

University of Houston President Dr. Renu Khator named College of Optometry Dean Dr. Earl L. Smith III to a two-year term as Interim Chief Health Officer. Dr. Smith, a Past President of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and member of its Board of Directors, will lead the University of Houston's efforts to develop a strategic plan and launch a new UH Health Science Center. As the Interim Chief Health Officer, he will work with stakeholders on creating a Health Science Center that is relevant to the community by serving its mission of workforce preparation, innovative solutions to cutting-edge research problems, community outreach and patient care. He will collaborate with the Health Science Center Task Force, a group of UH System faculty, to develop programming by analyzing workforce needs in the region and implementing new degree programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. More than 11,000 students are currently enrolled in health-related degree programs at UH, and approximately 24% of all degrees awarded by the university are health-related.



*Dr. Earl L. Smith III, right, and Dr. Roger Boltz.*

During the two years that Dr. Smith focuses on his new role, Dr. Roger Boltz, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Professional Studies, will serve as Interim Dean of the College of Optometry and a member of the ASCO board.