



Dr. Keshia Elder

Dr. Keshia Elder Selected as Next Dean for UMSL College of Optometry

We are excited to share that, following a comprehensive national search, Dr. Keshia Elder was recently selected as the next dean for UMSL Optometry. We look forward to welcoming her to the college and campus this fall when she assumes the position September 1st. Dr. Elder previously served the college, from 2011 – 2016, as Associate Clinical Professor and clinical preceptor as well as course instructor for Foundations of Ocular and Systemic Diseases II and III and laboratory instructor for Clinical Optometry III. Beginning in 2015, as Director of 4th Year Clinical Rotations, Dr. Elder instituted many critical revisions to the externship experiences in order to bring the program into alignment with the evolving accreditation standards. According to Dean Davis, “This is an historic moment for the college and optometric education. I am pleased that Dr. Elder is returning in order to serve in such a critical role to advance optometric education.” He also states, “Dr. Elder is a compassionate educator and thoughtful strategic planner. Under her leadership, a

good UMSL externship experience was enhanced and set on a trajectory toward greatness. The externship program continues to be among the points of pride of the professional education offered at UMSL due in part to the many necessary adjustments she initiated.” Following her time at UMSL, Dr. Elder returned to the faculty at UAB School of Optometry where she’s served with distinction in several capacities in the classroom, clinic, research, and administration.

Dr. Elder holds a Doctor of Optometry and two Master’s degrees, one in Vision Science and a second in Instructional design, all from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Prior to her faculty appointments at UAB and UMSL she served on the faculty at University of South Carolina Department of Ophthalmology and as an officer and optometrist for the United States Navy Medical Services Corps. She is frequently pursued as a collaborator by colleagues throughout optometry and optometric education. Dr. Elder is actively involved across the optometric community with leadership roles on national committees and tasks forces in several optometric organizations, including the American Academy of Optometry, the National Optometric Association, and the Association of Schools & Colleges of Optometry, to name a few.

In his campus-wide announcement Provost Berberich states, “Dr. Elder’s passion for optometric education, student success and diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts for students, staff and faculty make her a perfect fit for the UMSL College of Optometry.” We could not agree more.