

RAS-ACS News



A Quarterly Update from the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons



Spring 2005

Editor: Juan C. Paramo, MD, Chair, Communications Committee, RAS-ACS
Associate Editor: C. Suzanne Cutter, MD, Co-Chair, Communications Committee, RAS-ACS

- [RAS-ACS Leaders and ACS Officials Hold Strategic Planning Session](#)
- [Three Resident-Oriented Sessions Held during Spring Meeting](#)
- [Surgical Jeopardy](#)
- ["Life after Residency"](#)
- [Advances in Surgical Training](#)
- ["Extra, Extra!" Read All about the Upcoming July Issue of the Bulletin](#)
- [The ACS Web Portal: Designed Your Way](#)
- [Financial Considerations for Surgical Residents: Part 2](#)
- [RAS Symposium at Clinical Congress to Examine "Truncated Training for the Surgical Resident--The Future or Fallacy?"](#)
- [Local Chapter Updates and Announcements](#)
- [ACS Surgery Introduces the ACS Surgery Weekly Curriculum](#)

RAS-ACS Leaders and ACS Officials Hold Strategic Planning Session

On Sunday, April 17, 2005, the leadership of RAS, including Danielle Katz, MD, Michael Sutherland, MD, Gregory Cherr, MD, Jeffrey Upperman, MD, FACS, Juan Paramo, MD, and staff liaison Peg Haar, met with key staff of the College--Thomas Russell, MD, FACS, Paul Collicott, MD, FACS, Ajit Sachdeva, MD, FACS, and Patrice Blair MPH--for the second annual RAS Strategic Planning meeting. During the meeting the accomplishments of the past year were reviewed, and goals for the future were established.

Membership in RAS continues to increase. The ACS New Mexico Chapter recently expressed the intention to enroll all residents in their chapter, and we are encouraging all RAS members to become more involved with their local chapters. We are still working on member retention. **Beginning in July 2005, all surgical interns** will be enrolled at not cost for their first year of membership. We are working on strategies to help more senior residents appreciate the value of continuing membership in RAS, and during the strategic planning session, we also explored some ways in which to facilitate the transition from Resident to Associate Fellow status.

There are more RAS members than ever before serving on ACS committees, RAS representatives will make oral presentations at the Clinical Congress, and written reports will be posted on the RAS Web site. Gaining RAS representation on nearly all ACS committees has been set as a goal to be achieved during the next one to two years. An outcome of the planning session was a commitment to continue to have two RAS officers attend each Board of Regents meetings.

RAS is continuing to collaborate and work in conjunction with the Division of Education on courses and other activities relevant to resident education.

New ideas being developed include a "**Residents as Managers**" course to assist residents in acquiring the skills they need to be successful chief residents and to make the transition from resident to attending, a course for residents on conducting research, and the development of a RAS-sponsored plenary session for the Clinical Congress.

This year's RAS Strategic Planning meeting was extremely productive. New projects have been proposed and new goals set for the future. We are excited that RAS is continuing to grow and develop, to be a voice for residents and Associate Fellows, and to actively contribute to the work of the College.

Danielle A. Katz, MD
Chair
RAS-ACS

Three Resident-Oriented Sessions Held during Spring Meeting

To continue our support of resident educational programs, the RAS-ACS sponsored three resident-oriented sessions during the College's annual Spring Meeting, which was held April 16-19 in Hollywood, FL. All of the RAS sessions were held on Sunday, April 17, and all three programs were a tremendous success.

The first session, "**Clinical abstract presentations by residents**," was moderated by **Steven D. Wexner, MD**, and **Barry Jenkins, MD**. Congratulations to the residents presenting abstracts: Robert Baird, MD, Mary Heyrosa, MD, Deepak Nair, MD, Sorin Pusca, MD, and Heena Santry MD.

The second session, "**Spectacular Cases from Residents**," was moderated by **A. Frederick Schild, MD**, and **Juan C. Paramo, MD**. Five truly spectacular cases were presented by Howard Levinson, MD, Raja Gopaldas, MD, Lisa Wiechman, MD, Mohiuddin Cheema, MD, and Suzan Marshall, DO. The RAS-ACS would like to thank the panelists Joe Levi, MD, Alan Livingstone, MD, Lawrence Lottenberg, MD, and Thomas Mesko, MD, for a wonderful discussion on the different case presentations.

The final session, "**Surgical Jeopardy**," was moderated by **Mark W. Bowyer, MD**, and facilitated by Jon Perlstein, MD, Matt Ritter, MD, and James Cook, MD. The RAS-ACS would like to congratulate B.V. Reddy, MD, and Raja Gopaldas, MD, residents from the Easton (PA) Hospital Surgical Residency for being this year's jeopardy champions.

Again, we want to make the Annual Spring Meeting **your** meeting. We plan continue offering these programs on a yearly basis.

Juan C. Paramo, MD
Co-Chair
Communications Committee
RAS-ACS

Surgical Jeopardy

Answers:

"Defined by the hamate and pisiform bones, the ulnar nerve runs through this structure."

"This physician helped Dr. Bovie invent the electrocautery device."

"This ulcer sits high on the lesser curve on the stomach."

To the amazement of the mere mortals in the audience, questions such as these were easily answered by the contestants during this year's Surgical Jeopardy session at the ACS Spring Meeting. Led by emcee Mark Bowyer, MD, FACS, (Burke, VA), the afternoon session included fierce competition,

stunning displays of surgical knowledge (and trivia), and a lot of laughs.

This year's champions are **BV Reddy, MD**, and **Raja Gopaldas, MD** (Easton Hospital Residency Program). Their amazing wealth of knowledge, ranging from basic sciences to flatus to TV doctors, left us all shaking our heads in astonishment.

Think you're smart? Consider entering next year's session of Surgical Jeopardy to be held during the Resident's session at the Spring Meeting.

Questions:

What is Guyon's canal?

Who is Harvey Cushing?

What is Csendes (Type IV) gastric ulcer?

Gregory Cherr, MD

Secretary

RAS-ACS

"Life after Residency"

One of the many features designed for residents during the College's Spring Meeting is the "Life after Residency" program sponsored by the Division of Education. This program is designed to provide senior residents with the tools that are necessary to **better negotiate contracts, examine job offers, and prepare for and register for the American Board of Surgery certification process**. The session also provided information on many other important tools that can be used in preparing to transition from residency to practice.

The day-long course format included lectures on preventing malpractice claims by a prominent medical malpractice defense attorney and practice management strategies presented by successful surgeons in leadership roles in the College. Barbara Bass, MD, FACS, Chair of the American Board of Surgery, presented a concise guide to the board certification process. She provided a step-by-step walk-through of the process from application to certification, eliminating the mystery of the board process. Staff of the College's Division of Education described new and upcoming products that are, or that will be, available to members. RAS was represented, and a concise review of all of the College offerings that are relevant to residents and young surgeons was presented.

This program **will be presented again next year** at the Spring Meeting and is open to fourth- and fifth-year residents from any specialty. If you are interested in participating in this exciting program next year, watch for registration links in upcoming editions of this newsletter.

Michael Sutherland, MD

Vice-Chair

RAS-ACS

Advances in Surgical Training

With the limitations of the 80-hour working week and external pressure resulting in less time for teaching in the operating room, training programs are seeking alternate means to impart surgical skills to their residents. New technology has been introduced aimed at creating a **virtual learning environment to enhance technical proficiency**, especially in endoscopy and laparoscopy. Residency programs are starting to incorporate these simulators into their educational curriculum. The benefit of simulation is that it allows limitless practice in a safe environment.

Surgical skills coordinator Janet Ketchum has described the incorporation of simulators into the skills lab in the Southern Illinois University general

surgery residency program. The goal is to teach basic and complex surgical techniques, and to provide a means to advance residents along the learning curve for surgical procedures. Other programs, such as the one at the University of Michigan, have developed similar clinical simulation centers, where complicated technical procedures and refined motor skills can be learned intuitively. A performance report provides trainees and mentors a means to follow an individual's progress through the program. These innovative learning tools are significant, as studies have demonstrated that the majority of surgical complications occur early in the learning curve for any given procedure.

Ted A. James, MD
Co-Chair
Education Committee
RAS-ACS



Immersion© endoscopic and laparoscopic simulation



UMCSC hosts a variety of clinical simulators from Simbionix™

Extra! Extra!" Read All about the Upcoming July Issue of the *Bulletin!*

Once each year, the Resident Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) is charged with the task of developing a special issue of the *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons*. The upcoming July issue will be devoted to issues pertinent to residents, young surgeons, and, most importantly, the field of surgery as a whole.

ACS President Edward R Laws, MD, FACS, will expand upon the theme for his presidential year--"**Unity in Surgery**"--by discussing surgical subspecialty membership within the College. RAS chair, Danielle A. Katz, MD, will reflect on unity from the perspective of the RAS, and Joshua Rosenow, MD, will discuss how the unity of the College affects the role of residents and faculty surgeons, fostering research, and creating a unified voice in Washington.

Learn more about the upcoming Clinical Congress RAS-ACS sponsored symposium, "**Truncated training for the surgical resident—the future or fallacy?**", in a preview by Faisal G. Qureshi, MD. Looking to get ahead on this potentially controversial subject? Look no further than Juan Paramo's, MD, article in which he determines that surgical training should take "anywhere between three and more than nine years." Read the articles, attend the symposium, and then decide for yourself.

Leadership and volunteerism are two qualities the College promotes among its young surgeons. Learn about the adventures of Mecker G Möller, MD,

and John Karamichalis, MD, as they share their personal experiences from a mission in Valladolid, Mexico. C. Suzanne Cutter, MD, and Jeffrey Upperman, MD, FACS, discuss the complexities of developing leadership training for up and coming surgeons. Do you have what it takes to lead?

Joshua A. Broghammer, MD
Communications Committee
RAS-ACS

The ACS Web Portal: Designed Your Way

The ACS Web portal—*e-facs.org*-- is currently being developed, and RAS member input will make a difference. In July, residents, fellows, and some associates will progress to an advanced stage of training or professional positions. Now is a good time to reflect on the types of tools and information that would help you now and in the coming year. Could you use more information on writing **job search** materials (that is, CV, personal statements, cover letters)? Would a listing of materials for **ABSITE or Surgical Board** preparation be helpful? Do you want to know about **upcoming meetings** for surgeons or scientists at your level?

Let us know your thoughts about these and other ideas. Please send your comments and ideas to the Editor at ras-news@facs.org.

C. Suzanne Cutter, MD
Co-Chair
Communications Committee
RAS-ACS

Financial Considerations for Surgical Residents: Part 2

This is the second part in a series on financial debt for surgical residents. Previously, we reported that the average debt of the graduating 2004 medical school class was \$115,218 and discussed average resident salaries along with the specific difficulties surgical residents have in paying off these debts. For many of us, the quick answer is deferment and/or forbearance with the ultimate goal of paying off debt once we start making "real money."

However, let's put this plan in perspective and some practical context. Over the last 20 years, median tuition and fees have increased by 165 percent in private medical schools and by 312 percent in public medical schools. However, during this same period physician income has increased by only 34.6 percent, essentially in line with the consumer price index.* Thus, a larger percentage of physician income is now allocated toward debt. In order to further delineate the escalating problem, we must point out the economically advantageous period of time we have recently enjoyed. Interest rates last year were at all time lows. For example, recent interest rates of 2.82 percent on an educational debt of \$150,000 result in a monthly payment of \$1761. However, rates are already increasing in response to rising inflation rates and if they return to the maximum levels of 8.25 percent seen in 2001, the monthly payment would double with consolidation and triple without consolidation.+ These figures reflect very large burdens on surgeons regardless of whether they are still training or starting a practice.

Obviously, we have little control over interest rates, rising tuition costs, and decreasing reimbursement. However, we can keep ourselves informed. In the coming months, we plan to expand on this issue and explore the resources and strategies available to help take control of our ever-increasing debt.

* AAMC: Medical School Tuition and Young Physician Indebtedness, March 2004.

+ AAMC: Medical Education Costs and Student Debt, March 2005.

Rich Baynosa MD
Faisal Qureshi MD
Hima Ghanta MD
Issues Committee
RAS-ACS

RAS Symposium at Clinical Congress to Examine "Truncated Training for the Surgical Resident—The Future or Fallacy?"

Each year, the RAS-ACS sponsors a symposium during the Clinical Congress on a topic targeted at surgical residents, young surgeons, and fellows. This year's presentation will examine the issue of truncated training for residents proceeding to surgical specialties and will be held on Sunday, October 16, from 1 to 4 pm. The aim of this session is to provide insight into the future of surgical training and how truncated training would impact the trainees, training programs, and societal needs. The symposium will explore the possible **advantages and pitfalls of reducing the number of years a surgical specialist has to train**. The role of truncated training in the environment of limited work hours, long-term financial benefits, and impact on family life will also be discussed.

Speakers will include:

Barbara L. Bass, MD, FACS, Professor of Surgery, Director, General Surgery Residency Program, University of Maryland; Chair, American Board of Surgery
L. Scott Levin, MD, FACS, Professor of Surgery, Chief, Division of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Duke University
Jonathan Towne, MD, FACS, Professor of Surgery, Chief, Division of Vascular Surgery, Medical College of Wisconsin; Chair, Vascular Surgery Board of the American Board of Surgery
Amit Kumar, MD, Chief Resident in General Surgery, University of Rochester (NY)

Attendance is open to all RAS members as well as all residents, fellows, and medical students. An open-microphone discussion will promote audience participation.

We hope to see you there.

Faisal G. Qureshi, MD
Co-Chair
Issues Committee
RAS-ACS

Local Chapter Updates and Announcements

This summer we will introduce a new section to the RAS-ACS e-newsletter, which will focus on local chapter events and announcements. Reports of local chapter happenings, such as community projects, medical meeting summaries, and academic achievements, are encouraged. Recognition of varying achievements is important and may open new channels of communication and collaboration at future meetings. We suggest a local representative be selected to gather possible submission information and forward it to **Andrea Silver** at hiho70@yahoo.com. We look forward to hearing from chapters throughout the country.

ACS Surgery Introduces the ACS Surgery Weekly Curriculum

ACS Surgery: Principles & Practice has announced the introduction of a new teaching tool/information resource--The *ACS Surgery Weekly Curriculum*, a weekly e-mail review of key surgical topics with case-based questions and detailed discussion of answers for surgical residents. The program works as a partnership between program directors and their residents. Program

directors receive a ready-made curriculum based on new and updated chapters from the official ACS text, the new *ACS Surgery 2005 Bound Volume* (just released in March 2005), a 12-month subscription to *ACS Surgery Online*, and special discounts on additional copies of *ACS Surgery*. Program directors can then share this valuable teaching tool and information resource with their residents who, as members of the College, have free access to *ACS Surgery Online* as a benefit. The curriculum is priced at \$349 for Program Directors. To learn more about The *ACS Surgery Weekly Curriculum*, contact rkhan@webmd.net or call 212-624-3940.

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 member of the Candidate Group or an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Candidate Group 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 2,700 Associate Fellows and 4,400 Candidate Group members 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 online *ACS Surgery Textbook*
- free Clinical Congress and Spring Meeting registration and access to CME credit
- reduced pricing for *SESAP*
- information on clinical and research fellowship opportunities
- free access to the College's job and resume databank
- electronic newsletter and Web site
- 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!

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.

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

RAS-ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acis/index.html>

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

Job Bank: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acis/career/career.html>

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

ACS Spring Meeting: <http://www.facs.org/2004springmeeting/index.html>

Communications Committee, RAS-ACS

*Juan C. Paramo, MD, Chair, Miami Beach, FL
C. Suzanne Cutter, MD, Co-Chair, New York, NY
Joshua Rosenow, MD, Chicago, IL
Mecker G. Möller, MD, Grand Rapids, MI
Josh Broghammer, MD, Detroit, MI*

Executive Committee, RAS-ACS

*Danielle Katz, MD, Chair, Syracuse, NY
Michael Sutherland, MD, Vice-Chair, Ocean Springs, MS
Gregory S. Cherr, MD, Secretary, Buffalo, NY
Jeffrey Upperman, MD, Ex-Officio, Pittsburgh, PA
Andrew Evans, MD, Manlius, NY
Scott Hansen, MD, San Francisco, CA
Mark Hatton, MD, Burlington, MA
John Karamichalis, MD, Omaha, NE
Joshua Mammen, MD, Cincinnati, OH
Jacob Moalem, MD, North Brunswick, NJ
Teimour Nasirov, MD, Fargo, ND
Juan C. Paramo, MD, Miami Beach, FL
Robert W. Reagan, Jr., MD, Chapel Hill, NC
Joshua Rosenow, MD, Chicago, IL*

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



Click [here](#) to unsubscribe

633 N. Saint Clair St., Chicago, IL, 60611