

Illinois College of Optometry

Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean

Position Announcement

Chicago, Illinois

Transform the Future of Optometric Education and Patient Care

Position	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean
Institution	Illinois College of Optometry
Location	Chicago, Illinois
Reports to	President

The Opportunity

The Illinois College of Optometry (ICO), one of the nation's premier institutions of optometric education and the oldest continuously operating college of optometry in the United States, invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean.

The Dean serves as the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the College and a key member of the senior leadership team. Reporting to the President, the Dean provides visionary leadership for all academic programs and works collaboratively with faculty, students, staff, alumni, the Board of Trustees, and clinical leaders to advance the College's mission and strategic priorities.

ICO is recognized nationally for its commitment to excellence in optometric education, innovation, scholarship, and patient-centered care. Through its integrated clinical enterprise, the Illinois Eye Institute (IEI), ICO provides exceptional clinical training opportunities while serving a diverse patient population and advancing the profession of optometry.

About the Illinois College of Optometry

Founded in 1872, the Illinois College of Optometry is a private, not-for-profit institution dedicated to preparing future optometric leaders through rigorous academic instruction, clinical excellence, scholarship, and community engagement. ICO's educational program combines classroom learning, laboratory experiences, and extensive patient care training through the Illinois Eye Institute and a broad network of affiliated clinical sites.

ICO's mission is to develop highly qualified clinical optometrists through excellence in optometric education who will strive to seek that all will receive optimal healthcare.

Leadership Opportunity

The next Dean will guide ICO through a period of opportunity and transformation, building upon the College's strong foundation while positioning the institution for continued success in an evolving healthcare and higher education environment.

The successful candidate will:

- Provide visionary leadership for the College's academic mission.
- Foster a culture of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.

- Support innovation in curriculum, technology, and educational delivery.
- Maintain a strong commitment to accreditation, assessment, and continuous quality improvement.
- Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding faculty and academic leaders.
- Strengthen collaboration between the academic enterprise and the Illinois Eye Institute.
- Promote student success, professional development, and leadership.
- Serve as a visible ambassador for ICO within the profession and broader healthcare community.
- Advance strategic partnerships, external engagement, and fundraising initiatives.

Qualifications

Required Qualifications	Preferred Qualifications
• OD degree preferred; PhD or equivalent terminal degree with significant experience and demonstrated success in optometric education. • Significant leadership experience in higher education, healthcare, or an academic health professions environment. • Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, organizational leadership, and resource management. • Strong understanding of accreditation and academic quality assurance. • Excellent communication, relationship-building, and leadership skills.	• Distinguished record of academic and professional achievement. • Experience within optometric education or academic health professions education. • Experience leading clinical education programs or healthcare delivery systems. • Experience supporting faculty development, shared governance, and organizational change. • Experience with fundraising, alumni engagement, and external partnerships. • Previous experience as a Dean, Associate Dean, Department Chair, or comparable executive leader.

Desired Leadership Characteristics

ICO seeks a leader who is:

- Committed to academic and clinical excellence.
- A strategic visionary.
- Collaborative and relationship-oriented.
- Student-centered.
- Skilled in leading change and innovation.
- Financially astute and operationally effective.
- Inclusive, transparent, and accountable.
- Dedicated to developing future leaders in optometry.

Why ICO?

The Illinois College of Optometry offers a unique opportunity to lead a nationally respected institution that combines:

- A long tradition of excellence in optometric education.
- A robust and integrated clinical enterprise.
- A commitment to innovation and scholarship.
- A diverse and engaged academic community.
- A mission-driven culture focused on improving eye health and patient care.

Click to view the [Job Description](#) for Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean

Application Process

The Illinois College of Optometry welcomes applications, nominations, and expressions of interest from accomplished and visionary leaders who are passionate about the future of optometric education and patient care.

Candidates should submit the following required material through the [application link](#):

- An authentic and personal letter of interest including a statement of leadership philosophy
- Curriculum vitae

After initial application, the candidate will submit three (3) professional references. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality consistent with institutional policies and applicable requirements.

Preferred application date

Candidates should submit application materials by **October 1, 2026**. Review of applications will begin upon receipt and will be ongoing until the position is filled. Nominations and expressions of interest are encouraged throughout the search process.

[Click Here to Access the Application Portal](#)

Illinois College of Optometry is committed to fostering an environment that values the contributions of all members of its community and provides equal opportunity in employment and education.