



**ARIZONA COLLEGE  
OF OPTOMETRY**

**2026 COMMENCEMENT**



Arizona College of Optometry  
**2026 Commencement**

Midwestern University • Glendale Campus

Wednesday, the Third of June  
Two Thousand and Twenty-Six



## **ORDER OF CEREMONY**

**Processional:** *Pomp and Circumstance*

THE AUDIENCE WILL PLEASE STAND

**Introduction:** Kaila Dougherty, O.D., D.H.A., FAAO  
*Chief Operating Officer*

**National Anthem:** *The Star-Spangled Banner* by F.S. Key

**Opening Reflection:** Christina Esposito, O.D., FAAO, FOVDR, FNAP  
*Director of Student Achievement*

**President's Address:** Joshua C. Baker, O.D., M.S.  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

**Dean's Welcome:** Alicia E. Feis, O.D., FAAO  
*Dean, Arizona College of Optometry*

**Optometric Oath:** Caitlin Miller, O.D., FAAO  
*Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs*

**Presentation of Graduates:** Dr. Feis

**Conferral of Degrees:** Dr. Baker

**Graduate Hooding of the Class of 2026**

**Presentation of Midwestern University Coin  
Honoring our Military Graduates**

**Student Remarks:** Ammon Vaterlaus  
*Valedictorian, Class of 2026*

**Closing Remarks:** Dr. Feis

**Closing Reflection:** Kevin Helmuth, O.D.  
*Director of Clinical Operations*

**Recessional**

**Announcer:**

Christopher Lowe, O.D., FAAO

**Hooders:**

Florencia Yeh, O.D., FAAO, FSLs  
Vladimir Yevseyenkov, O.D., Ph.D., FAAO

**Student Marshals:**

Elizabeth Escobedo, O.D., FAAO  
Sydni Davis Farhat, O.D., FAAO  
Pierce Kenworthy, O.D., FAAO  
Taylor Bosch, O.D.

**Faculty Marshals:**

Sarah Huff, O.D., M.S., FAAO  
Rachel Stephan, O.D., FAAO  
Laura Addy, O.D., FAAO

**Mace Bearers:**

Matthew Roe, O.D., FAAO, FOVDR  
Michael Kozlowski, O.D., Ph.D.



## DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY CLASS OF 2026

**Maryam Abbas**

Phoenix, AZ

**Sarah Abraham**

Glendora, CA

**Aracelis Aguiar**

Miami Lakes, FL

**Sofia Alfaro**

Santa Clarita, CA

**Jared Baldrige**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Mountain Home, ID

**Kimball Booth**

West Jordan, UT

**Victoria Carlson**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Williamsburg, IA

**Talia Carreon Trimmer**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Albuquerque, NM

**Colby Charette**

Oakland, ME

**Chloe Delaney**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

*Gold Key Honor Society*

Herriman, UT

**Jared Denton**

Sherwood, OR

**Kathrine Do**

Wichita, KS

**Michelle Do**

Tucson, AZ

**Nicholas Ernst**

Dublin, OH

**Eden Feucht**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Denham Springs, LA

**Miriam Freeman**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

*Gold Key Honor Society*

Rifle, CO

**Christine Gillikin**

Miami, FL

**Alice Gong**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Chandler, AZ

**Cameron Hale**

Dallas, TX

**Emily Hansen**

Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada

**Kara Herman**

Parkston, SD

**Samantha Jang**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

West Sacramento, CA

**Jessica Janowski**

Prospect Heights, IL

**Isabella Jenson**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

**Ty Joinson**

Beaumont, Alberta, Canada

**Tara Kern**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Phoenix, AZ

**Allison Lewandowski**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

*Gold Key Honor Society*

North Mankato, MN

**Stephanie Long**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*

Mesa, AZ

**Choon Loo**

Daly City, CA

**Sara Mailatyar**

Scottsdale, AZ

**Benjamin Malmanger**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Faribault, MN

**Madison McClure**

Sheridan, WY

**Trae Megaffin**

Hays, KS

**Tanpreet Nagra**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Stockton, CA

**Kerstina Nasr**

Gresham, OR

**Keili Oxley**

Chandler, AZ

**Jay Patel**

Phoenix, AZ

**Weslee Pedroso**

Fountain, CO

**Grace Petrykowski**

Las Vegas, NV

**Rachel Pina**

*Gold Key Honor Society*  
San Antonio, TX

**Brooke Pratt**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada

**Melissa Rabe\***

Minot, ND

**Marshall Reese**

Spanish Fork, UT

**Katie Rizk**

Dakota Dunes, SD

**Lyssa Schabel**

Independence, KS

**Michaela Shaughnessy**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

**Quentin Shaw**

Salina, KS

**Jaycee Smith**

*Gold Key Honor Society*  
Highland, CA

**Amanda Solnitzky**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Albuquerque, NM

**Carson Summers**

Rexburg, ID

**Grace Valiant**

Lake Elmo, MN

**Heath Van Heuveln**

Rapid City, SD

**Ammon Vaterlaus**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Mesa, AZ

**Kevin Vazquez**

Miami, FL

**Lindsay Veglia**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
*Gold Key Honor Society*  
Phoenix, AZ

**Nichole Virgil**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Eagle Mountain, UT

**Grace Von Krosigk**

Sheridan, WY

**Caleb Wale**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Vanderhoof, British Columbia, Canada

**Madison Weaver**

Olathe, KS

**Sydney Wendt**

Gillette, WY

**Rachel Yee**

*Beta Sigma Kappa Honor Society*  
Elk Grove, CA

## 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 the diverse populations who seek my services, with concern, with compassion and with due regard for their human rights and dignity.

I WILL work to expand access to quality care and improve health equity for all communities.

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 doctors of optometry 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 a doctor of optometry.

I HEREBY commit myself to be steadfast in the performance of this my solemn oath and obligation.

## ARIZONA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY FACULTY

### **Full-Time Faculty**

Laura Addy, O.D.  
Taylor Bosch, O.D.  
Sydni Davis Farhat, O.D.  
Renee Doss, O.D.  
Elizabeth Escobedo, O.D.  
Christina Esposito, O.D.  
Alicia Feis, O.D.  
Robert Fintelmann, M.D.  
Javier Gantes-Nuñez, Ph.D.  
Kevin Helmuth, O.D.  
Wendy Huang, M.D.  
Sarah Huff, O.D., M.S.  
Pierce Kenworthy, O.D.  
Michael Kozlowski, O.D., Ph.D.  
Grace Liao, O.D.  
Christopher Lowe, O.D.  
Caitlin Miller, O.D.  
Ashley Olson, O.D.  
Krupa Patel, O.D.  
Matthew Roe, O.D.  
Rachel Stephan, O.D.  
Sarah Thomas, O.D.

Balamurali Vasudevan, M.B.A., Ph.D.

Eric Woo, O.D.

Florencia Yeh, O.D.

Vladimir Yevseyenkov, O.D., Ph.D.

### **Visiting Instructors**

Charnjot Bassi, O.D.

Gavin Jaime, O.D.

Michelle Sakuda, O.D.

Shaye Wang, O.D.

### **Adjunct Faculty**

Megan Baker, O.D.

Thelma Barnes, O.D.

Mike Bogaard, O.D.

Tricia Bogaard, O.D.

Cori Jones, O.D.

Rimpi Nakhwal, O.D.

Sylvia Panora, O.D.

Aaron Piranio, O.D.

Dianne Settlege, O.D.

Todd Smith, O.D.

Jasendeep Uppal, O.D.

## ACADEMIC REGALIA AND PROCESSIONAL

**Gown**

The gown is the cornerstone of the academic costume that has its origins in 12th and 13th century Europe, a period when universities were being formed. Today, Midwestern University follows guidelines established by the American Council on Education. All graduates wear black gowns, with the front panels of the doctoral gown trimmed in black velvet. Each sleeve of the doctoral gown is adorned with three bars of black velvet with bell-shaped wrist ends. The master's gown is unadorned, with the wrist ends of the sleeve open oblongs that extend beyond the hand.

**Arizona College of Optometry**

Discipline Color: Seafoam  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine**

Discipline Color: Kelly Green  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine**

Discipline Color: Nile Green  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Dental Medicine–Arizona**

Discipline Color: Lilac  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Graduate Studies Biomedical Sciences Program**

Discipline Color: Gold  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Graduate Studies Precision Medicine Program**

Discipline Color: Gold  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Graduate Studies Public Health Program**

Discipline Color: Salmon  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Cardiovascular Science Program**

Discipline Color: Gold  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Clinical Psychology Program (Doctor)**

Discipline Color: Royal Blue  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Clinical Psychology Program (Master)**

Discipline Color: Gold  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Nurse Anesthesia Program**

Discipline Color: Apricot  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Nursing Program (Doctor)**

Discipline Color: Apricot  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Nursing Program (Master)**

Discipline Color: Apricot  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Occupational Therapy Program**

Discipline Color: Sage Green  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Physical Therapy Program**

Discipline Color: Teal  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program**

Discipline Color: Gold  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences Speech-Language Pathology Program**

Discipline Color: Crimson  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Pharmacy, Glendale**

Discipline Color: Olive  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Veterinary Medicine**

Discipline Color: Gray  
Liner Color: Navy  
Chevron Color: Gold



### ***Hood***

The hood, a commencement accessory placed around the neck that drapes down the back of the graduate's gown, signifies achievement in higher education. Its velvet top layer is the discipline color of the program of study. Both the lining and the chevron trim colors are those of the college or the program. The doctoral hood is four feet in length; the master's hood is three and one-half feet in length. At Northwestern University, the hood is carried over the right arm of the graduate in the processional and is placed on the graduate during the ceremony.

### ***Tam***

All Northwestern University graduates wear black velvet tams with black (master's programs) or gold (doctoral programs) tassels that hang to the right front side.

### ***Honor Cords***

The honor cord, nearly six feet in length, is worn around the graduate's neck and drapes down the front of the gown. The different cord colors designate the academic achievement or honor status in a national academic/professional society. A graduate can wear multiple cords if he or she qualifies for individual honors.

### ***Northwestern University Coins***

A custom minted coin is a military tradition to recognize achievement, create incentive, improve safety, or show appreciation for duty, dedication, or a job well done. Northwestern University proudly presents graduates who are in the military or entering the military following graduation with a coin to honor their service to our country.

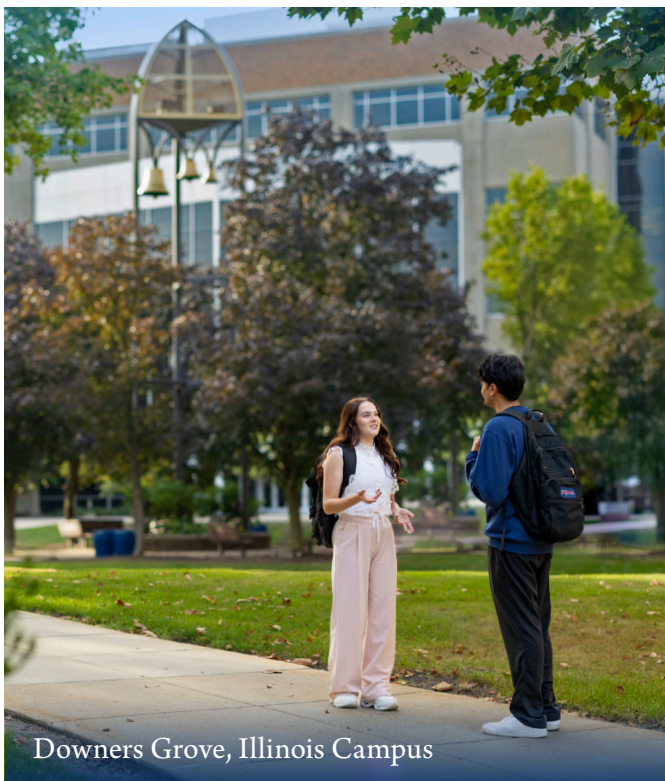
## HISTORY OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1900 as the American College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Chicago, Illinois, Midwestern University began with a clear mission to educate healthcare professionals in a not-for-profit, student-centered environment. Early leadership and faculty built a strong reputation for academic excellence and hands-on clinical training, helping shape the future of osteopathic medicine.

The University's growth reflects both vision and responsiveness to the needs of healthcare. In 1986, the institution relocated to Downers Grove, Illinois, creating space for expanded programs across the health sciences. In 1995, Midwestern University established a second campus in Glendale, Arizona, significantly broadening its reach and impact. Over time, the University expanded to include programs in pharmacy, dental medicine, optometry, health sciences, podiatry, nursing, biomedical science, and veterinary medicine.

Today, Midwestern University is a comprehensive graduate university with two campuses, multiple colleges, and a wide range of healthcare programs. Students learn in modern facilities and gain valuable experience through interprofessional education, clinical education, and community-based clinics. The University's One Health initiative further emphasizes the connection between human, animal, and environmental health, preparing students to collaborate across disciplines to address complex global challenges.

Throughout its history, the University has remained committed to its founding principles of academic excellence, compassionate care, and student success, preparing our graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing healthcare environment.





## ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Joshua C. Baker, O.D., M.S.  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

Thomas A. Boyle, D.O., M.B.A., FACEP, FACOEP  
*Dean, Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine*

Sheri Brownstein, D.M.D., M.Ed.  
*Dean, College of Dental Medicine-Arizona*

Jared Chamberlain, Ph.D.  
*Dean, College of Health Sciences,  
Glendale Campus*

Megan Dallianis, Ed.D.  
*Dean of Student Services, Downers Grove Campus*

Mitchell R. Emerson, Ph.D.  
*Dean, College of Pharmacy,  
Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses*

Alicia E. Feis, O.D., FAAO  
*Dean, Arizona College of Optometry*

Carla Gartrell, D.V.M., J.D., DACVIM  
*Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine*

Harold J. Haering, Jr., D.M.D.  
*Dean, College of Dental Medicine-Illinois*

Brianne N. Hobbs, O.D., Ph.D., FAAO  
*Dean, Chicago College of Optometry*

Sandra E. Inouye, Ph.D.  
*Dean, College of Graduate Studies,  
Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses*

Jeffrey L. Jensen, D.P.M., FACFAS  
*Dean, Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine*

Lori A. Kemper, D.O., M.S., FACOFP  
*Dean, Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine*

Coretta C. Patterson, D.V.M., DACVIM-SA  
*Dean, Chicago College of Veterinary Medicine*

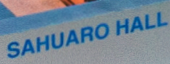
Sarah Radtke, Ed.D., ATC  
*Dean, College of Health Sciences,  
Downers Grove Campus*

Shannon Sesterhenn, Ed.D., M.S.  
*Dean of Student Services, Glendale Campus*

Yir Gloria Yueh, Ph.D.  
*Provost*



SAHUARO HALL





*Tomorrow's Healthcare Team*

Glendale Campus  
19555 North 59th Avenue  
Glendale, Arizona 85308  
[www.midwestern.edu](http://www.midwestern.edu)