

AUGUST  
2019

# EYE ON ALUMNI

The official newsletter of the Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry



**NORTHEASTERN**  
STATE UNIVERSITY







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# Upcoming Events

## Optic Cup

Cherokee Springs Golf Club in Tahlequah, OK

**September 7, 2019**

## Primary Eye Care Update

NSU Event Center in Tahlequah, OK

**September 7-8, 2019**

## Tulsa Winter Weekend

Renaissance Hotel in Tulsa, OK

**December 6-7, 2019**

Join us for a getaway before the holidays! This year we will hold our Fifth Annual Tulsa Winter Weekend at the Renaissance Hotel in Tulsa, Oklahoma on December 6-7. Our 2019 speaker will feature Dr. Blair Lonsberry. Receive 9 hours of COPE approved CE and finish your holiday shopping all in one weekend!

*Please check our website for further details and updates, or contact Callie McAtee at 918-316-3602 or [mcateec@nsuok.edu](mailto:mcateec@nsuok.edu) for information. We look forward to seeing you!*

## NSUOCO's Continuing Education Program Continues to Grow

The Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry was invited for the 2nd year in a row to present its Advanced Procedures Course at the national AOA Optometry's Meeting in St. Louis on June 20-23, 2019. They presented the course to doctors from all over the country in an effort to continue to promote scope expansion for optometry across the nation.

NSUOCO was also invited by the Alberta College of Optometry to Calgary, Alberta, Canada to present the first-ever international Advanced Procedures Course. The course was held on June 13-16, 2019 where they trained 100 optometrists to help promote scope expansion for their province.

# Don't Miss Optic Cup 2019

## Greetings, NSUOCO Alumni!

Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry's chapter of the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) will be hosting our 32nd annual golf tournament—the Optic Cup—on Saturday, September 7 at the Cherokee Springs Golf Club in Tahlequah, OK. The student-organized tournament is held annually to help assist students attending the AOA/AOSA national optometry conference. The conference is an excellent opportunity for students to hear from nationally renowned speakers, interact with other students from across the nation, meet with vendors and possibly discuss practice opportunities.

The Optic Cup is open to alumni, faculty, students, optometric physicians and company representatives, as well as family members and friends of those previously listed. We would like to invite you to participate in this great event. The \$90 registration includes green fee, cart, beverages, lunch and prizes. We do ask that you reserve a place for you and/or your team in advance as we are limited to 100 participants. Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. on the day of the tournament. Tee time will be 9:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided at noon upon completion of the tournament. The tournament will be played in a four-person scramble format, and we will gladly place you on a team if needed. You will also have the ability to sponsor students to play in the tournament if you are unable to attend in person.

## Sponsorship Opportunities

If you are interested in sponsorship, each of the 18 holes will be available for recognition. Platinum, Gold or Silver Sponsorship of a hole entitles the organization to a sign honoring their contribution at the hole and their logo on the back of the tournament T-shirt. Platinum Sponsorship (\$700+) includes entry for two representatives to play in the tournament. Gold Sponsorship (\$500) includes entry for one representative to play in the tournament. Silver Sponsorship will be available for \$300. Bronze Sponsorship includes the organization's name recognized on a sign displayed at the registration table and is available for \$150. Additionally, any lesser monetary donation or donation of a product would be greatly appreciated and recognized. The deadline to register or sponsor is August 31, 2019.

We expect this tournament to be the largest and best-represented tournament to date. Please consider supporting NSUOCO and participate in a wonderful event. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions concerning the event or your donation. Thank you so much for your consideration, and we hope to see you all in September!

Sincerely,

Brock Helfrich, Class of 2020  
Golf Tournament Chair  
620-682-5726  
[helfrich@nsuok.edu](mailto:helfrich@nsuok.edu)

Jacob Bellamy, Class of 2021  
Golf Tournament Chair-Elect  
405-234-7496  
[bellamyj@nsuok.edu](mailto:bellamyj@nsuok.edu)



# Cherian Elected AOSA President

Bibin Cherian, OSIV, has been elected the 2019 American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) President. NSUOCO's last student to hold this position was Dr. Tyson Allard (Class of 2010). This is a tremendous honor, and we are so proud of Bibin for this accomplishment!

Bibin first became interested in the optometry profession when he was a junior in college. While not initially sure which healthcare field he wanted to pursue, he decided to shadow a couple of optometrists. After spending time with Dr. Selina McGee, he decided on optometry, a decision that completely solidified after his first week as a student in our program.

He was not very involved during his undergraduate years, so he made the decision to become more active as an optometry student. His opportunity arose when the applications for the Optometry Student Association's (OSA) Executive Council positions and the AOSA Trustee-Elect position were distributed. He applied for the position and served as the NSUOCO AOSA Trustee-Elect in 2017 and Trustee in 2018. The AOSA Board of Trustees is made up of two members from every optometry school, and they meet in-person twice a year to represent students at the national level. The time spent on the AOSA Board of Trustees included some of the best experiences Bibin has had so far during school, and valued friendships have been built through this opportunity. It was during his time on the AOSA Board of Trustees that he considered running for AOSA President. After talking with several people in AOSA leadership positions, he decided to proceed.

Over the last two years, the AOSA has worked to rebrand their organization, emphasizing student education, advocacy, tools for success, and experience. Their mission is to empower students to thrive as doctors of optometry. Bibin played a major role in planning the student pop-up sessions and activities at the 2019 Optometry's Meeting in St. Louis, mentioning that their goal this year was to provide relevant continuing education courses to students that stretched beyond the materials learned in their programs. Advocacy is another area strongly emphasized, and over 130 students attended AOA on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to advocate for their profession to legislators.

Bibin does not plan on his involvement to end after he completes his optometry degree. After graduation, and possible residency, he is hoping to partner in one or two practices in the Oklahoma City area where he can practice full-scope optometry, particularly laser procedures and ocular disease. Recognizing this scope has come from years of advocacy, he is looking forward to joining the AOA and OAOP to continue the fight for optometry's scope of practice and to network with other doctors. ***"I truly feel like the AOA and OAOP are small optometry families, and both have already led to some of my best experiences thus far in optometry school. I'll definitely continue to be involved and do my small part in allowing optometrists to provide better patient care."***



Bibin Cherian, Class of 2020

# Celebrating Years of Graduates

Take a walk with us down memory lane as we celebrate three decades of graduates, starting with the Class of 1989. We love to look back at all the composites lining our hallways, beginning with our first graduating class, the Class of 1983.

As visitors and incoming students tour the building, many stop to find alumni they know, carefully scanning each composite until they find a familiar face.

It is hard to believe that forty years ago, NSUOCO began, giving Oklahoma its first and only optometry program and becoming one of the now twenty-three optometry schools in the U.S.



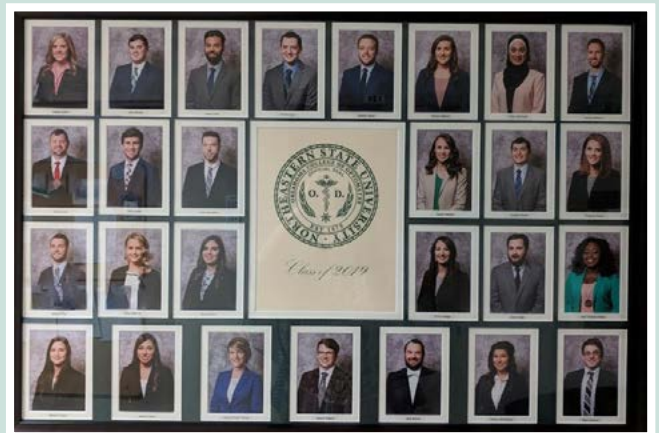
*Class of 1989*



*Class of 1999*



*Class of 2009*



*Class of 2019*





# The History of NSUOCO

The first session of the 34th Oklahoma Legislature referred a request for an interim study to determine the need and feasibility of establishing a school or college of optometry at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah to the Legislative Council. The Executive Committee of the Legislative Council in December 1973 requested the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education undertake a study of the subject so that the results could be presented at the second session of the 34th Legislature.

The regents published the results of their study, "Optometrists for Oklahoma: A Study of Supply and Demand to 1990," in May 1974. The study showed Oklahoma needed to increase the number of optometrists either through establishing a school of optometry or increasing the number of contracts with out-of-state optometry schools. In the study, the regents noted individuals with impaired or deficient vision were handicapped in an increasing visual world, and it was therefore critical that Oklahoma have access to adequate primary visual care through the provision of adequate numbers of optometrists to serve all the state's citizens.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education authorized Northeastern to begin a program in optometric education for the Fall Semester of 1979, and gave formal approval to Northeastern to implement a full four-year professional program in optometry during the July 29, 1981 meeting.

Pictured above is the first entering class in 1979. Today we are celebrating **forty years of success** as a program and are looking forward to many more years to come.

# Alumni News



Congratulations to Dr. Tyson Allard ('10) on his new position as the 2019 Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians President-Elect! Dr. Allard currently serves as a Diplomate of the American Board of Optometry and was the recipient of the 2017 OAOP Young Optometrist of the Year award.



The 2019 OAOP Optometric Physician of the Year award was given to Dr. Lynsey Bigheart for her exceptional leadership in the workplace and around Oklahoma. She was named the OAOP Young Optometric Physician of the Year in 2013 and currently serves as the chair of the Oklahoma Optometric Political Action Committee. Dr. Bigheart is a 2007 NSUOCO graduate. Congratulations on this immense honor!



Dr. Trevor Conklin is the 2019 recipient for the Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians' Young Optometric Physician of the Year. This award is given to optometrists practicing less than ten years who display exceptional leadership in the profession and their communities. Dr. Conklin is a 2011 graduate of NSUOCO. Congratulations on this honor!



# Alumni News



This year's OAOP Distinguished Service award recipient is Dr. Dawn Holsted for her exemplary leadership within the profession, dedicating her career to expanding the optometry scope of practice. Amongst her many awards and accomplishments, she has served as past OAOP President, received the 1997 OAOP Young Optometric Physician of the Year award, and was titled Northeastern State University's Young Distinguished Alumni in 2010. Dr. Holsted is a 1991 graduate of NSUOCO. Congratulations on this new award!



Congratulations to Dr. Selina McGee ('02) in her new role as the 2019 Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians President! Dr. McGee currently works for Precision Vision in both Edmond and Midwest City, and she was the recipient of the 2012 OAOP Young Optometrist of the Year award.

# Congratulations to our 2019 Graduates!

- » Kelsey Buford, O.D.
- » John Choate, O.D.
- » Adam Clark, O.D.
- » Kennon Cox, O.D.
- » Bradley Daniel, O.D.
- » Rachel Gilliland, O.D.
- » Heba Hammami, O.D.
- » Jared Holthaus, O.D.
- » David Hurd, O.D.
- » Seth Laster, O.D.
- » Ryan McCarthy, O.D.
- » Caitlyn Mefford, O.D.
- » Devyn Moran Staggs, O.D.
- » Hayden Nauert, O.D.
- » Kathleen Nelson, O.D.
- » Jeffrey M. Rice, O.D.
- » Shea Schmidt, O.D.
- » Rachel Sires, O.D.
- » Kevin Stieb, O.D.
- » Idell Thomas-Payne, O.D.
- » Megan Tucker, O.D.
- » Melissa Vides, O.D.
- » Martina Webb-Haines, O.D.
- » Jeremy Wiggins, O.D.
- » Bret Wilmon, O.D.
- » Brittany Wolthuizen, O.D.
- » Blake Zoellner, O.D.



*Congratulations to the Class of 2019!*



*David Hurd, 2018 National Student Bowl Champion*



*Seth Laster receiving his hood from Dr. Joseph Shetler (left) and Dr. Leland Carr (right)*



*Pictured left to right: Kevin Stieb, Martina Webb-Haines, Melissa Vides, Idell Thomas-Payne, and Jeremy Wiggins*



# NSUOCO News

## Farewell and Best Wishes

This July, we were saddened to see two wonderful faculty members go. After twenty-one years at NSUOCO, Dr. Leland Carr is retiring. Dr. Joseph Shetler and his wife, Karen, are pursuing a new adventure in Alaska after spending the last six and a half years with us.

We are grateful to both doctors for their countless contributions to our college over the years and wish them nothing but the best in their new journeys!



# NSUOCO News

## NSU Circle of Excellence Awards

Each year, three Northeastern State University faculty members are selected by their peers (from among many who are nominated by students and/or colleagues) to be added to the NSU Faculty Circle of Excellence. One faculty member is selected for his/her contributions in teaching, one in research, and one in service. This year, we were pleased that not only one, but two NSUOCO faculty members were chosen: Dr. Neal Whittle for the Circle of Excellence in Teaching and Dr. Alan McKee for the Circle of Excellence in Service. Congratulations to both for this extremely high honor!

Dr. Whittle graduated from NSUOCO in 2012. He completed a residency in Family Practice and Ocular Disease at NSUOCO, after which he joined the faculty of NSUOCO in 2013 as an assistant professor. Dr. Whittle currently teaches the Geometric and Physical Optics course, as well as the Vision Science I: Optics course. He is the clinical chief of the Electrodiagnostics Clinic at NSUOCO in addition to serving in other clinical areas, such as ocular disease, contact lenses, and primary care. He is also involved in NSUOCO's Advanced Procedures and Laser Course that is offered each year in Tahlequah, OK.

Dr. Alan McKee is a 1996 graduate of NSUOCO. He and his wife, Dr. Earlena McKee, joined the NSUOCO faculty in 2004. Dr. McKee is currently a professor of Optometry and Director of Optical Services for the college with teaching assignments in Ophthalmic Optics, Environmental Vision, Contact Lenses, and serves as a clinical instructor in the NSUOCO clinics. His service to the university includes the University Student Learning and Assessment and University Curriculum committees, as well as the college's Equipment and Curriculum Committees. In addition to being involved in the local Tahlequah Lions Club, Dr. McKee has served in leadership positions within the Oklahoma Lions Eye Bank Executive board and continues to provide expertise in the fabrication of spectacles for the Special Olympics Lions Club International Opening Eyes program held each year in Stillwater.



*Dr. Alan McKee (left) and Dr. Neal Whittle (right) were recognized at the Northeastern State University Commencement ceremony on May 11, 2019 for their Circle of Excellence awards.*



# NSUOCO News

## Congratulations to Dr. Hank VanVeen

Northeastern State University celebrates the induction of ten new members into the NSU Centurions. The NSU Centurions induction was established as an annual tradition on Founders Day, March 6, 2009, with the selection of the inaugural class. This year, Dr. Henricus (Hank) Van Veen was among those ten. As the first faculty member and clinical director for NSUOCO, Dr. Van Veen has devoted more than two decades to the university. He filled several leadership roles, including director of NSU and Cherokee Nation Optical Dispensaries and assistant dean for academic affairs.

Dr. Van Veen earned a Bachelor of Science in Physics from the University of Tulsa and a Doctorate of Optometry from the University of Houston. He served his country as an officer in both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army Reserves.

In retirement, Dr. Van Veen is a member of the Lion's Club and the Parish Council at St. Brigid Catholic Church. He supports Feed My Sheep, Help in Crisis, the Tahlequah Area Habitat for Humanity, and the Special Olympics. Dr. Van Veen joins a team from NSUOCO that manufactures eyewear to deliver to participants on sight during the State Special Olympics: Lions Club International Opening Eyes program.



# NSUOCO News

## Eye Ball 2019

NSUOCO's 40th annual Eye Ball Spring Awards banquet was held at The Shangri-La Resort in Afton, OK on April 13. Many students were awarded scholarship monies for academic excellence, clinical achievement, leadership initiative, dedication to the profession, and acts of service.



Kelsey Buford was the recipient for the 2019 Golden Retinoscope Award, given to one deserving student of the graduating class for academic and clinical excellence.



*Adam Clark*



*Seth Laster*



*Kevin Stieb*

This year, NSUOCO had three exemplary students graduate with a 4.0 GPA, earning the highest honor from Beta Sigma Kappa: the Beta Sigma Kappa Silver Medal. A special recognition goes to Adam Clark for receiving the NSU Graduate Academic Achievement Award as the top graduate in the College of Optometry.



*Caitlyn Mefford*



*Kathleen Nelson*



*Shea Schmidt*



*Devyn Staggs*



*Brittany Wolthuizen*

Five students were recognized and awarded the NSUOCO Clinical Excellence award for demonstrating outstanding clinical skills in patient care. These awards are determined by a faculty vote.



# NSUOCO News

## Academic Achievements

Throughout the year, several of our faculty members, residents, and students achieve many academic accomplishments, whether through poster presentations, continuing education speaking events, or publications. Below are few highlights from the last six months. Congratulations to all on these achievements!

- » Dr. Jonathan Janzen ('17), Assistant Professor, presented a continuing education class at the 5-State Symposium on the NSU campus titled "Color Vision Review."
- » Dr. Alan McKee ('96), Professor and Dispensaries/Spectacle Fabrication Services Chief, contributed three clinical ophthalmic dispensing cases published in a new textbook *Clinical Cases in Eye Care*.
- » Dr. Richard Castillo ('87), Assistant Dean for Surgical Training and Education, authored a chapter on blepharoplasty in the 4th edition of Pfenninger & Fowler's *Procedures for Primary Care*, was awarded Fellow status (FASOS) by the American Society of Optometric Surgeons (ASOS) Board, received the 2019 Distinguished Service Award by the Illinois College of Optometry, and has been elected President of ASOS.
- » Dr. Blake Carlisle ('14), Adjunct Professor, presented "Times I Missed: Difficult Anterior Segment Cases" at the NSUOCO 5-State Symposium.
- » Dr. Alissa Proctor, Professor and Pediatric Services Clinic Chief, presented a poster titled "Effectivity of At-Home Sports Vision Training Compared to In-Office Trainings" at the American Academy of Optometry Meeting alongside students Kelsey Buford ('19) and Brittany Wolthuizen ('19).
- » Many of the residents and students presented posters at the Heart of America Eye Care Congress in February. NSUOCO brought home two grand prize awards. Dr. Stephanie Uchida, NSUOCO resident and '18 alumna, presented her poster titled "Pigmentary Maculopathy Secondary to Aromatase Inhibitor Use." Students Bradley Daniel ('19) and Nathan Castillo (OSIV) along with Dr. Richard Castillo ('87), presented "Radiofrequency Reduction of Prolapsed Orbital Fat Pads of the Lower Eyelids."
- » Several residents presented at the NSUOCO 5-State Symposium, including Dr. Judson Chevalier ('18) and Jenny Lau with "Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension," and Dr. Haley Kincannon with "Refractive Surgery Update."
- » Dr. April Parker ('13), Assistant Professor, along with students Seth Laster ('19), Adam Clark ('19), Rachel Gilliland ('19) and Jared Holthaus ('19) presented "Grand Rounds in Medical Optometry" at the NSUOCO 5-State Symposium.



# NSUOCO News



## 2018-19 Postdoctoral Residents

- » **Louis Blowers II, O.D.**  
*Northeastern State University*
- » **Anthony Castanares, O.D.**  
*Southern California College of Optometry*
- » **Megan Chee, O.D.**  
*Illinois College of Optometry*
- » **Judson Chevalier, O.D.**  
*Northeastern State University*
- » **Randy Cox, O.D.**  
*Northeastern State University*
- » **Devany Dougherty, O.D.**  
*Midwestern University - Arizona College of Optometry*
- » **Lauren Gee, O.D.**  
*University of the Incarnate Word*
- » **Katherine Herron, O.D.**  
*The Ohio State University*
- » **Brooke Houser, O.D.**  
*University of the Incarnate Word*
- » **Julie Kells, O.D.**  
*University of Houston*
- » **Haley Kincannon, O.D.**  
*Southern College of Optometry*
- » **Jenny Lau, O.D.**  
*Illinois College of Optometry*
- » **Cassandra Lux-O'Callaghan, O.D.**  
*Midwestern University - Arizona College of Optometry*
- » **Ramva Natarajan, O.D.**  
*University of Missouri-St. Louis*
- » **Myranda Partin, O.D.**  
*Northeastern State University*
- » **Travis Partin, O.D.**  
*Northeastern State University*
- » **Sergiu Piciooreanu, O.D.**  
*University of Waterloo*
- » **Robert Roden, O.D.**  
*Midwestern University - Arizona College of Optometry*
- » **Bradley Taylor, O.D.**  
*University of the Incarnate Word*
- » **Stephanie Uchida, O.D.**  
*Northeastern State University*



# NSUOCO News

## Opening Eyes 2019

A team of NSUOCO faculty, staff, students, residents, NSU Pre-Optometry Club members, OAOP leadership, alumni, and community members saw around 350 Special Olympics athletes with the Special Olympics Lions Club International Opening Eyes program on Thursday, May 16. The event was held at the Oklahoma Special Olympics Summer Games on the campus of Oklahoma State University. We had an incredible amount of volunteer support this year. In all we had 184 volunteers. Of those volunteers 13 were NSUOCO faculty or residents, 10 were NSUOCO staff, 18 were NSUOCO students and 15 were members of the NSU Pre-Optometry Club. The Opening Eyes screening event consists of visual acuities, retinoscopy, ophthalmoscopy, color vision, depth perception, cover test, motilities, biomicroscopy, tonometry, and auto refraction. Any athlete failing the screening is given a complete refraction on site, and prescriptions for dress glasses and sport goggles are fabricated on site by our NSUOCO staff and given to the athletes free of charge. Lenses are donated by Essilor, frames are donated by Safilo, sports goggles are donated by Liberty Optical and lens edgers are donated by Santinelli.







# NSUOCO News

## Student Day at the Capitol

Student Day at the Capitol is one of the most highly anticipated events held each year. Often referred to as Capitol Day, students are given the opportunity to experience the legislative side of optometry. On Wednesday, February 13th, a group of 47 students, 11 residents, and 4 faculty members met with current legislators and members of the OAOP to discuss some of the most pressing issues within the profession and advocate for vision care standards in Oklahoma.

## Share your news!

We would love to feature your news in our "Eye on Alumni" newsletter! Contact Brooke Johnson at [johns283@nsuok.edu](mailto:johns283@nsuok.edu) with story ideas or alumni news items.

