

**Optical Sciences Diploma now available
via distance learning through unique partnership**

The Registered Opticians Association of the Texas' Board of Education has just inked a deal with NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) to offer an opticians course via distance learning. Texas, like about half of the states in America, has no regulations stating opticians need to have mandatory education. The Registered Opticians Association in Texas says many employers are anxious to have their staff take this online program to acquire formal education credentials in ophthalmic dispensing (glasses and contact lenses). There are about 6,000 opticians in Texas, of which only about 200 have educational credentials. The Registered Opticians Association of Texas made arrangements with NAIT to bring Canada's only Optical Sciences program available via distance delivery to Texas. Opticians in other states may also take these courses as long as they meet NAIT's entry requirements. So far, about a dozen students in Texas have signed up for NAIT's part-time distance learning program, which starts the 3rd of September, 2007. It's expected many more will sign up over the summer before the August 15th cut off date. Academic education loans are available for this training.

For more information about this story, contact David Forrest, with the Registered Opticians Association of Texas' Board of Education, at 713-477-4900. You can also reach Dr. Warren G. McDonald, NAIT Representative in the US at 910-818-1146 or via email: WGMPHD@aol.com.

(Background: Opticians are to the optical world what nurses are to the medical world. Opticians provide valuable assistance to the doctor's patients by providing counseling and accurate measurements in order to assure the best results when fulfilling a doctor's instructions. Optician students can study and do a practicum over two years and then get an eyeglass diploma. After that, they can take an additional two years of part-time study and a practicum to receive an Advanced Practice Contact Lens Certificate, and an additional year of study in the skill of refraction. Graduates can work in corporate companies, at independent optical companies, within Ophthalmology practices, or in optometry offices. Opticians who complete this program can expect to make about \$40,000-\$45,000 a year while those who complete all the programs including the Advanced Contact Lens Certificate can expect to earn about \$60,000 a year with in five years of successful completion.)