President
New England College of Optometry
Boston, Massachusetts

“Changing the way people see the world through optometric education, discovery and service.”

THE SEARCH

The retirement of the New England College of Optometry’s President, Dr. Clifford Scott, provides an important moment of transition for the College. Given NECO’s history, reputation, location, size, and independent status, its next President will have an exciting opportunity to shape the future of the College and broadly influence the future of optometry. Future institutional success will require updating and implementing a forward-thinking strategic plan that further distinguishes NECO by strengthening, integrating, and leveraging the clinical, research, education, and service capabilities of the College. A compelling strategic plan for NECO will capitalize on opportunities made possible by the College’s attractive location within a vibrant healthcare and academic community in Boston, and will include a broad set of institutional advancement initiatives. The President will be supported in these strategic efforts by a close-knit NECO community, known for its collegiality, strength, and collective purpose.

The College seeks a new President who is a proven leader with the experience, creativity, and skill to position NECO for continued excellence in an evolving and increasingly-competitive environment for higher education institutions and healthcare organizations. The candidate’s past experiences should demonstrate a history of innovative and effective leadership, using managerial, organizational, and interpersonal skills to direct the human, financial, and physical resources of a major academic or related institution. The President will set the course for NECO as it prepares students to succeed in a healthcare environment that is being increasingly measured by access, outcomes, and cost-effectiveness. The President should be a dynamic leader who can function effectively in a mission-driven and complex academic environment. High value will be
placed on a leadership presence that engenders the respect of NECO’s many constituencies and strengthens the College’s institutional advancement efforts.

ABOUT NECO

Originally founded as the Klein School of Optics in 1894, NECO is the oldest continually operating school of optometry in the country. Its name changed in 1901 to the Massachusetts School of Optometry, in 1950 to the Massachusetts College of Optometry, and in 1976 to the New England College of Optometry to reflect its expanding role in educating almost 70 percent of the region’s optometrists.

For more than 120 years, the New England College of Optometry has been preparing compassionate and exceptionally skilled optometrists for practice in diverse settings. The College is distinguished by its rich history and location in a city long known for its world-class educational and healthcare institutions. NECO’s well-regarded educational programs provide early and integrated clinical experiences in diverse settings that train students in both comprehensive and specialty optometric fields.

NECO’s strong reputation continues to attract a talented student body of more than 500 future optometrists. In August 2016, the College welcomed the largest first-year class in its history: 819 students applied and 145 were admitted to the Doctor of Optometry program. NECO offers a four-year Doctor of Optometry, Accelerated Optometric Degree Program, international, and graduate programs. The College has 87 full- and part-time faculty members in addition to 75 professional and support staff. Its 2017-18 operating budget is $28 million and its endowment totals close to $25 million.

NECO’s location in the heart of Boston’s medical community, aided by the most expansive clinical network of any optometry school in the country, creates an optimal environment for educating students about the vital role that optometrists play as members of patient-centered healthcare teams. The College has made significant investments in an extensive clinical network that supports high-quality educational programs and patient care. NECO recently completed a major construction project to enhance its clinical campus, including a new flagship optometric clinic and optical dispensary, a clinical specialty service that includes rehabilitative vision care and clinical research, and a soon-to-be completed, state-of-the-art student clinical training facility. With expanded capacity and enhanced capabilities, the clinical campus renovation has significantly improved the College’s educational and patient care programs. The NECO Center for Eye Care provides optometric services to nearly 90,000 patients annually in more than 43 locations, including many community health centers throughout Greater Boston.

NECO has evolved from a regional institution, focused solely on educating optometric practitioners, to an enterprise with a world view and a multi-dimensional mission. Through its Center for the International Advancement of Optometry, the College has developed extension programs – the first of their kind – with China, France, Italy, Spain, South Africa, and
Germany. The College has become a leader in providing optometric education in ways that address the needs of a new generation of students. On-demand recorded lectures, team-based projects, facilitated group discussions (including sessions with live patients), simulators for clinical skill demonstration and practice, and online business course simulations are all part of NECO’s educational repertoire, which provides meaningful learning experiences beyond the formal classroom setting.

ROLE OF THE NECO PRESIDENT

The President reports to the NECO Board of Trustees, a committed and engaged governing body. The President is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the College and has authority commensurate with these responsibilities. The President’s direct reports are indicated on the organizational chart provided in the Appendix.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The 13th President of the New England College of Optometry will assume leadership of a venerable institution with a strong foundation. This individual will need to position NECO for success in a changing, competitive landscape for optometric education and healthcare. The traditional model of preparing optometry graduates solely for private practice has become inadequate to address a broader range of potential career paths for graduates. As demand for optometric education remains flat nationwide, newly-opened optometry schools have created heightened competition for a limited pool of prospective students.

To serve as an effective and inspirational leader, the NECO President will be expected to address the following opportunities and challenges:

*Set a bold and coherent plan for the College that positions it at the forefront of optometry.*

The President will develop and articulate a clear and compelling plan that positions the College as a leader in optometric education and service in the midst of significant changes in healthcare and the optometric care delivery system. Fewer graduates are entering private practice. With the healthcare industry emphasizing team-based care and value-based reimbursement models, new educational programs and business structures are needed. NECO has incorporated modern technology into its new clinical space, and its extensive network of community-based clinics provides fertile ground for inter-professional care and education. Developing innovative educational programs, incorporating new technology and related training, developing inter-professional clinical sites, and adding continuing education programs are important issues the new President will need to consider.

NECO’s distinctive position in optometric education and clinical training has attracted a steady stream of well-qualified applicants. Recently implemented application and yield enhancement efforts have resulted in a strong September 2017 entering class. However, the College competes for students with institutions, including one in Massachusetts, that have lower tuition, lower
living expenses, and more robust financial aid budgets. It is likely that new colleges of optometry will emerge and compete for a stable applicant pool. NECO’s future vision must include an aggressive enrollment management strategy that ensures the College is presented effectively to prospective students with offerings that are appropriately tailored to market-needs and leverage the school’s limited financial aid resources.

**Develop a short- and long-term plan for organizational success.**

As one of only a handful of standalone, single curriculum schools of optometry in the United States, NECO is in a unique position. The next President must work with the Board of Trustees and the College community to explore strategic opportunities that reposition the College’s education, research, and clinical programs while strengthening its long-term financial position. Maintaining its current single profession focus, developing new health science programs beyond optometry, and partnering with another institution are among the strategic options a new President will need to consider.

**Develop a robust institutional advancement program.**

NECO’s financial health is relatively sound; it is highly tuition-dependent, modestly endowed, and space-constrained. There is a need to develop a robust institutional advancement program that includes alumni engagement, communications, and fundraising. The new President will need to be centrally involved in generating significant philanthropic support for the College, including gifts to the endowment, scholarships, annual giving, and unrestricted general support for College priorities. The President, working with the Board of Trustees and development staff, will need to engage and cultivate key constituencies in ways that deepen their relationships with the institution and foster increased philanthropic support. This individual will also need to be creative about developing new revenue streams, potentially from international or other new educational programs. In addition, the President will need to work closely with the CFO to ensure a viable financial plan is developed that supports the College’s education, research, and clinical activities.

**Devise and gain consensus on a short- and long-term physical plant strategy.**

The College’s Beacon Street campus, built as a row of abutted, elegant private homes in the late 1800s, was completely restored in the late 1990s. In addition to making major classroom, laboratory, student services, and office facility improvements, the renovation won several local and national awards for outstanding preservation of historic buildings. The Back Bay campus, beloved by many students and faculty, provides attractive quarters at a signature address with easy access for students to reach the bulk of their clinical rotations via public transportation.

Although additional clinical training space has been constructed at NECO’s Commonwealth Avenue location (less than two miles from the Back Bay campus), the College’s projected classroom and laboratory space needs may not be accommodated on Beacon Street. Some members of the College community believe that a wholesale move to a larger and more space-
An efficient campus is necessary for the College to thrive in the future. Others are equally convinced that the cost of such a move is beyond the College’s means and that the Beacon Street location is a significant attraction and benefit for students. While the Board of Trustees is currently reviewing both short- and long-term facility and space options, the new President will also be significantly involved in addressing and resolving this issue.

*Ensure the continued success of NECO’s extensive clinical network.*

NECO’s diverse clinical network is a distinctive hallmark of the College. Students have the opportunity to engage with different types of patients in a variety of settings. These experiences help develop mature, well-rounded optometrists with excellent clinical skills. The President will provide leadership in maintaining the strength of this robust network, including relationships among and communication between clinical sites.

Managing a complex clinical network requires an understanding of clinical care, operations, business models, and the larger healthcare system. Many of NECO’s clinical sites are community health centers that are under increasing fiscal pressure related to federal reimbursement rates and a heightened focus on productivity. The President will be active in health policy discussions at the city, state, and national levels, facile at navigating changes in federal healthcare law, and be aware of how these developments impact NECO’s clinical network.

*Develop a research strategy in line with the College’s priorities and capabilities.*

NECO has a long-standing commitment to producing new knowledge about vision and eye health that also informs development of first-class academic experience for future optometrists. Competing demands and limited resources, including fewer funds from government sources for sponsored research, have put a strain on NECO’s research program. The new President will lead the College in articulating a future plan for NECO’s research agenda that strikes an appropriate and sustainable balance among basic, clinical, and health system research activities. The President will also work with the NECO community to identify and pursue a diverse array of funding sources and research partnerships.

*Recruit, retain, and support an excellent faculty.*

Faculty are the most valuable asset of any college, and faculty time is an institution’s most prized resource. The next President, working closely with the academic dean and department chairs, will oversee the recruitment, development, and support of an excellent faculty. This individual will strive to strengthen the NECO academic community by fostering stronger ties between didactic and clinical faculty and by crafting faculty policy and practice in ways that acknowledge and take full advantage of the important intellectual contributions of a diverse faculty.
THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful candidate for President will possess many of the following personal qualities and professional qualifications:

- Demonstrated success leading a complex, diverse enterprise; experience establishing and executing organizational strategy; evidence of effective financial management; and a proven ability to develop and motivate an effective executive team;

- The drive and personal commitment to lead decisively and to energize and inspire, coupled with a propensity to collaborate, listen, and learn;

- Significant understanding of optometric and healthcare education;

- The capacity and commitment to be a thoughtful and compelling ambassador and advocate for the College with prospective donors and the full range of external and internal constituencies; a significant track record of growing the assets and income of an organization is highly desirable; unbridled enthusiasm for the task is required;

- A willingness to take calculated risks and explore alternative ways to achieve results; flexibility and open-mindedness, imagination, and creativity;

- Evidence of productive interaction with a volunteer board of directors;

- Excellent communication skills and evidence of building strategic alliances;

- Well-developed political and diplomatic skills;

- Indomitable energy and professional maturity to balance the demands of the role;

- Integrity, resilience, and a sense of humor.

NECO will search widely for candidates whose leadership talent, intellectual vitality, and personal values indicate the capacity and commitment to lead the New England College of Optometry. Individuals with senior executive experience in higher education, optometric or other healthcare organizations, or related institutions are invited to apply.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

NECO has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the next President. Review of nominations and applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications,
including a curriculum vitae and a letter of interest that addresses the challenges above, should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Stephanie Fidel, Vice President
Amy Segal, Managing Associate
Michael O’Shea, Associate
Isaacson, Miller
www.imsearch.com/6291

NECO is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.
APPENDIX

Academic Programs

The College offers the following degree programs:

- Four-year OD (Doctor of Optometry) Degree Program
- Accelerated Optometric Degree Program (AODP)
- International Programs
  - Advanced Standing International Program (ASIP)
  - MS/OD China Program
- Graduate MS & Dual Degree Programs
  - MS in Vision Science
  - OD/MS Dual Degree
  - OD/PhD Dual Degree

Leadership

NECO’s current leadership structure includes the following individuals and units:

- Clifford A. Scott, OD, MPH, President
- Sandra Mohr, MS, MA, EdD Interim Dean of Academic Affairs
- Traci Logan, MS Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration, CFO
- Mark Cataudella, MBA Director of Campus Planning and Facilities Management
- Tony Cavallerano, OD Executive Director of Clinical Care and Training
- Amy Moy, OD Chief Clinical Officer
- Erik Weissberg, OD Director of Clinical Education.
- Gary Chu, OD, MPH Senior Director of Public Health and Community Collaborations
- Elizabeth Davies, BS, SPHR Executive Director of Human Resources
- Ben Feingold-Thoryn, MA Director of Technology Support Services
- Ingrid Hoogendoorn, MAT MA Director of Communications
- Ruth Joress, MBA Executive Director of Financial Operations
- Jill Lund, BS Director of Enterprise Technology
- Barbara McGinley, MA Associate Dean of Students
- Kristen Tobin, MS Director of Admissions

NECO’s leadership is supported by the following offices:

- Academic Affairs
- Admissions
- Business Office
- Communications
- Financial Aid
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
NECO’s academic departments, each led by a chair, are as follows:

- Biomedical Science and Diseases
- Primary Care
- Specialty and Advanced Care
- Vision Science

Research

In recent years the College has developed and nurtured a higher level of scholarly excellence. NECO research faculty members contribute to gains in the knowledge of ocular and visual disorders, and expose students to the rigors and satisfactions of intensive research. The College is particularly highly regarded for its research leadership in the etiology and treatment of myopia. The College received nearly $1 million in research funding in 2016-17.

Facilities

NECO’s facilities include its main campus at 424 Beacon Street and two clinical sites, one located on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, and the other on Washington Street in Roslindale. NECO also has partnerships with 14 community health centers located throughout the Greater Boston Area.

Its approximately 58,000 square feet (sq. ft.) main campus is comprised of four refurbished mansions in Boston’s historic Back Bay neighborhood. These buildings house the school’s administrative offices, classrooms, meeting rooms, and some laboratory space.

Its Commonwealth Avenue space is broken down into approximately 1,900 sq. ft. of optical space, 5,300 sq. ft. of space for clinics, 6,300 sq. ft. of administrative office space, and 4,000 sq. ft. of pre-clinical training space. This is leased space. The Roslindale location includes approximately 5,500 sq. ft. of leased space for optical and clinic operations.

Clinical Network

The New England College of Optometry (NECO) Clinical Network manages all College-owned patient care operations and maintains liaisons through professional service agreements with other clinical training sites in the Boston area. The network includes two local comprehensive eye centers, a mobile clinic, and over 40 community health centers, VA Medical centers, hospitals, school-based programs, as well as a host of community partners serving individuals with disabilities, low vision/geriatrics, and homeless programs.
The breadth of clinical settings provides opportunities for students to experience a wide diversity of locations, patients, eye conditions, and treatments during their education. This distributed network of patient care and clinical teaching sites makes NECO the largest provider of ambulatory eye and vision care services in Massachusetts.

NECO’s newly designed clinical campus on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston co-locates its clinically related activities, including primary patient care, optical dispensing, specialty patient care, electro-diagnostic and other specialized testing, simulation laboratories, clinical research, and clinical procedures training. The College will be piloting models of care that emphasize the use of technology while delegating objective tests and measurements and patient education to technical staff. The goal is to upgrade the doctor’s role to a more appropriate skill level of analysis, diagnosis, and developing management/treatment strategies.

International Education

NECO has robust international education partnerships and a strong international reputation. Since the establishment of the Center for the International Advancement of Optometry in 1994, NECO has created one of the largest international optometric programs in the world by developing extension programs, the first of their kind, with institutions and professional groups in Germany, South Africa, Latin America, and China. The spectrum of current programs ranges from advanced training for optometrists in a focused area of study to partnering in graduate level education with foreign universities. In collaboration with Wenzhou Medical College in China, for example, the College has established the first international joint health care degree program (MS/OD) ever approved in China.

Students

NECO enrolls over 500 students in its four-year OD, AODP, international, and graduate programs. More than 25 percent of the students enrolled in the Doctor of Optometry programs received their pre-optometry education outside the U.S., representing 14 different countries including Canada, China, Jamaica, and South Africa. In August of 2016, New England College of Optometry welcomed the largest class in its 122-year history. One hundred forty-five students were selected from 819 applicants, representing 20 states. Twenty-five percent of this year’s class hails from Canada.

Faculty and Staff

The College has 87 full-time and part-time faculty members. Ninety percent of faculty hold OD degrees and include Fellows of the American Academy of Optometry, while a significant number hold PhDs. The College is supported by a cadre of 75 dedicated managers and staff members.
Finances

NECO is largely tuition-dependent, with 72.3 percent of its budget coming from tuition and fees. Another 16 percent comes from patient care and professional service contracts. Smaller amounts come from contributions and grants and contracts. Total assets for the College were $46.9 million in 2016, while the endowment is close to $25 million. Its operating budget for 2017-18 is $28 million. The College recently received two capital grants of $500,000 and is continuing work on a capital campaign.

Operating expenses are split chiefly among clinical instruction and patient care (34 percent), other instruction (24 percent), institutional support (20 percent), research (5 percent), academic support (9 percent), student services (7 percent), and auxiliary services (1 percent).

Alumni

Many of NECO’s graduates go on to become leaders in the field. Notable alumni include the following:

- Dr. Richard Wallingford Jr., OD ’75, past President of the AOA
- Dr. Lu Fan MS/OD ’02, President of the Wenzhou Medical University
- Dr. Irving Fradkin, OD ‘43, founder of Dollars for Scholars, a college scholarship program

Many NECO alumni hold faculty and leadership positions at the College, including President Clifford Scott. There is an active alumni community and a strong sense of loyalty to NECO. NECO’s Alumni Association includes over 4,300 graduates, as well as NECO residents. An estimated 5.5 percent of alumni contribute to the College’s fundraising efforts.

Institutional Advancement

The President works in concert with central staff on development efforts. Currently the advancement team includes Tony Cavallerano, Director of Professional Relations; Margery M. Warren, Director of Alumni Relations; and Camille Ruán, Assistant Director, Alumni Relations and Development. NECO is ramping up for a $5-million capital campaign in support of the new clinical campus on Commonwealth Avenue.

Annual Report

NECO’s most recent annual report can be found here: http://neco.edu/about/annual-reports.

Strategic Plan

NECO is currently pursuing a strategic plan for 2015-2020. It can be found here: http://www.neco.edu/about/strategic-plan.