



**HELPING
PEOPLE SEE**

**STRATEGIC
PLAN
2024-2029**



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY
& VISION SCIENCE

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



The School of Optometry and Vision Science has a long, proud history of making bold changes to improve eye care. Evolving from a Toronto college established in the 1920s, our forerunners took a leap of faith to join the young University of Waterloo in 1967. Today, we are on the cusp of building the Waterloo Eye Institute as Canada’s leading eye and vision care centre of excellence.

In 2017, the School dared to dream big and put together an ambitious [2018–2023 strategic plan](#). In 2021, we published a [report on progress](#), which outlined the significant steps taken. It’s now time once again to think big and envision what we want to achieve in the next five years.

As we look to the future, we will build on our previous strategic plan, lean on the themes of the [University of Waterloo 2020–2025 strategic plan](#) and embrace the [Waterloo at 100 strategic vision](#), which envisions the University in 2057.

As an organization with multiple mandates, we’re working to meet new challenges in research, education and patient care. As we balance these imperatives, we have identified the following top priorities:

- Building the Waterloo Eye Institute
- Serving our patients and communities
- Advancing research for global impact
- Developing talent for a complex future
- Strengthening sustainable and diverse communities

Feeding into these priorities, we are exploring ways to advance optometrists’ core and specialized skills, scope of practice and geographic reach. We are also putting more emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion, which is consistent with our work to advance access to eye and vision care.

Advances in artificial intelligence and other technologies, greater emphasis on mental health and wellness, and demographic changes including an aging population and a surge in newcomers all provide opportunities for us to better serve our patients. We’ll meet these and other challenges by setting ambitious goals and working towards them with partners from a variety of disciplines and organizations locally, nationally and internationally.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stanley Woo, OD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Stanley Woo, OD, MS, MBA, FAAO
Director, University of Waterloo School of Optometry & Vision Science



MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

OUR VISION

Helping people see.

OUR MISSION

To be a global innovator in optometry, vision research, education and patient-centred collaborative care through:

- Excellence in optometric education based in theory and research.
- High-impact, world-class eye, health and vision science research.
- Exceptional patient care and experiences across the full range of patient-centred eye, vision and healthcare services.
- Preparation of the next generation of leaders in the optometric profession.
- Training the next generation of research leaders and innovators.
- Residency training across the full range of optometric care.
- Specialized training opportunities for practitioners.
- Lifelong learning and continuing professional development opportunities.
- Eye health initiatives with global impact.

OUR VALUES

The values that guide our decisions, strategies and actions are:

- Integrity
- Compassion
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Excellence



ADDRESSING THE WATERLOO AT 100 VISION

In 2023, President and Vice-Chancellor Vivek Goel launched Waterloo at 100, a strategic vision for what the University of Waterloo wants to be known for in 2057, 100 years after its founding. The University's vision for Waterloo at 100 is a major source of inspiration for our 2024-2029 strategic plan and squarely fits with our vision for ourselves in 2057.

Who we are: The School of Optometry & Vision Science and Waterloo Eye Institute are renowned globally for impactful research; exceptional eye and vision care; excellent, student-centred, work-integrated education; and leading-edge innovation and entrepreneurship.

What we envision: A community of curious, collaborative, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial learners, problem-solvers and leaders who seek to understand, identify and mobilize equitable and sustainable solutions for the future of vision and health.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will follow the same guiding principles as the University, which are:

Rediscover unconventional: We will think outside the box to transform education in ways that respond to and shape our future.

Lead globally, act locally: As we continue to address global challenges and make impacts around the world, we will also continue to contribute to our local surroundings through collaborative relationships and a commitment to serving patients and communities in our region.

Co-ordinate and collaborate: We will create a culture of coordination and collaboration both within and beyond our institution, including across disciplines and with partners such as industry, community organizations and global institutions.

GLOBAL FUTURES

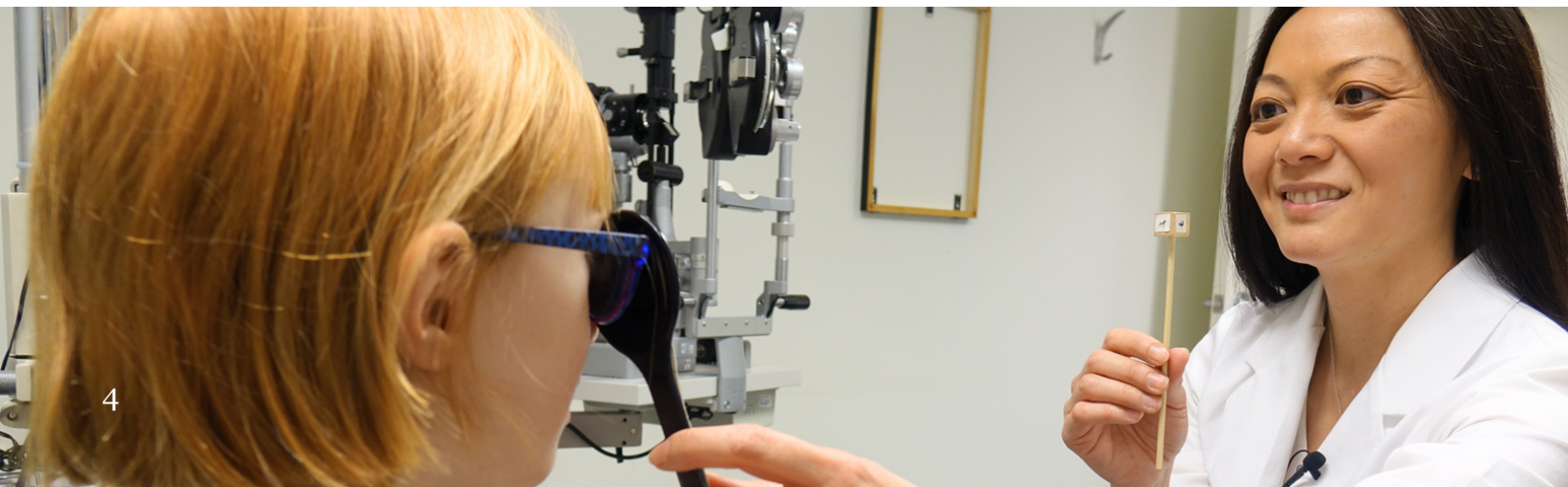
We will address some of the world's most pressing challenges, as identified in Waterloo at 100.

Societal futures: We will share and translate knowledge to positively enhance society's future and to ensure communities and everyone within them thrives. We will do this through cell-to-society research ultimately aimed at helping people see and through initiatives to improve access to vision care for all. We are committed to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism and decolonization in our curriculum, School community and professional community.

Health futures: We will help ensure equitable opportunities for optimal health and well-being through pharmaceutical and technological advances, including virtual care and health data applications. We are physically making more space for these advances in the Waterloo Eye Institute by including an eye imaging centre, a teleoptometry centre and more clinical research space. By working to advance optometrists' scope and specialized skills, we will improve the health care system. By capitalizing on the eye as a window to the brain and body, we will improve detection and diagnosis of diseases in and beyond the eyes.

Technological futures: We will help ensure a safe and human-centred digital future by collaborating with others such as engineers, physicists, computer scientists and data scientists to improve technologies such as eye and vision imaging, analysis and rehabilitation. We will do so with ethics, privacy and security at top of mind.

Economic futures: We will help create equitable and resilient local and global economies through increasing our focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, in part through interdisciplinary collaboration with industry and academic partners nationally and internationally. Through improving and expanding our work-integrated and professional learning programs, we will help individuals upskill and keep pace with the changing world of work.



GOAL 1

Establish and build the Waterloo Eye Institute as Canada's leading eye and vision care centre of excellence.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- Serving our patients and communities
- Strengthening sustainable and diverse communities
- Developing talent for a complex future
- Advancing research for global impact

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide exceptional care to patients through the continuum of eye and vision care from wellness to rehabilitation.
2. Modernize clinic technology and infrastructure, including clinical research infrastructure.
3. Bring new techniques and treatments from the lab to the clinic through a cross-disciplinary research program that enhances the delivery of patient care and creates global impact.
4. Develop the Waterloo Eye Institute Teleoptometry Centre to increase access to comprehensive remote eye care and provide infrastructure for best-practice clinical education.
5. Build upon the strengths of the Waterloo Eye Institute Seeing Beyond 20/20 campaign to more deeply engage with alumni, the optometric profession, industry, government and philanthropic groups.
6. Successfully operationalize building phasing and completion with minimal disruption to the School's multiple missions.





GOAL 2

Serve our patients and communities by delivering exceptional patient experience and outcomes.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- Serving our patients and communities
- Strengthening sustainable and diverse communities

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide outstanding patient experience through excellent customer service, clear communication and ongoing enhancements in service delivery.
2. Nurture a culture of learning and continuous improvement through effective staff and faculty training, resourcing and recognition.
3. Provide quality, safe, contemporary and evidence-informed care that achieves excellent patient outcomes in comprehensive care and clinics for specific needs.
4. Modernize the Waterloo Eye Institute's infrastructure using advanced technology, streamlining administrative tasks, and ensuring efficient, cost-effective clinic management.
5. Advance health equity by increasing access to eye and vision care for underserved communities and individuals, including through initiatives focused on leadership in outreach, advocacy, culturally competent care and teleoptometry, as well as patient and community education about eye and vision health.

GOAL 3

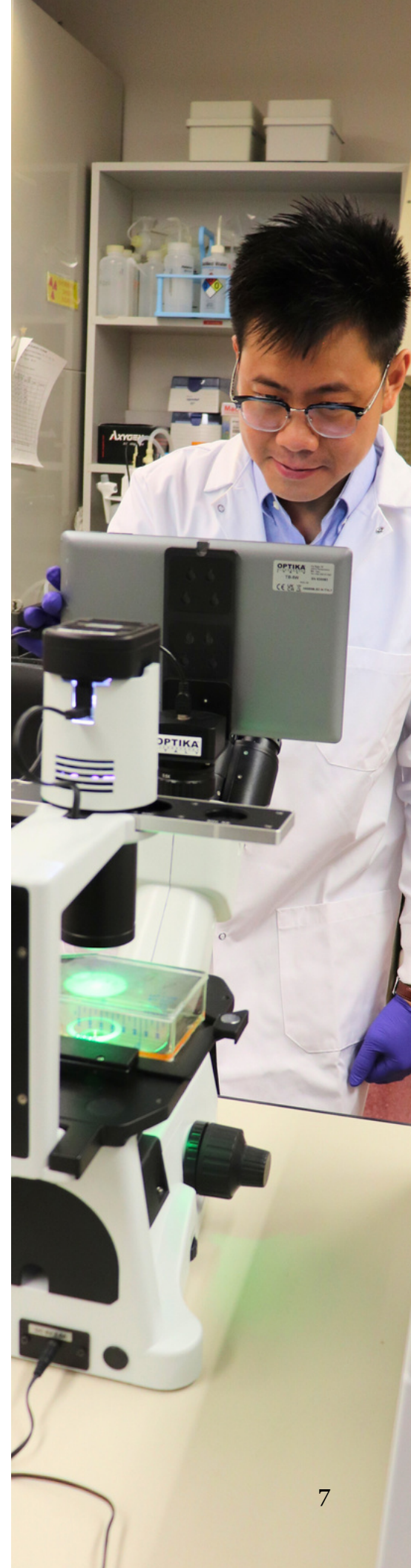
Harness our research strengths to solve real-world problems with a focus on the global vision crisis.

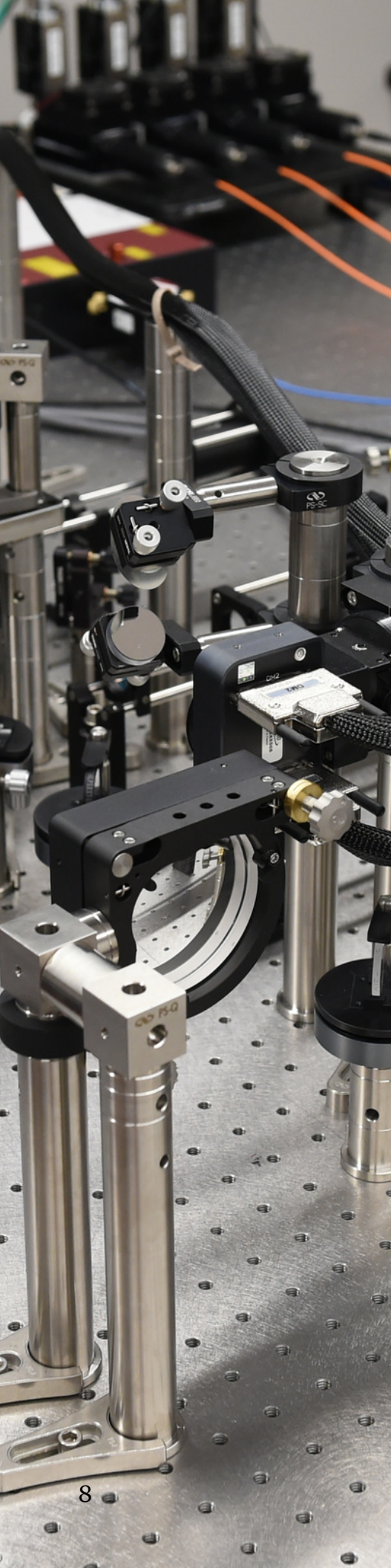
STRATEGIC THEMES

- Advancing research for global impact

OBJECTIVES

1. Lead nationally and globally at the interface of society, health and technology by enabling high-impact, world-class eye, health and vision science research through:
 - **Fundamental bioscience** – Examining the processes that form the basis of vision.
 - **Applied studies** – Applying scientific discoveries made in the lab to the development of trials and studies.
 - **Societal impact** – Transforming scientific results into new treatments and approaches to care, improving the health of the population.
2. Promote the impact of cell-to-society research within our research pillars to enhance the visibility of research and clinical innovation.
3. Promote the communication and mobilization of research, including through community- and patient-focused communication, engagement with professional and public health partners, and working to shape public health policy regarding eye and vision care.
4. Explore, promote and nurture interdisciplinary research between faculties and through engaging with the University's Transformative Health Technologies initiative.





5. Promote and nurture national and international collaboration, including through increasing strategic research partnerships, deepening relationships with national and international institutions and leveraging the strengths of the Waterloo Eye Institute, Centre for Ocular Research and Education (CORE), Centre for Sight Enhancement (CSE) and Centre for Eye and Vision Research (CEVR).
6. Increase research impact through strategic partnerships, including with private, public and not-for-profit organizations, to enhance competitiveness and innovation and to impact policy.
7. Foster an environment that stimulates entrepreneurial pursuits and leverage networks to expand opportunities in innovation and entrepreneurship, including through creating interdisciplinary teams to solve problems relevant to Canada's economy and increasing infrastructure to support research commercialization and policy application.
8. Attract, develop and retain tomorrow's research leaders, including through robust faculty hiring and development, as well as through community outreach to raise awareness of optometry and vision science as career paths.

GOAL 4

Develop talent to meet the eye health and vision challenges of a complex future.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- Developing talent for a complex future

OBJECTIVES

1. Deliver an evidence-informed curriculum that anticipates changes in health systems, technologies and scope of practice; facilitates best-practice pedagogy and technology-enabled learning; offers a roadmap for learning aligned with accreditation processes; and incorporates continuous review and evaluation processes.
2. Promote a positive, student-centred environment where students are supported and engaged and wellness is prioritized.
3. Develop expanded opportunities for clinical education, work-integrated learning and advanced training, including exploring ways to offer clinical experiences in the first and second years; adding an additional term between the second and third years; further developing the fourth-year clerkship program; and expanding accredited residency training opportunities for the development of advanced competencies.
4. Establish centres of excellence in patient care in Western and Eastern Canada to support regional clerkship programs with the goal of evolving them to include specialty care, residency training and, where feasible, the establishment of satellite campuses for optometric education, patient care and research.





5. Enhance graduate and postdoctoral studies by strengthening graduate student support, growing graduate work-integrated learning, increasing external research partnerships including with industry, and exploring pathways for the formation of graduate programs, e.g. OD/PhD.
6. Be the leading national resource for continuing optometric education and professional development, including through identifying growth opportunities in professional development and working with partners to establish national-level standards for professional development and specialty certification for optometrists.

GOAL 5

Strengthen the School of Optometry and Vision Science as a sustainable, diverse and inclusive community.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- Strengthening sustainable and diverse communities

OBJECTIVES

1. Nourish a supportive, people-centred culture that fosters a sense of belonging, collective purpose and shared responsibility, including through celebrating individual and collective achievements and sustaining meaningful relationships with alumni, the profession and other partners.
2. Promote a positive environment where staff and faculty are supported and engaged and wellness is prioritized.
3. Be a sustainable and effective institution, including through the optimal use and planning of human, infrastructural and financial resources to realize the School's long-term vision of success.
4. Nurture a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and decolonization. Ensure these values are reflected in the curriculum, clinical spaces, recruitment and admissions processes, and relationships with community partners and equity-deserving groups.





GOAL 6

Become a global leader in optometric innovation and entrepreneurship.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- Advancing research for global impact
- Developing talent for a complex future
- Strengthening sustainable and diverse communities

OBJECTIVES

1. Foster an environment that stimulates entrepreneurial pursuits through creating interdisciplinary teams to solve problems relevant to Canada's economy and fostering pathways to entrepreneurship for optometry and graduate students.
2. Increase infrastructure to support research commercialization and application, including through:
 - Leveraging networks to expand entrepreneurial opportunities and partnerships with industry.
 - Further strengthening the emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship and spin-out companies at the Centre for Eye and Vision Research (CEVR) and Centre for Ocular Research and Education (CORE).
 - Engaging with the University's Velocity Health and Innovation Arena initiatives to boost entrepreneurship in the health technology sector.



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