothing short of spectacular! Immerse yourself in the vibrant cultural landscape of Indianapolis, where a myriad of enriching attractions awaits exploration. Notably, [Food & Wine magazine](#) has bestowed upon Indy the esteemed title of one of America's next great food cities, affirming its status as a culinary destination not to be missed!





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| SPRING 2024

Section & SIG Symposia

Teaching Strategies for Maximizing Memory Retention and Clinical Performance (Academic Optometry SIG)

Faculty are typically charged with designing courses and curricula for their students to learn, prepare properly for boards and perform well in clinic. For educational techniques to be effective they need to be tailored toward the neurological pathways responsible for information retention. In this interactive course, neuroanatomy, including the relevant auditory, visual and memory passageways, will be reviewed in addition to proven educational techniques in a classroom, lab, and clinical setting. We have expert educators who will share their proven strategies.

From the Trenches: Complex Cases at Academic Medical Centers (Academic Medical Center Optometrists SIG)

A multiple case report presentation and panel review of complicated cases in academic medical centers (AMCs) highlights interdisciplinary management and the vital role that optometrists play in ensuring a positive outcome for patients. Panelists add their expert perspectives on the diagnosis, treatment, and management of the case, followed by a robust question-and-answer session with the audience. Through the interactions of the speakers, panelists, and audience, we hope that each attendee will gain further insight and knowledge when faced with similar complicated cases in their practice.

The Cryptids of Anterior Segment Disease – Cases You Need to See to Believe (Anterior Segment Section)

This course details four unique anterior segment cases that will be presented at the anterior segment symposium including a reactive arthritis conjunctivitis case, an IPL-induced uveitic glaucoma, an ocular graft vs host disease, and finally a limbal stem cell deficiency/neurotrophic keratitis due to a sebaceous cancer of the eyelid. The moderator will manage a discussion between the authors to determine the best practices to diagnose and treat these complex anterior segment disease cases.

Hyperopia: From Cradle to Classroom (Binocular Vision, Perception, and Pediatric Optometry Section)

The symposium will feature speakers involved in cutting-edge research and clinical care in hyperopia. Our speakers will discuss recent research on the development of hyperopia (i.e. how emmetropization fails), how hyperopia is related to accommodation and vergence, the clinical implications for infants and children, and the effect of correction for hyperopia. Additionally, our symposium will dedicate time for an in-depth panel discussion with each of our expert speakers.

Genetics and the Cornea in 2024 and Beyond: Cutting-Edge Concepts and Clinical Recommendations (Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses & Refractive Technologies)

This symposium will feature speakers involved in cutting-edge research

and clinical care in the genetics of eye disease. First, an overview of the latest advances in genetic medicine from the ophthalmologist/Chief of the Ophthalmic Clinical Genetics Section, NEI. Our next presenters will then discuss their research in the genetics of corneal disease, including keratoconus, corneal dystrophies and microbial keratitis; and present recommendations for patient education and clinical care. Additionally, we will dedicate time for an in-depth panel discussion with each of our expert speakers.

Worth the Weight? A Multidisciplinary Look at Eye Health and Weight Management (Comprehensive Eye Care Section and Nutrition, Disease Prevention and Wellness SIG)

Recognized as a global epidemic, obesity presents a complex challenge, with psychological, behavioral, and physiological complications. As eye care practitioners, we are a part of weight-related discussions that can influence patient engagement in weight loss efforts. This comprehensive symposium will cover the multi-disciplinary fundamentals of current weight loss strategies and medications and highlight how these therapies can affect eye health.

Improving Patient Adherence (Glaucoma Section)

Glaucoma is a progressive and potentially blinding disease. Often, first line management is topical antihypertensive therapy. Once initiated, topical therapy is used at least once daily for an indefinite amount of time. Non-adherence to topical therapy decreases the effectiveness of the drug and





Section & SIG Symposia

increases the risk of disease progression. Several behavioral modifications have been suggested to improve medication adherence, but no method is considered best.

Assistive Technology for People with Vision Impairment: Designing and Testing New Applications and the Role of Artificial Intelligence (Low Vision Section)

This symposium will include perspectives from vision research, computer science, and people with vision impairment. It will explore various aspects of the development of assistive technology, the user experience and challenges for people with vision impairment, strategies for rigorous evaluation of new technologies, results of recent clinical trials, and an agenda for future development that maximizes benefits for patients.

Not to Miss Neuro-ophthalmology (Neuro-ophthalmic Disorders in Optometry SIG)

There are certain neuro-ophthalmic conditions that need urgent and emergent work-up and are essential not to miss on a clinical examination. This symposium will discuss neuro-ophthalmic conditions that are critical in achieving a proper diagnosis. In addition, this course will discuss the clinical challenges in differentiating certain neuro-ophthalmic entities from each other including ischemic optic neuropathies, swollen optic nerves and glaucomatous vs non-glaucomatous optic neuropathies among others.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Optometric and Allied Health Professions Education (Optometric Education Section)

This symposium is aimed at informing

optometric educators on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare and healthcare education with a discussion on AI uses in optometry and optometric education. The presenters will outline what AI is and how it has grown exponentially in recent years. They will discuss a study that they completed in conjunction with IBM that explored AI competencies in healthcare. The latter half of the presentation will focus on current AI use in optometry, optometric didactic education, and clinical education with questions posed to the audience for discussion.

CDC Watch List for Emerging Infectious Diseases (Public Health & Environmental Vision Section) Referencing the CDC's National

Referencing the CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Disease list of emerging diseases, participants will review the epidemiologic drivers of disease emergence, spread and re-emergence; vaccine and treatment availability, use and misuse aiding emergence, and spread in the United States. The course aims to equip eye care professionals with the necessary information to recognize and manage these infectious diseases effectively, better understand their role in the broader public health context, and be a community resource.

An Evidence-Based Exploration of Remedios Caseros Oftálmicos (Ophthalmic Home Remedies) (¡Salud! Latinx/Hispanic/Chicanx SIG)

Participants will enhance their knowledge of diverse health beliefs and healing practices. We will review common home remedies and the evidence behind their use. The focus extends to acquiring strategies that foster a welcoming and understanding

patient dialogue. Additionally, we will emphasize cultural humility in working with patients who embrace alternative medicines. Integrating these elements aims to equip participants with a well-rounded understanding and the practical tools needed for respectful and inclusive interactions within different optometric healthcare settings.

Meeting the Challenges with Older Patients: Demystifying Management of Patients Requiring Complex Care (Vision in Aging SIG)

The aging population is a rapidly growing demographic with complex needs. The goal of this lecture is to highlight the need for geriatric optometric care and attempt to demystify these clinical encounters. An overview of common challenges, considerations, as well as real cases and pearls for clinical application will be provided.

Adaptive Optics: Pioneering Insights into Ocular Disease for Vision Health & Restoration (Vision Science Section)

Adaptive optics (AO) has emerged as a game-changer in ocular disease management. This cutting-edge technology enables live imaging of the retina with unprecedented clarity. AO serves as a crucial tool in monitoring disease progression, and guiding personalized treatment plans for conditions like diabetic retinopathy. The ability to visualize and analyze the retina in vivo empowers clinicians and fosters a new era of targeted therapies. Adaptive optics heralds a promising frontier in vision restoration, offering hope for transformative treatments to restore and enhance vision.

Diplomate Prep Courses

Not Just for Diplomates!

Take advantage of the chance to learn from the best at the educational events below. Please be sure to register!

Anterior Segment Section

(During the meeting – Thursday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm)
Add to your Academy 2024 Indianapolis registration - \$100.

- Sarah Lopez: Sending Out a Flare for Help: Anterior Uveitis Explained (1 hour)
- Zanna Kruoch & Christen Kenrick: Anterior Segment Jeopardy Part 2! (1 hour)
- Zanna Kruoch & Christen Kenrick: New Pharm for the Anterior Segment (1 hour)
- John Conti & Richard Weisenberger: Anterior Segment Section Diplomate Cases: What Would You Do? (1 hour)

Binocular Vision, Perception and Pediatric Optometry Section

Virtual - Register through the Academy website.

- Marie Bodack: Pediatric Head Trauma - May 2, 2024, 8:00 pm EST (2 hours) - \$50
- Tim Hug: Pediatric Ocular Anomalies - Anterior Segment - August 26, 2024, 8:00 pm EST (1 hour) - \$25
- Tim Hug: Pediatric Ocular Anomalies - Posterior Segment - September 25, 2024, 8:00 pm EST (1 hour) - \$25

Comprehensive Eye Care for Section

Virtual - Register through the Academy website.

- Karen Squier: Low Vision Review - August 7, 2024, 8:00 pm EST (1 hour) - \$25
- Cara Lai: Binocular Vision and Pediatric Examination Refresher - September 12, 2024, 8:00 pm EST (2 hours) - \$50
- Susan Gromacki: Ocular Complications of Contact Lens Wear - October 9, 2024, 8:00 pm EST (2 hours) - \$50

Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses & Refractive Technologies

Virtual Contact Lens Day: April 27, 2024, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm - \$75/3 hours of credit

- Andrew Pucker: Myopia Management: Applying the Latest Evidence-Based Research to Clinical Practice
- Edward Bennett: Corneal GP Fitting and Evaluation, from Basic to Advanced
- Susan Gromacki: Managing Presbyopia with GP Contact Lenses

Glaucoma Section

Virtual - Stay tuned for more details!

Low Vision Section

Asynchronous online - Register on the Academy website.

- Raman Bhakhri: Ocular Disease Imaging of the Posterior Segment (2 hours) - \$50
- Matt Valdes: Low Vision Clinical Optics Review (3 hours) - \$75

Optometric Education Section

Informational session at Academy 2024 Indianapolis on Wednesday 1:00 to 3:00 pm – be on the lookout for the registration!

Public Health & Environmental Vision Section

Asynchronous online – No CE credit

This course will help with the preparation for the written exam. Reach out to Helenv@aaptom.org for access.

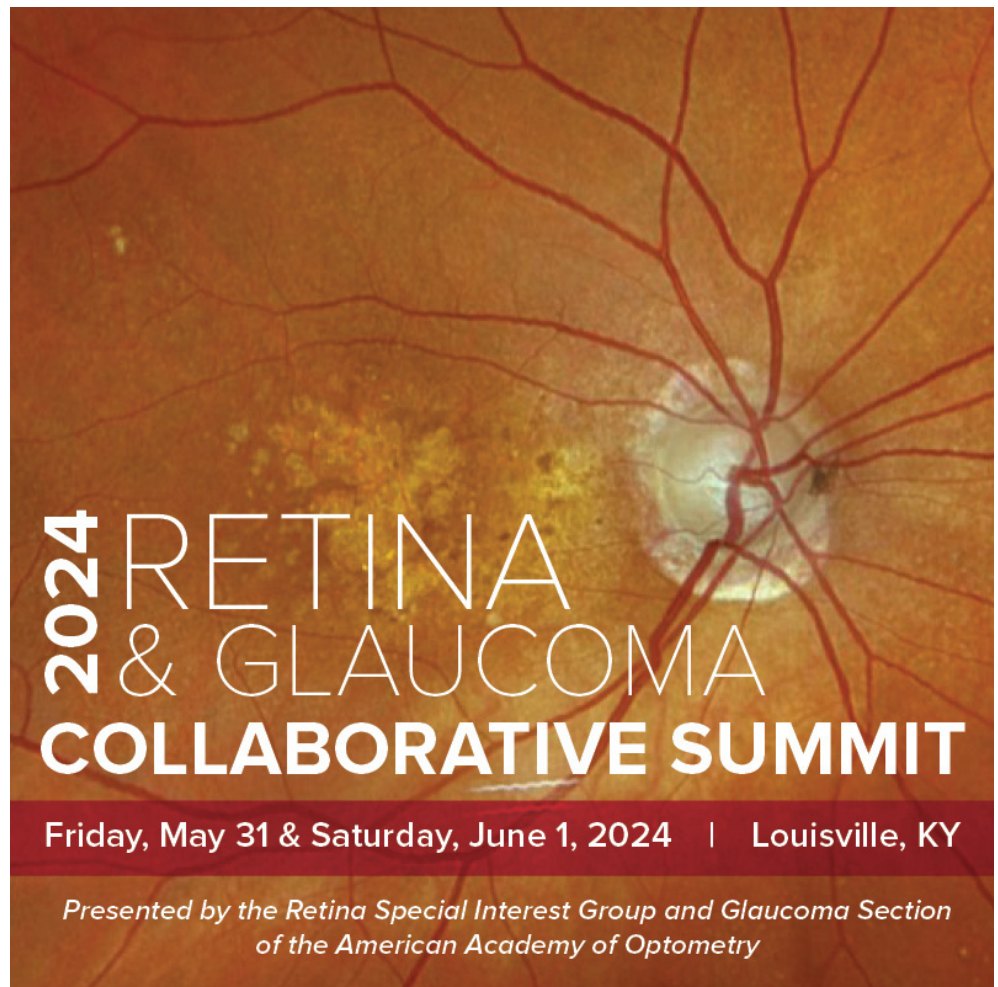


Academy-level Education Mid-year!

Following two years of retina education in a regional setting, the Retina Special Interest Group has joined forces with the Glaucoma Section to provide ten hours of specialized continuing education content for optometrists and vision scientists at the 2024 Retina & Glaucoma Collaborative Summit on May 31-June 1, 2024, at the beautiful newly renovated Galt House Hotel in the heart of downtown Louisville, Kentucky.

Attendees can expect continuing education topics on the management of diabetic retinopathy, conversations surrounding AMD, glaucoma diagnosis and treatment, and more. The program will provide the latest updates from clinical trials and other evidence in the peer-reviewed medical literature relevant to the prevention and management of retinal diseases. The program also includes an hour of expanded therapeutic procedures credit.

Early bird registration for the Retina & Glaucoma Collaborative Summit will end on May 9, 2024.



Macula Masterclass: AMD and Beyond

Mohammad Rafieetary, OD, FAAO, Salar Rafieetary, MD

This course discusses various macular diseases encountered in the primary care optometry office, such as age-related macular degeneration, and other macular degenerative and non-degenerative disease including toxic maculopathies. The audience will be presented with diagnostic and management tips, follow-up protocols and current as well as emerging treatments.

Navigating the Vascular Landscape of Diabetic Retinopathy and Retinal Vein Occlusions

Roya Attar, OD, MBA, FAAO, Barbara Mihalik, OD, FAAO

This informative presentation explores the complex vascular landscape of two prevalent retinal conditions: – Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) and Retinal Vein Occlusion (RVO). Attendees will gain insights in identifying and managing patients presenting at various stages of DR and RVO. The session also covers the latest advancements in retinal imaging and provides strategies for addressing the vascular challenges of DR and RVO.

Sharpening Expertise: A Grand Rounds Dive into Compelling Glaucoma Cases

Sarah MacIver, OD, FAAO, Danica Marrelli, OD, FAAO, Sarah Dougherty Wood, OD, MS, FAAO

This two-hour course will be case based and will highlight the essential components associated with the diagnosis and management of glaucoma. Current evidence from landmark glaucoma studies will be applied throughout the course to highlight their importance to clinical care.

Hot Topics in Glaucoma

Sarah MacIver, OD, FAAO, Danica Marrelli, OD, FAAO, Sarah Dougherty Wood, OD, MS, FAAO

Glaucoma is an ever-evolving disease with new information and technology advancing rapidly. This course will outline some of the most prevalent new information regarding the diagnosis and treatment for glaucoma.

Retina Rounds: Common Clinical Conundrums / Women in Retina Present Complex Patient Cases
Mohammad Rafieetary, OD, FAAO, Salar Rafieetary, MD, Roya Attar, OD, MBA, FAAO, Barbara Mihalik, OD, FAAO

This lecture exhibits two common but unrelated conditions: floaters and retinal arterial macroaneurysm case presentations with associated findings and proper management. This presentation will focus on clinical cases in retina, providing eye care professionals with an opportunity to learn from real life cases and enhance their knowledge and skills in this area. Through a series of case presentations, participants will explore the diagnosis, treatment, and management of various retinal conditions. The presentation will also highlight the latest advancements in retinal imaging and surgical techniques, as well as discuss the challenges and potential complications that can arise in the management of these conditions.

Expanded Therapeutic Procedures for Glaucoma
Sarah MacIver, OD, FAAO, Danica Marrelli, OD, FAAO, Sarah Dougherty Wood, OD, MS, FAAO

This course presents the most recent developments in the interventional management of glaucoma as well as an update on laser interventions already employed for the treatment of open angle and angle closure glaucoma. New developments in new approaches to treatment are discussed as well as landmark studies advocating for the use of SLT as a primary treatment of primary open angle glaucoma. *One Hour ETP-Approval!*

Current Trends in Retina Care and Comanagement
Mohammad Rafieetary, OD, FAAO, Salar Rafieetary, MD, Roya Attar, OD, MBA, FAAO, Barbara Mihalik, OD, FAAO

Optometrists frequently have to manage and make clinical decisions for symptomatic and asymptomatic patients presenting with a variety of retinal conditions. This lecture is a collaborative discussion between retina-centric optometrists and retina specialists regarding who, how, and when to self-manage or refer patients with common retinal conditions.

A Review of Contemporary and Future Technologies in the Retina Space
Mohammad Rafieetary, OD, FAAO, Salar Rafieetary, MD, Roya Attar, OD, MBA, FAAO, Barbara Mihalik, OD, FAAO

The field of healthcare is rapidly moving forward with innovations in both diagnostic and treatment arenas. Eyecare is in the same revolutionary cycle. As clinicians, we must keep abreast of these changes and be up to date with what is on the horizon. This lecture reviews advances in retinal imaging, application of artificial intelligence (AI), as well as current research is testing and treatment of inherited and other retinal disease.

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REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

- \$250 | Members Early Bird Rate (through 5/9)
- \$350 | Nonmembers Early Bird Rate (through 5/9)
- \$400 | Regular/Onsite Rate (5/10-5/31)

[REGISTER NOW](#)

HOTEL INFORMATION

Galt House Hotel
140 N. Fourth St., Louisville, KY 40202

[BOOK HOUSING NOW](#)





Through education and mentorship, the Leadership Academy will cultivate ethical, empathetic, and innovative leaders who contribute positively to the optometric community.

The Merton C. Flom Leadership Academy

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Academy's commitment to promoting a leadership culture within the organization and profession. The new and revised leadership institute, known as the **Merton C. Flom Leadership Academy**, offers members exclusive partnerships and resources to sharpen their skills in strategic thinking, building relationships, influence, and execution.

The core program lasts one year and consists of nine learning modules; topics range from effective communication to public speaking. The Flom Leadership Academy helps leaders develop a deeper understanding of their core identity and harness their unique talents to maximize their potential and encourage innovation. By nurturing aspiring leaders to become role models and mentors in the Academy, we foster ethical, empathetic leadership to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion, and provide opportunities for networking and establishing life-long relationships across the field.

This year, we've added community forums and podcasts to expand self-reflection and strengthen relationships between fellow participants. We've also reinvented the writing module and recruited prominent scholars to lead personalized writing circles for members to generate high-quality publications.

We are looking for professionals who are committed to excellence and want to join a family of leaders who will support each other far-beyond the completion of the program. Graduates of the Flom Leadership Academy are strongly considered for future leadership positions and community initiatives across the profession, including the AAO Leadership Committee's multimedia platform.

For example, the **Flom Leadership Community Podcast Series** was launched at Academy 2023 New Orleans. Eight dynamic podcasts were recorded during the event, featuring esteemed moderators and faculty members delving into various aspects of leadership. The inaugural podcast premiered in the January 2024 edition of the **Flom Leadership InSight Newsletter**, an AAO publication with curated resources for professional development. Led by Dr. Shalu Pal, the first podcast explored the crucial topic of Avoiding Burnout, with insights from Drs. Andrea Lasby and Andrew Morgenstern. Keep an eye out for the next Community Podcast and Leadership Insight Newsletter as we explore new topics!



Call for Applications

The application window for the Class of 2025 opens May 15 and closes July 15, 2024. Applicants must be Fellows of the Academy and can submit their applications by logging into the Academy's member portal. Please visit the program website for more information, including course descriptions and important dates.

[Learn more about the Flom Leadership Academy](#)

Fellowship Anniversaries

Class of 1974 - 50 Years!

Dr. Kenneth Absher, Nevada City, CA
 Dr. William Bartolovich, East Liverpool, OH
 Dr. Morris Berman, Newton, MA
 Dr. Stanley Coren
 Dr. Bonny Eads, Naples, FL
 Dr. Erik Erwin, Tulsa, OK
 Dr. Mark Fisher, Eden Prairie, MN
 Dr. David Garbutt, Morrisville, VT
 Dr. David George, Port Clinton, OH
 Dr. John Heiby, Saint Clairsville, OH
 Dr. John Johnson, Taylorsville, KY
 Dr. Allen Kaplan
 Dr. Steven Kastenbaum, Santa Monica, CA
 Dr. David Kirschen, Brea, CA
 Dr. Robert Kleinstein, Hoover, AL
 Dr. Edwin Marshall, Bloomington, IN
 Dr. Robert Newcomb, Columbus, OH
 Dr. Lyman Norden, Birmingham, AL
 Dr. Robert Perlin, Delray Beach, FL
 Dr. Philip Sidran, Miami, FL
 Dr. Damien Smith, Victoria, Australia
 Dr. James Stephens, Tallahassee, FL
 Dr. Sidney Stern, Miami, FL
 Dr. Don Steward, Linton, IN
 Dr. Donald Teig, Hollywood, FL
 Dr. Lorraine Voorhees, Simi Valley, CA
 Dr. Bradley Williams, Lincoln, NE
 Dr. Jeffrey Zlotnick, Edison, NJ



50 year Fellow, Dr. David Kirschen, and 2022 award recipients celebrating at the Academy 2022 San Diego Foundation Awards Breakfast.

Class of 1984 – 40 Years

Dr. John Alexander, Meadville, PA
 Dr. David Atchison
 Dr. Michael Bartiss, Pinehurst, NC
 Dr. Neil Boderman, Hilton Head, SC
 Dr. William Bogus, Salt Lake City, UT
 Dr. Harvey Bonner, Billings, MT
 Dr. Randolph Brooks, Salem, NY
 Dr. Linda Casser, Belmont, NC
 Dr. Joseph Cimochowski, Dunmore, PA
 Dr. Edward Cordes, Corning, NY

Dr. Stephen Dain, New South Wales, Australia
 Dr. Daniel David, Pullman, WA
 Dr. Jim Davis, Copperas Cove, TX
 Dr. Bernard Dolan, San Mateo, CA
 Dr. Melvin Evers, Kissimmee, FL
 Dr. Richard Feinbloom, Bohemia, NY
 Dr. Michael Gallaway, Marlton, NJ
 Dr. Stephen Glasser, Washington, DC
 Dr. Fred Goldberg, Mclean, VA
 Dr. Leslie Grant, Bethesda, MD
 Dr. Jack Hopkins, OK
 Dr. Desiree Hopping, Houston, TX
 Dr. Dennis Hunter, Marshall, MO
 Dr. Richard Ireland, Valparaiso, IN
 Dr. Bob Joe, Austin, TX
 Dr. James Lanier, Jacksonville, FL
 Dr. David Magnus, Corrales, NM
 Dr. Deborah McBride, San Jose, CA
 Dr. Martin McDowell, Ontario, Canada
 Dr. Timothy McMahon, Chicago, IL
 Dr. A Clark McQuigg, Miami, OK
 Dr. Laura Pankow, South Bend, IN
 Prof. Eliezer Peli, Needham, MA
 Dr. Marcus Piccolo, Houston, TX
 Dr. Lee Rigel, The Villages, FL
 Dr. Scott Robirds, Salem, SC
 Dr. Mark Slosar, Peoria, AZ
 Dr. Terry Steckman, Bend, OR
 Dr. Lloyd Tantum, Maryville, TN
 Dr. Randall Thomas
 Dr. Mel Weiss, Smyrna, GA
 Dr. Randall Yumori, Los Angeles, CA
 Dr. Karla Zadnik, Columbus, OH



The Academy Board of Directors (2021-2022) at the Black Tie Dinner during Academy 2022 San Diego. Pictured left to right: Drs. Carl Spear, Chris Wilmer (25 year Fellow), Barbara Caffery, Susan Cotter, Timothy McMahon (40 year Fellow), Jeff Walline, and Andrew Mick.

Fellowship Anniversaries



25 year Fellow, Dr. Sandra Wang-Harris with Dr. Karl Citek and her parents at the Academy 2023 Orleans Closing Celebration.

Class of 1999 – 25 Years

Dr. Kraig Abe, Cupertino, CA
Dr. Stuart Adams, Lake Havasu City, AZ
Dr. Cheryl Adlington, Reno, NV
Prof. Mark Andre, Bend, OR
Dr. Timothy Arbet, Rock Island, IL
Dr. Joanne Bachman, Tacoma, WA
Dr. Annette Bade, Plantation, FL
Dr. Patricia Beaty, Coalville, UT
Dr. Jonah Berman, New York, NY
Dr. Karen Brandreth, Walnut Creek, CA
Dr. John Buch, Jacksonville, FL
Dr. Thomas Callan, Dublin, CA
Dr. Nathalie Cassis, Norfolk, VA
Dr. Thomas Chester, Medina, OH
Dr. Gary Chu, Boston, MA
Dr. Kathryn Cizek, Traverse City, MI
Dr. Shannon Clark, Fort Pierce, FL
Dr. Patrick Clark, Vallejo, CA
Dr. Jennifer Coyle, Forest Grove, OR
Dr. Christopher D'Alterio, Farmingdale, NJ
Dr. David Damari, New Albany, OH
Dr. Kenneth Daniels, Princeton, NJ
Dr. Krista Davis, Saint Paul, MN
Dr. Christopher Dente, Bernardsville, NJ
Dr. Wesley DeRosier, Park Hill, OK
Dr. Rita Ellent, Forest Hills, NY
Dr. Macarena Fernandez-Baca, Madrid, Spain
Dr. Laura Flockencier, West St Paul, MN
Dr. Brad Fortune, Portland, OR
Dr. Richard Frick, White River Junction, VT
Dr. Theresa Frith, Baraboo, WI

Dr. Michael Fu, Andover, MA
Dr. Ian Gaddie, Louisville, KY
Dr. Alan Glazier, Rockville, MD
Dr. Kathy Halverson, Travelers Rest, SC
Dr. Douglas Hansen, Silverdale, WA
Dr. Usha Hari, San Diego, CA
Dr. Paul Harris, Cordova, TN
Dr. Patsy Harvey, Berkeley, CA
Dr. Susan Haskell, Dover, NH
Dr. Amy Head, Beverly Hills, MI
Dr. Catherine Heyman, High Point, NC
Dr. Stacy Hinkemeyer, Sartell, MN
Dr. Laura Holt Maloney, Las Vegas, NV
Dr. Diane Houtman
Prof. Isabelle Jalbert, New South Wales, Australia
Mr. Helge Jorgensen, Helsingor, Denmark
Dr. Charlotte Joslin, Chicago, IL
Dr. Paul Karpecki, Lexington, KY
Dr. Peter Kehoe, Galesburg, IL
Dr. Razmig Knajian, Anaheim, CA
Dr. Todd Lauby, Fairfax Station, VA
Dr. Hannu Laukkanen, Forest Grove, OR
Dr. Salena Lee, San Francisco, CA
Dr. Helios Leung, Ann Arbor, MI
Dr. Blair Lonsberry, Portland, OR
Dr. Kathrine Lorenz, Montgomery, OH
Dr. Tracy Louie, Davis, CA
Dr. Robert Love, Lake Mary, FL
Dr. Carla Mack, Fort Worth, TX
Dr. Kelly Malloy, North Wales, PA
Dr. John Marohn, Saint Joseph, MI

Dr. Randall McPherran, Marina, CA
Dr. Mohinder Merchea, Fort Worth, TX
Dr. Stephanie Messner, Chicago, IL
Dr. Claudia Montana-Collins, Aliso Viejo, CA
Prof. Philip Morgan
Mrs. Sarah Morgan
Dr. Elizabeth Muckley, Mogadore, OH
Dr. Paul Murphy, Canada
Dr. Leon Nehmad, Davie, FL
Dr. Tricia Newman, Valparaiso, IN
Dr. Daphne Nishikawa, Honolulu, HI
Prof. Teng-Leng Ooi, Columbus, OH
Dr. Xavier Ordonez, Placentia, CA
Dr. Arthur Pazornik, Laguna Niguel, CA
Dr. Dawn Pewitt, Grove, OK
Dr. Santwana Prasad, Moorestown, NJ
Dr. James Robinson, Harker Heights, TX
Dr. Kenneth Rosengren, Atlanta, GA
Mrs. Hazel Sacharowitz, Johannesburg, South Africa
Dr. Sam Salituro, Palatine, IL
Dr. Richard Schamerloh, Bluffton, IN
Dr. Peter Schmid, Hudson, OH
Dr. Suzanne Scott, Pullman, WA
Dr. Melissa Shafer, Brownsburg, IN
Dr. Sharon Shaw, Hillsborough, CA
Dr. Jerome Sherman, New York, NY
Dr. Leonid Skorin, Albert Lea, MN
Dr. Todd Slusser, Rupert, ID
Dr. Suzanne Smith, Waterloo, IA
Dr. Laurie Sorrenson, Cedar Park, TX
Dr. John Spalding, Apopka, FL
Dr. Christine Stabile, San Antonio, TX
Dr. Lawrence Stark, Fullerton, CA
Dr. Clifton Stephens, Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Dr. Andrew Stoehr, York, PA
Dr. Thomas Stokkermans, Solon, OH
Dr. Robert Strath, British Columbia, Canada
Dr. Vissett Sun, Houston, TX
Dr. Bitu Tabassi, Dulles, VA
Dr. Derek Tong, Pasadena, CA
Dr. Julie Tyler, Anaheim, CA
Dr. Jeffrey Urness, Medical Lake, WA
Mr. Wouter Verboon, Woerden, Netherlands
Dr. Sandra Wang-Harris, DPO, AE
Dr. Deborah Watanabe, Austin, TX
Dr. Erik Weissberg, Boston, MA
Dr. Annette Williamson, Helotes, TX
Dr. Chris Wilmer, Oakland, CA
Dr. James Winnick, Oakdale, CA
Mr. Kwan Hing Wong
Dr. David Yang, Cupertino, CA
Dr. Benjamin Yanofsky, Mesa, AZ
Dr. Susy Yu, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
Dr. Lorne Yudcovitch, Dundee, OR
Dr. Michael Zost, Park Ridge, IL

Committee Spotlight

Vondolee Delgado-Nixon, PhD, FAAO

Chair, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee



I am honored to serve as the first Chair of the newly developed Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee to help promote health equity in eye care for the patients we serve by fostering a diverse optometric community that feels a sense of belonging.

The Academy is dedicated to ensuring diversity in its composition, as well as within its committees, Sections, SIGs, and staff.

In addition to upholding a non-discrimination policy throughout the organization, the Board highly values the engagement of individuals that vary by background; including race, ethnicity, religion, size, language, socioeconomic status, national origin, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, political belief, neurodiversity, physical ability, and more.

By bringing together individuals with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, we can more effectively identify and address the needs of our membership, and engage them to serve the community more equitably. We know that including different viewpoints results in better ideas.

In order to facilitate the [Academy's mission](#) and ongoing work, the DEIB Committee has just approved new [Race & Ethnicity categories](#) to help us have a better understanding of the Academy's membership. This information will be used to help us develop strategic initiatives to meet the needs of the membership and the patients they serve. When registering for the Academy's annual meeting or paying your dues online, you will now be prompted to take a moment to update your member profile. Please review and update your information so that our archived data better reflects our membership.

For more information on the Academy's statement and policy on diversity, DEIB initiatives, and what will be coming soon, please take a moment to check out the Academy's new [Diversity web page](#), as well as the [committee's roles, responsibilities, and goals](#) for the future.

Please do not hesitate to [contact me](#) if you have any questions at any time.

Student Fellowship

Congratulations to the 2023 Student Fellows!

Interested in becoming a Student Fellow? Academy 2024 Indianapolis requirements will be available on the Academy website in July 2024.

Arizona College of Optometry, Midwestern University

Nizette Basoco
Danielle Hollands
Thuy Trang Vu

Chicago College of Optometry, Midwestern University

Brian Le
Brittany Mohning

Illinois College of Optometry

Amina Cheema
Catherine Liu
Shivani Thakkar Sampat
Emily Strand
Cheuk Man Wong

Indiana University, School of Optometry

Grace Belangee
Eric Blickensderfer
Ethan Dupuis
Katelynn Edwards
Abigail Kuborn
Hope Mason

Inter American University of Puerto Rico, School of Optometry

Alaina Conturso
Mariana Estrada
Paola González
Leah Griffin
Jamesha Hughley
Samantha Tron Esqueda

MCPHS University, School of Optometry

Jillian Camara
Joana Lalaj
Avi Natver
Shirmarie Starks

Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University

Atila Erhan
Marilyn Johnson
Marino Markho
Sarah Monterusso
Riley Anne Parker
Paige Weber

New England College of Optometry

Rachel Harmon
Toby Raquel Werberger

Northeastern State University, Oklahoma College of Optometry

Derek Bryant
Tate Buster
Karis Cheek
Cori Dorrell
Kylie Feightner
Madison Gerke
Sabrina Le
Michael Wood

Nova Southeastern University, College of Optometry

Briana Arbelaez
Kimraj Bhandal
Murielle Cayemitte
Stephanie Chihata

Daniel Dibucchianico
Carlota Dickinson
Colleen Furey
Anusha Ghaffar
Simran Grewal
Eugene Huang
Navroop Kaur
Lauren Lee
Victoria Salinas
Mohtasim Siddiqui
Ishleen Singh
Antonia Stavrakis
Muhan Sun
Jin Yang
Christopher Zahora

Pacific University, College of Optometry

Amanda Ackerson
Amber Bui
Michelle Paul
Anna Wisdom

Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University

Juliette Baek
Claire Chu
Stephanie Chung
Allison Dorgan
Sarah Edwards
Juliana Haddad
Viral Shah
Manisha Talwar

Southern California College of Optometry at Marshall B. Ketchum University

Justin Alvarez
Brynn Babey
Nancy Barajas
Jaclyn Charbonneau
Jean Kim Cho
Linh Doan
Trang Hoang
Kristie Lin
Wallace Lowe
Megan Luksik
Laura Belle Morel
Natalie Nell
Karen Nguyen
Dailyn Nguyen
Dhara Patel
Alice Si
Mariah Solcher
Kaitlyn Tsou
Julie Vu

Southern College of Optometry

Alexa Allen
Madhurima Kota
Deema Mansour
Ghazal Mansouri
Sai Oak
Madison Schnell
Samantha Thompson
Kimsean Selena Tieu
Nithya Vemula

State University of New York, College of Optometry

Shraiya Agrawal
Susan Antigua
Lyndsey Campbell
Kasey Chan

Alicia Defonte
Margaret Fernicola
Emma Goodwin
Naira Hassan
Kendra Kim
Josephine Zeng

The Ohio State University, College of Optometry

Jack Baumer
Ian Binns
Maddison Fortman
Aidan Go
William Halling
Sajini Jayakody
Halea Kohl
Emily Koziczkowski
Kaylin Maxwell
Allison Noe
Sarah Olen-Thomas
Paige Pline

University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Optometry

Paley Anderson
Samantha Calhoun
Alexandra Campbell
Natalie Fiegl
Mary Braden Hendon
Hannah Morrison
Sarika Patel
Jodie Pope

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

Shaina Arun Goel
Tanya-Thaovy Nguyen
Huda Rahhal
Helene Ren
Vera Shan
Cindy Tieu
Bettyza D. Velasco Araujo
Reanna Wong
Abigail Yun
Zuhra Zaman
Annie (Huan Qing) Zhou

University of Houston College of Optometry

Shabistan Asrar
Angela Chin
Emmanuel Gbolabo
Jacqueline Hardin
Shelley Ho

Donna Pham
Adam Ross
Neha Srinivasan
Jeremy Tee
Joshua Tran
Lien Vu
Lauren Vuong
Ashleigh Young
Sarah Yun

University of Missouri at St. Louis, College of Optometry

Matthew Bozdech
Josephine Choi
Valerie D'Souza
Bradley Gamache
Odalys Leyte-Akman
Brandon Merrill
Karen Nguyen
Kevin Pizarro Miller

University of Montreal

Amir Ben-Nasr
Sara Chekaiban
Philippe Crease
Zachary Hazan
Yassemine Khawajkie
Elizabeth Lapointe
Claudia Pierre

University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry

Deanna Dale
Bruin Jones
Julia Otman
Lauren Richey

University of the Incarnate Word, Rosenberg School of Optometry

Rukiya Michel
Emilio Saenz
Rathanart Somphruek

University of Waterloo

Judit Antonyrajan
Wincy Chung
Danny Thai
Hellen Xu

Western University of Health and Sciences, College of Optometry

Sophia Lam
Kalie Loc
Samantha Royer



From left to right: Thuy Trang Vu, Nizette Basoco, Danielle Hollands. They are all current third year students at AZCOPT.

2024 Fellowship Candidate Crash Course

Kuni Kanai, OD, FAAO

Chair, Fellowship Engagement Committee

Do you want to become a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, but you are unsure about how to write a case report? You should consider joining this year's Fellowship Candidate Crash Course (FCCC)!

FCCC is a fast-paced, mentored introduction to the process of becoming a Fellow. Through weekly seminars, you will obtain a deeper understanding of:

- Elements of case reporting writing
- How to find and properly cite literature in your report
- Structure of the Academy
- How to prepare for an oral examination

Case report writing follows a specific format to be considered professional and appropriate. It may seem like a tall task if you have not written one before. The program reviews the overall structure of a professional case report and shares key points and tips for successful writing.

Citing the critical findings in the literature bolsters your case report. Several library search engines can assist your research. Cited facts from the literature should be appropriately acknowledged in your case report. In addition, citation manager software has become popular in scientific manuscript writing. The program reviews proper citation etiquette and reviews the pros and cons of various citation management software.

The Fellowship oral examination can be intimidating. It challenges your understanding of the case and the depth of your knowledge of the eye conditions you wrote about. Presenters from this program will review their experience and share their tips to get through the oral examination with confidence.

You will have a designated mentor who will coach you throughout the process and work with you on your case report. The mentors are Fellows who have gone through the rigorous Fellowship process and have first-hand knowledge. The program will conclude with a mock oral examination administered by your mentor and another Academy Fellow.

During the FCCC program, you will complete one case report and a mock oral examination. Successful program completion will earn 10 of the 50 points needed for the Fellowship application process. Last year, 35 mentees completed the program and earned 10 points and, more importantly, gained valuable experience for their future success.

The 2024 program starts in early August and ends in early October. Please join us! The application window will be open from April 17 to May 15, 2024. Learn more at aaopt.org/fccc.



A mentored path toward becoming a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry.

The Fellowship Candidate Crash Course is brought to you by the Fellowship Engagement Committee:

Kuniyoshi Kanai, Chair
Jessica Hanson, Vice Chair
Camille Cohen
Heather Jones
Chelsia Park
Eric Vilorio

Congratulations to the 2023 FCCC participants who completed the inaugural program!



Arizona College of Optometry, Midwestern University
Alexis Showalter

Chicago College of Optometry, Midwestern University
Olivia Jilek
Amy Nguyen
Kristen Sana

Indiana University, School of Optometry
Sidney Magdaong
Trevor Phillips

Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University
Abbey Mayer

New England College of Optometry
Jennie Leonard

Northeastern State University, Oklahoma College of Optometry
Christina Thompson
Mackenzie Zora

Nova Southeastern University, College of Optometry
Amanda Aker
Murielle Cayemitte
Mikaila Gallagher
Isa Prude

Pacific University, College of Optometry
Marco Arandia
Nathan Cazmersen
Alexia Gowing
Julia Holley
Cole McDougall
Aldrin Santamaria
Victoria Spence

Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University
Samantha Taylor

Southern College of Optometry
Donnie Koonce

University of California Berkeley, Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry and Vision Science
Amy Z Chen
Vivian Pham
Estie Sherbak
Bao Chau Vu

University of Houston College of Optometry
Mitchell Sullivan
Tiffany Lu

University of Missouri at St. Louis, College of Optometry
Charles Hauff
Casey Keith
Halle Neyens
Sabrina Schack

University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry
Seth Rhyne

Western University of Health and Sciences, College of Optometry
Talisa Chhabra

Don't miss your chance to participate in the 2024 program!

Learn More

The Fellowship Candidate Crash Course would not be possible without the support of our mentors. Thank you to all who supported the inaugural class!

Michelle Aaron
George Asimellis
Rahim Bhaloo
Grace Brasel
Franklin Bui
Steven Chang
Amanda Crum
David Damari
Sweta Das
Aurora Denial
Tina Esposito
Nick Fogt
Irene Frantzis
Sarah Gleason
Micaela Gobeille

Dawn Goedde
Rachel Grant
Nicholas Green
Greta Gregg
Danielle Iacono
Jason Jedlicka
Karen Kehbein
Jeffrey Kong
Larissa Krenk
Samantha Krueger
John Lee
Melissa Levine
Jennifer Liao
Amy Logan
Alexis Malkin
Eunice Myung Lee
Betty Ng
Lan Chi Nguyen
Morgan Ollinger
Komal Patel
Casey Peterson
Harneet Randhawa

Andrew Ritter
Julie Rodman
Mark Rosenfield
Leticia Rousso
Joan Sears
Erica Shelton
Anna Tichenor
Melissa Valdellon
Douglas Widmer
Jasmine Wong
Jessica Yuen
Melissa Zarn Urankar



Chapters Committee Updates

*Catherine Hogan, OD, FAAO
Chair, Chapters Committee*



The year 2023 exhibited exciting growth and activity for the Chapters Committee. There is a newfound energy within the chapters community, with an emphasis on service and pursuit of the mission of the Academy, that derives from the induction of new local chapters, both in the US and abroad, and from the current engagement of each chapter.

Of particular note is the creation of the Africa, Nigeria, and Ohio Chapters. Congratulations to the founding parties! The local chapters were well represented during the annual Chapters Committee meeting at Academy 2023 New Orleans. Chapter Presidents provided updates on their respective chapters' activities. A few highlights from the meeting include presentations regarding mentorship for Fellowship candidates, provision of mock interviews for Fellowship candidates, CE events and utility of Academy's Speaker Bureau, including several SIGs, and camaraderie with the American Academy of Optometry Foundation. Some special recognition to the Africa Chapter, which was the newest chapter at the time, who supported eleven new Fellows, and to the India Chapter who continues to be the fastest growing chapter.

In general news, the Chapters Committee signed the charter agreement with the Academy. Overarching goals include providing outreach and activity for Fellows and encouraging chapter membership (what better way to connect and learn alongside the best of optometry?).

If you are looking to become involved in leadership, community, and life-long learning, check out [our webpage](#) on Academy's website. You can find a list of each local chapter to plug into.

Are you interested in starting a chapter? Our webpage has a how-to guide to get you started. Email [Helen Viksnins](#) and [Catherine Hogan](#).

Are you a current chapter officer and want to update or create your chapter's webpage? This is a great way to showcase your chapter's activities or events and provide preferred contact information. Email [David Harrison](#) and [Catherine Hogan](#).

As always, I stand ready to assist and guide each local chapter. I am honored and grateful to be your Chair and colleague. Thank you to each chapter for what you do for the Academy and for the optometric profession at large.



Chapter representatives met at Academy 2023 New Orleans to share success stories and best practices.

Chapter News

Florida Chapter

The Florida Chapter provided two \$750 student travel grants for Academy 2023 New Orleans. They look forward to continuing this tradition for Academy 2024 Indianapolis.

The Florida Chapter will be hosting their annual spring meeting April 19-20 at the Mission Inn and Resort in Howie-in-the-Hills, FL. Education this year will be provided by Drs. Julie Rodman, Susan Gromacki, and Alice Sterling. The chapter will also hold their annual resident education event where optometry residents in the state of Florida are provided the opportunity to present their work in the form of posters and grand rounds paper presentations to earn points towards their Fellowship.

Illinois Student Chapter

Each fall the ICO Student Chapter hosts an event for the first-year students in August, "Envision," where each student organization sets up a table and shares what they do, goals for the year, and information about the various organizations. It is a lot of fun as it is hosted outside with food, drinks, and plenty of giveaways. The chapter hosted an Academy table with informational handouts, registration details for the annual meeting, and sticker and candy giveaways.

In October, ICO was pleased to take part in Academy 2023 New Orleans as attendees, presenters for research

posters, lectures and CE courses. ICO is also proud of Academy Fellow, Dr. Harthan, as she earned her Diplomate in the Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses, and Refractive Technologies! Also at Academy, ICO had a great time participating in the EssilorLuxottica Academic Challenge with pompoms and iconic NOLA beaded necklaces!

In March, the chapter hosted its "warm up to the quarter hot cocoa sale" to kick off spring quarter, featuring customizable cups of hot chocolate with a full toppings bar and some other tasty snacks for sale.

India Chapter

In the recent months, the Academy's India Chapter has been actively engaged in inspiring potential candidates to pursue Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry (FAAO). This effort has involved not only emphasizing the significance of becoming a Fellow but also providing guidance on the steps required to achieve it. A virtual "FAQs on Becoming a FAAO" session was held on January 20, 2024, featuring representatives from different categories: Dr. Nirav Mehta for Special Category, Mr. Vigneshwar A.G for the Clinical track, and Dr. Najiya Sandus for Scientific track. They shared their personal journeys and insights, addressing queries regarding the Fellowship process. Additionally, Dr. Rizwana conducted a closed group session for the UAE Optometry Forum, focusing on the same topic.

Furthermore, the India Chapter has supported aspiring students and optometrists in enhancing their skills in reading research papers and writing case reports. A webinar series titled "Reading Between the Lines," launched on February 16, 2024, in collaboration with Prismatic Visionary Solutions, Online Optom Learning Series,

and Nerdy Optometrist, featured Dr. Pavan Verkicharla, offering valuable tips and tricks for comprehending research papers effectively. The India Chapter's 2024 webinar series has been initiated with the first presentation by Ms. Maanasi Mahalingam, a current Fellow who provided insights into "Tips on Writing a Research Paper." The webinar series will continue to focus on inculcating the necessary skill set towards attaining the dream goal of becoming a FAAO.

Quebec Chapter

The Quebec Chapter met virtually on January 16, 2024. Several items were discussed including scientific presentations and conferences given at Academy 2023 New Orleans from the School of Optometry, University of Montreal. After a dip in 2020 due to COVID, the presentations are once again on the rise from faculty, optometry and graduate students. They welcomed new 2023 Fellow, Eric Lortie-Milner to the group and highlighted milestone anniversaries of Fellows celebrating 1, 5, 10, 15, 30, 35 and 45 years! Those that celebrated more than 30 years with the AAO deserve a special shout out, namely Jean-Yves Roy (30), Yves Cousineau (31), Daniel Brazeau (34), Langis Michaud (35), Jacques Gresset (37), and Brian Goldberg (45). Congratulations to all!

Other chapter news included an update of the website, an update of membership with 40 active members, and reports from the Faculty Liaison, Patrick Simard and the president of the student chapter, Elizabeth Lapointe. Fundraising plans are in the works for the student chapter as well as promotion of Academy 2024 Indianapolis. Officer elections were called and held in February 2024 with the following results: Etty Bitton (president), Sandrine Malaisson-Tremblay (VP), and May Jarkas (Secretary).



Navigating Geographic Atrophy: A Brief Overview

Mohammad Rafieetary, OD, FAAO, FORS, ABO

What is GA?

Geographic atrophy (GA) is the advanced form of dry or atrophic age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Under International Classification of Disease, tenth revision (ICD-10), GA is designated as H35.31X3 for advanced atrophic dry AMD without



subfoveal involvement and H35.31X4 with subfoveal involvement.¹ Until recently, many eyecare providers (ECPs) were not attuned to the intricacies of this stage of AMD, chiefly because there were no specific medical therapies. The emphasis was mostly to the “vision loss” to assess the patient for low vision rehabilitation or assistive devices. However, with the advent of new medical therapies for GA, ECPs are increasingly interested in maximizing detection of GA to appropriately refer and counsel patients on the newly available treatment options.

Who is at Risk for GA?

The risks for GA are essentially the same as risk factors for AMD. They include aging and family history as the strongest culprits, followed by smoking and genetic mutations in the complement system.² Additionally, having GA in one eye increases the progression of GA in the fellow eye.³

What is the Rate of Progression of GA?

The Beckman Classification⁴ is the widely accepted staging system for AMD. Stage zero is described as no drusen or pigmentary changes. Stage one is normal aging described as small drusen (< 63 μm) without pigmentary abnormalities. Stage 2 is defined as mild AMD including medium sized drusen (> 63 and < 125 μm) and no pigmentary abnormalities. Stage 3 or intermediate AMD (iAMD) includes presence of large drusen (> 125 μm) and pigmentary changes. Patients diagnosed with iAMD are at greater risk for neovascular AMD (nAMD) and or GA. Although it typically takes years to progress from early to advanced atrophic AMD, the median length of time for a non-central GA lesion to reach the center of the fovea is 2.5 years.⁵ Therefore, it is essential to detect the foveal sparing lesions as soon as possible.

How to Detect GA?

For many eye conditions, ECPs rely on changes in Snellen acuity to assess a disease’s impact on visual function; however, in patients with GA, visual acuity (VA) is not a reliable metric to determine the visual effects of the disease. Many patients suffering with GA may have normal or near normal VA, particularly in the absence of foveal lesions. While VA remains, normal patients may suffer functional vision loss. Example of these include inability to see under dim illumination, difficulties with reading and other near distance tasks, driving, and recognizing faces or objects.⁶

Although there are other methods to measure visual function including low-luminance visual acuity (LLVA), contrast sensitivity, reading speed skills, and microperimetry,⁷ these tests are not clinically practical therefore, not considered routinely during an eye examination. Ultimately, dilated fundus examination and multimodal imaging are the most effective tools in detecting and staging AMD and monitoring for vision-threatening complications including GA or neovascular AMD.⁷

Which Imaging Technique Is Best for Detection of GA?

The answer to this question relies on several factors including primarily the availability of different imaging modalities, the skill level of the imaging technician, and the interpretation skills of the ECP. A familiar understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each imaging modality is important to guide appropriate utilization.

Color fundus photography (CFP) is perhaps the most widely available imaging instrument in primary eyecare settings. CFP has been shown to be more sensitive in detecting AMD than both optometry and ophthalmology practices.⁸ Typically, GA lesions detected by CFP appear as demarcated areas of hypopigmentation (Figure 1) with increased visibility of choroidal vessels within the lesion as compared to surrounding area.⁹ The downside to CFP is difficulty with detection of early and smaller lesions as well as its inability to ascertain predictive features for progression.⁹

Optical coherence tomography (OCT) is a noninvasive imaging technique that has transformed detection and management of ocular disease. Historically CFP was regarded as the gold-standard for detection of GA, high-resolution, cross-sectional OCT scans have been shown to outperform CFP for both detection and staging of macular degeneration.¹⁰ (Figure 1) The examiner should assess multiple cross-sectional scans of the macula with a radial or cube scan to reduce the likelihood of leaving GA or pre-GA lesions undetected. Practitioners may also guide their OCT scan to suspected GA lesions detected on clinical examination or CFP. One major advantage of high-resolution, cross-sectional, OCT scans is the availability of tissue biomarkers which are of prognostic value in predicting which areas are likely to become pre-GA lesions or progress to definitive GA lesions.^{11, 12}

Fundus Autofluorescence (FAF) is another valuable, non-invasive, photographic technique beneficial in assessment of many retinal conditions including GA. FAF images are produced by light excitation of molecules known as fluorophores. When these molecules are exposed to shorter-wavelengths in the blue-green spectrum, they emit light at a longer wavelength in the yellow to infrared wavelengths. Lipofuscin, the brown-yellow pigment within the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE), is a fluorophore which gives the RPE its natural autofluorescent property. The presence, amount, or absence of lipofuscin drives image findings. Increased lipofuscin in aged and diseased RPE causes increased fluorescence (hyper-autofluorescence), and absence of lipofuscin in structures like retinal vessels or where the loss of RPE is noted causes decreased or absence of fluorescence (hypo-autofluorescence). The benefit of FAF, beyond the ease of detection of GA lesions, is the prognostic properties. A GA lesion with a hyper-autofluorescent border indicates a high likelihood of progression (Figure 1). The disadvantage of FAF is the availability and ECPs familiarity with this imaging modality.^{13, 14}

The ideal way to detect and manage GA is via multimodal imaging. However, it is up to the ECP to decide which modality is best to aid them in detection and staging AMD, including GA.⁷

What is the role of the complement system in development of GA?

The complement system, part of our innate immune system, is made up of distinct plasma proteins that react with one another to recognize and target pathogens and induce a series of inflammatory responses that help to fight pathologic offenders. An endpoint of the complement cascade is the formation of the membrane attack complex (MAC) which results in the lysis of the offending cell membrane. Cleavage of complement factors C3 and C5 is critical to the formation of the MAC. In AMD it is thought that due to genetic variations, the complement system is over actively damaging the RPE and photoreceptors, and ultimately resulting in development of GA.² The recent FDA approved pegcetacoplan (Syfovre®, Apellis Pharmaceutical) and avacincaptad pegol (Izervay®, Astellas Pharma Inc) inhibit C3 and C5, respectively, and are administered intravitreally every month to every other month.¹⁵ In clinical trial both agents have shown to be safe and effective in slowing down the progression of GA.^{16,17}

What should we do for GA?

Geographic atrophy is a common, progressive, and irreversible advanced stage of AMD that can result in significant loss of visual function. With recent approval of pharmacologic agents to slow down the progression, ECPs should be vigilant for early diagnosis, engage in patient education, and consider referring patients to retina specialist for possible treatment.

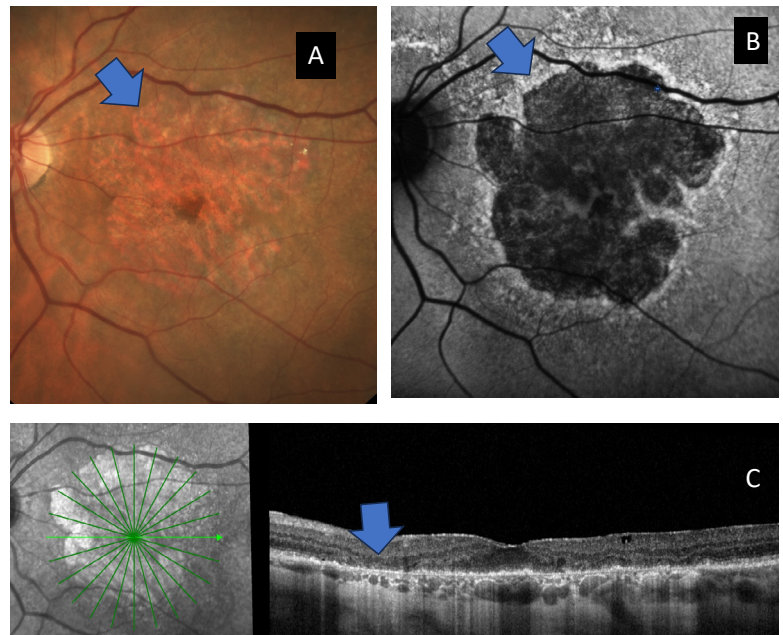


Figure 1

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Official foundation of the American Academy of Optometry | Spring 2024

President's Message



Tolstoy wrote, "Spring is the time of plans and projects." The American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF) continues to develop its plans and projects to support optometric research and education. Recent developments include:

1. The AAOF announced on March 15 a call for Letters of Intent for new myopia research projects. Funding of \$250,000 will be available thanks to the collaboration and generosity of Meta Reality Labs Research. The awardee(s) will be announced during Academy 2024 Indianapolis.

2. The AAOF sincerely appreciates volunteers who donated their Academy 2023 New Orleans speaker fees, totaling \$17,475. Their generosity helps support the numerous awards provided to students, residents, researchers and faculty. In addition, the Foundation is grateful for contributions received throughout the year when members renew their membership and register for the Academy annual meeting. Over the past eight months of our fiscal year, AAOF has received \$32,346 to support our programs.

3. The AAOF's popular Clinical Investigator Certification program conducted the first class of training in the spring of 2021 and will be conducting its fifth class beginning April 9, 2024. The CIC program, which provides practicing optometrists with the training and skills necessary to serve as a clinical investigator for sponsored clinical research trials within their practice setting, has graduated 111 Academy Fellows. Many of the graduates are now participating in clinical trials or communicating with industry partners about future opportunities.

Want to learn more? The [Foundation's website](#) is your resource to learn more about grants, awards and programs provided by AAOF. The Board of Directors also invites you to review our [2023 Annual Report](#). The AAOF is very appreciative of your support to make the grants, awards and programs possible. To donate, please visit aaopt.org/donate.

Sincerely,

Rachel A. "Stacey" Coulter

Rachel "Stacey" Coulter, OD, MS, FFAO, Dipl AAO
Diplomate, Binocular Vision, Perception, and Pediatric Optometry
President, AAOF

New President's Circle Members

The American Academy of Optometry Foundation appreciates the generous support of President's Circle members. We are pleased to present the new members with special thanks from the Foundation Board of Directors.

New President's Circle members since September 2023:

David and Monique Berntsen (PC Gold)
Sally Dillehay (PC Gold)
John and Kay Sims (PC Gold)
Sanjeev Kasthurirangan and
Sowmya Ravikumar
Erich Mattei
Renee Reeder
Low Vision Section

Interested in learning more about the President's Circle and supporting the Foundation?

Visit aaopt.org/donate

Award Spotlight: Korb-Exford Dry Eye Career Development Grant

*Maria Markoulli, OD, PhD, FAAO
Recipient of the 2023 Korb-Exford Dry Eye Career
Development Grant & two time Ezell Fellow*

American Academy of Optometry Foundation



Ezell Fellow

As a recipient of the prestigious William C. Ezell Fellowship in both 2009 and 2010, I

have personally witnessed the profound impact of grants awarded by the AAOF. Among dry eye grants, the Korb-Exford Dry Eye Career Development Grant stands as the ultimate recognition—a symbol of excellence in our field, akin to winning a gold medal. I am resolute in my belief that my research on the influence of nutrition on the ocular surface holds significant importance and I am immensely grateful for the support of the AAOF.

Given the chronic nature of dry eye disease, I am a passionate advocate for embracing non-medicated approaches whenever feasible. Therefore, substantiating dietary modifications with robust evidence becomes pivotal in supporting these patients. Being awarded the esteemed Korb-Exford Dry Eye Career Development Grant enables me to secure the necessary funding to propel my project forward, and also grants me a platform to amplify the message about the profound impact of nutrition on the ocular surface and the imperative of further exploration in this domain.

Through this grant the AAOF is providing our profession with the opportunity to undertake cutting edge research that will provide valuable insights into the role of gut dysbiosis and its modulation in the management of dry eye disease. Many of our patients with dry eye disease will present with undiagnosed and unmanaged gut dysbiosis, which only acts to propagate disease severity. However, little is currently understood about the potential impact of managing gut dysbiosis on the ocular surface. Through its philanthropy, the AAOF provides a global platform to initiate a dialogue about the effects of chronic gut dysbiosis on the ocular surface. Moreover, it presents an exceptional opportunity to emphasize non-medicated approaches for long-term management of dry eye disease.

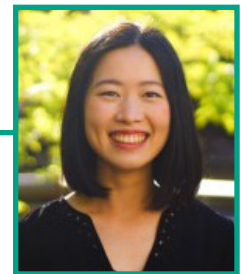


The outcomes of this research have the potential to enhance patient care by establishing clinical guidelines that facilitate collaborative care between optometrists, general practitioners, rheumatologists, and gastroenterologists. These guidelines will empower optometrists to actively manage and prevent ocular surface complications arising from gut dysbiosis. Consequently, this presents an exciting opportunity for the field of optometry to enhance its standing within the medical community as a vital profession involved in the continuous care of patients with chronic diseases.

2024 Jill and George Mertz OD/PhD Scholarship Recipient

The Foundation is pleased to announce Dorothy Ma, OD, FAAO, as the recipient of the 2024 Jill and George Mertz OD/PhD Scholarship. Dr. Ma is affiliated with the University of California, Berkeley, Herbert Wertheim School of Optometry & Vision Science, Clinical Research Center.

Dr. Ma intends to pursue a PhD in Vision Science, focusing on clinical science. Her research interest involves understanding the impact of hormonal contraceptives (HC) on ocular surface disease (OSD), in particular meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD).



American Academy of Optometry



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Inspiring Excellence in Eye Care



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The American Academy of Optometry provides exceptional education, supports innovative research, and disseminates knowledge to advance optometric practice and improve patient care

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Achieving the highest standards of clinical practice, critical thinking, scholarship, and professionalism

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