



Alumni Association Scholarship 2021 Recipient Essay

by Randi-Jo Francis '21

My involvement began in first quarter of first year as I was class representative for both the Private Practice and Sports Vision Clubs, positions which I held until third year. I was also the workshop coordinator for the Cornea and Contact Lens Society in third year, where I helped organize our annual STAPLE contact lens workshop as part of our Contact Lens curriculum.

Other organizations in which I am a member include the Canadian Association of Optometry Students (CAOS), Optometric Extension Program (OEP), Black Student Union (BSU), Multicultural Association (MCA), National Optometric Student Association (NOSA), and Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (SVOSH). Being a member of SVOSH, I received the amazing opportunity to travel to Jamaica with the Eye Health Institute to provide eye care to those in need. The Eye Health Institute has invited me to join their team after graduation, and I'm excited to continue my journey of service!

I am honoured to have held the role of ICO's Trustee for the American Optometric Student Association for 2 years. In my position, I was able to put forth ideas and be part of project teams working to advance the AOA and AOSA's missions on a national level. Locally in this role, I've successfully executed our slumber party themed quiz bowl, secured travel grants for students to attend Optometry's Meeting, and organized a number of fundraisers including the yearly briefcase and white coat embroidery sale.

In other ways, ICO has provided more opportunities to stay involved. I've been a part of Homecoming and Practice Symposium for multiple years. I was also appreciative to be interviewed by the communications department twice about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the changes being implemented through our institution — a topic of extreme importance to me. In addition, I've tutored continuously since starting in second year, have been a lab TA for first to third year students, and held multiple other work-study positions throughout campus.

I currently serve as president of the Gold Key International Optometric Honours Society for 2020-2021. Being elected on the board of a prestigious society as this was a true reward for these past 4 years. My proven involvement and commitment to the ICO community will not cease post-graduation. In the future, I look forward to continuing this engagement whether that be on a committee, participating in campus events, or speaking to the next generation of future leaders. There are no words for the impact this community has had on my educational career, but I can only hope for more opportunities to stay part of it.