

November 7, 2018

Samuel D. Pierce, O.D., President
American Optometric Association
243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Floor 1
St. Louis, MO 63141

Dear Dr. Pierce:

During the Fall Meeting of the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) on October 12-14, 2018, the members of the ACOE requested that I send this letter to you.

In my September 7, 2018 letter to you as President of the American Optometric Association, I stated "...the ACOE evaluates each new program that applies for preliminary approval preaccreditation status based on its own merits in relation to the ACOE process and standards." Recent public statements in the AOA publications and written communication from the AOA Board of Trustees to ACOE that single out individual institutions compel us to reiterate this position. When reviewing any program, the ACOE considers only the program's merits in relation to the ACOE process and standards.

Regardless of the AOA Board's intentions and disclaimers, public statements in the AOA news publications and written communications from the AOA Board to ACOE regarding individual institutions may be seen as an effort to influence the actions of the ACOE regarding these institutions. These communications raise concerns with perceptions concerning the integrity of the ACOE process. The ACOE will continue to follow best practices of accreditation, and the criteria of the U.S. Department of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. These processes call for accreditors to follow established standards and procedures.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have about the ACOE's policies and process and to have continuing dialog in the future.

Sincerely,



Darin L. Paulson, O.D.
Chair

cc: AOA O, T, ED, AED, ACOE