



For Immediate Release  
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**Salus University President, Professor Enshrined in National Optometry Hall of Fame**



*Drs. Satya Verma and Michael Mittelman (rear admiral, U.S. Navy, retired).*

**Elkins Park, Pa.** — Salus University highlights from Optometry’s Meeting® 2021, the annual meeting of the American Optometric Association (AOA) and American Optometric Student Association (AOSA), prove it was a banner year for the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) at Salus University. Culminating in some truly memorable moments, by the conclusion of the event, PCO/Salus achieved two National Optometry Hall of Fame inductions and a student quiz bowl championship.

During Optometry's Meeting, Salus University president **Michael H. Mittelman, OD '80, MPH, MBA, FAAO, FACHE** was enshrined in the National Optometry Hall of Fame alongside 2020 inductee **Satya Verma, OD '75, FAAO, DPNAP, Diplomate**, associate professor and director of Externship Programs, Optometry. For 22 years, the Hall of Fame has recognized doctors of optometry who have made significant contributions to the optometric profession. Both Drs. Mittelman and Verma were officially recognized during the optometry profession event, which took place in Denver, Colorado.

Dr. Mittelman's career started in the U.S. Navy after he received his Doctor of Optometry degree from PCO/Salus in 1980. In 1989, he was the first optometrist designated as an aerospace physiologist and used his extensive training to develop the Navy Aerospace Optometry program, earning his aeromedical Wings of Gold. After serving 33 years in the Navy, Dr. Mittelman retired and began his position as Salus president in 2013.

Dr. Verma received his initial optometric training at the School of Optometry, Gandhi Eye Hospital in Aligarh, India, in 1964. In the early 1970s, he came to the U.S. and served as an associate in optometry at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Optometry before he transferred to PCO/Salus, where he has been involved in academia for more than four decades. He earned his Doctor of Optometry from PCO/Salus in 1975. The recipient of numerous accolades and awards, Dr. Verma was selected as a Delegate to the 1995 White House Conference on Aging and for a Primary Care Health Policy Fellowship at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – one of only four optometrists ever selected for the honor.

In other events from Optometry's Meeting, Tyler Lesko '22OD took home the AOSA Optometry Student Bowl championship for PCO/Salus. The competition put college rivalries center stage as optometry schools battled to be the smartest, loudest and most creative during the 30th Optometry Student Bowl, powered by Essilor. Lesko, no stranger to hard work and high pressure as a third-year optometry student, competed against students from 23 other schools in the high-speed, high-stakes test of optometric knowledge. The last time the coveted crystal trophy made it back to PCO/Salus was in 2015 when **Nicole Rist, OD '16**, won in Seattle, Washington.

Optometry's Meeting is where doctors, optometric professionals, students and industry come together to further the optometry profession. The event provides education and networking opportunities for doctors and optometry professionals.

### **About Salus University**

Salus University, founded as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1919, today is a diversified, globally recognized professional academic center of learning that offers a wide range of degree programs in the professions of Optometry, Audiology, Physician Assistant, Blindness and Low Vision Studies, Biomedicine, Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology. Salus operates four clinical facilities in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties that provide highly specialized vision, hearing and balance, speech-language pathology services and occupational therapy. The University has more than 1,200 students, and more than 14,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit [www.salus.edu](http://www.salus.edu).