

## So you want to be an optometrist...

Optometry is one of the fastest-growing professions in the United States. In particular, as the number of Americans over age 65 continues to increase, the need for skilled doctors who can diagnose, treat, and manage eye health is greater than ever.

If you're looking to make an immediate and powerful impact on the lives of patients, optometry could be the ideal career path. Optometrists enjoy excellent work/life balance while still providing essential care to patients of all ages. Obtain your OD degree in just four years, and you'll be changing lives for the better before you know it.

# Great Experiences Forge Great Doctors

Great doctors provide much more than treatment. They give their patients freedom, independence, and confidence. They give them the promise of a brighter, healthier future. They turn a simple act – like performing an eye exam – into a moment that changes a life for the better.

At New England College of Optometry (NECO), we believe that the key to training great doctors lies in providing innovative, enlightening experiences that shape the earliest stages of their careers. From invaluable clinical work to vibrant classroom discussions and groundbreaking research opportunities, every moment of your NECO training will pay dividends for a lifetime.

We pride ourselves on preparing exemplary doctors who advance the field of eye care while treating every patient with compassion and understanding. This has been our purpose for over a century – and we're just getting started.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Many diseases like diabetes and hypertension can be detected through an eye examination. In addition to prescribing glasses and contact lenses and treating eye disorders, optometrists play an important role in a patient's overall health by detecting diseases and collaborating with other healthcare professionals.

### Facts about optometry:

<b>Job Growth</b> The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates optometry will grow by 27% – an increase of about 11,000 new jobs – between 2014 and 2024.	<b>Opportunity</b> ODs practice in more than 7,000 communities throughout the U.S., providing two-thirds of primary eye and vision care services in the country.
<b>Salary</b> The average annual salary for optometrists in 2016 was over \$106,000.	<b>Quality of Life</b> Optometrists can create flexible work schedules, working full or part time. They receive minimal emergency calls related to patients.
<b>Location</b> Optometrists have the freedom and flexibility to live and practice almost anywhere they choose.	<b>Specialization</b> Optometrists can specialize in areas such as pediatric or geriatric eye care, low vision, contact lenses, sports vision, vision rehabilitation, and ocular disease.
<b>Residencies</b> Many optometrists choose to do a specialized one-year post-graduate residency training program. ODs gain additional specialized skills in areas such as geriatrics, low vision, ocular disease, and pediatrics.	<b>Modes of Practice</b> Optometrists work in a variety of settings. Around half work in stand-alone practices. Others work in hospitals, VA medical centers, community health centers, military practice, as well as retail, research, corporate, and academic settings.



## Your Journey Begins Here

Step into our historic building in the heart of Boston and you'll notice that every corner of New England College of Optometry is abuzz with activity. From our anatomy lab and pre-clinic on the fourth floor, where students hone their skills, to the cafe, Community Commons, and library on the ground level, where they swap notes, study together, and relax, the vibrant energy of our campus reflects the dynamic and innovative optometric education we have championed since 1894.

### *Forward-looking History*

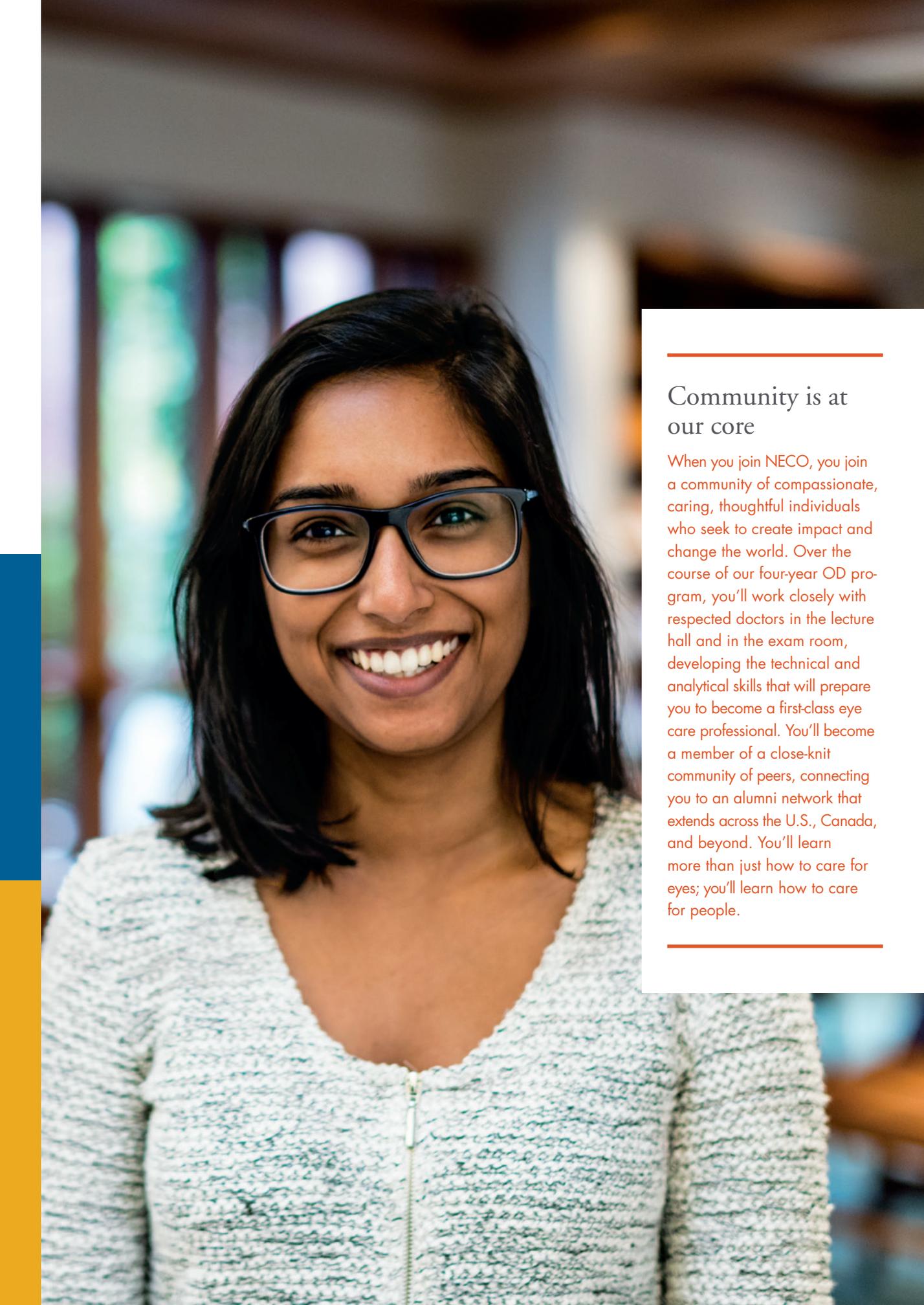
NECO has played an integral role in the field of optometry for nearly 125 years. Our graduates have improved the lives of countless patients with their attentive care, public policy work, and research. With that history in mind, we keep our sights on the future and continue to focus on delivering the essential experiences that will forge the next generation of great doctors.



As the **oldest continuously operating optometry school** in the country, NECO has been shaping the field **since 1894.**

“I have a family here – supportive classmates, helpful upperclassmen, and understanding professors. The NECO community shapes students not only into great optometrists, but into great people.”

• POONAM BHAVSAR, '20



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## Community is at our core

When you join NECO, you join a community of compassionate, caring, thoughtful individuals who seek to create impact and change the world. Over the course of our four-year OD program, you'll work closely with respected doctors in the lecture hall and in the exam room, developing the technical and analytical skills that will prepare you to become a first-class eye care professional. You'll become a member of a close-knit community of peers, connecting you to an alumni network that extends across the U.S., Canada, and beyond. You'll learn more than just how to care for eyes; you'll learn how to care for people.

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# The NECO Academic Approach

## *Interweaving Classroom and Clinic*

NECO's four-year OD program comprises both lecture- and lab-based academic coursework as well as hands-on clinical experiences. Concepts introduced during lectures come to life when you observe them while examining a real patient. By the same token, your experience in clinics adds new depth and context to your classroom discussions. In this way, the two primary dimensions of your education – clinical and academic work – complement and enhance each other, preparing you for a lifetime of success in optometry.



“I appreciate that we start applying the skills we’ve learned in class to our clinical work early in our first semester. This has made a huge impact on my overall experience and education at NECO.”

• TINA KHIEU, '20

# Customize Your Experience

Just because all students follow the same four-year OD curriculum doesn't mean your NECO experience will be identical to your peers'. From additional coursework and research opportunities to how you spend your fourth year, there are a variety of ways to make the NECO experience uniquely yours.

## Concentrations

- Specialize in pediatric or contact lenses tracks
- Pair with a faculty mentor in area of specialty
- Follow four-year OD curriculum augmented with seminars outside of class, targeted coursework, and focused clinical placements
- Graduate with extremely marketable skills for jobs and residency programs

## Dual Degree Programs

- Apply in the first year to the OD/MS program (four years) or the OD/PhD program (seven years, available through a partnership with Boston University)
- Receive a broad background in vision science and strong training in research
- Conduct original research project with a faculty mentor and complete/defend thesis

## Special Populations Elective Courses (SPEC)

- Apply to courses in third year
- Focus on specialty areas of optometry – pediatrics, low vision, advanced contact lenses, vision therapy, and individuals with disabilities
- Take courses with weekly mentoring meetings, grand rounds presentations, self-study written papers, case presentations, journal clubs, and additional clinical experiences

## Research

- Collaborate on research projects with NECO faculty or researchers at nearby institutions in Boston such as the Schepens Eye Research Institute
- Contribute to research in vision science, biomedical science and disease, or clinical research

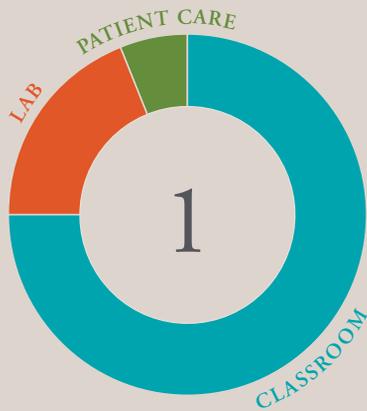
## Clinical Rotations

- Choose four three-month clinical rotations from opportunities at over 150 locations in the U.S., Canada, and around the world
- Select one externship in a specialty care mode of practice (vision therapy, pediatrics, specialty contact lenses, or low vision)
- Choose an elective rotation to explore an area of interest, a particular mode of practice, or a specific location

## Residencies

- Participate in year-long post-graduate placement to develop additional competency and advanced skill in a specialty such as ocular disease, cornea/contact lens, pediatric optometry, and community health optometry
- Focus on specific mode of practice, and participate in grand rounds, teaching, scholarship, and self-directed learning
- Choose from residency programs through NECO, as well as peer institutions across the country

## OD PROGRAM AT A GLANCE



### YEAR ONE

Within the first few weeks, first-year students provide patient care by performing vision screenings on students at local public schools, testing children for potential vision problems. Your coursework includes anatomy, physiology, and other basic sciences, as well as the fundamentals of vision and optics. You learn the basics of public health, exploring how the social, ethical, and policy issues of the current healthcare environment impact the optometry profession. Throughout the first year, a thoughtful combination of didactic and clinical coursework – including simulations and practical labs – will ensure that you're prepared to deliver quality eye care as an important team member at your clinical assignments.



### YEAR TWO

In the second year, students spend time as a member of an eye care team working with doctors to deliver comprehensive eye exams. In the classroom and in labs, you'll focus on advanced optics concepts, general medicine and pharmacology, and practice management. You'll also cover ocular disease and concentrate more deeply on advanced principles of patient communication. By the end of the year, you'll be well versed in comprehensive eye exams, formulating diagnoses, and developing patient care plans.





### YEAR THREE

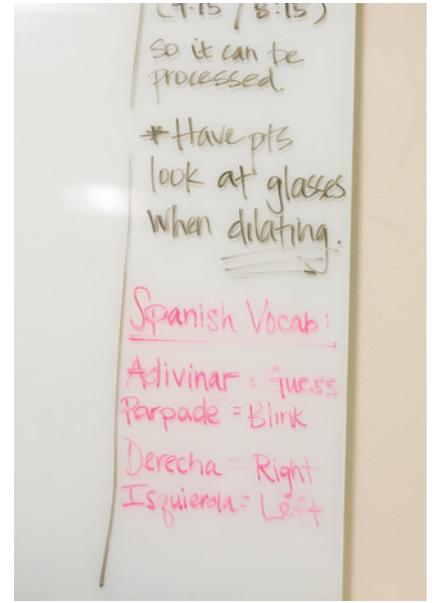
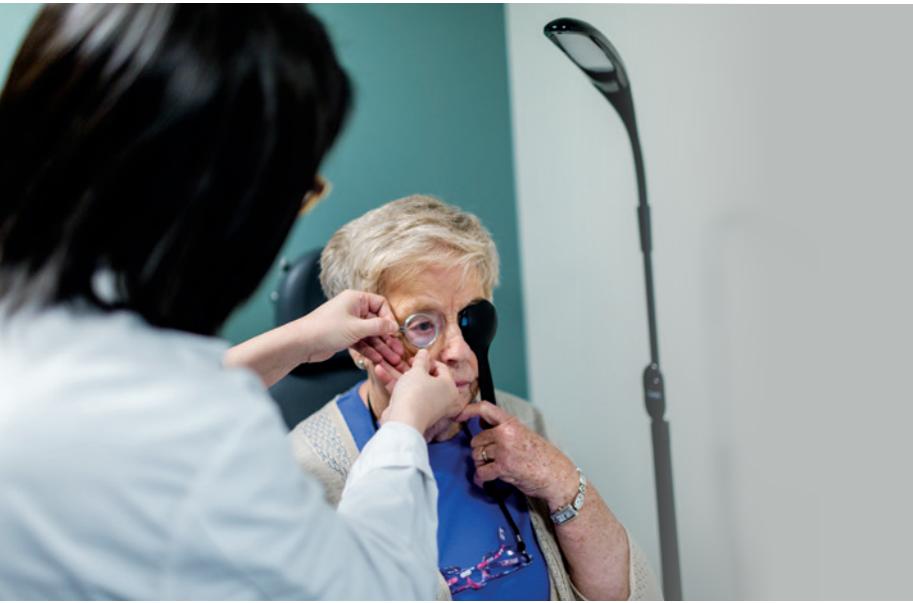
Third-year students provide comprehensive eye care to patients under the supervision of a member of the NECO clinical faculty. Your coursework covers advanced topics in ocular disease, diagnostic techniques, and treatment of pediatric and low vision patients. You will delve into the principles of managing an optometric practice, then develop and present a business plan. You can also choose from elective seminars focusing on areas such as community health, special populations, and advanced care. At the end of the year, you will take the first part of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry exam, which covers basic science and pharmacology.



### YEAR FOUR

The fourth and final year is devoted entirely to clinical work. You will participate in four full-time rotations at affiliate sites in various locations across the country and internationally. Each location will expose you to new patient populations, challenging you to apply the technical, analytic, and diagnostic skills acquired during your previous three years. You will sit the remaining two parts of the National Board exam, which will prepare you to embark on your career as a licensed optometrist.





## Clinical Experience

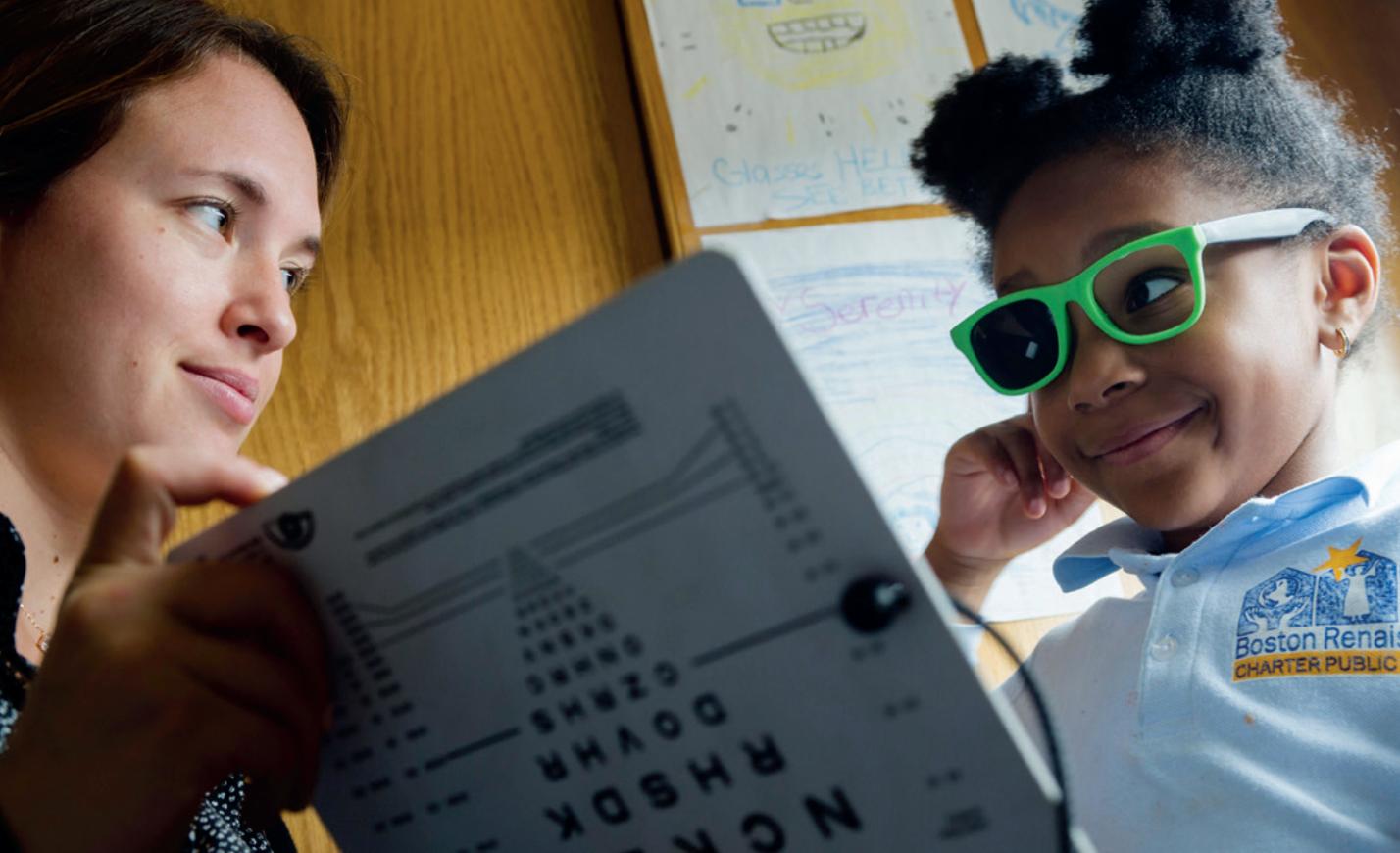
### *Practicing Compassionate Care*

There's no substitute for hands-on experience – which is why you'll see your first patient within weeks of starting at NECO. First-year students immediately dive into performing vision screenings, discovering not only how to apply the principles introduced in the classroom, but also how to develop as compassionate clinicians who forge authentic connections with the patients they care for.

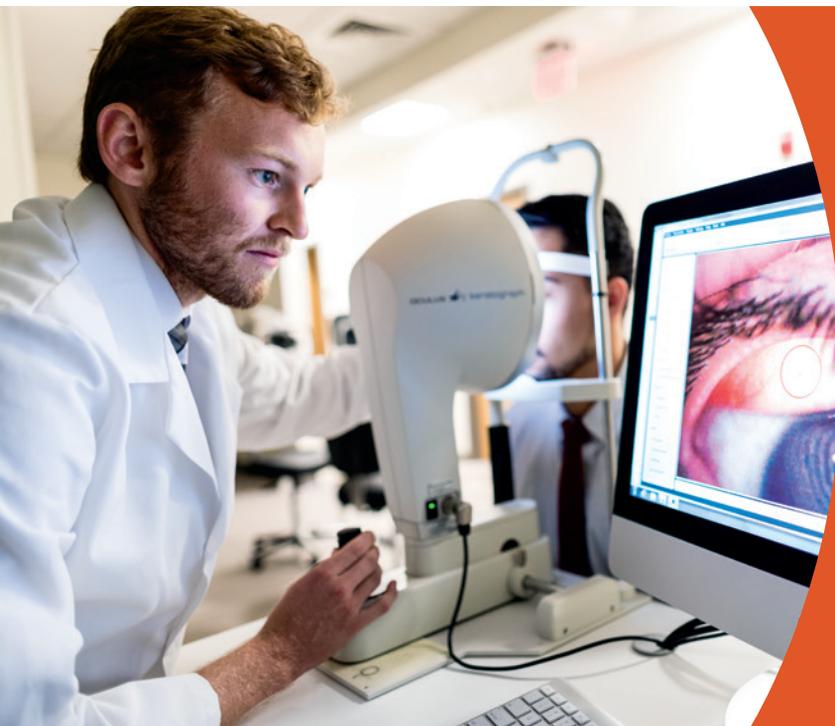
Our robust clinical education program is designed to give you early and diverse experiences treating a wide range of real patients. Under the supervision of NECO preceptors, you'll learn how to perform comprehensive eye exams, identify and diagnose eye disorders, utilize medical records, and collaborate with specialists from other disciplines to provide comprehensive care.

By the time you enter clinical rotations, you will have developed robust technical skills that will position you to deliver superb eye care – and have a tangible, positive impact on your patients' lives.

*“What's great about NECO is that students start gaining clinical experience right away. Classes are invaluable in establishing a firm base of knowledge, and clinic is where students gain further confidence in their diagnostic and patient care skills.”*



**First-year students** perform over **1,000 vision screenings** on children at local elementary schools each year.



New England  
College of Optometry

## CENTER FOR EYE CARE

The newly renovated NECO Center for Eye Care provides:

- Comprehensive primary eye care and diagnostic services for all ages
- Specialty care for vision therapy, low vision rehabilitation, contact lens, and myopia control
- The latest eye care technology
- A boutique optical center
- Adjacent innovative pre-clinic facility



## NECO Clinical Locations

### *A Network That Reflects Our Commitment to Patient Care*

In addition to the NECO Center for Eye Care, our students train at a variety of locations within the NECO Clinical Network – an interconnected group of community health centers, independent clinics, hospitals, private practices, and community partnerships. This diverse network provides every student with a unique opportunity to discover their passions and explore their interests while developing a strong core of effective clinical skills within a patient-centered, team-based healthcare environment.

Access to a variety of clinical locations connects students to a network of highly skilled clinical faculty and unique patient cases. Treating varied populations in community health centers and other locations allows for a more global and expansive clinical education. Overcoming a language barrier, providing a solution to help a low vision patient retain her independence, or reassuring a patient who's never had an eye exam – these experiences help students develop essential cultural competencies that make the difference between skilled technicians and truly exceptional providers of care.



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## Why community health centers matter

Every NECO student rotates through a community health center during their clinical training. Community health centers provide diverse patient populations access to comprehensive healthcare services in under-resourced communities. These services include primary care, behavioral health, dental health, and eye health and vision services. Our students engage in the larger healthcare community by collaborating with other medical professionals and sharing electronic health records (EHR) to provide holistic, patient-centered care in an interdisciplinary environment.

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Experience **inter-professional education** as you work alongside **health professionals** and students from a variety of fields.

## Education That Impacts Lives

### *A Commitment to Serve*

At NECO, you have the opportunity to impact the community while you're still training to be an optometrist. Between performing screenings in Boston's public schools and seeing patients in clinics, community health centers, group practices, and on clinical rotations, each class of NECO students collectively touches the lives of more than 200,000 people over four years – an impact that grows exponentially over the course of their careers.

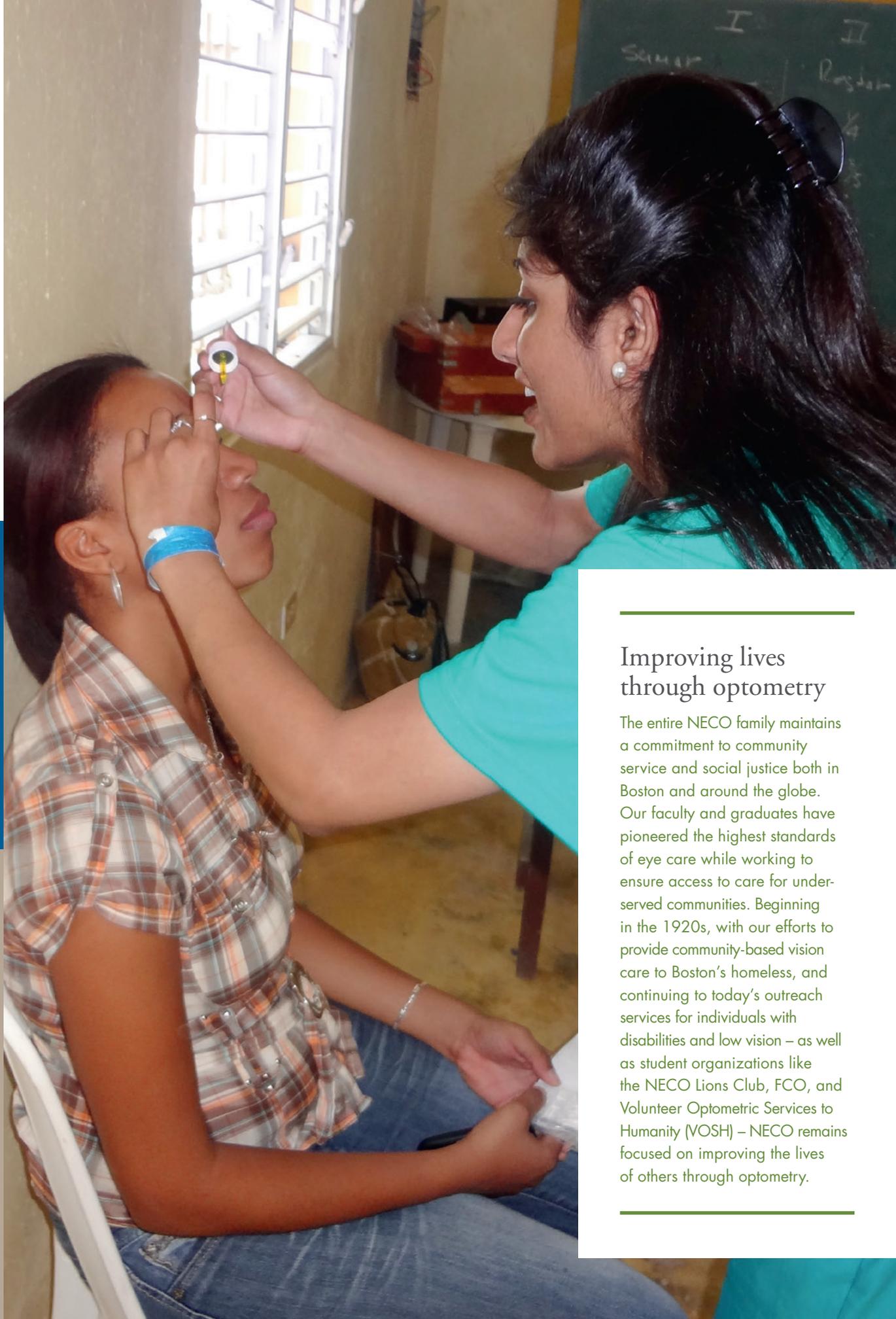
### *Making Our Voices Heard*

In addition to direct service, NECO advocates to improve eye care locally, regionally, and nationally by maintaining close relationships with Massachusetts legislators and federal health policy administrators. In order to enable and inspire the next generation of leaders and advocates, we instill in our students a desire to shape the future of the profession through on-campus advocacy groups such as the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists Student Chapter (MSOS) and the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA).



Each graduating class provides care to over **200,000 patients** while attending NECO.

“NECO has provided me with the opportunity and skill set to take service trips to South America and Africa – the most rewarding experiences during my four years in optometry school. These trips have given me great insight into how we as doctors can make a significant difference in the lives of people without access to eye care around the world.”



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## Improving lives through optometry

The entire NECO family maintains a commitment to community service and social justice both in Boston and around the globe. Our faculty and graduates have pioneered the highest standards of eye care while working to ensure access to care for underserved communities. Beginning in the 1920s, with our efforts to provide community-based vision care to Boston's homeless, and continuing to today's outreach services for individuals with disabilities and low vision – as well as student organizations like the NECO Lions Club, FCO, and Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) – NECO remains focused on improving the lives of others through optometry.

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## Opportunities for career preparation

- On-campus career seminars
- Practice management events
- Annual career symposium
  - Alumni resume reviews
  - Faculty mentorship
- Support for NBEO examinations
- Online career resources

Our **4,800-member alumni network** advises and encourages students as they **embark on their new careers.**



## Career Preparation

### *Ensuring Lifelong Success*

Every aspect of our program has been designed to prepare you for a successful and rewarding career. From a flexible program that allows you to tailor your experience and discover your passion, to clinical facilities with the latest optometric equipment that enable both students and faculty to stay abreast of new developments in technology, we impart the skills students need to thrive – no matter where they choose to practice, research, or teach.

### *A Lifetime of Learning*

Your coursework covers not only principles of optometry, science, and medicine, but also business management and public health, preparing you to run your own practice, advocate on behalf of the communities you serve, and navigate the ever-changing field of healthcare. We also maintain a robust professional development and continuing education program to ensure that our alumni remain as informed about best practices in optometry 30 years after graduation as they are the day they receive their diplomas.

### *Colleagues, Classmates, and Connections*

Some of the most important connections of your career will be forged here at NECO. The classmates you study with and the faculty members who guide your progress will become your colleagues in the field. Members of our extensive alumni network support one another personally and professionally for decades to come.



“NECO has prepared me for my career by providing cutting-edge research programs alongside a first-rate clinical education. This opportunity has sparked my interest in pursuing novel methods of myopia control in private practice.”



## Balancing Work and Play

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Our students are serious about their work, but they still find time to explore their passions outside the classroom. They take part in the NECO Olympics, Amazing Race, Ski Trip, and the Eye Ball. They also participate in over 15 clubs to:

- Promote the optometric profession
- Advocate for legislation
- Provide eye and health screenings
- Bring guest speakers to the College
- Provide peer tutoring
- Deliver eye care on medical missions
- Educate others about contact lenses and business management





## BOSTON IS A CITY OF STUDENTS

With more than **50 colleges and universities** and **9 world-class hospitals and medical centers**, the entire city will be your campus.

## Our Boston Location

### *Beyond the Classroom*

Our campus is located in the heart of Boston's historic and beautiful Back Bay neighborhood, on the banks of the Charles River. This city represents an essential part of our institutional identity; we are committed to championing the community we have called home for over a century. Many students live together in the surrounding neighborhoods, and NECO can help you find the ideal arrangement in the perfect location.

### *The Best of Boston*

No matter where you choose to live, it's easy to take advantage of the vibrant cultural offerings available throughout the Boston area – from the world-class Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Museum of Fine Arts to the legendary Fenway Park, home of the beloved Boston Red Sox, and the historic sites that shaped this country's founding. Downtown Boston is easily walkable; convenient bus, subway, Amtrak, and commuter rail lines connect you to the vibrant nearby cities of Cambridge and Somerville.

### *A Hub of Learning and Medicine*

In addition to some of the world's most distinguished academic institutions, Boston is also home to a large number of prestigious hospitals and medical centers, providing a wealth of opportunities to enhance your learning experience. Whether you're working alongside doctors and students from other specialties or simply soaking up the intellectual vibrancy of the city, Boston will become both a teacher and a home during your time at NECO.



## Innovation and Leadership

### *Charting the Future of Optometry*

For more than a century, NECO has trained doctors who serve as leaders in the field, advancing not only our understanding of eye care, but overall patient well being and quality of life. Through our advocacy efforts, NECO helped establish optometry practices at some of the first community health centers and VA hospitals, and we have remained at the forefront of care and outreach to individuals with intellectual disabilities and to Boston's homeless population. We maintain state-of-the-art technologies at the NECO Center for Eye Care, and our faculty are closely involved in developing new tools and methods to advance the field and provide superior care.

### *A Faculty Committed to Your Success*

At NECO, you will learn from distinguished faculty and mentors who specialize in areas such as myopia, ocular disease, public health, contact lenses, low vision, pediatric optometry, binocular vision, optics, and visual neuroscience. Our faculty members contribute to the field by leading continuing education programs and speaking at conferences locally, nationally, and globally in their areas of expertise. They communicate with international practitioners through webinars and provide optometric trainings across the globe both on-site and virtually through our partnership with Orbis International, a non-profit committed to the elimination of avoidable blindness.

*“Our students have the opportunity to participate in clinical discussions with providers in other countries through video-conferencing technology. As technology continues to advance, these global learning programs will become an even more integral part of our curriculum.”*

• ALEXIS MALKIN, OD, FAAO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

We're preparing **today's students** to become **tomorrow's leaders.**



## Teachers who research and researchers who teach

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In the course of their research, NECO faculty members have contributed to greater understanding and new treatments for myopia, visual impairment, juvenile macular disorders, retinal imaging, and other areas. These discoveries have a direct impact on patient care through the development of innovative new techniques and treatment options. Our students can collaborate with our faculty in their research or create their own independent research projects.





## DID YOU KNOW?

NECO was founded in **1894** as the Klein School of Optics

There are **132** students in the Class of 2021, representing **25** U.S. states, **7** Canadian provinces, and China

We have over **500** students across all programs

Our student body is **76%** female, **24%** male

Nearly **90%** of our students receive financial aid

Our network includes over **150** clinical internship locations

Each student sees an average of **2,000** patients before graduating

In addition to our four-year OD program, we offer:

- Accelerated Optometric Degree Program
- Advanced Standing International Program
- MS in Vision Science

# What will your NECO experience be?

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To learn more about  
New England College of Optometry:

- visit [www.neco.edu](http://www.neco.edu)
- contact the Office of Admissions at 617.587.5580
- email [admissions@neco.edu](mailto:admissions@neco.edu)



New England College of Optometry

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