



SUNY College of Optometry was awarded \$750,000 through the SUNY Empire Innovation Program (EIP) to recruit a leader and senior investigator with expertise in molecular genetic vision research focusing on eye disease.

EIP is a state-funded competitive grant program dedicated to recruiting and retaining world-class faculty at SUNY. The new position is part of a larger effort at the College to establish a **Center for Translational Vision Research** to integrate and enhance individual and collaborative research programs.

Translational studies, defined as the translation of basic research into clinical studies, will form a comprehensive research platform at the College as an incubator for new therapies and technologies that will eventually be tested at the previously established Clinical Vision Research Center (2013).

"Translational research fills the gap between our basic and clinical research programs and informs them both," says Dr. David Troilo, vice president and dean for academic affairs. "This grant will provide an important element to our research efforts at the College and will help us advance the profession of optometry as we help more patients."

Current translational research at the College focuses on neurodegenerative diseases of the eye, glaucoma, refractive errors (myopia), amblyopia, corneal disease, angiogenesis, traumatic brain injury, and cataract, each of which has specified as areas in which increased research is needed by the National Eye Institute (NEI).

Dr. Stewart Bloomfield led the College's effort to secure the EIP grant and serves as director of the College's Graduate Center for Vision Research. "[This award] will significantly increase the College's competitiveness for federal research and training funding," he says. "Recruitment of an EIP scholar and creation of the Center for Translational Vision Research will transform the overall experimental program at the College."

Eight current members of SUNY Optometry's graduate research faculty who conduct translational

research will form the Center's initial core, including Dr. Troilo, Dr. Bloomfield, Dr. Jose-Manuel Alonso, Dr. Alexandra Benavente-Perez, Dr. Robert McPeck, Dr. Tracy Nguyen, Dr. Miduturu Srinivas, and Dr. Suresh Viswanathan.