

WINTER
2020 - 2021

EYE ON ALUMNI

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



NORTHEASTERN
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Upcoming Events

Mark your Calendars!

28th Annual Ocular Disease Update

Virtually and in person at Big Cedar Lodge in Branson, MO
June 5-7, 2021

July Ophthalmic Procedures Course

NSUOCO in Tahlequah, OK
July 8-11, 2021

Primary Eye Care Update

NSUOCO in Tahlequah, OK
Sept. 11-12, 2021

Don't miss out on your opportunity to take part in each of these events!

NSUOCO & OAOP CE Event

Be on the lookout for your chance to take part in the first ever NSUOCO & OAOP CE Event. This combined event will take place in Tulsa, Oklahoma on Nov. 19-20, 2021. Additionally, second-year students will be presented with their white coats at the White Ceremony on Friday evening at the conference.

More information to follow!

28th Annual Ocular Disease Update Information

Receive 16 hours of COPE approved CE and join us for the 28th Annual Ocular Disease Update featuring Dr. Selina McGee, Dr. Marc Bloomenstein and Dr. Carolyn Majcher.

The Ocular Disease Update will be held at Branson's premier family resort, Big Cedar Lodge. This year's conference will be live in person and will also be streamed via Zoom Conference for live COPE approved CE.

Lodging at Big Cedar Lodge fills up very quickly. If you are interested in attending in person and staying at Big Cedar, please secure your hotel arrangements as soon as possible!

Please check our website for further details and updates, or contact Callie McAtee for information. We look forward to seeing you!!

<https://optometry.nsuok.edu/continuingeducation/default.aspx>

Callie McAtee - 918.316.3602 - mcateec@nsuok.edu



NSUOCO News

Big Announcement! NSUOCO Plans Huge Upgrade to Facilities



There are big and exciting things happening at Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry!

In November, NSUOCO formally announced plans to construct a \$26 million, 101,500 square-foot complex to support the facility's already industry-leading faculty and staff.

"The original W.W. Hastings Hospital, constructed in 1934, has been home to NSU's Oklahoma College of Optometry since 1991. Although we are extremely grateful to have the facility, the building's age and design are unable to meet the needs of our current program. We need a dynamic building that matches the academic caliber of the faculty and the national reputation of the Optometry Program with the instructional needs of our students (future optometrists) and the needs of the thousands of individuals who seek outstanding vision care in the clinic each year," Northeastern State University President Steve Turner said. "The time has come for a first-class program to move out of second-hand facilities."

NSUOCO News

NSUOCO recently announced its vision for the future of the optometric program. Four years of programming and planning have resulted in an exciting vision of an optometry complex that serves the community, students, residents and alumni.

The proposed complex will feature state-of-the-art equipment, up-to-date classroom technology and specialized clinics for low vision, vision therapy, infant vision, neuro-vision rehabilitation, primary care and contact lenses, as well as a surgical suite for laser and office-based surgical procedures.

The Building Excellence: A Vision for the Future campaign is a generational call to action to all former and current students to help take the future home of the Oklahoma College of Optometry from vision to reality. Visit nsugiving.com/ocovision to learn more about this project and to lend your support.

The NSU Oklahoma College of Optometry is proud of its graduates and is fortunate to enjoy their ongoing charitable support.

NSUOCO Building Project Steering Committee

The NSUOCO Building Project Steering Committee is composed of:

- » Dean Doug Penisten
- » Associate Dean Nate Lighthizer
- » Assistant Dean Earlena McKee
- » Dr. Alan McKee
- » Dr. Ryan Fenska
- » Dr. Neal Whittle
- » Dr. Sarah Krein
- » Dr. Joseph Shetler
- » Peggy Glenn, Director of NSU Development

An Advisory Board was also formed in order to help advise the internal steering committee. The Advisory Board is composed of both OD's and non-OD's outside of NSU, along with NSU President Steve Turner, NSU Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Dr. Debbie Landry, and the entire development and building team. The Advisory Board is composed of:

- » Mr. Jay Hannah
- » Dr. Jason Ellen
- » Dr. David Cockrell
- » Dr. Roger Montgomery
- » Dr. Kathleen Elliot
- » OAOP President Dr. Tyson Allard
- » Ms. Sandra Naifeh
- » Mr. Jerry Cook
- » Dr. Carl Newton

Check out the NSUOCO Facebook page for additional information and updates about the project: <https://www.facebook.com/nsuoco>

A special thanks to Northeastern State University President Steve Turner, the NSUOCO Building Project Steering Committee and the Advisory Board!

NSUOCO News

On Feb. 2 an assembly of NSUOCO faculty, staff, and students gathered together for the reveal of the new facility's location. NSU President Steve Turner and the Provost, Dr. Debbie Landry, were also present. The future home of NSUOCO will be located in Tahlequah off of the corner of Cedar Avenue and Crafton Street. The new facility will be directly across the street from the Branscum Alumni Center.

Current Faculty

- » **Dr. Louis Blowers**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Tara Brown**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Kelsey Buford**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Saunya Burkhart**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Christian Bussey**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Richard Castillo**
Ophthalmologist & Assistant Dean for Surgical Training and Education
- » **Dr. Caitlin Chevalier**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Ryan Fenska**
Associate Professor / Rural Eye Clinics Director
- » **Dr. Jari Frazier**
Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Jonathan Hatley**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Jonathan Janzen**
Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Spencer Johnson**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Matthew Krein**
Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Sarah Krein**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Jenna Lighthizer**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Nathan Lighthizer**
Associate Dean & Director of Continuing Medical Education
- » **Dr. John Lindsay**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Carolyn Majcher**
Associate Professor & Director of Residencies
- » **Dr. Alan McKee**
Professor
- » **Dr. Earlena McKee**
Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs
- » **Dr. Jeffrey Miller**
Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs
- » **Dr. Latricia Pack**
Professor
- » **Dr. April Parker**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Douglas Penisten**
Dean of the College
- » **Dr. Dawn Pewitt**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Alissa Proctor**
Professor
- » **Dr. Seth Rich**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Bret Seamons**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Joseph Shetler**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. David Simpson**
Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Nicole Stout**
Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Heidi Thoden**
Clinical Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Jessica White**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Neal Whittle**
Associate Professor
- » **Dr. Andrew Young**
Clinical Assistant Professor
- » **Dr. Bryan Young**
Clinical Assistant Professor

NSUOCO News

Spotlight on NSUOCO Faculty!

Dr. Spencer Johnson was featured in the Tahlequah Daily Press as an Everyday Hero. A 2010 opportunity with NSUOCO brought Johnson to Tahlequah. He grew up near Salt Lake City, Utah, and attended optometry school in Philadelphia.

"A few years after graduation, I was working in Connecticut, but had always had a desire to teach. When I learned of an opening at NSU, I applied, and it has been a privilege to be part of such a great program for more than a decade now," Johnson said.

Since NSUOCO plays a couple of roles in the community, Johnson said his job is essential. "We provide needed eye care to our patients and train the next generation of doctors to care for their patients," he said. "I feel that the community has been very appreciative and supportive of the work we have done during this difficult time."

According to Johnson, NSUOCO has taken many precautions to be able to safely continue to care for patients and educate students during the pandemic. "For example, each morning, everyone entering the building has their temperature taken and is screened for symptoms of COVID-19. We encourage all of our staff and students involved in patient care to wear clothing that can be easily washed, such as scrubs instead of dress clothes - at the end of the work day," Johnson said. "I can see some of the screening procedures staying in place after the pandemic, particularly during flu season."

Johnson said his family has not had to be quarantined. His wife, Brooke, works at home, and their children are currently attending school in person. The couple have four kids: Carter, 16; Abbie, 14; Jake, 11; and Taylor, 1. "In addition to my job at the college, I have been serving as the bishop of my church congregation in Tahlequah for the past five years," Johnson said. "For exercise, I enjoy running and swimming, and in my free time, I love to spend time on the lake with my family."

The **Dr. Tiffany Maher Legacy Award** is named after a dedicated, hard-working professor who passed away in 2013. Maher was described as a student advocate first and a professor second. She was known for devoting her time and energy to her students and she left behind a fun-loving, lasting legacy at NSU. Each year, the NSGA sends out nomination requests to all students for the Dr. Tiffany Maher Legacy Award. The students are asked to nominate a faculty and staff member who has impacted them greatly and someone who they think best deserves this award. After the nominations are reviewed by the NSGA committee, one Dr. Tiffany Maher Legacy Award winner and Top Ten RiverHawk Recognition Award winners are chosen and voted on by the senate body. This year, **Dr. Carolyn Majcher** was honored as one of the Top 10 RiverHawk Award Recipients.

In November, **Dr. Richard Castillo**, OD, DO, NSU Ophthalmologist and Assistant Dean for Surgical Training and Education was featured as a speaker at the University of California/Berkeley's Gold Key forum where he shared the virtual stage with UCB School of Optometry Dean John Flanagan. Castillo spoke on the future of optometric practice and education. He serves as co-chair of the American Optometric Associations Future Practice Education Task Force. Castillo also has worked to provide several hours of advanced medical, surgical, and laser continuing education for the Pennsylvania Optometric Association and the Tennessee Optometric Association by utilizing distance learning technology to conduct the programs.

NSUOCO News

Castillo provided a seminar on optometric laser therapy for a recent webinar of the American Society of Optometric Surgeons (A.S.O.S.). He has served as the organization's founding president, and was re-elected to his 3rd consecutive term. A.S.O.S. began as a student surgery club started by Castillo in 2016 at NSUOCO and is now an international society of optometric physicians, optometry students, residents, educators and industry personnel with members across the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia, the Philippines, India and the United Kingdom. He was recently interviewed and featured on the Optometry Podcast, *Try Not to Blink*, one of Optometry's largest social media publications.

In the interview, Castillo was asked to comment on his career to date, as an optometric physician and ophthalmologist, and as an internationally known figure who has personally brought about substantial change to the profession of optometry. He was also interviewed by the American Optometric Association's *Focus Journal*, concerning evolving paradigms in advanced optometric training and education. His comments are included in the November issue of *AOA Focus*. Castillo was appointed to the National Board of Examiners' Part III Clinical Skills Restructure Committee. He will be assisting with the restructure of the Injections Skill Module. He also recently received a *Certificate of Recognition* from the National Board of Examiners for his contributions to, and as a founding member of the NBEO's Laser and Surgical Procedure's Examination. He serves on the NBEO's laser & surgical examination development task force.

Locally, Castillo is also acting as the ophthalmology preceptor for the Ophthalmology clerkship at the OSU-Cherokee Nation's Family Medicine Residency. He recently hosted the first Family Medicine Resident Physician to rotate through the combined CN-NSU eye clinic in Tahlequah. Preceptors according to the American Council for Graduate Medical Education are licensed DO or MD physicians who supervise and provide training for resident physicians (DO or MD) completing a training rotation through their respective specialty. Castillo has participated in the training of medical residents in Tahlequah at Cherokee Nation facilities and Tahlequah City Hospital, Northeast Health System for over two decades now.

Dr. Alissa Proctor serves as a professor at NSUOCO. Recently, she attended the American Academy of Optometry's Annual Meeting (Academy 2020 At Home). While attending the meeting, she presented student research during the virtual poster session. The research poster was titled "Retained Primitive Reflexes and Optometric Referrals at Vision Screenings." Proctor served as the research advisor for this project. The two students who worked on this research are Kayla Cook and Kristina Flaig.

Dr. Joseph Shetler, associate professor with the Oklahoma College of Optometry has been awarded the 40 Year Membership Award by the American Optometric Association. Shelter, an Indiana University graduate, began his career while serving the Navajo Nation in Chinle, Arizona as a public service officer. He was in private practice in western Nebraska and South Dakota for 25 years prior to accepting his position with the Oklahoma College of Optometry in 2013.

Best of Broken Arrow Awards

The Lesley L. Walls Vision Center was selected for the 2020 Best of Broken Arrow Awards in the Eye Care Center category.



NSUOCO News

White Coat Ceremony 2020

On November 13, 2020, NSUOCO held its 16th annual White Coat Ceremony for the current second year class. This year, the White Coat Ceremony was hosted within the Auditorium at the College. It was streamed live to all of the students' families and friends via Zoom.

The White Coat Ceremony is held in order to recognize the students who are progressing their optometric education from classroom to clinic. The presentation of the clinical coat signifies the beginning of the students' clinical education.

The coats, which were embroidered with each student's name, were presented to the students by Dr. Earlena McKee. The white coats were sponsored by Alcon.

The following second-year students were recognized at the ceremony:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| » Brianna Albers | » Jenna McKaig | » Kelli Schaedel |
| » Ameerah Al-Sadi | » Cole McKnight | » Madeline Smith |
| » Kaylee Bobbitt | » Aaron Meyer | » Lauren Stoffel |
| » Crosby Cooper | » Jacob Musto | » Aubry Tackett |
| » Matthew Endres | » Morgan Newton | » Kevin Struble |
| » Paige Fielden | » Tiffanie Nguyen | » Peyton Turner |
| » Brett Freeman | » Joey Nugent | » Story Whitson |
| » Will Grovenburg | » Jadica Piela | |
| » Nathan Kuykendall | » Wes Rushing | |

Congratulations to all of the second-year students. We are so proud of you!

NSUOCO News



Class of 2024



Bryley Banks



Logan Blowers



Drew Breedlove



Jazmine Casias



Rebecca Clover-Wendt



Dalton Cunningham



Karlee Dearman



Abbie Etter



Kylie Feightner



Blayke Haggard



Dylan Hance



Jeremy Hutchinson



Amanda Idell



Marisa Jonas



Emily Laub



Sabrina Le



Rachael Lockhart



Carter Morrison



Stacie Newton



Cole Powlison



David Ross



Kendra Scott



Jackson Shetlar



Christina Thompson



Regina Veracruz



Kevin Walp



Michael Wood



Mackenzie Zora

NSUOCO News

Welcome, Class of 2024!

We are so glad that you have joined the NSUOCO family.

- » **Bryley Banks**
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
- » **Logan Blowers**
Lincoln, Nebraska
- » **Drew Breedlove**
Broken Arrow, OK
- » **Jazmine Casias**
Albuquerque, New Mexico
- » **Rebecca Clover-Wendt**
Chanute, Kansas
- » **Dalton Cunningham**
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
- » **Karlee Dearman**
Norman, Oklahoma
- » **Abbie Etter**
Healdton, Oklahoma
- » **Kylie Feightner**
Enid, Oklahoma
- » **Blayke Haggard**
Gans, Oklahoma
- » **Dylan Hance**
McAlester, Oklahoma
- » **Jeremy Hutchinson**
Park Hill, Oklahoma
- » **Amanda Idell**
Spring Hill, Kansas
- » **Marisa Jonas**
Hoisington, Kansas
- » **Emily Laub**
Grand Island, Nebraska
- » **Sabrina Le**
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- » **Rachael Lockhart**
Norman, Oklahoma
- » **Carter Morrison**
Colby, Kansas
- » **Stacie Newton**
Cherokee, Oklahoma
- » **Cole Powlison**
Sherman, Texas
- » **David Ross**
Tulsa, Oklahoma
- » **Kendra Scott**
Belleville, Kansas
- » **Jackson Shetlar**
Salina, Kansas
- » **Christina Thompson**
Fort Smith, Arkansas
- » **Regina Veracruz**
Tahlequah, OK
- » **Kevin Walp**
Andover, Kansas
- » **Michael Wood**
Edmond, Oklahoma
- » **Mackenzie Zora**
Lawton, Oklahoma

NSUOCO News

Callie (Jordan) and Clyde Stinson Optometric Student Equipment Fund

On your road to becoming an optometrist, you undoubtedly overcame obstacles. The long hours of school, late night studying for exams, and of course the cost of tuition and equipment. You persevered and achieved a goal; something the late Callie (Jordan) Stinson knew plenty about. Born in 1910, Callie was rendered blind shortly after birth when a doctor administered improperly formulated eye drops. In spite of this, she thrived and achieved accomplishments that might have seemed impossible in a similar situation.

Callie was a fixture in the Tahlequah community, volunteering with the First United Methodist Church, organizing blood drives for the Red Cross and campaigning for Governor Nigh, amongst her other activities. She and her husband Clyde always gave back. Now her family strives to honor their memories by donating to another fixture of the Tahlequah community—Northeastern State University.

The family's ultimate goal is to provide equipment to all first-year optometry students at NSU free of charge, in perpetuity. Earlier this year, they established the Callie (Jordan) and Clyde Stinson Optometric Student Equipment Fund towards that goal. They ask that you join them, and please donate, whatever amount you can, to help foster the next generation of optometrists at Northeastern State. From now until June 2021, an anonymous donor will match your gift dollar for dollar up to \$25,000. Callie (Jordan) Stinson and her husband will be remembered as those who never let obstacles stand in their way; we look forward to continuing to honor them through this endowment.

For more information on the fund, please contact Jennifer Thurman by email at jthurman@cfok.org or by phone at 405-488-1450. To donate now, visit www.cfok.org/stinsonmatch. You can also mail checks with "Stinson Match" in the memo line to Communities Foundation of Oklahoma, PO Box 21210, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73156. Remember, if you give now, your gift will be matched!

Alumni News

In Remembrance of Dr. Patrick Harmon



Dr. Patrick Harmon

On Friday, August 21, 2020 Dr. Patrick W. Harmon passed away. After earning a bachelor's degree in education and mathematics from Pittsburg State University, he married the love of his life, Sharon, in 1968 and soon after received a master's degree in physical education. He taught math and drivers' education and coached basketball, football and baseball in Kansas and Colorado before returning to the Kansas City area. Soon after, he and Sharon started a family and he began working with his father in the family business, Harmon Optical.

Pat and Sharon became the parents of three children and then made a move to Tahlequah, Oklahoma. It was at this time that Pat elected to attend Northeastern State University in order to obtain a Doctorate of Optometry. He graduated from the program in 1993. Upon returning to Kansas City, he opened an optometry practice, Harmon Vision Center.

He successfully managed the practice for twenty-five years. After retiring and selling his practice in 2018, he turned to his love of sports and coached high school basketball in Kansas and New Mexico.

Throughout his career, he was active in his professional organizations, was elected Kansas Optician of the Year, was a member of the Lions Club, and even a licensed pilot. His patience, generosity, humor and thoughtful advice touched many and he will be missed.

WANT TO STAY IN THE LOOP?

Follow us on all of our social media accounts!





optometry.nsuok.edu