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**THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPTOMETRY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
THE 2020 VSP PRACTICE EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

ORLANDO, FL (October 29, 2020) The American Academy of Optometry Foundation, an affiliate of the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), and VSP Global® are pleased to announce the recipients of this year's Practice Excellence Scholarships. Nearly \$164,000 were distributed to several top-performing fourth-year optometry students in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Canada.

"We are honored to celebrate these incredible students as they move closer to starting their careers in eye care," said VSP Global Board Chairman Gordon W. Jennings, OD. "The Practice Excellence Scholarship is another demonstration of our 65-year commitment to deliver support and opportunities for optometry's next generation."

The scholarships are funded by VSP Global and administered through the AAOF. In total, VSP has awarded more than \$2.5 million in scholarships to optometry students.

The Practice Excellence Scholarship is a long-standing and prestigious award that represents the very best in what optometry has to offer in patient care, practice management and in the communities. Only two recipients from each of the 25 schools and colleges of Optometry were selected from nomination submitted by their individual institutions. Scholarship recipients were selected based on key criteria including the student's commitment to enter the independent practice of optometry, and their clinical and academic performance.

"We are very grateful for VSP's foresight in establishing these awards and their dedicated commitment to support the future of optometry," said Pete Kollbaum, OD, PhD, FAAO, and President of the American Academy of Optometry Foundation. "Through VSP's support of these future leaders, and their continued partnership with the Foundation, they demonstrate an unwavering commitment to not only advance optometry but more importantly advance the clinical care patients receive for generations to come."

The recipients were recognized at a special virtual reception hosted by VSP Global®.

2020 Practice Excellence Scholarship recipients are:

- Chicago College of Optometry at Midwestern University — Michael DeStefano & Rema Idriss
- Illinois College of Optometry — Phoebe Chow & Randi-Jo Francis
- Indiana University School of Optometry — Sydney Lehman & Nina Rettig
- Inter American University of Puerto Rico, School of Optometry — Safinaz Gamini & Jessica Bertemati
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences — Carolyn Te & Cynthia Noorani
- Michigan College of Optometry — Azra Fazil-Jamal & Amanda Kruse
- Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry — Bryan Grossman & Tyler Boyack
- New England College of Optometry — Jonathan Elin-Calcadore & Nathan Bates

- Northeastern State University Oklahoma, College of Optometry — Kayla Cook & Kristina Flaig
- NOVA Southeastern University College of Optometry — Erik Kelly & Austin Mason
- Ohio State University College of Optometry — Kirsten Sullivan & Veronica Schuver
- Pacific University College of Optometry — Christina Goodrich & Megan Schmauder
- Pennsylvania College of Optometry — Gina Piorkowski & Tanya Vigdal
- Rosenberg School of Optometry — Bilal Ismail & Michelle Nguyen
- Southern California College of Optometry — Bradley Kovach & Lauren Zabaleta
- Southern College of Optometry – Jonathan Eide & Alec Waters
- State University of New York College of Optometry — Anthony Boyd & Emily Shtull
- University of Alabama at Birmingham — Sarah Kate Day & Whitney Powell
- University of California-Berkeley, School of Optometry — Joanna Toner & Jeffrey Kong
- University of Houston, College of Optometry — Linus Klingler & Sarah Wilting
- University of Missouri–St. Louis, College of Optometry — Katelyn Flood & Kyle Carnahan
- University of Montreal, School of Optometry — Anabel Cormier & Ariane Dupont
- University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Optometry — Hannah Sigmon & Ambrosia Makini
- University of Waterloo, School of Optometry and Vision Science — Joanne Han Qiao & Christina Chen
- Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry — Suparna Bajaj & Alexander Bennett

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About VSP Global

VSP Global is a doctor-governed company that exists to create value for members and opportunities for VSP network doctors. Our industry-leading businesses include VSP® Vision Care, the only national not-for-profit vision benefits company, which provides access to eye care for nearly 90 million members through a network of over 40,000 doctors worldwide; Marchon® Eyewear Inc., one of the world's largest designers, manufacturers and distributors of high-quality eyewear and sunwear; VSP Optics, industry leaders in ophthalmic technology and lab services, providing custom lens solutions for the vision and lifestyle needs of patients; Eyefinity®, the industry leader in practice management and electronic health record software; VSP Retail, which focuses on increasing access to eye care and eyewear through multiple channels, and VSP® Ventures, which offers care-focused, customized choices for doctors looking to transition their practice.

About the American Academy of Optometry

The American Academy of Optometry (AAO) inspires 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 the website: <http://www.aaopt.org>.

About the American Academy of Optometry Foundation

The American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF) is the 501(c)(3) philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Optometry (AAO) and was founded in 1947 for the "upholding, broadening, fostering, promoting and aiding of optometric education; the profession of optometry and its practitioners." The organization provides financial support for optometric research and vision and eye health education to improve patient clinical care. For more information, visit the website: <https://www.aaopt.org/home/aaof>.