

**Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
Strategic Plan
2021**

Mission: The *mission* of the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation is to foster excellence and innovation in opticianry education by setting standards, assessing educational effectiveness, and identifying those academic programs that meet and exceed the standards, in order to aid programs to produce competent graduates who will provide professional services to the public.

Vision: Excellence in Opticianry Education

Objectives:

- Work to increase the number of programs accredited by the COA.
 - Increase awareness of the COA through interactions with external groups important to the field of opticianry.
 - Communication strategy
 - Interact with Program Directors of non-accredited programs of opticianry to describe the benefits of accreditation.
 - Interact with national/state associations to promote the benefits to the entire field of accreditation of programs of opticianry.
 - Letter from NFOS - Exhibit 1
- Strengthen and modify accreditation guidelines/standards appropriately to reflect the current field and practice of opticianry.
 - Perform a biennial review and update of COA guidelines/standards.
 - The Essentials will be reviewed in two years.
 - The By-Laws will be reviewed in two years.
 - Our website has been updated.
 - Opticianry programs will have the opportunity to provide the necessary feedback to improve the COA guidelines/standards.
- Ensure financial stability for the COA.
 - Continue to review Annual Fee structure.
 - Annual accreditation fees increase will be reviewed Fall 2022.
 - Explore possibilities for additional revenues including grant opportunities.
- CHEA continued recognition 2019/2020
 - Budget for 2020 fees
 - Consultant has written the Application Narrative
 - Continue working with CHEA for Continued Recognition 2022

National Federation of Opticianry Schools

236 East Main Street #183

Sevierville, TN 37862

www.nfos.org

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To the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation,

Greetings from the NFOS. We hope you are continuing to stay healthy and safe. Please accept this letter as an update of the efforts and actions of the NFOS since our last correspondence.

The impact of the COVID epidemic has continued to affect all aspects of our lives, and that includes the NFOS and formal Opticianry education across the country. Despite the recent apparent improvement nationwide in the severity of the pandemic due to mitigation efforts, including vaccination efforts, the impact of this health crisis will continue to affect our profession and our educational institutions. The efforts of the various national organizations will continue to be instrumental in helping our profession navigate these future challenges.

Supporting New Programs

Despite the significant challenges created by the current global pandemic, the need for quality formal opticianry education has never been more critical. We have had some programs close due to various reasons, including CCRI and Goodwin University, however, there are several programs starting up. The net change should be a gain in total opticianry programs. We are working with interested programs in North Carolina, multiple schools in California (approx. 4 new programs) and have worked with South Carolina in their efforts to approach a state institution about the viability and interest in opticianry programs. Some of the newer CA programs likely may start as 6 – 12-month certificate programs initially, but the end goal for all new programs is to become a 2-year accredited opticianry program, and the NFOS strongly encourages all members to seek and maintain accredited status from the CAO.

Review Classes

Due to the improvement in current state of the pandemic, more meetings have been held in person. The NFOS was able to provide successful in-person review classes for both the ABO and NCLE at Vision Expo East in Orlando, and ABO and NCLE reviews at the Professional Opticians of Florida in May. We are currently in the process of reaching out to additional state associations to provide in-person classes and anticipated providing sessions at Vision Expo West in September.

Incidentally the OAA has a workgroup called “Eye Unity”, which is tasked with improving relations between optometrists and opticians and helping promote inclusion of Opticians in their practices and business models, of which a member of our executive board is an active member. This may lead to

additional educational opportunities for the NFOS to reach a new audience with our review programs and provide more exposure and acceptance of opticianry as a career and promote formal opticianry education.

ABO and NCLE AC for NFOS faculty

The NFOS is strongly encouraging all faculty earn and maintain their Advanced Certification in the subjects they teach. We offer Basic and Advanced review classes at a state and national level for those seeking said certifications. The NFOS has received a grant to help NFOS members to obtain AC status, and the NFOS will be conducting review classes specifically for NFOS faculty to help the process along to ensure each member institution has the support and resources to continue to provide the best education and demonstration of competency possible.

ASCA outreach to promote profession.

Along with the ABO Executive Director Jim Morris, ABO Sr. Director of Marketing Strategies and Industry Relations Naomi Mundy, and representatives from Luxottica, Aarlan Aceto represented the NFOS at the annual meeting of the American School Counselors Association in Las Vegas. This meeting was a great opportunity for national opticianry organizations to promote opticianry as a profession and career.

NFOS activity

The NFOS has kept active with a virtual general meeting in February 2021 and has had multiple Executive Board meetings (virtual meetings in April, July, and an in-person exec board meeting at Vision Expo East). We have been working to promote the mission of our programs to continue to provide

Formal opticianry education to more students.

The NFOS will continue to work towards formalized optical education, and to continue to promote the advancement of education and promotion of the profession. We truly appreciate the support of the COA as well, and in support of our mission, especially as it pertains to the promotion of education, knowledge, and formal education. Your work and efforts in support of profession is critical to the continued advancement of opticianry. It is our goal to have all the schools within the NFOS accredited by the COA.

Sincerely,

Aarlan Aceto

Dr. Aarlan Aceto, O.D.
President, NFOS
Program Coordinator/Associate Professor
Ophthalmic Design and Dispensing
Middlesex Community College
100 Training Hill Road
Middletown, CT, 06457