



The **Barbara Ross-Lee, DO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award** celebrates initiatives in which diverse learners are developed, diverse faculties are constructed, and the graduate medical education community embraces differences and highlights them as examples of what is achievable. The award recognizes ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institutions and programs, as well as specialty organizations, working to diversify the underrepresented physician workforce and create inclusive workplaces that foster humane, civil, and equitable environments.

**American Academy of Ophthalmology**  
Specialty Organization



AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY®

**Nominators Had This to Say:**

“The American Academy of

Ophthalmology, in partnership with the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology, began the Minority Ophthalmology Mentoring (MOM) program as a two-year pilot in 2016. The initial success attracted the support of subspecialty societies, and with that momentum and funding, the first official class was welcomed in 2018.”

“The program gave me, a first-generation physician with no connections to a small surgical specialty, invaluable guidance, and encouragement. The one-on-one mentorship this program offers is unparalleled and deeply needed for students such as myself who are the first in their families to pursue medical careers. I strongly feel that other medical specialties hoping to recruit and retain underrepresented minorities in medicine should look to the MOM program as a model of success and inspiration.”

“Over one-third of MOM students are first-generation college students and over 80 percent do not have an immediate family member who is a physician; my mentees fall into both categories. Although these students are bright and dedicated, they face gaps in equity compared to peers from non-minority backgrounds. This is compounded by incidents of implicit bias as well as explicit racism they experience as URiM students in medical school, which erodes their sense of inclusion and belonging. The MOM program takes a holistic approach to supporting students. In addition to fostering generative connections with mentors and other URiM medical students, MOM students are given educational materials, self-study resources, and research opportunities. The attention paid to all areas of a student’s life helps both the student and their mentor be proactive in identifying and addressing challenges.”