



SCO is still here for you...

SOUTHERN
COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRY



Table of Contents

Institutional Advancement	3
Alumni and Career Services	5
The Hayes Center	7
SGA Executive Council	11
AOSA AOA	13
AAO Benefits.....	17
Financial Aid	19
Information Services	22
Strategic Communications Marketing	25
Continuing Education	27
The SCO Library	28
Institutional Assessment	30

Institutional Advancement

Dear Class of 2026,

Congratulations on reaching this remarkable milestone. Your hard work, resilience, and dedication have brought you to this moment, and we are proud to welcome you into the profession of optometry.

As you begin your career, remember that Southern College of Optometry will always be your home.

We encourage you to stay connected by returning to campus for Homecoming, participating in SCO's continuing education programs, and visiting with us at national, regional, and state meetings. We look forward to celebrating your personal and professional milestones and staying connected throughout your journey.

Your time in Memphis has helped shape you, and your relationship with SCO does not end at graduation. I encourage you to remain engaged and support your alma mater in the years ahead. Your involvement and generosity will help ensure that future students benefit from the same exceptional education and opportunities you experienced.

Staying involved with SCO

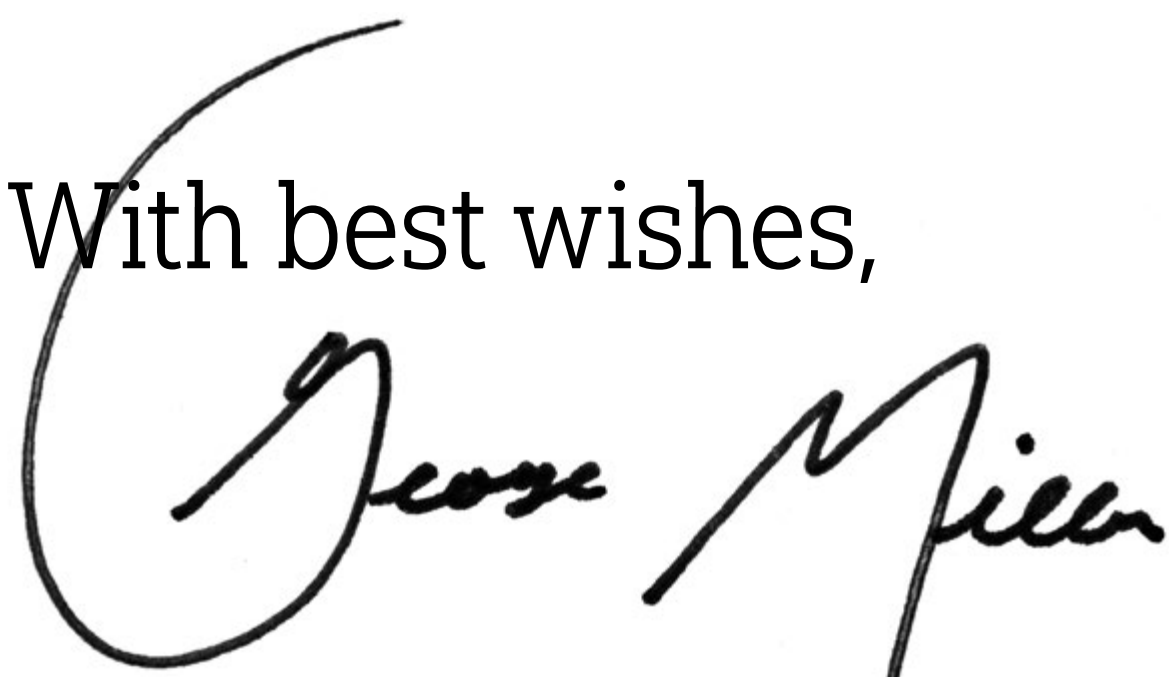
As a graduate, you have the opportunity to make a lasting impact by staying engaged with SCO. One meaningful way to give back is through the SCO Annual Fund. Gifts of any size provide immediate support for the student experience, technology enhancements, faculty initiatives, and emerging needs across campus.

You may also consider supporting student scholarships, which directly reduce the financial burden for current and future students. Many alumni choose to give in honor of a favorite faculty member or classmate, or to mark a milestone since graduation.

Whether you give annually, support a specific initiative, or participate in a reunion class gift, every contribution strengthens SCO and helps sustain its tradition of excellence.

On behalf of the entire SCO community, thank you for the impact you have made, and congratulations again on all you have achieved. We look forward to seeing all that you will accomplish in the years ahead.

With best wishes,



George C. Miller, CFRE
Vice President for Institutional Advancement



Alumni and Career Services

Dear Class of 2026:

Let us be one of the first to say...Congratulations! Your graduation from Southern College of Optometry is a significant achievement and milestone as you start your professional career in optometry. We join your friends and family in celebrating this wonderful achievement with you!

As a new member of the SCO alumni community, the college is here to serve you. The Department of Alumni and Career Services is here for you should you need us for anything. During the Fall season, we host our annual Homecoming Weekend for several reunion classes. Every year, you can find us hosting events and receptions at regional and state meetings, SECO, Optometry's Meeting, and Academy. We hope to see many of you at one or several of these events, and we look forward to engaging with you.

We also encourage you to keep your email and physical address current, so you receive our alumni e-newsletter and *Visions* magazine. We encourage you to share the milestones and accomplishments of your life – both personal and professional. Everyone loves to celebrate a wedding or a new addition to the family just as much as the professional recognition and awards you will receive. Share with us your personal and professional milestones by emailing alumni@sco.edu.

As you transition into professional practice, The Hayes Center for Practice Excellence is here to support you on this journey. All the HCPE resources you utilized as a student are available to you for life as an SCO alumni. The HCPE is here to support you on your professional journey – so please do

not hesitate to contact Dr. Lisa Wade if you need assistance — lwade@sco.edu.

On behalf of the entire SCO family, we wish you the very best and could not be prouder of each and every one of you!

Mike McKeever

Mike McKeever
Senior Director
Alumni and Career
Services



Karen Flowers

Karen Flowers
Director
Alumni and Donor
Relations



Dr. Lisa Wade

Dr. Lisa Wade
Director
Hayes Center for
Practice Excellence



The Hayes Center

To the Class of 2026...

Congratulations on your hard-earned Optometric degree! The Hayes Center joins with the entire SCO community in wishing you the best as you embark on this new chapter in your career.



The Hayes Center is a testament to the lasting impact one Alumnus(ae) can have on SCO and the entire profession of Optometry. Established in 2005 through the generosity of Jerry Hayes, OD '73, and his wife Cris, the

HCPE has become a nationally recognized leader and resource for preparing and guiding ODs into the Independent Practice of Optometry.

As a student, you had the opportunity to benefit from instruction in practice operations and management, financial literacy, individual career counseling, guidance in developing your resume and online presence, access to Optometry's Practice Connection, numerous networking opportunities, assistance with evaluation of career opportunities and many more outreach programs of the HCPE.

As an alumnus(ae), you can still benefit from many of these same services.

HPCE Services Available for Alumni

Our commitment to your success does not end at graduation. As an alumnus(ae), you have lifetime FREE access to the following services:

- Access to Optometry's Practice Connection, SCO's Placement Service, as either a Seeker and/or a Provider — odpracticeconnection.com
- 1:1 Personal Career Counseling
- Resume/CV/LinkedIn Review
- Assistance with Employment Contracts for Residents and Alumni
- Networking opportunities on campus at SCO, as well as local, state, and national meetings.
- General guidance on practice operations and transitions

Alumni are also eligible for recognition programs established by SCO and AOA.

HCPE Practice of Excellence Awards

Established at SCO by the Hayes Family, the Practice of Excellence Awards recognize success of young alumni engaged in the Private Practice of Optometry. Each year, three individuals are selected to receive:

1. **A \$5,000 Cash Award**
2. An expense paid trip to Memphis to share the story of their journey and their success with the 3rd year students the second Wednesday of April.
3. A beautifully engraved plaque for display in their office

One recipient is selected annually from EACH of the following categories:

New Practice Award

- An OD who entered Private Practice via a Cold Start.
- The applicant holds a majority or equal ownership interest in a practice for which he/she participated in writing the business plan, securing financing, and the operational development for a newly formed private practice.

Partnership Award

- An OD who entered Private Practice via a Buy-In to an existing practice.
- The applicant has PURCHASED/EARNED an equity interest in an existing Private Practice and actively participates as an equity partner in its operations/management.

Practice Acquisition Award

- An OD who entered Private Practice via a Buy-Out of an existing practice.
- The applicant has completed the Buy-Sell process of acquiring a previously existing Private Practice and currently holds a majority or equal ownership interest in that practice.

The application with FULL DETAILS is available to view at sco.edu/practice-of-excellence-award on the SCO Website.



Since 2014, the HCPE Practice of Excellence Awards have recognized recent SCO graduates who have demonstrated outstanding success in the Independent Practice of Optometry.

The Golden Opportunity Award

As collaborative effort between the AOA Center for Independent Practice and PERC Alliance, the Golden Opportunity Award is presented to Optometrists who wish to achieve the dream of owning their first independent practice.

Golden Opportunity Awards of **\$50,000** each will be awarded annually to as many as three deserving ODs to create the financial foundation of an independent practice. Emphasis is placed on recognizing and awarding individuals from an underrepresented group within the optometric community or someone who seeks to build a practice in an underserved area or population of need.

Information on this award and its application process can be viewed at aoafoundation.aoa.org/our-programs/golden-opportunity-award.

As I have mentioned many times, I am here to be of assistance at any every stage of your journey. You just have to reach out — Cell: 901-326-8498, Email: lwade@sco.edu.

Again, my very best wishes to each of you as you enter this exciting phase of your Optometric Career,



Dr. Lisa Wade

Director

Hayes Center for Practice Excellence



"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

—Mark Twain

SGA Executive Council

Dear Class of 2026 Graduates,

As you all prepare to step into your next roles as optometric physicians, we wanted to take a moment to congratulate you on years of preparation and hard work now finally coming to fruition. We want to celebrate and uplift all of your accomplishments thus far as your final moments here at SCO come to an end. Today, we celebrate and look forward to all of you making positive impacts in your careers and communities by taking with you everything you have gained during your time here.

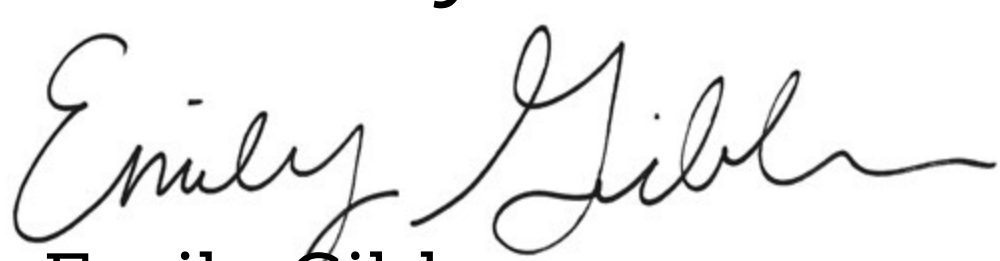
Looking back only four years ago, it's amazing to see how far you all have come and the vast amount of knowledge you carry with you. Even through tough times and multiple challenges, you all have overcome and persevered through anything that came your way whether that was acing practicals, taking Boards, or facing the world head-on during externs. Even after being away a year from Memphis, you have gotten a look at what life will look like and have gained the confidence that will take you the rest of the way to a successful future.

Now, it's finally your turn to walk across that stage and into the world as doctors and the future of optometry. It's always a bittersweet moment for us to say goodbye after the countless hours spent together and friendships made, but your presence here at the school and the impacts you have made here will carry on throughout the years to come. Even though we are losing some of our best and brightest, it is with great ease of mind that numerous communities across the states are about to gain some of the best eyecare providers available. With your fellow

classmates, you've experienced every high and low in optometry school, and we hope that you take those moments with you wherever you end up. Whether you are choosing to continue in your education through residency, through a position at a practice of your choosing, or maybe even cold starting your very own practice, we hope that you have cherished your time here and will make these last moments with each other last a lifetime.

The SGA Executive Council wants to congratulate you on all your amazing accomplishments while at SCO. Thank you for being friends, mentors, leaders, and for setting an example for the classes to follow. We'll carry all that you have shared and taught us and will try to fill the big shoes you have left behind. Congratulations, Class of 2026. The sky is the limit, and all of you will help pave the way for a brighter, clearer future

Sincerely,



Emily Gibbons
SGA President





AOSA



AMERICAN
OPTOMETRIC
ASSOCIATION

Congratulations Class of 2026!

It is crucial to remain involved in the advocacy and community of the optometric profession as you transition into the next phase of your career. Transitioning your AOSA membership to an AOA membership will help you do this, and you receive countless member benefits! And what makes it even easier, since you have been and are a current member AOSA, you've also been a member of AOA, and you will continue that AOA membership (and a state affiliate) as you transition into practice

Benefits of being an AOA Member

Financial Growth & Guidance

- **Malpractice Insurance:** AOA members have access to business and liability insurance tailored specifically to optometrists, ensuring comprehensive coverage at discounted rates and guaranteed scope of practice coverage. AOA members receive a 50% discount on malpractice insurance through Lockton Affinity during their first year of practice, and a 25% discount during their second year.
- **Student Loan Advice and Refinancing:** New grads who become AOA members can benefit from a 0.25% interest rate discount on student loan refinancing just for maintaining their membership, helping to manage educational debt more effectively.

Career Advancement Tools

- Identify your next move to advance your career with the **AOAExcel Career Center job board**.

Professional Development Opportunities

- Elevate your career with the skills, training, resources, and connections provided in programs like the AOA Leadership Institute and AOA Leadership Institute 2.0.

Paraoptometric Training and Certification

Enhance your practice's efficiency by providing your staff with training and certification opportunities, leading to improved patient care and satisfaction.

Advocacy and Staying Informed

AOA actively engages in advocacy efforts to protect and advance the optometric profession. Members receive timely updates on legislative changes, new research, and technological advancements, ensuring they remain informed and can effectively advocate for their patients and practice.

Joining the AOA means aligning with a community committed to supporting your professional journey, offering resources that cater to both your personal development and the advancement of the optometric field. **To learn more visit [aoa.org](https://www.aoa.org) and visit the "New Doctors of Optometry" page under the "Practice" heading!**

AOA / Affiliate Membership

New Graduate Membership

Your AOSA/AOA membership remains active until the end of your graduation year (December 31), so be sure to take full advantage of member benefits,

including student pricing for Optometry's Meeting, state association meetings and more.

To ensure a smooth transition from AOSA/AOA membership to an AOA and affiliate/state association membership, graduating optometry students need to update their personal information and state affiliate preferences. New graduate members will receive an email from the AOA prior to graduation with a survey to do this. Alternatively, you can log into aoa.org and update your profile. After your information is updated, the quickest way to transition your membership and secure the new grad discounted pricing is to reach out directly to the affiliate (state association) you plan to join. If you don't reach out, the affiliate you designated to the AOA will contact you about membership. You will continue your membership in the AOA through that affiliate/state association.

If students need any assistance or have questions, they can reach out to memberservices@aoa.org for support or chat with them online. Visit aoa.org to talk with a member services representative during regular business hours (8am-5pm CT).

New Graduates Doing a Residency

The AOA works directly with ASCO to obtain a list of the members completing a residency program. Although these graduates are completing a residency, their AOSA/AOA membership also remains active, and **they do not incur any dues obligation** for the remainder of their graduation year (December 31). Membership will be renewed to the post-graduate classification the following year and they will be able to obtain the post-graduate/residency membership pricing (currently \$50).

Dues

The ascending dues schedule is a five-year graduated percentage of full dues. All student members automatically begin the ascending dues schedule in January after the year in which they graduate and earn their Doctor of Optometry degree. If you are doing a residency, your dues the first year out of school are discounted and then you will start the ascending dues the following year, so you will pay 10% of the full active dues amount the year after your residency is completed. Please note that you will receive a dues invoice prior to January, in November or December of the year you graduate, for the following year. This invoice may come from AOA or your affiliate (state association) but will include dues for both organizations. State affiliate dues amounts vary but most also follow the same ascending dues schedule as AOA.

Students currently members of AOSA/AOA and not doing a residency, will renew to AOA/Affiliate (10% of full dues) for the new calendar year. The percentage of dues will increase with each year following graduation, as follows:

Graduation year	0%
1st full year after graduation.....	10%
2nd full year after graduation.....	20%
3rd full year after graduation.....	50%
4th full year after graduation.....	75%
5th full year and thereafter.....	100%

Landyn Goodwin
AOA President



Nathan Walls
AOA Vice President



AAO Benefits



Ever Wonder What Those Extra Letters, FFAO, Mean?

Become a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry (FAAO)

Who are we?

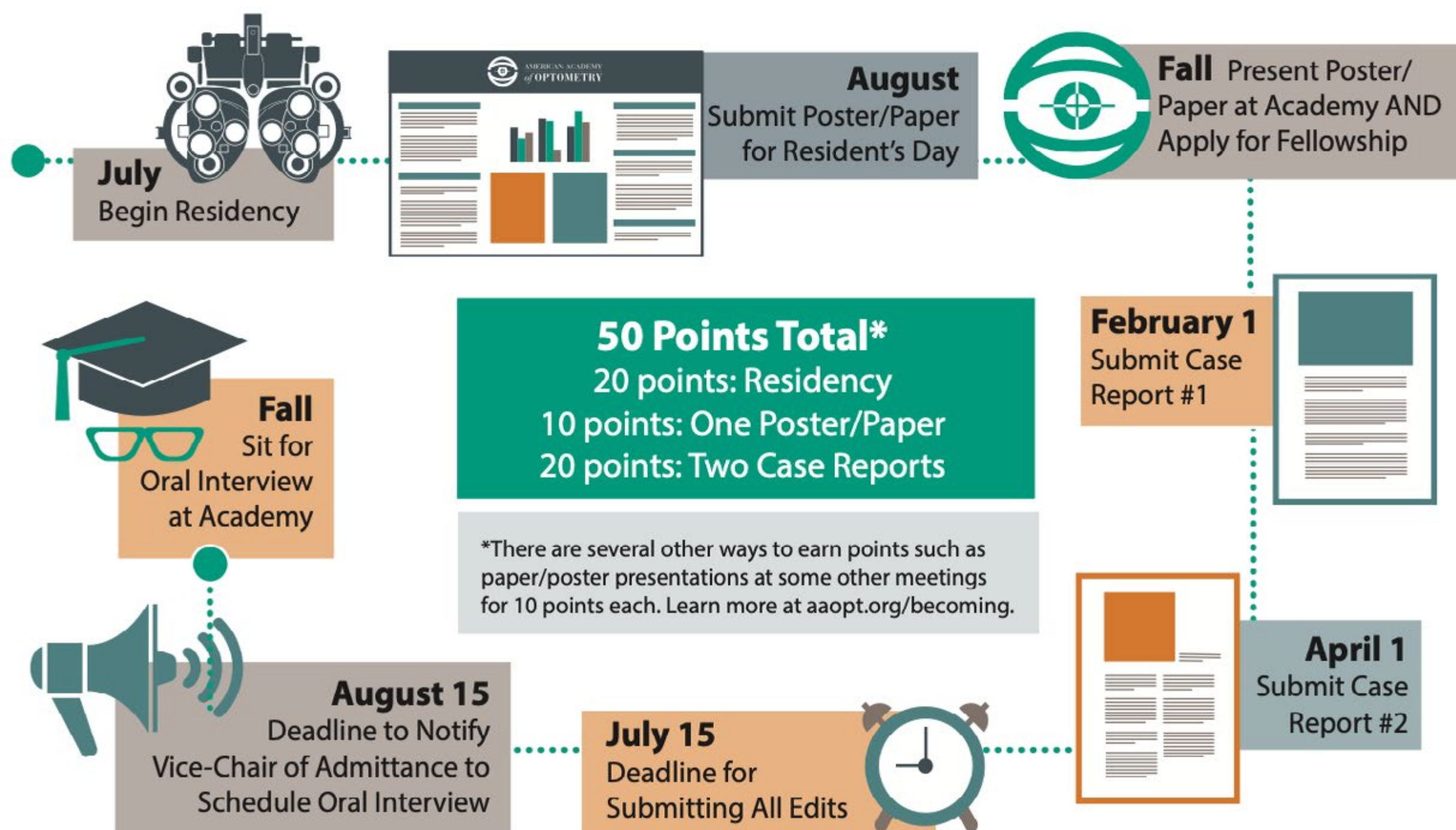
The American Academy of Optometry is an association of optometric professionals who strive to stay at the top of their field with like-minded colleagues and a commitment to promoting the art and science of vision care through lifelong learning. The letters "FAAO" after the name of an optometrist, scientist, or other professional signify to colleagues and patients that the rigorous qualifications for Fellowship have been met.

Member Benefits Include

- Use of the FAAO distinction and prestige
- Access to the latest scientific research and best CE
- Professional camaraderie
- Access to resources like *Optometry and Vision Science* and *Clinical Insights in Eyecare* and more



How to Become a Fellow in ONE Year After Starting a Residency



FELLOWSHIP CANDIDATE CRASH COURSE

A Mentored Path Toward Becoming a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry

- Fast-paced eight-week program designed to prepare participants for the FAAO application process
- Case report writing and mock oral exam
- Earn 10 points toward your FAAO
- One-on-one mentorship with an Academy Fellow

American Academy of Optometry

925 South Semoran Blvd., Suite 120

Winter Park, FL 32792

(321) 319-4860

membership@aaoptom.org

Financial Aid

Words of Encouragement

There are many milestones in life, but none quite as monumental as a graduation. It represents the end of an era, an accomplishment, and a transition from one life state to the next. For the graduate, it's an emotional day. One that's hard-earned and sometimes bittersweet. For friends and loved ones, it's a time to recognize and celebrate the achievements of someone dear.

It has been a pleasure for myself and Mrs. Delrita Branch to assist you in achieving your dream via financial aid assistance. Therefore, if we were able take one stressor out of the equation, i.e., if we took care of the money for you and allowed you to focus all that energy on actually being a successful student, we have done our job! Congrats and best wishes for your next chapter!

Next Steps if You Have Student Loans

All students with Federal Student Loans are required to complete Exit Counseling when you leave school or drop below half-time enrollment. The purpose of exit counseling is to ensure you understand your student loan obligations and are prepared for repayment. You'll learn about what your federal student loan payments will look like after school. The Department of Education will recommend a repayment strategy that best suits your future plans and goals.



Please log onto studentaid.gov to view a PDF file on the Exit Loan Counseling process. A video that describes the process and be found at youtube.com/watch?v=oPN2rpxCO0I.

- Assess studentaid.gov to find information on the topics listed below.
 - » *Complete Exit Loan Counseling*
 - » *Get information on starting loan repayment plans*
 - » *Find the student loans servicer*
 - *Learn about the role that student loan servicers play in the repayment process and which servicer handles your federal student loans.*
 - » *Enroll in, recertify, or change an Income Driven Repayment (IDR) Plan;*
 - » *Calculate payment options using the Department of Education's Loan Simulator.*
 - *This feature helps you estimate monthly student loan payments and choose a loan repayment option that best meets your needs and goals. You can also use it to decide whether to consolidate your student loans.*
 - » *Use the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Help Tool*
 - *Use the PSLF Help Tool to confirm you're eligible and fill out and submit your PSLF form.*
 - » *Complete a Direct Consolidation Loan Application*
 - *A Direct Consolidation Loan allows you to consolidate (combine) multiple federal student loans into one loan with a single monthly payment.*
- Private Loan Repayment options may include the ones listed below. With private student loans, your options will depend on the lender and loan agreement. Therefore, you will to work directly with your Private Loan Lender.
 - » *Extended term repayment*
 - » *Rate reduction programs*
 - » *Cosigner release*
 - » *Deferment*
 - » *Forbearance*
 - » *Immediate repayment: paying back the full principal and interest while you are still in college, starting as soon as you receive the funds. Immediate repayment minimizes the interest you pay on your loan.*

» *Interest-Only Repayment: Paying back only the interest that accrues every month.*

» *Partial Interest Repayment*

» *Full Deferment*

- Health Professional Student Loans are repaid via Heartland Educational Systems, Inc (ECSE) at the link below:

» heartland.ecsi.net/index

» *Helpful information on the loan:*

- *5% fixed interest rate*
- *A grace period of 12 months after enrollment ceases.*
- *Deferment and Forbearance options are available.*
- *Standard 10-year repayment schedule; minimum \$40/month payment.*

Sincerely,
The Financial Aid Department


LeChelle Hunt-Davenport
Director of Financial Aid


Delrita Branch
Financial Aid Officer



Information Services

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation. Here is what you need to know about your digital life after SCO.

Email

You will get to keep your email and maintain an SCO email account for life.

Your email address and login will change on or about August 1, 2026. Your address will change from **sco.edu** to **od.sco.edu**. So, if your current address is `jdoe@sco.edu` your new email will be `jdoe@od.sco.edu`. Your password will not change, and you will continue to receive email sent to your old address. When your old login no longer works, use the new one.

If your name changed while you were a student or if you want to have different address, please complete the following request: forms.office.com/r/XraUCnnECz

Office 365 (Word | Excel | PPT | OneNote | OneDrive)

- After Aug. 1, 2026 you will no longer have access to any of the Office 365 suite of applications.
- We suggest you create a paid Microsoft 365 account or utilize another online cloud storage account and save all your notebooks and documents there.

Here's how to move your OneNote Documents

- Export the Notebook: youtu.be/zufx3JM8MSI?si=OIR77t_QNZ1rOVsU.

- » **Open OneNote:** Launch the OneNote desktop application and open the notebook you want to move.
 - » **Go to File > Export:** Click on the “File” tab in the ribbon, then select “Export”.
 - » **Choose Notebook:** Select “Notebook” and then choose “OneNote Package (*.onepkg)”.
 - » **Export the Notebook:** Click “Export this notebook” and save the package to a location on your computer.
 - » **Sign Out:** In OneNote, sign out of your current account.
- **Sign In to the new account** you want to move the notebook to.
 - » **Open the Package:** Double-click the exported OneNote Package (.onepkg) file.
 - » **Choose Location:** OneNote will prompt you to choose a location to save the notebook. Select the location in your new OneDrive account where you want to store the notebook.
 - » **Share or Move:** Once the notebook is imported, go to File > Share and select the OneDrive location of your new account.
 - » **Rename and Move:** Rename the notebook if necessary and click “Move”.

Here's how to move your OneDrive Documents

- Download Files from sco.edu OneDrive:
 - » **Log in:** Access the OneDrive account containing the files you want to transfer via a web browser.
 - » **Select files:** Choose the files or folders you want to transfer.
 - » **Download:** Click the “Download” button to download the selected files to your computer.
- Upload Files to the Destination OneDrive:
 - » **Log out:** Sign out of the source OneDrive account.
 - » **Log in:** Log into the new OneDrive account.
 - » **Navigate to the OneDrive folder in the new account and upload the downloaded files.**

Instructional Technology Tools

(Panopto | Moodle | Teams | TopHat | ExamSoft)

As a rule, all of this will go away after graduation. If you have not passed boards, we can decide on a case-by-case basis to provide access to some resources but please reach out to Melissa Bloom at mbloom@sco.edu or 901-722-3333.

Dean Swick, MBA

Vice President for Information Services



Strategic Communications | Marketing

Press Releases

SCO sends out news releases to hometown newspapers and media outlets to publicize your graduation along with your senior portrait. Melissa Hansbro in the Communications Department has been in touch about updating the Public Information Form you filled out at Orientation for any additional details to include. If you have details about where you'll be practicing, this is a great opportunity to promote the name of your practice or where you'll be spending your residency. Please note that there's no guarantee that newspapers will publish a graduation story; however, midsized and smaller town publications will usually run these articles by July as they receive many this time of year.

Photos

All photos will be placed on the college's website in high resolution versions which can be used free and without charge for printing or social media. If you need your Hayes Center or senior portraits at any point in the future for licensure or other professional purposes, we're glad to provide the digital files at no charge by emailing ejaffe@sco.edu.

Yearbooks

Make sure you've updated your current address with Institutional Advancement or Student Services. Your 2025-26 yearbook will be mailed to you once the book has printed later this year.

VISIONS | SCOnline

Additionally, you'll begin to receive the *Visions* alumni magazine in the mail three times a year at the address you have on file. You'll also receive the monthly SCOnline e-newsletter as well as other announcements about special events like SECO or CE events. Don't forget to follow SCO on Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads, and Facebook.

Staying in touch

The college loves to share your news and success stories. Whether you join or start a new practice, get married/engaged, welcome a baby to your family, or other news, your fellow alumni enjoy keeping up to date with how other SCO graduates are doing. Please keep us in the loop for your news and accomplishments. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram where we share alumni news as part of our content. Current and future students get a sense of what their lives could look like once they've successfully graduated, so your ongoing success stories are an important part of SCO's message content. Alumni news can be sent to kflowers@sco.edu for sharing.

For questions or additional information please contact Jim Hollifield, Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing.

jhollifield@sco.edu | 901.722.3343

Jim Hollifield
Director



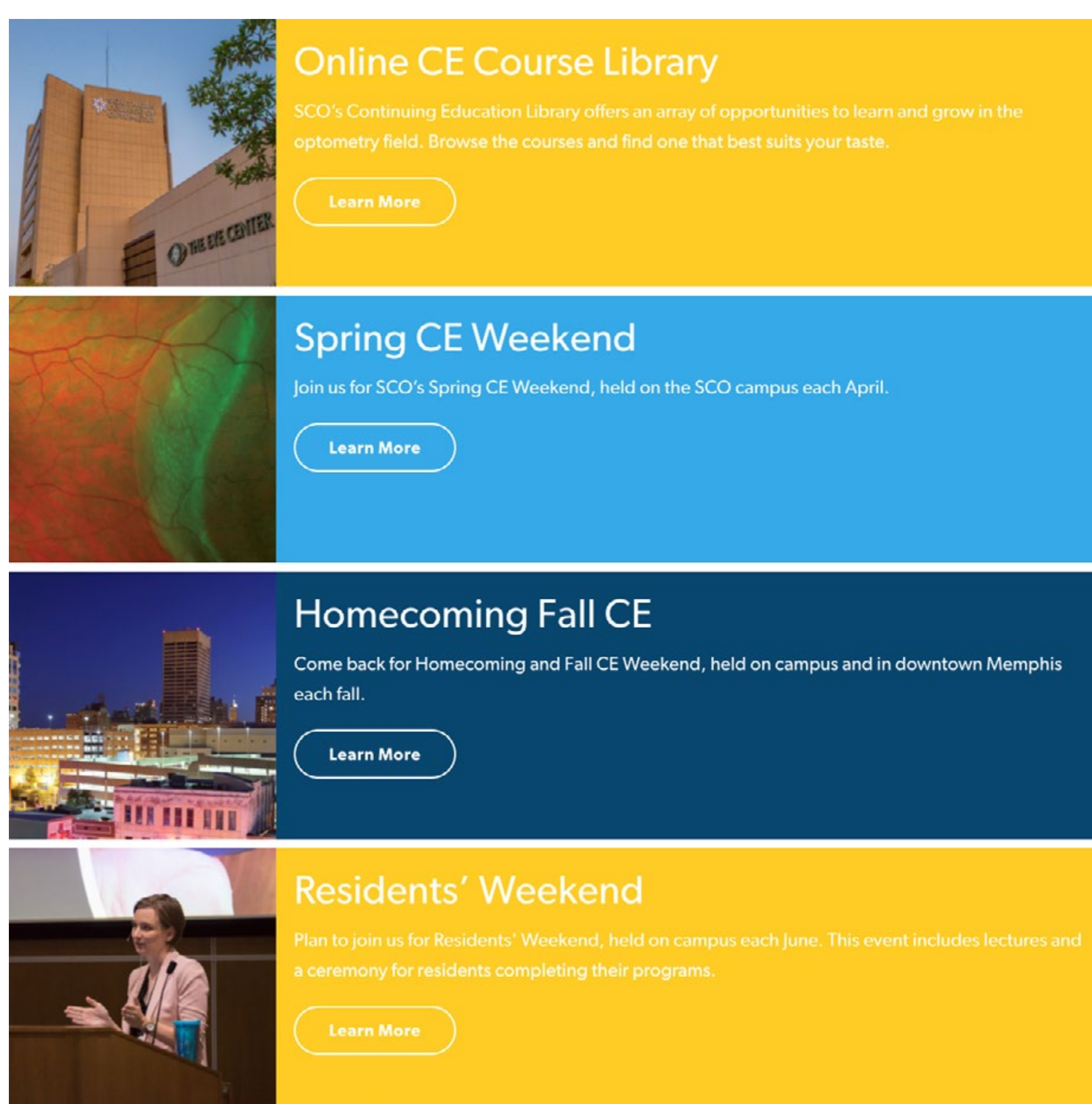
Continuing Education

Graduates, congratulations on this milestone! I encourage you to — savor, reflect, and celebrate!

- Savor this moment
- Reflect on the journey with gratitude
- Celebrate your achievement(s)

Following are several SCO opportunities to earn CE credits towards license renewal.

Please become familiar with your state licensure renewal requirements. (i.e., are CEE/Transcript Quality hours required, required number of ocular disease hours, allowed number of virtual hours, allowed number of practice management hours.



The image displays four promotional cards for continuing education opportunities, each with a distinct background image and color scheme. Each card includes a title, a brief description, and a 'Learn More' button.

- Online CE Course Library:** Features a yellow background with an image of a building. Text: "SCO's Continuing Education Library offers an array of opportunities to learn and grow in the optometry field. Browse the courses and find one that best suits your taste." Button: "Learn More".
- Spring CE Weekend:** Features a blue background with a microscopic image of a retina. Text: "Join us for SCO's Spring CE Weekend, held on the SCO campus each April." Button: "Learn More".
- Homecoming Fall CE:** Features a dark blue background with a night cityscape. Text: "Come back for Homecoming and Fall CE Weekend, held on campus and in downtown Memphis each fall." Button: "Learn More".
- Residents' Weekend:** Features a yellow background with an image of a woman speaking at a podium. Text: "Plan to join us for Residents' Weekend, held on campus each June. This event includes lectures and a ceremony for residents completing their programs." Button: "Learn More".

sco.edu/continuing-education

Questions? Contact ce@sco.edu or djohnson@sco.edu.

Another useful website to note is arbo.org.

Delores Johnson
CE Coordinator



The SCO Library

Access to library resources changes after graduation. Here's a brief overview of what you will and won't have access to going forward.

How we can still help

We are always happy to answer any queries we can, assist in finding free or low-cost resources, or do a citation search. If we are unable to help you, we will identify a resource or institution that can. Some institutions allow alumni to access their library collections for a fee, and while SCO does not offer that your undergraduate institution might.

SCO and Association of Vision Science Librarians (AVSL) are always presenting posters and lectures at Academy that are designed to address the gaps created by the loss of access to an institution library, so keep an eye out for those. We cover topics such as access to information/resources, managing research, and data management. We also take requests.

What you can't access

Subscription Resources

License agreements with our content providers restricts access to currently enrolled faculty, staff, students, and residents. This also means that your current login credentials will no longer log you into the library catalog.

Inaccessible Resources

Most full-text articles as well as ebooks and includes *Cochrane's*, *Ovid*, *EBSCO*, *Medline Ultimate*, *R2* and *VisionCite*.

What you CAN access

PubMed

A database of medical journals created by the National Library of Medicine which includes some free full-text (PubMed Central). This will be your best resource going forward.

AVSL List of Vetted Journals

Optometry, ophthalmology and vision science journals that have been vetted to ensure they are not predatory publishers and suitable for publication.

DOAJ

Directory of Open Access Journals is a database of free journals from non-predatory publishers with a broad subject focus.

Mendeley

Free research management software.

LibGuides

The library has created guides to research, publishing, copyright, AAO fellowship, and other relevant topics that are accessible to anyone. There is also a guide specific to Alumni with resources curated for your needs. If there is a topic you would like us to address on a LibGuide, please do not hesitate to reach out

Library Discovery System

The library catalog/discovery system has some free full-text that has been aggregated by our software producer that can be access without logging in to the library catalog.

Leslie Holland, MLIS
Manager
Library Services



Library Website

www.sco.edu/library

Contact Information

library@sco.edu 901-722-3237

lholland@sco.edu 901-722-3238

Institutional Assessment

Assessment, Alumni and the Path Ahead

Congratulations on your remarkable achievement in earning the title of Doctor of Optometry. As you prepare to enter this next phase of life, it's important to reflect on the journey that brought you here—your perseverance, your intellect, your support system, and your unrelenting pursuit of purpose. As you transition from student to alum, your relationship with Southern College of Optometry (SCO) is not ending, but evolving.

You are shifting from an internal stakeholder to an external one. In this role as an alumnus, your voice and actions continue to matter deeply to this institution.

Your Continued Role in the Life of SCO

As a new graduate, your influence remains strong through:

- **Participation in Alumni Surveys:**
Your honest feedback helps us improve.
- **Support and Engagement:**
Your involvement strengthens programs and services for future students.
- **Networking and Mentorship:**
Support each other and current students in their professional journey.
- **Advisory Roles and Volunteering:**
Help guide institutional initiatives.
- **Ambassadorship:**
Represent SCO wherever your career takes you.

We urge you to complete the **Graduation Exit Survey** — your final act as a student, but your first as an alumnus. You will receive the survey about week after your graduation.

Understanding Institutional Assessment

In a word, **Accountability**.

Assessment is about ownership — of outcomes, experiences, and growth. It requires the rare but vital ability to self-reflect and introspect. At SCO, we uphold accountability to:

- **Internal Constituents:** Students, faculty, Board of Trustees.
- **External Constituents:** U.S. Department of Education, State of Tennessee, Accrediting bodies (SACSCOC, ACOE).

Surveys and assessments you've participated in during your time here were more than bureaucratic checkboxes — they were the heartbeat of continuous improvement.

Assessment Beyond Graduation: A Life Skill

You may be done with school, but assessment will follow you into every goal you set. Think of it now as **personal accountability** — a framework for excellence in both professional and personal arenas.

Goal Setting: The Heart of Personal Assessment

All goals are not created equal. The key to success lies in *how* you plan, measure, and hold yourself accountable for progress.

Consider the SMART Goal Framework

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound

Example SMART Goal

- **Goal:** To enhance my diagnostic skills in pediatric optometry by completing a specialized continuing education course and participating in at least 20 pediatric case studies within the first year of practice.
- **Expected Outcome:** Increased confidence and capability in managing pediatric cases; enhanced services within practice.
- **Metrics:** Course completion; case logs; supervisory feedback.
- **Benchmarks:**
 - » **Month 3:** *Enroll in CE course.*
 - » **Month 6:** *Complete course and begin applying skills.*
 - » **Month 9:** *Log 10 pediatric cases.*
 - » **Month 12:** *Reach target of 20 cases.*
- **Target:** Certification and hands-on experience leading to specialty development.

NOTE: *Periodic benchmarks help you stay aligned, assess progress, and adjust your path as needed.*

Final Word: Excellence Through Habit

As Aristotle once said, *“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”*

Let this be your guidepost as you begin this new chapter — not just to aim high, but to follow through strategically.

Stay Connected. Stay Accountable.
Help the World See Better.

Contact the Department of Assessment at assessment@sco.edu or 901-722-3318.

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