Educational Outcomes for the MS/OD China Program

The faculty of the New England College of Optometry (NECO) has established a common set of objectives for all of its Doctor of Optometry educational programs. These objectives reflect the competencies expected of every graduate of the College, to enable the graduate to independently practice optometry anywhere in North America.

A Doctor of Optometry (OD) graduate from the New England College of Optometry must be knowledgeable in ophthalmic and systemic care, and possess a commitment to continuously improve knowledge and abilities. The graduate will be skillful in techniques and new technologies, skillful in problem solving, and will possess professional, ethical and compassionate behavior and standards. The graduate will be able to address community health issues and thrive in a changing health care environment.

The unique purpose of this dual degree program is for select students from our sister college, the Wenzhou Medical University (or other Chinese universities), to become well-trained in modern optometry at NECO and in ophthalmic science at WMU. Upon graduation from the OD and MS programs these students will have the credentials to gain advanced career positions and the opportunity to become rising stars in Chinese medical universities.

Knowledgeable in visual, ocular and systemic care—the graduate shall:

- know the structure and function of visual and systemic systems.
- know the normal range of clinical findings.
- recognize pre-disposing epidemiological, environmental, and etiological factors that require intervention to prevent visual deterioration or ocular disease.
- understand the principles underlying the use of ophthalmic devices and procedures in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of visual conditions.
- understand the mechanisms and interactions of pharmacological agents along with their safe and effective use in the diagnosis and treatment of ocular conditions.
- understand the pathogenesis of disease and the implications for ocular health and function and be knowledgeable in ocular and laboratory testing used in the assessment of systemic, visual and ocular function.
- know the scientific and statistical principles underlying the practice of optometry.
- possess the initiative and critical acumen required to continuously improve their knowledge.
- pass the National Board of Examiner in Optometry examination: Part 1 (Applied Basic Science)
Skillful—the graduate shall demonstrate the ability to:

- obtain the pertinent information about a patient using communication, observation, and diagnostic testing.
- interpret results of common procedures, develop differential and definitive diagnoses, devise and implement treatment and management strategies, including the skillful use of ophthalmic materials.
- recognize and triage life threatening and sight threatening problems.
- be aware of the limitations of current procedures and the need to continuously learn, understand, develop and incorporate new technologies and procedures into examination strategies.
- be skillful in organizing, integrating and applying knowledge.
- apply scientific principles to problem solving by:
  - identifying the problem
  - retrieving relevant information from current knowledge of basic sciences
  - judging its adequacy, pursuing additional information and assessing its value
  - interpreting and relating all data to the information obtained
  - applying deductive reasoning to solve the problem
  - monitoring outcomes and modifying management strategies

Professional and ethical—the graduate shall demonstrate:

- knowledge of principles that govern ethical decision making and respect for the dignity of the patient.
- honesty and integrity in patient and professional interactions and be mindful of ethical pitfalls, conflicts of interest and legal issues in various practice arrangements.
- ability to provide compassionate care.
- commitment to provide eye care regardless of the patient’s economic means.
- skill to identify and relate to the special needs of diverse patient populations.
- understanding of community health issues.
- how to use epidemiological factors to identify and respond appropriately to environmental issues affecting eye disease.
- how to thrive in a changing health care (eye care) marketplace.
- understanding of organizational and financial issues of private practices, health centers, HMOs and hospitals.
- recognition that health care is a team approach which includes a wide range of professionals and practitioners in both the local and global communities.
• ability to participate and take leadership in inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary health care communities.

• understanding of the standard of care for various disease entities and to recognize the risks, consequences and legal implications of the failure to adhere to established and recognized standards.

Unique Outcomes of the Dual Degree Program:

• Integrate their Doctor of Optometry training in the US with the Chinese Masters’ degree in Ophthalmology or Optometry to advance the profession either in academia, clinical care, research, or industry.

• Those completing the program have had opportunities in China to undertake leadership roles in Chinese medical universities. This program aims to continue this trend, support the contributions to the profession, thus resulting in improvements to the level of eye care provided in China.