



February 10, 2021

Oregon House Committee on Healthcare
900 Court St SE
Salem, OR 97301

To the Honorable Members of the Oregon House Committee on Healthcare,

As the Dean of Pacific University College of Optometry (PUCO), I am proud of the education that we provide our students and I want to provide you with information about our educational preparation that is supportive of HB 2541.

Background

Pacific University, located in Forest Grove, Oregon, is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (<https://nwccu.org/member-institutions/directory/>). The Pacific University College of Optometry is an accredited member of the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) - <https://www.aoa.org/education/accreditation-council-on-optometric-education>). The ACOE is the “only accrediting body for the professional optometric degree (O.D.)” and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

Curriculum Background

The curriculum at PUCO is spread out over four years where the first two years are primarily focused on foundational topics relative to contemporary optometry and health care. These topics are not limited to eyecare as we must educate our students as a part of the interprofessional healthcare community.

In addition to foundational knowledge, our students are trained in the latest in assessment, diagnostic, and treatment for ocular and systemic conditions. This includes hands-on laboratories. This progression and application of classroom knowledge in a lab setting allows them to be more confident when they apply this skill under the supervision of a licensed optometric physician when our students enter clinic.

Our Commitment

Along with our mission statement, we also make commitments to our students. One of these commitments is that our graduates will be “fully qualified to practice in any state in the U.S. and province in



Canada, the curriculum far exceeding the most stringent educational requirements.” There are other states that currently have “expanded” scopes compared to Oregon and these states recognize and accept our curriculum as meeting their standards.

We have met their standards as we have been teaching about lasers for over 25 years. As more states have expanded their scopes, we have also invested in a Duet laser so we can match similar education that is taught at other programs. This allowed us to expand our offerings within our Ocular Disease curriculum and associated labs.

Again, we do not teach them lasers without any background knowledge. Our students understand the disease processes, the structures and function of the anatomy and the rationale for when certain procedures will be provided. The students have to demonstrate an understanding of patient selection, risks associated with these procedures, informed consent, and more in order to be successful if they are able to practice these skills.

In addition to our curriculum, we have also supported our faculty who teach in this topical area to travel to Oklahoma to be certified with their laser curriculum. Our colleagues in Oklahoma have been able to provide these laser treatments for their patients and have a recognized curriculum of training. Our faculty is dedicated to making sure that our students are trained for the latest in optometric care.

We feel that it is in the best interest of our students to be ready to provide the care that is best for their patients. We also feel that it is important for education to be established and recognized prior to legislation. Our education at Pacific University is recognized as meeting the standard for these procedures and so we feel that HB 2541 allows our graduates to finally practice to the level that they are trained. This is why we are in support of this bill.

We will continue to educate and train our students to the highest level in order to become optometric physicians that are ready for a dynamic healthcare setting. We pride ourselves in the level of education we deliver and it has helped our graduates who are serving their communities across North America and internationally. We are also humbled to have such great relationships with our colleagues in medicine and we look forward to working along side them to provide what is best for our shared patients.

Thank you for considering the passing of this bill as it will allow our students to be able to practice at the level that they are educated.

Respectfully,



Fraser C. Horn, OD, FAAO
Dean
Pacific University College of Optometry
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR 97116
503-352-3133
hornfc@pacificu.edu