



At this year's American Optometric Association Annual Meeting in Denver, your Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) was everywhere. The list of ASCO groups that met in Denver is impressive: the [Chief Academic Officers](#), the [Student Affairs Officers](#), the [Board of Directors](#), the [Interprofessional Education Committee](#), our [corporate partners](#), the [Government Affairs Committee](#), the [Leadership Development Task Force](#), the [Applicant Pool Development Task Force](#), the [GRE Admissions Testing Task Force](#); all that and we had our new [Annual Business meeting](#), too! One could be forgiven for getting the feeling that it was all a bit exhausting. But all the groups were very productive and moving your organization forward in exciting ways.

For all the internal meetings, though, I could not help but notice that the theme that emerged from our week in Denver was collaboration. It seems to me that ASCO is more involved in collaborations than ever before, and many of those collaborative relationships were advanced, or originated, at the AOA meeting. We are collaborating with the American Academy of Optometry, the AOA, and the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) on strengthening continuing professional development. The hope is to make the credentialing of continuing education activities more collaborative and thereby more similar to other professional accreditation processes.

We are collaborating with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry to improve the quality of our institutions and our data reporting processes. We are collaborating with the AOA, ARBO, the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry to set the stage for a new summit that will ready the profession for new technologies for data gathering, enlarged scope of practice, and a rapidly changing payor landscape.

We are collaborating with the AAO to develop a system to credential subspecialty practice in optometry. We hope to collaborate with the AOA to develop a "leadership academy" to give young Doctors of Optometry and faculty the opportunity to learn the skills needed to be an effective leader

in academia and in healthcare professions. We are collaborating with the eye care and vision care industries to better attract quality applicants to our wonderful profession, not so that we can graduate more optometrists, but so that we can be more selective in accepting high quality, diverse applicants to optometry schools and colleges.

This is just a partial list of ASCO collaborations. In today's world, a healthcare professional cannot practice alone in his (I use that pronoun advisably) dark exam room and expect to offer high quality patient care. I would argue that a professional organization cannot provide high quality services to its members in isolation, either. As you can see, ASCO is actively working with many others to provide the best service to our member institutions we possibly can.