



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY®

50th

COMMENCEMENT

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

GOHAM HALL
NEW YORK CITY
MAY 23, 2024

FIFTIETH

COMMENCEMENT



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.



Dr. David A. Heath

President, SUNY College of Optometry

Dr. David A. Heath retires this year after seventeen years as the President of SUNY College of Optometry. He joined the College as its third president in 2007. During his presidency, Dr. Heath led the college through a series of strategic initiatives including expanding enrollment by 30%, growing the Residency Program from 27 to 43 positions, building the research enterprise to \$4.0M+ in extramural funding annually, and initiated several collaborations to ensure value-added opportunities for students. He has been a champion for increasing diversity and inclusion among the SUNY Optometry community as well as the overall profession. Focusing on service to the community, over 250,000 patient visits are conducted each year by

faculty, students and residents across nearly 100 partner sites and in the University Eye Center. His dedication to the profession will continue as he guides the formation of an optometry extension program at SUNY Upstate Medical University to address the workforce needs in upstate New York.

Dr. Heath has served as the president of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) as well as a member of their Executive Committee; participated as an active member for several American Optometric Association (AOA) committees; and was a founding member of the Board of Directors for the American Board of Optometry (ABO) from 2009-2015. His work spans the globe through over ninety scholarly publications and/or presentations, extensive work with Wenzhou Medical University to increase the quantity and quality of primary eye care providers in China, and a number of awards recognizing his scholarship and contributions.

To celebrate and honor his legacy, especially his commitment to student support, we are pleased to announce a newly formed endowed scholarship. Named the *President's Scholarship*, this endowed fund has been generously gifted initially by members of the College Council, the SUNY College of Optometry Foundation, and alumni. The first recipient will be awarded this fall.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

Academic Procession	Music by The Chamberlin Brass
The National Anthem	Margaret Fernicola Elina Niyazov
<i>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.</i>	
Welcome	David A. Heath, OD, EdM <i>President, SUNY College of Optometry</i>
Greeting from the Class President	Margaret Fernicola
Commencement Address	Chancellor John B. King, Jr.
Conferral of the Honorary Degree Recipients	Dr. Heath
Honorary Degree Recipients	Dr. Stephen A. Burns Richard E. Feinbloom

ORDER OF EXERCISES

Presentation of Candidates for the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy in Vision Science Master of Science in Vision Science	David Troilo, PhD <i>Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs</i> Stewart Bloomfield, PhD <i>Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research</i>
Conferral of Candidates for Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy in Vision Science Master of Science in Vision Science	Dr. Heath
Presentation of Candidates for Degree of Doctor of Optometry	Dr. Troilo Guilherme F.C. Albieri, PhD <i>Vice President for Student Affairs</i>
Conferral of Candidates for Degree of Doctor of Optometry	Dr. Heath
Recitation of Optometric Oath <i>Oath included on next page</i>	Dr. Fernicola
Closing Remarks & Congratulations	Dr. Heath
Recessional	<i>Guests are asked to remain in their seats</i>

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.

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER



John B. King, Jr.
Chancellor

John B. King, Jr. is the 15th Chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY), the largest comprehensive system of public higher education in the United States. As Chancellor, King and the SUNY Board of Trustees have established four pillars to guide SUNY's progress: student success; research and scholarship; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and economic development and upward mobility. Under Chancellor King's leadership, SUNY has seen its largest operating aid increase in over 20 years, including double-digit percentage increases for every state operated campus and dedicated recurring annual funding for expanding mental health services, services for students with disabilities, paid internships, and research, as well as addressing food insecurity. In fall of 2023, the System saw its first overall enrollment increase in a decade and hired approximately 700 faculty members across all disciplines at SUNY's State-operated campuses.

Before being appointed SUNY Chancellor, King served as president of The Education Trust, a national civil rights nonprofit, and Professor of the Practice at the University of Maryland College Park. Prior to this, Chancellor King served in President Barack Obama's cabinet as the 10th U.S. Secretary of Education. Upon tapping him to lead the U.S. Department of Education, President Obama called Chancellor King "an exceptionally talented educator," citing his commitment to "preparing every child for success," and his lifelong dedication to public education as a teacher, principal, and leader of schools and school systems.

His service in Washington, D.C. followed Chancellor King's tenure as New York State's first African American and first Puerto Rican Education Commissioner, a role in which he oversaw all elementary and secondary schools, as well as public, independent, and proprietary colleges and universities, professional licensure, libraries, museums, and numerous other educational institutions.

Chancellor King holds a Bachelor of Arts in government from Harvard University, a J.D. from Yale Law School, as well as both a Master of Arts in the teaching of social studies and a doctorate in education from Teachers College at Columbia University.



Stephen A. Burns, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor
Indiana University School of Optometry

Stephen Burns received a B.S. in Engineering from Lehigh University and a Ph.D. in Biophysics from the Ohio State University. He is currently a Distinguished Professor of Optometry at Indiana University and the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs in the School of Optometry. Dr. Burns is a gold fellow in ARVO, as well as a fellow of the Optical Society of America (OSA) and the American Academy of Optometry. He is the 2010 awardee of OSA's Tillyer Award for contributions to vision science and the American Academy of Optometry's Prentice Award.

Dr. Burns' research interests are varied. While in graduate school at the Ohio State University, he worked on opponent color theory and that interest in color and early visual processing has been a major interest for his entire career. He developed his interest in the impact of disease on vision during his postdoctoral studies in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Chicago. He has continued to pursue research that involved both clinical and basic aspects of eye research in his subsequent positions at the University of Pittsburgh (1979-1987), the Schepens Eye Research Institute and Harvard Medical School (1987-2005) and now at Indiana University. Dr. Burns' research has typically included both the development of new technologies for studying the eye and the application of these technologies to focused investigations of the eye's structure and function. Thus, he developed and applied psychophysical techniques for measuring cone photopigment kinetics, used nonlinear analysis of electrophysiological (ERG) and psychophysical responses, as well as developing and applying optical techniques for measuring the optical aberrations of the eye and measuring the Stile-Crawford effect.

Currently his lab is a major contributor to advances in using adaptive optics to better understand the impact of diabetes and glaucoma on the eye. His research has been funded continuously by NIH since 1982.



Richard E. Feinbloom
CEO and President
Designs for Vision, Inc.

Richard Feinbloom is the president of Designs for Vision, headquartered on Long Island NY with seventy-three offices worldwide. The company was founded in 1961 by Mr. Feinbloom's late father, Dr. William Feinbloom, with a goal of manufacturing optical devices to help people from all walks of life through better vision. Mr. Feinbloom has continued this vision and exponentially grown Designs for Vision through his dedicated leadership, innovation, and business acumen.

Specializing in wearable devices that provide enhanced visualization through magnification and illumination, more than 100,000 optical products developed and manufactured by Designs for Vision help healthcare professionals in clinics and operating rooms across the United States improve the quality of life for their patients. The precision optical research and manufacturing conducted by Designs for Vision is among some of the most sophisticated in the world. More than 100 of these devices were created and patented by Mr. Feinbloom himself. Further, the company has the distinction of being involved with multiple NASA missions, and Mr. Feinbloom personally fitted President Ronald Reagan with telescope spectacles at the President's request.

Mr. Feinbloom earned a Business Administration degree at Baruch College, and completed the Optical Design program at the Institute of Optics. In addition to being a past president of SUNY Optometry's affiliated foundation and a current board member, Mr. Feinbloom has served on multiple boards of directors and advisory groups, including several specifically related to vision.

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN VISION SCIENCE

Carol Lin
Myopia’s Influence on the Retinal Neurovascular Unit: Implications for Glaucoma Susceptibility
Advisor: Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Perez

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE, MASTER OF SCIENCE IN VISION SCIENCE

Stephanie Aguilar
Development of a Pediatric Digital Eye Strain Questionnaire
Advisor: Dr. Mark Rosenfield

Nada Fareed
Upregulation of Gap Junction Connexins in Glaucoma
Advisor: Dr. Stewart Bloomfield

Derek Ng
Digital Eye Strain and Pupillary Response to Blue Light
Advisor: Dr. Mark Rosenfield

Elianna Sharvit
Cognitive Demand, Concurrent Viewing Distances, and Digital Eye Strain
Advisor: Dr. Mark Rosenfield

Jia Ying Tan
Influence of Glaucomatous Structural and Functional Parameters on ON-OFF Perimetry
Advisor: Dr. Mitchell Dul

Sakshi Vasiu
Retinal Ganglion Cell Function in Diabetes Mellitus
Advisor: Dr. Suresh Viswanathan

Jesse Wang
Diurnal Variations in Scotopic and Photopic Flash Electroretinogram
Advisor: Dr. Suresh Viswanathan

CANDIDATES FOR THE DEGREE, DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY

Nouralison Abdella ^{***}	Howard Ho	Joanna Quach
Jency Abraham ^{**}	Tram Le Thuy Hoang [*]	Mackenzie A. Reed
Shraiy Agrawal [*]	Jodie HOUNG ^o	Humayra Kabir Rima
Phoebe Ahn ^{***}	Ahmed Mustafa Ilahi	Jacob Saxon
Faisal Aiwezali	Jasmine Farisha Jethwa	Yana Seviaryn ^{***}
Andrea Gorczynski Alfaro ^o	Annika Jung	Elianna Sharvit ^{+o*}
Sadiqah Mariam Ali	Gurleen Klair ^{**}	Jia Y. Tan ⁺
Kevin Darnell Anthony Atkinson	Franc Kolami	Gabrielle Thompson-Sales
Rachail Avizova	Janet Lam	Tracy Tse ^{**}
Rodnell Stephen Gonzales Batac ⁺	Joanna Latek ^{+o}	Kristen Valles
Stacie Morgan Beene	Jennifer Grace Le ^{**}	Sakshi Vasiu ^{***}
Ilana Bronfman	Jenilee Yuan Liang	Celesse Vazquez ^o
Tu Cao	Samantha Mahajan	Sarah Elizabeth Walsh
Kasey Kwong-Yin Chan	Ezza Malik	Jesse Wang ^{**}
Lindsey Chan ⁺	Samjhana Mandal ^{**}	Yanlei Wu ⁺
Shaoheng Chen ^o	Alex A. Martin	Shoshana Yakubova
Brian Chu	Emily McDermith	Jina Yoo ⁺
Kevin Cohenmehr	Lewam Girmay Mebrahtu ^{**}	Aafreen Zaidi ⁺
John DeMartino	Laura Medina ^{**}	Xingfang Zhao
Patrick Doughten ^{**}	Simon Sakkina Faizy Mohamed Sharfraj	Kelly Li Zhu ^{**}
Nia A Ebrahim ^{**}	Jessica Moskovich ^{**}	Emily Grace Zimmerman ^o
Vanessa Eger	Martin Mundackal	
Hassan Elhage [*]	Kateryna Nahornyak	
Nada Fareed ^{***}	Derek Ng ^{**}	
Zara Farooq	Andrew Nguyen	
Annum Fatima	Jasmine Yen-Binh Nguyen	
Margaret Fernicola	Elina Niyazov [*]	
Melanie Zena Fleyshmakher	Kelsey Orzel	
Esther Gurell ^{***}	Nishita Patel	
Naira Hassan	Priyanka Patel	
Aimon Syed Hazari	Alisa Peña ^{***}	
Michelle Henesch	Jennifer Ngoc Pham	
Max Herbik [*]	Rena Pinkhasov ^{**}	
Mariam Hessen	Rida Pirzada ^{**}	

* Beta Sigma Kappa member
** 4-year BSK member
+ Gold Key Society member
o Microcredential Certificates

CANDIDATES FOR THE ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN OPTOMETRY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Emily Grace Zimmerman

RESIDENCY CANDIDATES FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED CLINICAL COMPETENCY*

Alexis Brianna Abernathy, O.D.	Kristin Joseph, O.D.	Monica Sanago, O.D.
Stephanie M. Aguilar, OD	Inwhan Joshua Lee, O.D.	Nand Shah, O.D.
Hira Alam, O.D.	Courtney Shuiying Liang, O.D.	Angelo Hideo Shimada, O.D.
Eman Al-Yousefy, O.D.	Avalena Abigail Linsky, O.D.	Tara Tagami, O.D.
Gulnoza Azieva, O.D.	Rachel M Luke, O.D.	Nazia Tahia, O.D.
Krupa Baxi, O.D.	Hania Mahmood , O.D.	Lydie Tshiyoyo Tubene, O.D.
Lindsey C. Boody, O.D.	Christina Marzelli, O.D.	Tiffany Tsoi, O.D.
Veena M Bokka, O.D.	Kayla E. McGuiness , O.D.	McKenna Lynn Turrill, O.D.
Graham K. Chung, O.D.	Anushka Mitesh Mistry , O.D.	Sadhvika Venkat, O.D.
Tyler D’Agostino, O.D.	Daniel Kowalsky Moskaliuk, O.D.	Jamie Wang, O.D.
Caroline Quinn Donato, O.D.	Jasmine Fatima Nouravi , O.D.	Donald Matthew Graham Weatherbee, O.D.
Diana Marianne Doscas, O.D.	Travis M. Pfeifer, O.D.	Max Williger, O.D
Zachary William Graham, O.D.	Greta Danielle Pucci, O.D.	
Elaine L. Ho, O.D.	Jacob S. Rosenberg, O.D.	

** to be presented during residency ceremony*

COMMENCEMENT AWARDS

presented during a ceremony this morning

CHANCELLOR’S AWARD
for Student Excellence

Hassan Elhage
Sakshi VasIU

BETA SIGMA KAPPA AWARD
for Academic Excellence

Gurleen Klair
Sakshi VasIU

DR. FREDERICK W. BROCK MEMORIAL AWARD
for Outstanding Clinical Performance
in Vision Training

Andrea Gorczynski Alfaro

COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS IN VISION DEVELOPMENT AWARD
for Excellence in Vision Training

Michelle Henesch

COLUMBIA CLASS OF 1936 AWARD
for Academic & Clinical Achievement
in Ocular Disease

Kateryna Nahornyak

CLASS OF 1991 PACE SETTER AWARD
for Excellence in Primary Care

ShraiY Agrawal
Celesse Vazquez

DR. STANLEY EISENBERG MEMORIAL AWARD
for Excellence in Practice Development
and Administration

Jennifer Grace Le

DR. WILLIAM FEINBLOOM MEMORIAL AWARD
for Outstanding Clinical Proficiency in Low Vision

Celesse Vazquez

IRA GOLDFARB MEMORIAL AWARD
for Excellence in Low Vision

Nia A. Ebrahim

DR. LOUIS HERRMANN MEMORIAL AWARD
for Outstanding Compassion in Patient Care

Kelly Li Zhu

COMMENCEMENT AWARDS		presented during a ceremony this morning	
MR. AND MRS. IRVING UNGER AWARD for Excellence in Optometry		Jessica Moskovich	
THE JOSH WALLMAN, PHD MEMORIAL RESEARCH AWARD		Elianna Sharvit	
ESTHER J. WERNER MEMORIAL AWARD for Academic Excellence		Jessica Moskovich	
DR. MAX COHEN MEMORIAL AWARD for Volunteer Commitment to Community Service		Jina Yoo	
DR. BENJAMIN FREED MEMORIAL AWARD for Community Service <i>Created by Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation</i>		Yanlei Wu	
MORTON L. KIMMELMAN MEMORIAL AWARD for Student Leadership in Organized Optometry		Lindsey Chan Aafreen Zaidi	
BILLIE M. LYONS MEMORIAL AWARD for Distinguished Service to the College Community		Jennifer Grace Le Alisa Peña Elianna Sharvit	
NEW YORK STATE OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION AUXILIARY AWARD for Outstanding Service to the Class of 2024		Margaret Fernicola	
INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AWARD Sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging		Celesse Vazquez Yanlei Wu	
ABRAM A. HUBAL, OD, STUDENT SERVICE AWARD Sponsored by The New York State Optometric Association (NYSOA)		Aafreen Zaidi	

COMMENCEMENT AWARDS		presented during a ceremony this morning	
ALCON AWARD for the Outstanding Case Report on the Use of an Alcon Product		Sakshi Vasiu	
GP LENS INSTITUTE CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD for Outstanding Clinical Proficiency in Contact Lenses		Elianna Sharvit	
DR. WILLIAM M. EISENBERG MEMORIAL AWARD for Excellence in Ocular Disease		Gurleen Klair	
GOOD-LITE PEDIATRIC AWARD for Excellence in Pediatric Optometry		Nouralison Abdella	
ESHENBACH LOW VISION AWARD for Excellence in Low Vision		Nouralison Abdella	
JOHNSON & JOHNSON EXCELLENCE AWARD for Excellence in Clinical Contact Lenses Patient Care		Janet Lam	
OPTELEC LOW VISION AWARD for Excellence in Low Vision		Alisa Peña	
COOPERVISION 4TH YEAR CONTACT LENS CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD		Jasmine Jethwa	

GREETINGS & CONGRATULATIONS

The College Council extends our deepest congratulations to the Class of 2024. 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.

Gretchen Stone, MAT

Chair, College Council

Today you join the alumni network with nearly 3,600 members who offer you best wishes as you celebrate Commencement. This marks the beginning of your journey as part of the alumni community and we are so proud to welcome you. We hope you enjoy this profession as much as we do, and we encourage you to become involved in advancing the profession and the alumni association.

Vito Proscia, OD ‘91

President, Alumni Association

GREETINGS & CONGRATULATIONS

The SUNY College of Optometry Foundation Board of Trustees salutes the Class of 2024 on your tremendous achievement. You are well prepared to join the community of eye care professionals and rise above whatever challenges may appear. Be proud of your SUNY Optometry connections and remember those who supported you along your journey, reaching out to help those who come after you. Congratulations!

Richard Soden, OD ‘79

President, SUNY Optometry Foundation

The New York State Optometric Association (NYSOA) offers our most heartfelt congratulations and welcome into the profession upon your graduation. As you begin your careers, we look forward to working alongside you as mentors, colleagues, and friends. Become a member today and help champion this wonderful profession for those who will work alongside you. Best of luck!

Marina Su, OD R’13

President, NYSOA

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 is used to signify that the proceedings of an event have an official sanction and 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!

