



## **From the Chair of RAS-ACS:** *The voices of young surgeons*

by **Gregory S. Cherr, MD, Buffalo, NY**

It was only a few years ago that I attended the first meeting of the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS), then known as the Candidate and Associate Society. I clearly remember the sense of excitement as we residents realized that this new committee would be a means for the voices of young surgeons to be heard by the leadership of the College. Over the ensuing years, this has proven to be true, as RAS members have joined ACS committees and advisory councils, attended Board of Regents meetings, moderated Clinical Congress plenary sessions, published an e-newsletter, and made regular contributions to ACS publications like *Surgery News* and the *Bulletin*. Given the opportunity by the leadership of the ACS, members of the RAS committees have worked tirelessly to address issues of concern to young surgeons. The July issue of the *Bulletin*—which, since 2004, has been devoted to issues of importance to young surgeons—is an excellent illustration of the contributions that young surgeons can make when given the opportunity.

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The RAS has a Council of Representatives (with members from each local ACS chapter), an Executive Committee, and officers (determined by vote of the Council). A majority of the RAS' work is done by the four standing committees, composed of volunteer members from the U.S. and Canada. (On a related note, the RAS is always looking for interested new members to join our committees.)

## Update on the RAS Committee activities

### Education Committee

The Education Committee is charged with identifying educational areas of need for young surgeons. The committee, led by Anatheia Powell, MD, and Joshua Mammen, MD, has many ongoing projects. To help interested residents find appropriate research positions, the committee has developed an online database of available resident research fellowships. Before implementation of the 80-hour workweek, the committee published the results of a resident survey regarding their opinions of restricted duty hours. The committee is now developing a follow-up survey to gauge the impact of the 80-hour workweek on resident education. The committee has also partnered with the Committee on Resident Education to develop the Residents As Teachers and Leaders course, offered for the first time in June 2007.

### Membership Committee

The Membership Committee of the RAS is charged with recruiting and retaining young members. This committee, led by Luke Brewster, MD, and Adil Haider, MD, has recruited more than 100 young surgeons to serve in the new RAS liaison program. The liaisons will serve as leaders at a local level to engage young surgeons and further the goals of the RAS. The committee has developed a recruiting package for the liaisons, including a comprehensive list of ACS membership benefits. Our goal is to enlist two liaisons from each surgical residency program in North America. Surgical interns continue to receive free first-year membership in the ACS. However, there is attrition after the first year of free membership. The committee sent letters to all nonrenewing

second-year residents and enlisted liaisons to help with retention of these young surgeons. The Membership Committee is also exploring ways to recruit medical students into the ACS.

### Issues Committee

The primary focus of the Issues Committee is the annual RAS symposium at the Clinical Congress. Last year's very successful topic was acute care surgery and included speakers from multiple surgical specialties. This year's symposium—tentatively entitled Pay for Performance and Surgical Quality Initiatives: Will the "Generalist" and Surgical Training Survive in the New Paradigm?—will explore the impact of quality initiatives on surgical training and the future practice of surgery. Led by Hari Nathan, MD, and Mindy Williams, MD, the committee has recruited a prominent panel of speakers to explore this timely issue. The program is followed by a question-and-answer session. Based on the response to previous symposia, I'm sure that this session will prove to be provocative and stimulating.

### Communications Committee

The Communications Committee, led by C. Suzanne Cutter, MD, remains very busy and productive. This issue of the *Bulletin* is a shining example of the accomplishments of the committee. The RAS e-newsletter, edited by Carlos Mery, MD, and Wesley Francis, MD, is regularly distributed and addresses the issues and activities of young surgeons. Because of the rapid turnover time for the e-newsletter, we are able to focus on timely topics of concern to our membership. Unsolicited contributions to the e-newsletter are welcomed and encouraged—young surgeons are invited to write about an issue of interest to them. The committee is also pursuing alternative online methods of interaction, such as RAS discussion groups and Web logs.

### Ad-hoc committees

The RAS also has ad-hoc committees to address other topics of interest to young surgeons. This year we have a new committee, the International Medical Graduate (IMG) Committee.

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## **Resident and Associate Society** *Executive Committee*

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The ACS has many exciting activities developed by and targeted to young surgeons. The leadership of the ACS is committed to hearing and responding to the voices of young surgeons. With the rapid changes in the practice of surgery (and training of surgical residents), the ACS has engaged young surgeons to become involved in the College. With energy and enthusiasm, the RAS-ACS has responded to this call. 

IMGs comprise a significant proportion of surgical residents, practicing surgeons, and ACS Fellows. This committee is exploring methods to acclimate IMGs into surgical training as well as recruit them as RAS members. Many young surgeons are also enthusiastic advocates of surgical volunteerism and we are working with Operation Giving Back to encourage the development of international rotations for surgical residents. The Web Portal Committee has been working to improve the appearance and content of the RAS-ACS Community on e-FACS.

Finally, the Leadership Award Committee identified four worthy recipients of the second annual RAS-ACS Leadership Award: Gerald S. Lipshutz, MD, DDS, Los Angeles, CA; Neal Barshes, MD, Houston, TX; Awori Hayanga, MD, Ann Arbor, MI; and Arezou Tory Yaghoubian, MD, Los Angeles, CA. We received more than 80 applications for the scholarships (which are funded by an anonymous donor). Two recipients will attend the ACS Clinical Trials Course and two will participate in the Committee on Young Surgeons Leadership Conference in Washington, DC.

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