UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
COLLEGE of OPTOMETRY

Student Handbook

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ENHANCING VISION FOR LIFE
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OATH OF A STUDENT OPTOMETRIST

WITH FULL DELIBERATION, I FREELY AND SOLEMNLY PLEDGE THAT:

• 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 will be granted to me upon completion of all academic requirements.

• I will provide professional care for those who seek my services, with concern, with compassion and with due regard for their human rights and dignity.

• 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 optometrists 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 an optometrist.

I HEREBY COMMIT MYSELF TO BE STEADFAST IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS MY SOLEMN OATH AND OBLIGATION
**ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

*Academic Policy & Procedure*

The University of Houston College of Optometry policies were developed in accordance with the General Provisions of the University of Houston Academic Honesty policy: “Honor systems within the professional colleges are especially encouraged.” This document establishes the policies and procedures governing academic and clinical performance, as well as the general principles and expectations regarding ethical and professional conduct that apply to students taking courses in the professional program within the College of Optometry. The full document was drafted by the college Academic Committee, approved by University of Houston General Counsel, and is based on existing principles and practices established by the University Student Handbook, College Student Handbook, and University Eye Institute Policies Manual. Where applicable, the language, policies, and definitions are meant to conform to the University of Houston’s academic policies as defined in the student handbook. However, these policies and procedures are intended to address the unique standards of academic performance and conduct expected of health-care professionals. View the policy in its entirety at: [http://www.opt.uh.edu/current-students/academic-resources/academic-policy-and-procedures/](http://www.opt.uh.edu/current-students/academic-resources/academic-policy-and-procedures/).
NON-ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Rules of Conduct

Except for the following rules of conduct and those relating to academic matters, students disseminate their own behavior codes through approved student organizations and student committees established in cooperation with the Office of Optometry Relations. The college assigns great importance to self-discipline, the ability to work effectively with others, and the ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner. A demonstration of deficiency in any of these qualities will be deemed as evidence that the student is not suited to a professional career. The faculty of the college has the authority to establish and maintain standards of ethical and personal conduct for students in the professional degree program. The Dean is responsible either for enforcing all rules governing student affairs or for delegating the enforcement to others.

By accepting admission to the College of Optometry, students indicate their willingness to subscribe to and to be governed by these rules and regulations. They acknowledge the right of the college and the university to take disciplinary action, determined through regular process, either for failure to abide by such rules and regulations or for conduct determined by such process to be detrimental to the college or the university. The college may terminate enrollment of any student at any time for what the faculty and administration believe to be good and sufficient reasons, such as cheating, plagiarism, misuse of university property, or unprofessional conduct.

It is the responsibility of students to be familiar with University and College regulations and meet the conditions they impose.

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Sexual misconduct is unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. "Unwelcome" behavior is determined by the complainant (anyone who makes a complaint of sexual misconduct), and it is not the intent behind the sexual behavior that counts but its impact on the respondent (anyone who has been accused of committing an act of sexual misconduct) that constitutes sexual harassment.

For purposes of this policy, consent is an informed and freely & affirmatively communicated willingness to participate in a particular sexual activity (for a fully detailed definition of consent, please see Section 5 of the UH Sexual Misconduct Policy found here: http://www.uhsystem.edu/students/salutations/index.php. Alcohol and other drugs can lower inhibitions and create an atmosphere of confusion over whether consent is freely/effectively given. Being intoxicated or high is never an excuse for engaging in sexual misconduct.

Sexual misconduct may include:

- Sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking (for definitions of these terms in regard to this policy, please see Section 6 of the UH Sexual Misconduct Policy found here: http://www.uhsystem.edu/students/salutations/index.php;
- Use of graphic or degrading verbal, written, or electronic comments of a sexual nature about a person;
• Verbal remarks of a sexual nature, including sexually offensive jokes;
• Any unwelcome physical contact (touching, pinching);
• Actual or threatened physical assault.

Protection from sexual harassment applies not only to instructional and workplace settings but also to clinical settings, where the person exhibiting the inappropriate behavior may be a patient, relative of a patient, or anyone working in the clinic. *Sexual misconduct is illegal.* Furthermore, the University of Houston College of Optometry acts in accordance with the University of Houston’s commitment to addressing sex discrimination & harassment by complying with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This act prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits sex discrimination in employment. Sexual misconduct, as defined by the UH Sexual Misconduct Policy, constitutes a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII & Title IX.

Sexual misconduct may be committed by men or women, strangers or acquaintances, and may occur between people of the same or opposite sex. This policy applies regardless of the complainant’s or respondent’s sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. An attempt to engage in conduct that constitutes sexual misconduct under this policy may be treated itself as an act of sexual misconduct.

**Course of Action**

**Harassment by a patient:** If you believe a patient in a UHCO clinic is engaging or attempting to engage you in any form of sexual misconduct, you should excuse yourself from the examination room and notify your service director immediately. Your director will assist you in managing or resolving the situation. No student is ever expected to remain in a sexual misconduct-related situation in a clinic (internal or external), a classroom, or any other setting of the College. Sexual misconduct is rare, but it does occur and is unacceptable in the College and the University. Students, like other professionals, are expected to understand what constitutes sexual misconduct and to act accordingly.

**Other circumstances:** If you believe you have a reportable instance of sexual misconduct involving someone other than a patient, you may report your concern to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in OOR. You may also submit a report via UH’s secure web-based MySafeCampus ([http://www.mysafecampus.com](http://www.mysafecampus.com)), which allows the option of anonymity. You may also contact the Equal Opportunity Services Title IX Coordinator at 713-743-8835 to receive counseling or to file a formal complaint. Ignoring sexual harassment does not make it go away. Students should speak up, tell someone, keep a record of what happened, and seek support and counseling.

For additional information on ways to report incidents of sexual misconduct, please see Section 9 of the UH Sexual Misconduct Policy found here: [http://www.uhsystem.edu/students/salutations/index.php](http://www.uhsystem.edu/students/salutations/index.php)

**Code of Ethics**

UHCO follows the Code of Ethics approved by the American Optometric Association in 1944.
It shall be the Ideal, the Resolve, and the Duty of the Members of the American Optometric Association:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TO KEEP</th>
<th>the visual welfare of the patient uppermost at all times;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO PROMOTE</td>
<td>in every possible way, in collaboration with this Association, better care of the visual needs of mankind;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO ENHANCE</td>
<td>continuously their education and technical proficiency to the end that their patients shall receive the benefits of all acknowledged improvements in visual care;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO SEE THAT</td>
<td>no person shall lack visual care, regardless of his financial status;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO ADVISE</td>
<td>the patient whenever consultation with an optometric colleague or reference for other health professional seems advisable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO HOLD</td>
<td>in professional confidence all information concerning a patient and to use such data only for the benefit of the patient;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO CONDUCT</td>
<td>themselves as exemplary citizens;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO MAINTAIN</td>
<td>their offices and their practices in keeping with professional standards;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO PROMOTE</td>
<td>and maintain cordial and unselfish relationships with members of their own profession and of other professions for the exchange of information to the advantage of mankind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personal Attire and Hygiene**

Since the treatment of patients occurs in close proximity to classrooms and laboratories, each student is expected to dress appropriately and in a professional manner at all times. Students are required to dress in accordance with the clinical attire policy whenever in patient care areas. Students who are not properly attired or who have not observed adequate personal hygiene may be barred from patient areas by the faculty.

**Hazing**

Initiations by organizations may involve NO ACTION that is either dangerous or degrading to students. University of Houston’s Hazing Statement can be found at [http://www.uh.edu/dos/pdf/hazing_statement.pdf?6](http://www.uh.edu/dos/pdf/hazing_statement.pdf?6)

**Nonacademic Disciplinary Action**

Any student who engages in an act that violates existing UH student life policy and/or UHCO/UEI policy is subject to disciplinary action/sanctions, up to and including dismissal. [http://publications.uh.edu/index.php](http://publications.uh.edu/index.php)

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Contact Information**

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All students are responsible for keeping the Office of Optometry Relations informed of their current local address, cell or alternate telephone number, home address, home telephone number, and where they may be reached if employed. This includes keeping information updated in PeopleSoft and responsible for checking UH and UHCO messages which are sent through approved system accounts. Any students traveling out of the country on Mission Trips should notify OOR and provide emergency contact information.

External Clinic Rotations

Students spend 32 weeks in clinic rotations during the fourth year. Several of these clinics are in or near Houston and require no extra expense except for transportation. Other externship sites are located outside the Houston area, throughout Texas and beyond. A complete list of current externship sites is available through the Office of Optometry Relations. Students should plan for additional transportation and room and board expenses for extern assignments outside the Houston area. Externship site selection criteria is based on a combination of GPA and clinical performance to date. Students will make their selections in the fall semester of their third year. It is not permissible for students to arrange their own externship sites. All eligible students will make their selections from the college’s approved site roster.

I.D. Cards

Each student is required to have in his or her possession a photo-I.D. card issued by the University of Houston. Students may go online to your cougarnet account and click the cougar card icon. Upload a picture or stop by the CougarCard office located next door to the UH Welcome Center parking garage. If you have any questions regarding your CougarCard, please contact 713-743-2273.

Parking

There are a variety of parking options available for students through the Parking and Transportation Office. To view options and purchase parking permits, visit your cougarnet account and click the parking icon for more information. There is NO student parking allowed in the UEI/UHCO designated patient lot. Student vehicles parked in any unauthorized spaces on campus will be towed at the owner’s expense. Optometry students who park in the patient parking area may be charged with unprofessional conduct and will be referred to the Dean.

Right to Privacy

Privacy of student records and other personal information is protected under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended (PS. 93-380), (http://www.uh.edu/legal-affairs/contract-administration/pdf-documents/FERPA%20Authorization%20Form%20OGC-SF-2006-02.pdf) and by policies issued by the university. Students who have specific questions concerning government and university policies on privacy should consult the Office of Optometry Relations. Transcripts and other personal information will be released by that office only upon receiving written permission from a student or from persons authorized by law.

Campus Carry Policy

There are signs throughout UHCO which designate areas where concealed carry is not permitted. In areas not identified with signage, concealed carry is permitted; this includes our classrooms,
lunch rooms, offices, etc. Please be aware that you cannot inquire if an individual is carrying a concealed handgun.

If you see what appears to be an accidental reveal of a concealed handgun in an area where is allowed, use your best judgment and common sense as to how to react. Options would include doing nothing or calling UH Police Department at 713.743.3333.

If you see what appears to be a non-accidental reveal of a concealed handgun in an area where it is allowed, again use your best judgment and common sense, but the campus policy is for you to call the UH Police Department at 713.743.3333.

If you are aware of someone carrying a concealed handgun in an area which is a designated exclusion zone, e.g. clinics, the policy is for you to call the UH Police Department at 713.743.3333. For further information, see the campus carry website at: http://www.uh.edu/police/campus-carry/

EYE CARE SERVICES

Current students, faculty, staff, and members of their immediate families (spouse, children, stepchildren, parents, stepparents, and siblings) may receive eye and vision care at the University Eye Institute and affiliated clinics operated by the college. Covered children and most medical exams require a referral from the patients PCP for billing purposes. If you are unable to obtain a referral or if the UEI does not participate in your insurance plan, services may be rendered at no cost. Extended family members (grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and in-laws) may also receive courtesy reductions on vision and medical services, assuming insurance payment is not an option. Insurance policies will be billed and copays will be collected when applicable. Patients are also responsible for any un-met deductibles.

Courtesy reductions for ophthalmic materials are provided when applicable. The Service Director alone has the authority to initiate and to extend a professional courtesy for a qualified recipient, by a total or a partial waiving of the fees. A fee waiver form must be completed and approved by an Associate Dean, which will then be submitted to the business office for processing.

Student E-mails

All information sharing and correspondences with faculty, staff and administrators must be conducted through the official UHCO alumni e-mail account assigned to each admitted student. Failure to do so will null and void any correspondence with the intended recipient. Any communication or information sent from a personal email account will be treated as spam/junk/not received by the faculty, staff and administration. The official university/college operating hours are M-F 8am-5pm, excluding holidays, and e-mail and phone messages will be returned during this time. If your message is of an urgent nature (illness, family emergency etc.), note URGENT in the e-mail subject line and send a copy of the message to Melissa Mares, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at mmares@central.uh.edu. If it is after normal business hours and you are experiencing an emergency you may, in addition to emailing Dean Mares, send her a text message at 713.562.2149. For routine matters, text messages, social media or other forms of contact are not considered acceptable forms of communication. If a faculty member has provided a phone number in the syllabus and instructed you to contact them regarding emergencies via phone, you may call the number and leave a message. Send an email
message to the faculty member in addition to the call in cases where you must leave a voice mail, and forward a copy of the e-mail message to Dean Mares and/or members of the UHCO administration as appropriate. This will ensure your message is received should the faculty member be traveling or unavailable to return to call.

**Social Media**
This policy applies to the use of social media by UHCO students to represent or discuss matters concerning the College, organizations and/or members of the College community. “Social media” is a term used to describe tools and platforms that enable individuals to share ideas and content quickly and easily. Examples of popular social media include, without limitation, texting, blogs and propriety platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn®, YouTube, Instagram, Snap Chat and Flickr®.

This policy provides (1) guidance concerning the use of social media to represent or discuss matters related to UHCO, organizations and/or members of the UHCO community; and (2) sets forth rules for the regulation and administration of UHCO social media sites.

*Note: It is important to recognize, however, that the use of social media at or concerning UHCO is governed by the same laws, policies, and rules of conduct and etiquette that apply to all other activities at or concerning UHCO as well as the University of Houston. Please refer to UH Student Life Policies found at: [http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=4908](http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=17&navoid=4908)*

**Usage Guidelines**

**Rules for Posting to Social Media Sites:**
When posting to any UHCO social media site, UHCO affiliated site, communicating with members of the UHCO community, or discussing the College on any site (example: ODs on Facebook), even through your own personal account or using your own phone, computer or other device;

**Do**

- Remember that UHCO policies governing inappropriate conduct such as sexual (or other) harassment, bullying, discrimination, defamation, infringement of copyright and trademark rights, and unauthorized disclosure of student records and other confidential and private information apply to communications by UHCO students through social media.
- If endorsing UHCO, accurately disclose your relationship to the College when using UHCO sites, affiliated sites or acting within the scope of your College responsibilities.
- Carefully consider the accuracy, clarity, length (brief is better) and tone of your comments. Posts on social media sites should protect the College’s institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. *Remember, your posts may last forever.*
- Use your real name and indicate your relationship to UHCO. *Do not use pseudonyms or post anonymously.*
- Respect the views of others, even if you disagree.
- Be truthful, accurate and complete in describing UHCO programs and services.
- Strive to be accountable to UHCO audiences via regular updates and prompt responses when appropriate.
- Obey the Terms of Service of any social media site or platform in which you participate.
- Whenever appropriate, link back to information posted on the College website and/or College Facebook page instead of duplicating content. When linking to a news article about UHCO, check
first to determine whether you can link to a release from the UHCO News Room (http://www.opt.uh.edu/our-college/news-events/) rather than another media outlet.

- If posting to professional sites including but not limited to OD’s on Facebook, disclose within each post that you are a student of UHCO.

Do Not

- Use social media to harass, threaten, insult, defame or bully another person or entity; to violate any College policy; or to engage in any unlawful act.
- Post or store content that is obscene, pornographic, defamatory, racist, excessively violent, harassing, threatening, bullying or otherwise objectionable or injurious. In addition, do not attempt to compromise the security of any UHCO social media site or use such site to operate in an illegal venture.
- Post copyrighted content (such as text, video, graphics or sound files) without permission from the holder of the copyright. Remember, even information that is widely available to the public (such as text, photographs, or other material posted on the Internet) may be subject to copyright restrictions that prohibit unauthorized duplication or dissemination.
- Use the UHCO name, logo or trademarks for promotional announcements, advertising, product-related press releases or other commercial use, or to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- Disclose confidential College information, non-public strategies, student records, or personal information concerning (past or present) members of the UHCO community without proper authorization.
- Post video of class lectures led by a faculty member without their written (email is sufficient) prior approval.
- Post patient information subject to HIPPA policies and procedures.
- Make false claims or representations about UHCO programs or services, and do not speculate or guess if you do not know the information.
- Spread gossip, rumors, or other unverified information. Furthermore, do not assume that everything posted on a social media site is true.
- Transmit chain letters, junk email, or bulk communications.
- Be rude or argumentative, or use inappropriate language. [Correct factual inaccuracies but avoid negative exchanges whenever possible.]
- Be careless with spelling or syntax, or use language that may easily be misunderstood.
- Post a person’s photograph or video image without first obtaining permission and signed talent releases from anyone depicted in the photograph or video. Blank media release forms may be requested from and should be promptly signed and returned to the Office of Optometry Relations.
- Represent your personal opinions as institutionally endorsed by UHCO. If you are not authorized to post specific content on behalf of the College, then the following disclaimer should appear in your post: “These are my personal opinions and do not reflect the views of UHCO."
- Insult, disparage, disrespect or defame the College or members of the UHCO community.
- Discuss legal issues or risks, draw legal conclusions, on pending legal or regulatory matters involving the College.

Note: UHCO is not responsible for monitoring or pre-screening content posted on its social media sites but, reserves the right to monitor its sites and remove, without notice, any content UHCO determines harmful, offensive, commercial in nature, or otherwise in violation this policy or the law. If you become aware of objectionable content
posted on a UHCO social media -- or objectionable comments concerning the College that are posted on an affiliated site – please notify the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in the Office of Optometry Relations promptly.

Posting to Social Media Sites Not Administered by UHCO:
UHCO is aware that members of the UHCO community may wish to express their personal ideas and opinions through private social media that are not administered by the College. Nevertheless, UHCO reserves the right, to impose disciplinary measure upon students who use private social media sites or communication resources in violation of the Usage Guidelines in this policy or in ways that reflect poorly on the College, University or Optometric Profession, or are deemed to interfere with the conduct of College business. Use of patient identifying information and/or photos is never acceptable as per College policy and HIPPA regulations. In specific cases, such conduct may also be reported to law enforcement authorities.

With appropriate authorization, UHCO social media sites may be administered on behalf of (a) UHCO as an institution; (b) individuals, programs or departments; or (c) student organizations. Unauthorized use of the UHCO name, logo, or trademarks without the express permission of an authorized official of the College is strictly prohibited.

Any user violating university and/or college security policies is subject to immediate disciplinary action. Some violations may subject a person to civil and criminal sanctions. Both state and federal law provide punishments for unauthorized access and other computer/communications-related crimes. Federal law may apply when the crime is committed on a computer or communications device that communicates to another device outside of the state. The state and federal laws pertaining to information resources include, but are not limited to:

- Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986;
- Computer Security Act of 1987;
- Privacy Act of 1974;
- The Texas Public Information Act
- Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 (DMCA)
- Federal Copyright Law (Title 17)
- Vernon's Texas Code Annotated, Penal Code 16.01, 16.02, 16.04, and 33.04

Violators may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the College.

Any questions regarding site administration or Usage Guidelines may be addressed to the UHCO Office of Optometry Relations. Questions regarding copyright, privacy, advertising, and other legal requirements may be addressed to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

Mentor/Mentee Eligibility Policy & Procedures
- At the beginning of summer, after the OPT I students’ spring grades are posted, the Program Manager for Admissions and/or the Program Manager for Current Student Services (or another designated Team OOR member) reviews all OPT I GPAs to determine eligibility for serving as a mentor going forward in the program.
- A rising OPT II student must have earned a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher during his/her OPT I year in order to serve as a mentor and receive a mentee from the incoming OPT I class. In addition, a rising OPT II student must not have been on academic probation, an altered or reduced scheduled, suspension, or have appeared before the Academic Committee.
for other academic or disciplinary reasons. The rising OPT II student must also have satisfactorily completed all OPT I curriculum.

- The list of names of eligible mentors – including information on students’ hometowns and alma maters – is shared with the rising OPT II members of the Orientation Committee (OC) who are designated to match mentors with incoming mentees. No GPAs or other explanations of ineligibility are shared with the OC members. The OC members are instructed to refer any students with questions regarding eligibility to the OOR; the OC members should never feel responsible for explaining eligibility.

- The Program Manager for Admissions and/or the Program Manager for Current Student Services messages individually each ineligible rising OPT II student to explain the mentor selection policy and the circumstances of his/her ineligibility.

- OC members match mentors and mentees based on social media research, knowledge and requests of their own classmates and the information provided them by OOR.

- Around the beginning of August (or when the matching is complete), OC members contact mentors and provide them with their mentee(s)’ name and email address. Mentors are encouraged to reach out to their mentee(s) to welcome them to UHCO, share their contact information, encourage questions and interaction and, overall, establish their relationship prior to the OPT I students’ arrival for Orientation.

- OC members’ notes and the mentor/mentee matching information are shared with OOR to keep on file.

- College administration reserves the right to make changes to the Mentor/Mentee Eligibility Policy & Procedures at any time and reserves the right to determine mentor eligibility based on additional factors that may not be specifically listed here.

Later in August or early September, mentors and mentees are invited to attend an event celebrating their pairing and furthering the encouraging/mentoring relationship. Mentors go on to serve as sounding boards for their mentees when it comes to any aspects of the UHCO program, moving to and around the city of Houston and more. Mentees benefit their mentors by serving as patients as the OPT II students prepare for their pre-clinical practical exams.

**WHITE COAT CEREMONY**

The White Coat Ceremony is a tradition signifying an optometry student’s professional obligations and responsibilities in providing patient care. The ceremony is held the week we return from winter break in early January but this is subject to change. All second year students enrolled in the professional program are eligible to participate.

**BUILDING USE**

Your Cougar ID card provides access to the building outside of regular working hours using the patient entry nearest the surgery center doors. If you have an instance where you find your card is not working properly you may contact the Office of Optometry Relations. It is never acceptable to prop doors open allowing unauthorized individuals to access the building. This is for your safety as well as the safety of others.

Study carrels designated for optometry student use may not be reserved and items should never be left unattended. Whiteboards should only be used with dry erase ink and wiped down when you leave. Place all trash in the bins provided so the room is clean for the next student. If non-
optometry students are using the designated opt carrels, you may politely ask them to vacate the room. Report any issues to the Office of Optometry Relations so we may contact UHPD.

Refrigerators and microwaves are located in the lounges for your use. It is the responsibility of the students to clean the refrigerators on a regular basis. Custodial Services DOES NOT provide this service. If there is an issue with a microwave or refrigerator not working properly notify the Dean’s Administrative Assistant or report it to the Office of Optometry Relations.

Policies and procedures are in place and in accordance with University guidelines to request an event using our facilities, reserve space, seek approvals to serve food and/or alcohol and arrange for custodial services after hours. Failure to comply with policies and procedure may result in sanctions.

The Serenity Room is available to all UHCO students, faculty and staff for quiet meditation/prayer, as well as a designated space for nursing mothers. The room is not to be used for any other purpose, including studying. Please be respectful of this space and feel free to use it in the spirit for which it is intended.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For complete information about loans and scholarships or to obtain needed forms, contact financial aid officer, Scott Parker via email at sparke2@central.uh.edu or in person. UHCO Academic deadlines and Academic calendar may differ from the UH Main Campus deadlines and calendar. The EXCEPTION to this occurs with Financial Aid deadlines which are University System wide and applied universally. File all financial paperwork according to UH Policy.

Financial Aid Services

The college works with a university financial aid officer to assist students with loans, grants and scholarships. The financial aid officer is located at the UH Welcome Center and holds limited office hours at the college. To schedule an advising appointment or inquire about financial aid, please contact Scott Parker in person or via e-mail at sparke2@central.uh.edu

Educational Costs

Tuition rates for all UHCO students will be $612 per semester credit hour for Texas Residents and $1,127 per semester credit hour for non-residents plus the mandatory University and College fees. Tuition and mandatory fees for first year students will total approximately $24,897 (Texas residents) and $44,983 (out-of-state residents). * (Source: UH Office of Student Business Services; figures as of AY 17/18)

Books and Equipment

Students are required to purchase designated textbooks and equipment. Books and supplies purchased at the University Bookstore cost approximately $200 for the four program years. Students may be required to purchase a laptop or notebook
computer. Students may purchase their required first-year equipment kits through the Optometric Student Association for slightly below cost, which is approximately $2,200. Trial lenses and hand-held instruments—a retinoscope, direct and indirect ophthalmoscopes—are some of the required pieces of equipment that are used throughout the student’s educational career and later in professional practice. Additional equipment is required for purchase later in first year and in second year totaling between $1,000 and $3,000, dependent upon makes and models selected. A service policy may be purchased with the equipment. Students receive specific equipment lists and information concerning purchase and rental possibilities prior to enrollment.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The rigorous optometry curriculum requires the major portion of a student’s time and concentration and students should outline a financial plan that does not require outside employment. College assignments and clinical duties cannot be altered to fit work schedules and thus it is highly discouraged.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Before pursuing a degree in Optometry, students must consider a sound financial plan for their educational expenses early in their decision-making process. Financial assistance may or may not meet all of the student’s expenses. Eligible students will be awarded as much financial assistance as possible but not beyond their cost of attendance (budget). All financial aid awards are based on information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (www.fafsa.ed.gov) needs analysis form. A Student Aid Report is sent to the student shortly after applying. Financial aid is not awarded until the FAFSA is on file at the university and the student is admitted.

Many of the financial aid programs are funded by either governmental agencies or sponsoring individuals and organizations and therefore may be changed or eliminated at any time. All aid programs are subject to the rules, regulations and guidelines of the U.S. Department of Education, State of Texas, University, UH Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and the College of Optometry Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee. There are no special loan application forms for the Federal loan programs or grants. Applicants who complete the FAFSA may be eligible for these loan programs. Early applicants are given first consideration for these loans. The UHCO financial aid priority-processing deadline is January 15. All financial aid applicants are strongly encouraged to complete and submit their FAFSA online in October at www.fafsa.ed.gov

Scott Parker provides information on a variety of other private loan programs for students who need financial assistance beyond the traditional resources in order to meet their expenses. Credit based private loans are available from major lenders. Students are cautioned to borrow only the minimum loan funds needed and know your rights and responsibilities as a borrower. Remember, you can live like a student now and like a doctor later, or live like a doctor now and a student later!
**FEDERAL DIRECT LOAN PROGRAMS**

**Federal Unsubsidized Direct Loans**
These loans are for eligible students who show no financial need based on information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid; i.e. if their FAFSA Expected Family Contribution (EFC) figure is higher than their financial aid budget total. Current eligibility for this loan is $40,500 for the Fall & Spring semester and $47,167 for the 12-month period per academic period (Fall, Spring, and Summer). See also the Financial Aid Budget Limitation note. The lifetime maximum for both subsidized and unsubsidized Direct Loans is $224,000.

**Unsubsidized Direct Loan Interest Payments**
Students are cautioned to use this loan program only when necessary because the Federal government does not pay the interest while the student is in school. Students can make the decision to: 1) have the interest added (capitalized) to the amount borrowed or 2) make quarterly interest payments while enrolled when billed.

**Enrollment**
All students must enroll for at least 6 hours each semester in order to be considered for the Direct Loans. Per Federal loan guidelines, Summer enrollment will require a 6-hour minimum enrollment. Direct loan amounts are reduced for enrollment less than 12 hours.

**Interest Rates:**
The interest rate for the Direct Unsubsidized loan for the 2018/2019 academic year is 6.495%.

**Loan Origination Fees**
Loan fees for the Direct Loans are deducted prior to disbursement to the student. Presently, a 1.068% origination fee is deducted prior to disbursement.

**Lifetime and Annual Direct Loan Limits**
Total Direct lifetime limit allowed for graduate or professional students is $224,000, i.e., $65,500 in Subsidized and $158,500 in Unsubsidized Direct Loans. The graduate debt limit includes loans received for undergraduate study. Students are reminded that the maximum nine (9) month Direct Loan limit is $40,500. The maximum student can borrow for the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters is $47,167.

**Summer Financial Aid**
The only financial assistance available in the Summer is a Direct Loan. You must enroll for at least 6 hours to be considered for the summer Direct loan.

**Other Tuition & Fee Payment Options**
If your financial aid file is not complete by the tuition due date if you do not have accepted sufficient financial aid, there is an Emergency Deferment Plan available. This option will defer your tuition & fees for the current semester only. This deferment will incur an interest charge. Additionally, a student can also be placed on an installment plan if their financial aid is insufficient. Please see the Student Business Services page at the UH website for further details.

**Financial Aid Budget Limitation**
In no case will the student be awarded aid over and above their financial aid budget total. For example, if the financial aid budget total is $48,000, the total of all aid offered including grants, loans, scholarship etc. would not exceed $48,000.

**Over-awards**
Students can be over awarded aid due to a number of circumstances such as receipt of a late scholarship, change in tuition amounts, and change of residency status (out of state to in state), reduced enrollment and other circumstances. If the aid awarded exceeds the student budget, the university is required to reduce the amount of aid awarded and the student may be responsible for repayment of the over award. However, the student will still receive aid equal to 100% of their financial aid budget.

**Other Loan Programs**
Many state optometric associations and related organizations have loan or grant programs for
resident students. To obtain information or apply, students should contact their state optometric association.

Awards and Scholarships
The UHCO Scholarship Committee and/or the UHCO Financial Aid Office will notify by e-mail or the scholarship website (LINK) all students of any currently available scholarships. Each scholarship will have different requirements, deadlines and application forms. The UHCO Scholarship and Financial Aid Committee meet as necessary to review all scholarship applications.

College of Optometry Loans
A limited number of short-term loans are available for unexpected emergency financial needs. Students who experience such needs should contact the Office of Optometry Relations for information on this loan.
STUDENT SERVICES

THE COLLEGE’S OFFICE OF OPTOMETRY RELATIONS (OOR) PROVIDES STUDENT SERVICES FOR FUTURE OPTOMETRISTS. STUDENTS MAY CALL OR VISIT THE OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE OR INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

**Center for students with disABILITIES (CSD)/SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Center for Students with DisABILITIES will provide accommodation forms online for enrolled students. Per university policy, students are strongly encouraged to register for special accommodations within the first two weeks of class. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate accommodation requests. If you had an accommodation during any portion of your prior academic career, you are strongly encouraged to register even if you do not plan to utilize the accommodation. NOTE: The University of Houston reserves the right to request additional or updated documentation, even after a student has been granted an academic accommodation. It is the student’s responsibility to submit requested documentation to the CSD. Documentation fees are borne by the student. Students may choose to utilize the professional resources available to them within the University (Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Health Center, and so forth).

For UHCO’s program, there may be instances when an accommodation is not possible based on our curriculum and in preparation for the national board exams, which have a time component. Dr. Kim Lambreghts, Associate Dean for Professional Studies is available to meet with you to discuss in more detail. Assistant Dean Mares serves as the special accommodations liaison to work with the students and the faculty once an accommodation is approved.

For more information and/or to register go to [http://www.uh.edu/csd/](http://www.uh.edu/csd/)

**PEER TUTORING**

Students may request tutoring assistance through the Office of Optometry Relations. It is the student’s responsibility to identify the need for tutoring and actively seek assistance. The college tutoring program also provides a source of income for academically advanced second- and third-year students who have previously taken the course they want to tutor and have received an A in the course. Any student who has incurred academic sanctions (e.g. suspension, probation, altered schedule) is ineligible to serve as a tutor. Tutors will be assigned based on availability and are not guaranteed. Due to demand, tutors may be assigned to a small group rather than on a 1:1 basis and this will be determined by the Office of Optometry Relations. Students are highly encouraged to meet with faculty members during office hours to discuss areas you may be struggling. Faculty members are your best resource when it comes to their individual course material and are available to help you develop a study strategy so you understand the concepts and theories, and know how best to approach the material for academic success.

If you perform poorly on your first exam DO NOT WAIT FURTHER INTO THE SEMESTER TO REQUEST HELP!

**STUDENT COUNSELING**

Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Melissa Mares (mamares@central.uh.edu) and Program Manager for Admissions & Recruiting, Lyle Tate (dltate@central.uh.edu) are available to provide guidance and counseling for a broad range of student issues, both academic and nonacademic. Additional student counseling is also available at the UH Counseling and Testing Center (713-743-5454). Dean Melissa
Mares serves as the official UHCO Student Advocate for preparation with the UHCO Academic Committee.

LEARNING ADVANCEMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE COUGARS OF HOUSTON (LAUNCH)

LAUNCH, also available to graduate students, offers assistance in learning strategies counseling, study skills, time management and test anxiety. Counselors are familiar with the demands of the optometry program and have experience with counseling optometry students. All services are funded by Student Service fees and are free to currently enrolled students. LAUNCH is located in room N109 Cougar Village 1, building 563, 713-743-5411.  [http://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch/](http://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch/)

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

CAPS promotes the well-being of the diverse campus community by balancing high quality mental health services and clinical training with accessibility to foster student success through self-discovery, learning and interpersonal engagement. Reasons to Consult with CAPS

Notable change in academic performance, such as deteriorating class work, excessive procrastination, decrease in class attendance, disruptive behavior; papers with themes of distress, hopelessness, death, violence, etc.

If you are interested in any of the counseling services simply call CAPS at 713.743.5454 to arrange an Initial Consultation (ICON) appointment. ICON appointments are available throughout the week and can be scheduled at your convenience.

If you have an urgent question or concern, call the CAPS front office at 713.743.5454 and ask to speak with the consultant on duty. Dean Mares is available to walk with you over to CAPS if you prefer. CAPS is located at 226 Student Service Center 1, 4365 Wheeler and open from 8-5 M-F. For more information go to [http://www.uh.edu/search/?q=CAPS](http://www.uh.edu/search/?q=CAPS)

REGISTRAR SERVICES

The University uses PeopleSoft (MyUH) for all registration and student service needs. Students register and view their schedules at [www.my.uh.edu](http://www.my.uh.edu). The Office of Optometry Relations will remind students via-email of the time of registration and other matters including: academic records, residency status determinations, graduation, orientation, and degree confirmation. Notary services are available. The Office of Optometry Relations, Program Manager for Current Student Services, notifies all students of required courses and electives due to requirements, lab assignments, etc. If the student or Associate Dean of Profession Studies makes changes due to academic issues, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the Academic Advisor of any changes to his/her schedule and accept those changes through their PeopleSoft account. The Academic Advisor will assist in registration for course overload and changes made by the college after registration deadlines. Fees accrued through any course changes are the student’s responsibility, and a reimbursement will not be issued. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO CHECK HIS OR HER UHCO ASSIGNED E-MAIL ACCOUNT ON A REGULAR BASIS. FAILURE TO RESPOND TIMELY BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT CHECKED MESSAGES IS UNACCEPTABLE, AND EXCEPTIONS WILL NOT BE GRANTED.

MESSAGES
Students who must unavoidably miss classes or exams due to an emergency may use the Office of Optometry Relations to notify the college at large. However, students should contact instructors and clinic coordinators directly if they must miss an exam, class, or clinic. Students should then coordinate directly with the faculty member and/or the clinic coordinator, to arrange any make up work. Instructors and clinic should be notified before—not after—an exam or clinic assignment is missed. It is the student’s responsibility to verify that the appropriate person receives the appropriate notification. It is recommended an e-mail message be sent with a copy to Dean Mares, the Student Advocate to ensure your message is received. In cases where the faculty member is unavailable, Dean Mares will notify the appropriate UHCO/UEI Administrator. For absences or extended leave, individual faculty may require a doctor’s note as stated in their syllabus.

LIBRARIES

The Health Science Library covers the disciplines of optometry, pharmacy, nursing and physical therapy, and contains a core collection of medical books and journal titles. This includes an excellent collection of materials within optometry, ophthalmology, vision science, psychophysics, optics, vision rehabilitation, neuroscience, ocular pharmacology, psychology, general medicine and pediatrics. Students may also use the materials and services of the M.D. Anderson Library or any of the other libraries located on campus.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students enrolled at the University of Houston are eligible for a private endorsed insurance policy. Information is available through the University Health Center, 713-743-5151. The American Optometric Association provides medical insurance at low rates, or students may contract for health insurance at a special group rate. (https://www.uhcsr.com/AOSA)

Non-immigrant International students will be enrolled and charged for health insurance each semester to satisfy the University policy regarding maintaining acceptable health insurance coverage. A waiver of the health insurance fee may be requested online with proof of acceptable alternate insurance. (http://www.studentinsurance.com/Schools/TX/UH/) The insurance plan and University’s criteria are reviewed periodically and may be subject to change.

UH PUBLICATIONS-ACADEMIC CATALOGS AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

http://publications.uh.edu/

CAMPUS EMERGENCIES

UHPD

713-743-3333

uh.edu/police

The University of Houston Police Department (UHPD), provides comprehensive police services 24 hours a day/seven days a week. UHPD employs 55 commissioned police professionals as well as 160 security officers. Code Blue telephones with a direct line of communication to UHPD are located throughout the campus grounds, predominately in or near parking lots. Along with emergency and non-emergency incident response, UHPD offers a variety of community services including bicycle registration, vehicle watch, lost-and-found, as well as security escorts on campus. UHPD also offers programs on crime prevention, Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) system, alcohol awareness, and active shooter response and workplace violence among others.
UHPD monitors more than 1700 cameras from its 24 hour Virtual Patrol Room. This camera infrastructure has proven itself instrumental in solving many cases. Campus signage in the parking lots and buildings indicate to the campus community that areas may be monitored. For more information on UHPD programs and services, we encourage you to visit our website at www.uh.edu/police, or call our 24 hour dispatch communications center at 713-743-3333. The Police Department building is located at 4051 Wheeler, near the intersection of Wheeler Avenue and Scott Street.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
uh.edu/oem
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/uhoem
Twitter: http://twitter.com/uhoem

UH ALERT Emergency Notification System: www.uh.edu/emergency

The UH Office of Emergency Management (OEM), which is part of the Campus Safety department, is primarily responsible for enhancing and improving the university’s preparedness for emergencies, disasters and crisis incidents. The mission of the UH OEM is to support our campus community of students, faculty, & staff, to ensure that as a university we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

- Your instructors will know what to do if an emergency arises. Look to them for instructions and follow their procedures.
- Instructors have emergency information in their Syllabus and posters are located throughout the building and in the classrooms. Know your exit routes. http://www.uh.edu/emergency-management/planning-and-response/faculty-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-syllabus_v6-fillable.pdf
- Do not use elevators unless instructed to do so by emergency personnel.
- Fire alarms are mandatory evacuations. If a fire alarm sounds, stop what you are doing and evacuate.
- If you are unable to exit the building, go to the nearest stairwell or safe area of refuge and call UHPD at 713.743.3333 or 911 to report your location.
- If an active shooter or person with a weapon is reported in your vicinity, you may need to shelter-in-place if you cannot avoid the area. AVOID-DENY-DEFEND
  - AVOID: If possible, exit the building immediately and call 713.743.3333 to reach UHPD, or call 911
  - DENY: If you cannot exit, clear the hallway quickly. Remain behind closed doors in a locked or barricaded room, if possible, and stay away from interior windows. Use desks, chairs, or tables to barricade the door if it cannot lock.
  - DEFEND: Do not attempt to confront or apprehend the shooter, unless it is the last resort.
Students are urged to participate in student government at the college and campus-wide levels. In the college, each class elects representatives annually and students serve on standing faculty committees. Student affiliates of optometric associations offer additional opportunities to participate in student governance and activities. Information is provided by each college organization.

**AOSA:** *American Optometric Student Association*

The purpose of the American Optometric Student Association is to improve the visual welfare and health of the public, to promote the profession of optometry, and to enhance the education and welfare of optometry students. AOA is the voice of optometry as a whole and speaks as your advocate before the government.

**BSK:** *Beta Sigma Kappa*

Is the International Optometric Honor Society and their mission is to stimulate scientific attainment, academic excellence and the ethical practice of optometry; and to promote and provide financial support for worthy research projects relating to vision care and the eyes.

**FCO:** *Fellowship of Christian Optometrists*


**NOSA:** *National Optometric Student Association*

The National Optometric Student Association is the student extension of the National Optometric Association and is a service organization dedicated to providing the delivery of effective and adequate eye care to the minority and underserved communities. In addition, NOSA creatively markets the field of optometry in an effort to increase recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities into the profession.

**OSA:** *Optometric Student Association*

The Optometric Student Association is to promote the profession of optometry to students and encourage high professional standards within the student body. The OSA is there for the students to help contribute to and enhance the educational experience of its members. The OSA serves as a liaison to the optometric profession at the local, state and national level.

**SOPMA:** *Student Optometric Practice Management Association*

Our mission is to provide optometry students with the education, resources, and confidence necessary to pursue their individual goals as optometric professionals and preserve the integrity of the profession.
**STOA:**  **Student Texas Optometric Association**  
The Student’s Texas Optometric Association (STOA) serves as an open line of communication between the students and the Doctors of Optometry in Texas. Our goals includes; working to ensure that each community in Texas has access to the highest quality eye care continually providing Optometry students with up-to-date information regarding Legislation influencing Optometry’s scope of practice further strengthening the links between students and Optometrists in both academic and clinical settings.

**SVOSH:**  **Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity**  
The mission of SVOSH is to provide eye care services to all who need it, especially those who would not normally receive such care, primarily through vision screenings at the local level, eye prescriptions and eyeglasses at the international level, and finally to assist those patients in gaining access to the needed health care services.

**SPHVCA:**  **Student Public Health Vision Care Association**  
The Student Public Health Vision Care Association (SPHVCA) promotes health and wellbeing, with an emphasis on vision and eye health, through interdisciplinary partnerships. The goal of SPHVCA is to foster a relationship between optometrists and other health care advocates so that the overall health of the community is improved. All SPHVCA members also belong to the American Public Health Association (APHA).

**SAAO:**  **Student Chapter of the American Academy of Optometry**  
The purpose of this organization is to serve as an extension of The American Academy of Optometry to the students at The University of Houston. We will strive to uphold the mission and values of The American Academy of Optometry by promoting the art and science of vision care through lifelong learning.

**TSOSO:**  **Texas State Optical Student Organization.**  
TSOSO looks to strengthen these ties and build more networking opportunities for TSO optometrists and UHCO students, as well as inform students of opportunities and news TSO has to offer.

**Doctor of Optometry Program Curriculum and Course Descriptions**

The University of Houston Graduate Catalog is comprised of current academic policy and curriculum information pertinent to graduate and professional study at the University of Houston. The Graduate Catalog of the University is the document of authority for all students. Any
academic unit may issue additional or more specific information that is consistent with approved policy. *The information in the catalog supersedes that issued by any other unit if there is a conflict between the two.* All graduate and professional students are responsible for observing the policies and regulations governing this institution as published in this catalog and in other official publications. Questions regarding current information should be addressed to The Graduate School, Office of the Dean, 713.743.5284, 102 Ezekiel W. Cullen Building.

The University of Houston reserves the right to change the provisions of this catalog, including, but not limited to, degree requirements, course offerings, fees, and listings in the calendar as necessitated by university or legislative action. See Publication Disclaimer and Publication Updates as well as the degree plan outline and course descriptions online at [http://publications.uh.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=26&poid=9563](http://publications.uh.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=26&poid=9563)

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:**

The policy of the University of Houston (UH) is to ensure equal opportunity in all its educational programs and activities, and all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, veteran’s status, genetic information, or sex (including pregnancy), except where such a distinction is required by law. Additionally, UH prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment and educational programs on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Employees, students and visitors to campus with questions and/or complaints regarding discrimination, or sexual misconduct (such as sexual violence) under Title IX may contact Dr. Richard Anthony Maker, Title IX Coordinator and Assistant VC/VP for Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) for the U. S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Dr. Barker serves as the Title IX Coordinator as well as the ADA Section 504 Coordinator for UH and can be contacted at:

**Dr. Richard Anthony Baker**  
4367 Wheeler St., Houston, TX 77204  
[eos@uh.edu](mailto:eos@uh.edu)  
(f) 713.743.8835