



NEWS RELEASE

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Optometric Organizations Reach Agreement on Establishing New COPE Governing Committee

ORLANDO – December 18, 2018 – The American Academy of Optometry (Academy), the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) are pleased to announce a joint agreement has been reached to restructure the governance of the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE™). The newly established COPE Governing Committee will be comprised of representatives from ARBO, ASCO, and the Academy to assure collaboration and the ongoing advancement of the quality of optometric continuing education.

“After several years of profession-wide discussions, the Academy is pleased to announce that we signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreement to form a multi-organizational COPE Governing Committee. The collective strengths and unity of our organizations will ensure the highest standards of optometric continuing education and the sustained advancement of the profession,” states Brett G. Bence, OD, FAAO, Academy Past President (2015 & 2016).

COPE accredits optometric continuing education for use by ARBO’s member regulatory boards in assessing and determining eligibility for licensure by optometrists. COPE accreditation serves the public, regulatory boards and the profession by promoting improvement in competence, performance and patient outcomes.

“ARBO is pleased to announce this historic collaboration with the Academy and ASCO. We’re looking forward to enhancing communication and broadening decision-making by adding their expertise to COPE. I’m confident that they will make valuable contributions to the COPE accreditation process to have a positive impact on optometrist learning, performance and patient health outcomes,” states Richard Orgain, OD, ARBO President.

“As optometric educators, the faculties from our 23 institutions set high standards for ourselves and for our students,” says David Damari, OD, FCOVD, FAAO, President of ASCO and Dean of

Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University. “ASCO is pleased to join our colleagues from ARBO and the Academy on this agreement regarding the governance of and standards set by COPE. This collaborative effort will benefit all optometrists as they continue on the path of life-long learning begun in the schools and colleges of optometry.”

Initial nominations to the COPE Governing Committee are now underway, with the anticipation of completion in January 2019. Duties of the governing committee will include setting standards, policies and procedures for the COPE accreditation program, making accreditation determinations based on compliance with COPE accreditation criteria and policies, and preparing and presenting an annual report to the ARBO House of Delegates and the boards of directors of the participating organizations.

About the American Academy of Optometry

The American Academy of Optometry enhances excellence in optometric practice by fostering research and disseminating knowledge in vision science through its journal, *Optometry and Vision Science*, and the continuing education presented at its annual meeting. Fellows of the Academy are committed to the premise that learning is a lifelong obligation of a professional, as is the commitment to expand the profession’s knowledge base through ongoing fellowship and exchange. For more information, visit www.aaopt.org.

About the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry

The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) is a non-profit association representing the interests of optometric education. Founded in 1941 and headquartered in Rockville, MD, ASCO is committed to achieving excellence in optometric education and to helping its member institutions prepare well-qualified graduates for entrance into the profession of optometry. Its membership encompasses the schools and colleges of optometry in the 50 states and Puerto Rico. A number of optometry schools outside the United States are affiliate and associate members. For more information about ASCO, visit www.optometriceducation.org or contact Ms. Kimberly O’Sullivan, Director of Communications, at kosullivan@opted.org.

About the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry

The Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) is a non-profit organization based in Charlotte, North Carolina, and serves 66 Regulatory Boards of Optometry in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. ARBO's mission is to represent and assist member licensing agencies in regulating the practice of optometry for the public welfare. ARBO established the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) in 1993 on behalf of optometric licensing boards to accredit continuing education courses, providers and activities for license renewal. For more information on ARBO or COPE, please contact Lisa Fennell, ARBO

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