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Contact: Alexis Abate
215.780.1390

Benjamin Gutsin '23OD Wins the Best Practices Student Scholarship

When **Benjamin Gutsin '23OD** started his educational journey at the University at Buffalo (UB), he pursued a bachelor's degree in business and finance and briefly worked for a consulting firm upon graduation, all the while knowing a healthcare career would be in his future.

Today, his decision to become a healthcare professional is paying off as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) at Salus University Doctor of Optometry (OD) student enrolled in the Accelerated Scholars Program – and the recent recipient of CooperVision's 2022 Best Practices Student Scholarship, offered to outstanding third-year optometry students. Gutsin credits a little sisterly advice from a PCO/Salus alumna, **Laura Gutsin, OD '20**, for helping him choose the optometry profession.

"My older sister actually completed this very same scholars' program," he said. "So, she was a strong influence on me to explore and open up my mind to the possibility of practicing and ultimately going to this school."

Through the scholarship program, Gutsin will attend the CooperVision Best Practices Summit in April in Nashville where he will have the opportunity to network with some of the best optometrists in the U.S. In June, the award will also give him the chance to travel to Chicago to attend the media roundtable event at the American Optometric Association (AOA) annual conference – Optometry's Meeting - where he can interact with national media outlets covering trends in optometric care. He was honored as one of this year's three Best Practices student recipients during a recent plaque ceremony at the University's Elkins Park, Pennsylvania campus.

"We chose students who are already doing great things," said Steve Rosinski, senior manager of North America professional and academic affairs at CooperVision. "They're going to be learning from the doctors, but the doctors are also going to be learning from the students. It will provide another opportunity to showcase what these doctors and students are doing as leaders within their profession. Overall, our goal is to elevate the optometric profession."

During his time at PCO/Salus, Gutsin was also the recipient of the 2020 Dean's Scholarship and he has served as the Accelerated Scholars class president. While attending UB, he received several awards including the 2019 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, the Stewart Global Citizenship Scholarship Award, and the Grace W. Capen Academic Award. Additionally, he currently serves as an intern at The Eye Institute (TEI), where he independently examines patients and provides tentative diagnoses for preceptor review.

Upon earning his doctorate, Gutsin plans to return to his hometown in Buffalo, New York, to practice optometry and pay it forward.

"As far as bridging into the professional realm, I have a strong interest in helping give back and I'm looking for organizations that I can partner with or strong community representatives who can help me make a difference," he said. "I think we have this tremendous responsibility with the training and the opportunities we've received to give back to those less fortunate. So, I haven't quite figured out what that looks like yet, but I know it's in my future to really seek out those opportunities."

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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, Speech-Language Pathology and Orthotics and Prosthetics. Salus operates four clinical facilities in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties that provide highly specialized vision, hearing and balance, speech-language pathology and occupational therapy services. The University has more than 1,200 students, and more than 14,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit www.salus.edu.