

EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE

Executive Director

ORLANDO, FL



AMERICAN ACADEMY
of OPTOMETRY

American Academy of Optometry



FOUNDATION

Advancing Optometry's Future

This search is being conducted by:

VettedSolutions

Washington, DC • Chicago, IL • Los Angeles, CA

Telephone: +1.202.544.4749



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I. Position Description

The American Academy of Optometry (Academy) and the American Academy of Optometry Foundation (Foundation), headquartered in Orlando, FL, have enjoyed years of growth and prosperity. The Academy currently has an operating budget of approximately \$6 million and a staff of 17 serving over 11,500 members. Presently, they are in the midst of an important transition as they search for a new **Executive Director** to continue the advancement of their reputation and influence. The Academy and its Foundation will continue to promote strong vision research and present excellent, progressive continuing education to optometrists.

Scope

The Academy and the Foundation seek an energetic and innovative Executive Director who is a proven leader, with the experience, creativity, and skill to lead the organizations to even greater heights. The candidate should demonstrate a history of skills to direct the human, financial, and physical resources of a prominent optometric association. The Executive Director should effectively interact with optometric clinicians, instructors, scientists, partner organizations and industry partners.

Key Responsibilities of the Executive Director

The Executive Director reports to the Boards of Directors of both the American Academy of Optometry and the American Academy of

Optometry Foundation and has the overall strategic and operational responsibility for the staff, programs, expansion, and the execution of the mission of each entity. She or he will be required to develop an in-depth knowledge of the core programs, operations, and strategic plans for both organizations. Currently, the Executive Director oversees a staff of 17 people, including 6 direct reports. The Executive Director is expected to:

- Collaborate with the Boards of Directors by developing and implementing operational plans, policies, and goals that further Academy and Foundation strategic objectives, missions and visions
- Provide leadership and guidance to the Boards to develop strategies that will meet the needs of the optometry profession and its practitioners



- Create a culturally competent environment that will attract, support, and sustain an inspired staff and an increasingly diverse membership
- Actively engage and energize Academy members, volunteers, board members, and industry supporters
- Continue the exceptional success of the annual meeting by maintaining its high standards, anticipating future needs and requirements, and altering plans in reaction to internal and external opportunities and challenges
- Submit reports and records as requested or required to appropriate government officials and/or the Boards of Directors
- Enhance the growth and visibility of the Foundation through robust programs and broad fundraising efforts
- Establish, build, and foster strategic corporate relationships by cultivating and stewarding current supporters while identifying potential new sources of funding
- Maintain a full understanding of financial concepts with an ability to guide the Boards to develop a long-term financial sustainability model for the Academy
- Ensure that the goals of the annual budget are achieved and maintained by ensuring the accuracy, integrity, and timeliness of all financial accounting and reporting
- Guarantee that the organizations comply with all local, state, and national laws and regulations
- Maintain a competent and effective managerial staff through objective goal setting, delegation, communication, performance review, and opportunities for advancement
- Demonstrate strong public speaking skills and lead the Academy's communication efforts
- Maintain regular contact with key individuals from other optometry and professional associations, as appropriate
- Have the flexibility to travel to important committee and other professional meetings throughout the year



Qualifications, Experience, and Competencies

A successful candidate should possess the following experience and qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred
- A history of success working with a volunteer Board of Directors and the ability to cultivate existing board member relationships, roles and responsibilities
- Evidence of effective financial management, including financial planning, budget development and strategic growth of income and assets of an organization
- Experience in developing strategic relationships with industry partners resulting in robust exhibit and sponsor programs as well as increased philanthropic activities
- Ability to manage a large professional meeting
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Proven ability to lead an organization and manage all aspects of a headquarters office
- Ability to work effectively in collaboration with diverse groups of people



- Ability to act as an ambassador for the Academy and the Foundation with members, donors, and external constituencies such as industry partners and other professional associations
- Interest and experience in fundraising to accomplish the financial goals of the Academy and the Foundation
- Ability to work with a board to develop a strategic plan that ensures the future of the profession and the organization and engages people in those efforts

Personality and Behavioral Traits

The following traits will be important for success in the AAO position:

- Drive and ability to lead, energize, and inspire while collaborating, listening, and learning
- Ability to think strategically and implement tactically
- Flexibility
- Friendliness and approachability
- Visionary
- Innovative
- Strong and persuasive communicator

Measures of Success

The specifics regarding measures of success, including metrics, will ultimately be agreed upon by the successful candidate and the AAO Executive Committee, but at the end of 18 months, the Board would expect the following:

- A smooth transition in leadership has taken place, and the new Executive Director has developed strong rapport with the AAO and AAOF Boards, staff, and members
- The Executive Director has actively engaged and energized Academy members, volunteers, board members, and industry supporters
- The Executive Director demonstrates a solid understanding of the optometric profession
- The headquarters operation is being effectively managed and includes a high-functioning staff whose skills are matched to the strategic goals of the organizations
- The Executive Director has developed strong and mutually satisfying relationships with AAO's professional and industry partners
- Plans are in place to grow membership and conference attendance and satisfaction
- The Executive Director is effectively implementing AAO's Strategic Plan
- The Executive Director is working closely with the Foundation Board, enhancing the Foundation's strategic focus, setting new fundraising goals, and increasing the visibility and importance of this organization

II. Organization Review

About the Academy

The Academy is an international organization whose primary focus is to promote the art and science of vision care through lifelong learning. With over 11,500 members consisting of Fellows, Candidates, and students, the Academy is a thriving professional association whose membership has nearly doubled in the last seven years. It has an annual budget of over \$6 million. Also of note is the exceptional tradition of volunteer leadership within the Academy where Committees, Sections and Special interest Groups are organized and run by volunteer members. The Academy has earned its considerable momentum and continues to stand as a respected leader in the profession of optometry.

About the Foundation

The American Academy of Optometry Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Optometry. The Foundation develops and provides financial support for optometric research and education to ultimately improve patient care. Each year, the Foundation provides nearly \$500,000 in fellowships, scholarships, grants, residency awards, and student travel fellowships. The Ezell Fellowships

constitute the flagship program of the Foundation. They provide support to select graduate students who are likely to pursue careers in optometric research and education. More than 20 deans and presidents of optometric institutions are former Ezell Fellowship recipients.

Missions

The mission of the Academy is "to promote the art and science of vision care through lifelong learning. The Foundation's mission is "to develop and provide financial support for optometric research and education in vision and eye health to improve clinical patient care."

Annual Meeting

The Academy's annual meeting is the largest in optometry, and provides nearly 300 hours of innovative continuing education through lectures, clinical workshops, symposia, and poster presentations over four days of intensive learning and networking. Attendees are exposed to an array of groundbreaking research in optometry and vision science as well as relevant education on the





latest practices. The meeting also features an extensive exhibit hall with over 200 booths displaying a variety of optometric products and services. AAO's annual meeting is open to optometrists, vision scientists, ophthalmologists, students, and anyone else who may be interested in optometric continuing education and research.

Fellowship

In qualifying for and maintaining fellowship, individuals are evaluated against the highest standards of professional competence. The letters "FAAO" (Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry) after an optometrist's, scientist's or other qualified person's name signify to colleagues and patients that rigorous qualifications for fellowship

have been met. Fellowship is open to the following professionals who demonstrate that they meet Academy standards:

- Optometrists who are licensed to practice at the highest level permitted by law in their jurisdiction
- Scientists, educators, librarians, administrators, and editors who have accredited themselves and optometry by their contributions to optometry or vision science

Academy membership consists of Fellows (including Emeritus, Honorary and Life Fellows), student members, and candidates for fellowship. Although other categories of membership may have similar benefits, only Fellows may use the "FAAO" designation.

Awards

One of the most important ways in which the Academy and the Foundation serve members of the optometric and vision science community is through its recognition awards, grants, scholarships, travel fellowships and research funding. The American Academy of Optometry and the American Academy of Optometry Foundation provide several awards and grants for optometrists, vision scientists, graduate students, and optometry students.

Optometry and Vision Science Journal

Published monthly, *Optometry and Vision Science* (OVS) is the official journal of the American Academy of Optometry. It is an authoritative source for current developments in optometry, visual optics, and eye and vision science. This frequently cited scientific journal has served primary eye care practitioners for almost 90 years, promoting vital interdisciplinary exchange among optometrists, ophthalmologists and eye/vision scientists worldwide.



Sections and Special Interest Groups

Academy Sections and Special Interest Groups provide a forum for member discussions, professional enhancement, networking, and recognition. In addition, the groups listed below provide the Academy with important contributions from various fields of study or practice.

Sections

- Anterior Segment
- Binocular Vision, Perception and Pediatric Optometry
- Comprehensive Eye Care
- Cornea, Contact Lenses and Refractive Technologies
- Glaucoma
- Low Vision
- Optometric Education
- Public Health & Environmental Vision

Special Interest Groups

- Academic Medical Center Optometrists (AMCO)
- Fellows Doing Research
- Neuro-ophthalmic Disorders in Optometry
- Nutrition, Disease Prevention and Wellness
- Retina
- Vision in Aging
- Vision Science

Board of Directors

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- **Joseph P. Shovlin, OD, FAAO**
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- **Susan A. Cotter, OD, MS, FAAO**
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- **Andrew Mick OD, FAAO**

Headquarters

2909 Fairgreen Street
Orlando, FL 32803

Web Presence

www.aaopt.org

III. About Vetted Solutions

AAO has retained Vetted Solutions to serve as its partner for this search. For confidential consideration, please contact the search partners below. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume/CV directly to AAOExecDir@vettedsolutions.com.



Jim Zaniello, President
Vetted Solutions
1101 14th Street NW, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20005
+1 202 544 4749
jim.zaniello@vettedsolutions.com



Judy Walker, Vice President
Vetted Solutions
1101 14th Street NW, Suite 910
Washington, DC 20005
+1 202 544 4749
judy.walker@vettedsolutions.com

Vetted Solutions is an executive search firm that specializes in recruiting and consulting for the association, nonprofit, and hospitality, destination marketing communities. We focus on CEO and senior staff positions.

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