



For Immediate Release
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“Piccolo Girl” is All Smiles as She Graduates Optometry School

Elkins Park, Pa. – Four years after she became an internet sensation, dubbed “Piccolo Girl,” for tears streaming down her face as she played the piccolo as the Villanova Wildcats basketball team lost in the NCAA tournament East Region, Roxanne Chalifoux '19OD, graduated Thursday, May 23, 2019, from Salus University’s Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) with her Doctor of Optometry.

“Between it being my last NCAA tournament, my last time with the band, and graduation approaching, it felt like a lot of ends happening all at once,” she said.

But, it wasn’t her last time playing “V for Villanova,” as once she was shown on live TV; she quickly became a viral sensation - and the target for many memes. It also caught the attention of Jimmy Fallon - who invited her on his show to play the song again.

“Luckily, it happened at the tail-end of my senior year, so I didn’t have to handle too much craziness during school. It was certainly a unique way to graduate, but I would have been just as happy without the ordeal. I do, however, cherish the once-in-a-lifetime moments that occurred because of it,” she said.

Chalifoux did not tear up this time as the end of her four-year graduate school came to a close, as she has now fulfilled her dream of becoming an optometrist. Her path to an optometric career started when she was just 12-years-old and needed an eye exam after having a hard time seeing the ball while playing tennis. While she already knew she wanted to be in the medical field, the more research she did, the more she realized optometry was calling her name. “It seemed like a great career then, and I still hold that belief now,” she said.

As her education progressed to include externship rotations during her third and fourth year, she fondly recalls visiting the externship office and picking up the finalized list of sites in which she was assigned. "Having my external rotations finalized felt like a giant leap towards getting out on my own," she said. "Now that they've concluded, I can say with certainty that I grew exponentially as a clinician, and I'm excited to continue growing as a resident."

That's right - she isn't done quite yet. She only has a few weeks of rest after graduation because in July, she will start a year-long affiliated residency in Ocular Disease at the Baltimore Veterans Affairs (VA) Eye Clinic.

As she concludes her time at Salus/PCO, she leaves some advice for those interested in optometry:

- Make a list of all the career options and do thorough research on each of them
- Talk to optometrists from different backgrounds to get a firsthand insight on all of the options available
- Shadow optometrists and various practices

And, similar to her stealing the show during Villanova's upset, she hopes Salus/PCO students will be at the center of their own show. "Most importantly, follow your heart," she said. "You are in control of your own journey, and you know what's best for you."

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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, Public Health, 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, and speech-language pathology services. The University has more than 1,200 students, and more than 14, 000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit www.salus.edu.