

February 2009

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[Message from the Chair: Report from the Board of Regents Meeting](#)

As might have been anticipated, much of the discussion during the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Board of Regents meeting that was held in Chicago earlier this month centered on the implications of the economic downturn that our nation is facing. Like many other organizations, the College has suffered serious losses in the past several months, a situation that will force some difficult decisions to be made regarding our collective priorities.

I am proud and delighted to say that the importance of the activities of the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) remains unchallenged. Our report to the Regents regarding the progress of our standing committees and activities was extremely well received, and the support that RAS has among the Regents continues to grow. The Regents widely and openly recognize RAS as the future of the College, and they are wholly supportive of our programming.

Jacob Moalem, MD
Chair, RAS-ACS

[Building a Surgical Career](#)

Completing a surgical residency is just the first step in the construction of a lifelong surgical career. However, embarking upon a successful surgical career requires the need to address a number of key questions early on. Should you focus on building a private practice or should you seek to incorporate various academic components into your surgical career? How should you balance personal life, clinical excellence, and research productivity? What are the financial and bureaucratic hurdles involved and how should you manage them?

This year, RAS-ACS will be exploring some of these questions as part of the June issue of the *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons*. Some of the topics that will be discussed include:

- How to build a nonclinical component into your surgical career (basic science, clinical research, health policy, innovation)
- Balancing clinical practice with family and personal life
- Understanding and navigating bureaucratic hurdles within your practice
- Financial planning for your surgical career and beyond
- The place of general surgery as a specialty in the future

Look for this exciting issue of the *Bulletin*, and the contributions written by members of the RAS-ACS community.

Carlos M. Mery, MD, MPH

Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee

My Mentor: The RAS-ACS Communications Committee Sponsored Essay Contest

The RAS-ACS Communications Committee sponsored essay contest “My Mentor” has been a resounding success. There were several outstanding submissions that are a testament to the profound impact our educators can have on our surgical careers. The top 10 essays will be published in an upcoming series in the *Bulletin*. Although the scoring is done and a top essay has been chosen, the results are being kept confidential. The winner will be announced just prior to the 2009 Clinical Congress and will be awarded a certificate and a \$500 prize. The communications committee would like to thank all of the contestants for their thoughtful essays and congratulate each of the mentors for their outstanding work.

Heena Santry, MD

Vice-Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee

“Is the Generalist Surgeon Obsolete?” Get in on the Debate!

General surgery, neurosurgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics, otolaryngology, pediatric surgery, and urology all provide opportunities for both generalist and specialist practices. With increasing interest in the specialist practice, what is the role of the generalist? At the 2009 ACS Clinical Congress, the RAS Symposium will host a debate on:

“Is the Generalist Surgeon Obsolete?”

Leaders from both sides will debate the question. RAS members have an opportunity to get in on the debate by applying for the Second Annual Resident Submissions Competition. Winners will share the podium with these leaders and debate.

First-place winners will be invited to present their viewpoint at the RAS Symposium on Sunday, October 11, 2009, at the Clinical Congress. Second-place winners will have their submission published in an ACS publication.

Submission guidelines:

- One-page length maximum
- Does not need to be extensively researched, but citing recent publications or discussing the origins of your opinions is encouraged
- Please email submissions by March 13, 2009, to ras@facs.org

Nikunj K. Chokshi, MD, Kimberly A. Ruscher MD, MPH, C. Suzanne Cutter, MD

The RAS-ACS Issues Committee

Nominations Sought for 2009 ACS Volunteerism Award

The American College of Surgeons, in association with Pfizer Inc., is accepting nominations for the newly created Surgical Resident Volunteerism Award. This award is intended for Resident Members of the College who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to addressing the unmet needs of surgical patients at home or abroad. Nominees for this award will have had extensive experience during their education in volunteer efforts, such as with international surgical missions, or by working with free clinics in underserved areas, or may have made substantive contributions to the burgeoning fields of surgical global health research and advocacy.

Nominations will be evaluated by the Socioeconomic Issues Committee of the Board of Governors, with final approval of award winners by the Executive Committee. Potential nominees should make note of the following:

- Supplemental materials should be kept to a minimum and will not be returned
- Self-nominations are permissible but require an outside letter of support

The deadline for nominations is **February 27, 2009**. The forms are available at: <http://www.operationgivingback.org/>. For more information, contact umelchizedek@facs.org or call 312-202-5458.

Nominations Sought for Fifth Jacobson Promising Investigator Award

The American College of Surgeons is accepting nominations for the fifth annual Joan L. and Julius H. Jacobson II Promising Investigator Award, to be conferred in 2009. This award has been established to recognize outstanding surgeons engaged in research advancing the art and science of surgery who have shown through their research early promise of significant contribution to the practice of surgery and the safety of surgical patients.

Award criteria and nomination procedures can be found at <http://www.facs.org/cqi/src/jacobsonpia.html>. Special consideration will be given to surgeons who are at the "tipping point" of their research careers with a track record indicative of early promise and potential (such as degree program in research or K-award). Surgeon-scientists who are well established (for example, funded by NIH RO-1 grants) are not eligible candidates.

To be considered for the award in 2009, submissions must be e-mailed or (sent on a CD) postmarked no later than March 13, 2009. After compiling the necessary award criteria documentation in an electronic format, you may submit it via e-mail to mfitzgerald@facs.org. Nomination materials can also be submitted on a CD-ROM to Mary Fitzgerald, American College of Surgeons, 633 N. Saint Clair St., Chicago, IL 60611. Applicants are encouraged to verify that all necessary documentation has been received before the March 13 deadline. For additional information, contact mfitzgerald@facs.org, or call 312-202-5319.

Surgical Volunteering Opportunities with International Medical Assistance

International Medical Assistance (IMA) is a not-for-profit United States (US) corporation that aides the work of medical missions in Mexico. IMA is a Christian-based organization, but people from all religious and non-religious backgrounds participate in their missions. Medical students, residents and attending physicians are welcome to volunteer their skills in these missionary trips. Surgery residents and medical students work under the supervision of US surgeons.

The upcoming dates for surgical missions are:

February 14-28, 2009, Valladolid, Yucatán Medical/Dental/Surgical
April 18-25, 2009, Valladolid, Yucatán Urology

June 13-27, 2009, Valladolid Medical/Dental/Surgical
Visit IMA's Web site for detailed information: <http://www.ima-missions.org/>.

Share with Your medical students: Applications Being Accepted for ASCO MSR

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Medical Student Rotation (MSR) is a part of the Diversity in Oncology Initiative and is funded by **Susan G. Komen for the Cure®**. This program provides an opportunity for medical students from underserved regions of the US to learn more about the field of oncology. Completed applications are due by February 20, 2009. To apply, visit <http://www.ascocancerfoundation.org/>.

International Fellowship in France Available

The College of Medicine of Paris in conjunction with The Public Hospital of Paris is inviting international physicians to apply for a one-year fellowship in France that will begin November 3, 2009, and end October 31, 2010. The selected candidate will receive a monthly stipend of 1,450 Euros.

The requirements are:

1. Fluency in the French language
2. No older than 35 years of age
3. Non-French national
4. Just completed specialty training or currently in the last year of specialization

The deadline to receive applications is March 18, 2009. For more information and to download an application, visit <http://www.cmhp.asso.fr/main.htm>.

Click on: "Conditions de candidature" in the sidebar on the left side of the page.

Mecker G Möller, MD
Chair RAS-ACS IMG Committee

Coming Soon to an Operative Theater Near You: Medicine Meets Virtual Reality

At this year's *Medicine Meets Virtual Reality (MMVR) Conference*, held January 19-22 in Long Beach, CA, surgical simulation was a key topic on the agenda. During the MMVR 17th annual conference, highlights were provided and discussion took place on advances in medical simulation, modeling, visualization, and robotics. A panel of experts discussed the benefits of surgical simulation, not only on technical skills, but also on the development of surgical judgment during the session "**Preoperative Warm-up: Science, Theory, and Implications on Policy and Practice.**" Several reports suggest a positive role for preoperative simulation in reducing cognitive errors and possibly improving outcomes. One of the pioneers in the development of surgical virtual reality applications, Richard Satava, MD, FACS, mentioned that regulatory policy may arrive more quickly than actual access to simulation. Ajit Sachdeva, MD, FACS, FRCSC, Director of the College's Division of Education, stated that although some research has been published, further work needs to be done to validate these methods and determine the contexts in which they will be necessary.

In addition, several presentations described the current state-of-the-art and science behind the development of so-called **serious video games, or computer-based surgical simulators**. These programs have several distinct advantages over the more classic simulation-center based model; specifically these programs can be used on personal computers and, as a result, may prove to be more practical and cost-effective. Jan Cannon-Bowers from the University of Central Florida stated that one of the key features of such games is that they provide "pattern building for adaptive expertise." She went on to say that such simulators can provide variations on a theme for different scenarios and even provide for "over-learning" of cognitive skills making them automatic. This is an ever-expanding field of interest in the modern-day health care environment; such digital case-based

games are currently being developed for recertification of practicing surgeons.

Stefan Holubar, MD

Member, RAS-ACS Education Committee

The 2009 ACS Leadership and Joint Surgical Advocacy Conference

The ACS Committee on Young Surgeons invites all members of RAS to the 2009 ACS Leadership and Joint Surgical Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, March 22-24. The program offers excellent content for all aspiring leaders. A preliminary agenda can be accessed at http://magnetmail.net/images/clients/ACSSurgeons/attach/draft_schedule.doc.

In addition, 15 different surgical societies are expected to participate in the health advocacy symposium. To register, visit <http://www.facs.org/ahp/jsac2009.html>.

Perry Shen, MD, FACS

Chair, ACS Committee on Young Surgeons

2008 Clinical Congress Webcast Packages Now Available Online for CME

The American College of Surgeons Division of Education has announced the availability of the 2008 Clinical Congress Webcast Packages.

One package consists of selected sessions from the 2008 Clinical Congress in San Francisco and offers over 100 CME hours. In addition, the package includes access to the Webcasts of selected sessions from the 2007 Clinical Congress in New Orleans--all for \$99. The Webcast sessions also include audio recordings synchronized with the presentation slides.

A Webcast Package with audio recordings in MP3 format of the entire 2008 Clinical Congress can also be purchased for only \$249.

For more information and to order online, visit <http://www.acs-resource.org/> or contact elearning@facs.org.

Abstract Submissions Requested for 2009 Clinical Congress

Abstract submissions are being sought for the following programs: Owen H. Wangensteen Surgical Forum, Papers Session, Scientific Exhibits, and Video-based Education. All accepted abstracts will be presented during the 95th Annual Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons, October 11-15, 2009, in Chicago, IL. Submissions are subject to committee review and selection.

- Abstracts are to be submitted online only
- Submission period: From November 10, 2008, until 5 pm (CST) March 1, 2009.
- Late submissions are **not** permitted.
- Duplicate submissions (one abstract submitted to more than one program) are not permitted.
- Abstract specifications and requirements are posted at http://web2.facs.org/abstracts/Call_For_Abtracts.cfm.

For further information: Owen H. Wangensteen Surgical Forum (oral presentation)--Kathryn L. Matousek, 312-202-5336 or kmatousek@facs.org; Papers Session (oral presentation)--Beth Brown, 312-202-5325 or ebrown@facs.org; Scientific Exhibits (poster presentation)--Kay Anthony, 312-202-5385, or kanthony@facs.org; Video-based Education (video presentation)--Gay Lynn Dykman, 312-202-5262 or gdykman@facs.org.

Contribute to the next RAS-ACS e-Newsletter! The next deadline is April 6, 2009. You may e-mail submissions to spm352@yahoo.com or phaar@facs.org.

About RAS-ACS

The Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) is an organization within the American College of Surgeons that was formed to benefit young and future surgeons through involvement in the College's activities. Membership in the RAS-ACS is automatic when you become a Resident Member or an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Resident membership is open to all surgical residents enrolled in an accredited graduate educational program, surgical research, or fellowship program. Associate Fellow membership is open to young surgeons who are currently engaged in a second surgical residency, a research or a fellowship program, a surgical specialty practice, and are within five years of graduation from formal surgical residency training. Currently, over 2,600 Associate Fellows and 8,000 Residents are part of the RAS-ACS.

Benefits of becoming a RAS-ACS member:

- free *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* subscription
- free *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons* subscription
- free Clinical Congress advance registration and access to CME credit
- reduced pricing for selected postgraduate courses at the Clinical Congress
- information on clinical and research fellowship opportunities
- free access to the College's job and resume databank
- electronic newsletter, Web site, and Web portal
- educational materials to meet requirements for board certification
- opportunities to serve on various College committees
- opportunities for local chapter affiliation
- access to ACS-sponsored insurance programs (life, health, disability)
- a voice in advocacy and policy-making issues concerning residents and young surgeons

Join today!

Be Sure to Visit These Important Areas of the ACS Web site:

RAS-ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acs/>

How to Join RAS-ACS: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acs/membership/membership.html>

Job Bank: http://www.healthcareers.com/site_templates/ACS/index.asp?aff=ACS&SPLD=ACS

ACS Web portal: <http://efacs.org/residents>

ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org/>

Your Feedback Is Important to Us

We are interested in making sure that the content of *RAS-ACS News* meets the interests and responds to the needs of surgical residents and newly practicing surgeons across the country. Your feedback and ideas are important to us. Please send your comments about this newsletter and your ideas for articles to the Editor at ras-news@facs.org.

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For additional information regarding the benefits and activities of the RAS-ACS, please contact Peg Haar at ras-news@facs.org.

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