



Brandon Meacham | *COE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT*

Georgia Vision Institute and Georgia Cataract and Eye Specialty Center, GA

5 years in ophthalmology, 2 as Practice Administrator

Tell us about yourself and your current role:

We have 4 clinical locations and our own surgery center. I started here in 2021 as their ASC Director, and when the previous Practice Administrator retired in 2024, I moved into this position.

What drew you to the specialty and the pathway to your role?

I started in the medical field a month after High School going into the Navy as a Corpsman. I did emergency medicine, nursing, surgical tech, and urology tech. I got to witness, experience, and do things in the Navy it would take a whole medical career to do other places. When I left the Navy I was working as a Medical Assistant in Urology, and I was struggling going to school full time, having a family and working full time, so my mom recommended I apply for a travelling cataract surgical tech position at the company she worked for to give me more flexibility since I still had my CST as well. I did not have much experience with eyes, but fell in love with the surgical aspect of it and got to work with around 20 different Ophthalmologist in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. I absorbed as much information as I could and this is where I met the owners of the company I work with now. I would joke with them about when I got my degree they should just hire me to manage their surgery center they were building at the time, and Dr. Yancey would say well go get a couple years experience and we will talk about it, which I thought was joking as well. So, I finished my Bachelor's in Healthcare Management, and went to work for DePoe Eye Center as a regional manager for there Optometry locations. This was very new for me as I had never managed before, I had never been in the optical side of things before, so I did whatever I could to learn all of these areas I was not well versed in. Michelle Wright and both Dr. Adam and Laura DePoe taught me so much about the field and I loved being able to take what I knew and my strengths in the surgical and clinical side of things and help with that while absorbing as much as I could of their knowledge of Optical, sales, management and countless other things. I am grateful for all of the opportunities and knowledge they provided me with. I was able to also finish my MBA in Healthcare Administration during my time with DePoe. I had been there for almost 2 years and I found out maybe Dr. Yancey wasn't just joking about having a discussion once I got some experience under my belt, she reached out and they offered me the position of Surgery Center Director, and this was an amazing opportunity. Once I started, they saw I not only knew the surgical side of things like they had remembered, but I had obtained a lot of knowledge on the optical, sales and clinical side of things as well, which let them give me opportunities outside of the surgery center like revamping and running the optical, helping build and maintain Co-Manage relationships since I understood the Optometrist's needs now, and many other clinical and sales projects. I had been With Georgia Vision Institute for 3 years in 2024 when the previous Administrator retired, and the owners, Dr. Berry, and Dr. Yancey gave me the opportunity to expand out of the surgery center and be the Practice Administrator while still doing the ASC operations as well. It has been an enjoyable, challenging and always changing transition, but having a strong team around me and great support from the owners has helped out tremendously.

What inspired you to pursue the COE certification?

In the medical field usually when you want to get an accomplishment that shows knowledge in your field, it means getting another degree. I don't think that is always the case, especially in Ophthalmology. I like to challenge myself and am always looking for the next challenge I can push for. I wanted to get this Certification because I think it does a much better job of showing your knowledge in our field than any other degree or anything else you can obtain.

How did you prepare for the exam or training process (study methods, resources, mentors)?

I am not a typical learner, and do not study very much. How I learn is by listening to the people around me who know more about something than I do, and joining ASOA has helped a ton with that. So, for the most part my knowledge came from listening, asking questions, and trying new things throughout my journey in Ophthalmology. I did get the study material from ASOA which did a great job of confirming areas I was strong in and showing me areas I needed to dive into the information more before taking the test.

What was the most challenging part of preparing for the exam?

Being such a wide array of information, I think the biggest challenge was trusting you know enough to pass. No matter how long you are in the field, or how many hours you study, there are still going to be a ton of topics you are uncomfortable with or unfamiliar with.

What advice would you offer to those considering sitting for the exam?

Absorb as much information as you can from the people around you. Use whatever study or learning method works best for you to really hit on topics that you know you aren't as well versed in and then trust you know what you need to, to succeed.

How has achieving this certification impacted your professional development?

I did this more for me as a confirmation of the knowledge I have. I have done a lot of things in a short amount of time, and being a ASC Director at 27 years old, and then transitioning into a Practice Administrator right after turning 30, there are a lot of times you look around and feel you might not have the knowledge yet to be in these types of positions, but being able to do something like this is helpful in confirming I have learned a lot in this field and will continue to learn.

In what ways will this certification benefit your team, patients/clients, or the organization?

I think having this certification get more people asking about it, interested in pursuing it themselves, and looking into ways they can further their learning and development as well. There are a lot of people that do not know the methods they can utilize to develop and move up in this field and I think just having that, discussing that with others and helping others with it makes our organization and team stronger in the future.

What motivates you to continue pursuing learning and professional development?

Mostly my overactive competitiveness. If I see something others are doing and I don't know if I can do it, or it isn't something many people are able to do, it makes me want to do it more. That, and I like learning, I like knowing as much information as possible and love learning about anything at any time.

How did you celebrate after earning your certification?

As many people in this position know, things never slow down, so I have been super busy with rotating multiple projects we have going on right now, and sports, family and getting ready for school to start back. So, I did a small celebration for myself by buying some good bourbon and enjoying that, but plan to do some more celebration in New Orleans for AAO.

Who supported or inspired you most along this journey?

I have had great support from a ton of people along my journey, from Dr. Patino in the Navy, letting me do things I never would have thought I could do and trusting me to do them, to Dr. Powell being the first doctor I worked with out of the Navy and he was fresh out of fellowship, so we learned real world medicine together and are still good friends today. Michelle Wright and Dr. DePoe for giving me my first management role and trusting and building me up through that journey, to Dr. Berry and Yancey for remembering me 2 years later, and our joking conversation about managing their ASC, and trusting me with so many projects and opportunities since I have been here. And definitely my mom, she has worked as a surgical tech my whole life and got into eyes probably 20 years ago. She has moved up and is in a Director role as a surgical tech where she is now, and it is always fun meeting all the reps and people who have worked with my mom for years and now they are working with both of us.

Outside of work and professional learning, what do you enjoy doing in your free time?

That is a loaded question, my ADHD has inspired many different hobbies I bounce around from one to another. I love spending time with family and anything outdoors especially hunting, fishing and golf. But I also enjoy woodworking, restoring the 1985 Chevy I have, and even do some tattooing on the side.

What is next on your professional development journey?

I think enjoying where I am at in my journey, since this was always my goal, and continuing to get better at what I do now as well as grow and learn as much as possible for whatever the future brings!

Is this the year you obtain your COE? Visit <https://www.asoa.org/career-and-advancement/certified-ophthalmic-executive> for more information and to get started!