



RAS e-Newsletter

July 2007

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[From the Chair: How to Make Your Voice Heard](#)

One of the primary goals of the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) is to allow the voices of young surgeons to be heard by the leadership of the College. We have made great strides in this respect over the past seven years. RAS-ACS Vice-Chair Ted James and I attended the Board of Regents meeting in June. The recently completed RAS Young Surgeon Survey was an important topic of discussion. We have RAS representatives on the Advisory Councils and almost all ACS committees. Through this newsletter, interested members can submit articles for distribution to all of the young surgeons in the ACS. We are also able to reach out to all members of the College through the RAS community on the Web portal as well as through the July issue of the *Bulletin* of the ACS, which each year is dedicated to our issues and concerns. There's just not enough room in the newsletter to list all of the opportunities that are available to us.

Do you want to get involved in the ACS? RAS (and the ACS) needs motivated young surgeons who want their voices to be heard. We are recruiting surgical residents to serve as RAS-ACS liaisons. We're always looking for writers to contribute to this e-Newsletter and to our community on the College's Web portal. Your local chapter may be looking for help with projects closer to home. There are many other opportunities as well. If you are interested, we can find a way for you to contribute to the RAS.

Is there an issue that you think needs to be addressed? Send me an e-mail (gcherr@facs.org). We want to know what is important to you!

Gregory S. Cherr, MD
Chair, RAS-ACS
Buffalo, NY

Be Your Training Program's Representative for the College

RAS liaisons are surgical residents who are interested in becoming more involved with the American College of Surgeons and would like to represent their residency program in College activities. As a liaison you will help get information from the College out to your constituents. In addition to keeping your colleagues in your training program informed, you will also seek out greater interaction with your institution's surgical subspecialties and medical student interest groups.

There are multiple programs still missing an RAS liaison. To see if your program needs a liaison or if you are interested in fulfilling this role at your institution, please contact Luke Brewster (lukebrewst@aol.com) or Peg Haar (phaar@facs.org).

Luke Brewster, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee
Oak Park, IL

RAS-ACS Research Fellowship Database to be Launched

The Education Committee of the RAS-ACS announces the coming launch of the Research Fellowship Database. **The establishment of the database is an effort to support principal investigators (PI) and residents in their respective searches for laboratory fellows and positions.** Included in the posting entries and searchable criteria are:

- location (institution, city, and state)
- focus of research (including basic science, clinical, and public health/policy)
- length of position
- funding status
- clinical responsibilities
- required qualifications (citizenship, degree, years of training)

Position entries will also include posting date, application due date, start date, method of application, and contact information. There is also free-text space available for describing the position and for any other important information. **Program directors and principal investigators will be able to quickly list their positions by clicking on a link and inserting information on the provided form.** Results will be listed in a table with links to each posting. Postings will have the dates of entry, and the database will be kept current.

The database will be available within the next few months on the RAS page of the Web portal. Notification of surgical organizations and programs will commence once the database has been turned live, and listings will be accepted at that point. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Anathea Powell, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Education Committee
Bethesda, MD

RAS-ACS to Issue Survey on International Elective

As academic frontiers expand, it is clear that underdeveloped countries can provide US surgery residents with a unique and rare opportunity. **Experiencing the full spectrum of the natural history of disease and health care delivery in a setting of scarce resources and technology may facilitate a greater awareness of the challenges facing these regions.** This experience has been heralded by the College's Operation Giving Back program, which is currently coordinating opportunities for various academic surgeons traveling to South and Central America, Africa, Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent. However, no standard opportunities exist currently for residents to acquire international experience. There is anecdotal and limited evidence that a demand exists for such training among residents.

In order to address this need, the RAS-ACS will be launching a national survey in an attempt to assess interest in international training among surgical residents. This survey will be sent out to all RAS-ACS members during the next few months. **The survey will seek to understand how residents would prioritize international training over other available opportunities and the features of the experience that are important to trainees.** It will also attempt to determine the intentions, motives, and disincentives prevalent in making such a decision. Collected nationally and from a wide variety of residents, this information will help focus efforts to incorporate international training into residency programs.

Awori J Hayanga MD

RAS-ACS Liaison, University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

Residents as Teachers and Leaders

The Division of Education of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the ACS Resident and Associate Society (RAS) held the new "Residents as Teachers and Leaders" course June 1-3 in Chicago. (See <http://www.facs.org/education/residentsasteachersandleaders.html>).

The course was a great success, and the feedback from participants was very positive. Forty-five of the 60 available slots were filled. Participants stated that the course was extremely helpful and would benefit all senior residents. **The purpose of the course is to meet the need to master non-clinical skills (communication, leadership, conflict resolution, team teaching, and so on) that will be critical to success as senior level residents and practicing surgeons.**

Plans are already in place for the next session. Keep alert for postings of future course time and location.

Ted A. James, MD

Vice-Chair, RAS-ACS
Burlington, VT

Too Busy to Keep Up with the Surgical Literature?

Check out ***The Surgical Index*** (<http://www.facs.org/tsi/index.html>), one of the most important, useful, and underutilized resources that our College provides. In this monthly online publication, **the most significant papers from the leading journals** (Annals of Surgery, Journal of the American College of Surgeons, Archives of Surgery, Surgery, British Journal of Surgery, American Journal of Surgery, Journal of Trauma, Diseases of Colon and Rectum, World Journal of Surgery, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery, Journal of Vascular Surgery, Surgical Endoscopy, Cancer, the New England Journal of Medicine, and Lancet) **are expertly summarized.**

These one page reviews are comprised of an introduction, results, and conclusion, often with a brief editorial commentary. The Web site can be easily searched by date, as well as by specific subjects of interest to individual surgeons using a simple anatomical coding system with keyword subheadings. In addition, online CME is available for each month's issue by completing a post-test for a few of the reviews.

Edited by Joseph A. Ignatius, MD, FACS, every monthly edition reviews approximately 20 key articles in a very readable, practical way. At the moment, general surgery core areas are covered. In the future, this project will be expanded to include subspecialty areas as well as socioeconomic and advocacy topics. **Utilizing this great, free service of the College, one can very efficiently stay current with the literature, and build a basis for an evidence-based practice.**

Jacob Moalem, MD

Secretary, RAS-ACS
New Brunswick, NJ

Summer Volunteer Opportunities for Surgery Residents

Dr. Glenn Geelhoed, a Fellow of the College at George Washington University who is passionately involved in international surgery, is **traveling through Africa this summer with a group of surgeons and surgical residents**. Dr. Geelhoed says that this mission is an experience like no other in a resident's "transformational education." The itinerary includes Ethiopia (Addis and Wollaitta) from June 1-13; Sudan from June 13- July 6 (Khartoum and other locales); and Chad (N'djamena, AmTiman, and the IDP camps west of Darfur) from July 6-28.

Even though these trips are currently ongoing, there are several trips planned for the future. **The next series being planned is for Central Africa**. For more information, contact Dr. Geelhoed by email at: msdgwg@gwumc.edu and arrange a time to speak with him in greater detail by phone about obtaining necessary visas and other related details with relative ease. For your reference, there is a Web site that describes some past trips and other related information at <http://home.gwu.edu/~gwg>.

Mecker Möller, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Tampa, FL

RAS-ACS Holds Strategic Planning Meeting in Las Vegas, NV

The fourth annual RAS-ACS Strategic Planning Meeting was a resounding success. College leaders, including Dr. Thomas Russell, Executive Director; Dr. Paul Collicott, Director of the Division of Member Services; Dr. Mark Malangoni, Chair of the Advisory Council for General Surgery; and Dr. Ajit Sachdeva and Patrice Blair, Director and Associate Director of the Division of Education, met with your RAS leadership and enthusiastically welcomed our efforts to foster resident involvement in the College's activities. Among the subjects discussed were the upcoming RAS-sponsored programs at the Clinical Congress. The **RAS-ACS Symposium** will focus on the impact of pay-for-performance (P4P) and quality assurance initiatives on resident training, and promises to be a highly energized session featuring Drs. Courtney Townsend and Barbara Bass. The **jointly sponsored RAS and Committee for Young Surgeons (CYS) Symposium** entitled "All Politics Is Local," will focus on current advocacy efforts. In addition, our very popular Spring Meeting programs, **Surgical Jeopardy** and **Spectacular Case Presentations**, will be moved to the 2008 Congress, since the Spring Meeting has been eliminated.

Another highly successful initiative this year has been our **RAS Leadership Award** program. More than 80 highly competitive applications were reviewed, and four deserving residents and fellows were awarded an all-expense paid participation in one of the Colleges' most sought-after courses: Drs. Gerald Lipshutz and Neal Barshes will attend the Clinical Trials course, and Drs. Awori Hayanga and Arezou Tory Yaghoubian attended the Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. The ongoing success of the **ACS-RAS liaison program** was also a subject of much discussion and excitement. We explored ways to further develop it by increasing ACS leadership's involvement and by further encouraging surgical subspecialty and medical student membership in the College.

In summary, the College's leaders recognize and embrace the importance of resident involvement in the organization. They will continue to support our efforts and are committed to ensuring the future of surgery through improved resident participation and enhanced value of membership.

Jacob Moalem, MD

Secretary, RAS-ACS
New Brunswick, NJ

ACGME Changes Language Concerning Call Rooms

The ACGME will implement new Institutional Requirements starting 7-1-07 (http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/irc/irc_IRCpr703.pdf). While there are many changes in this requirement, **more specific language has been used to define an appropriate call room**. The

old guidelines stated: "Residents on call must be provided with adequate and appropriate sleeping quarters." This statement has been changed to "Residents on call must be provided with adequate and appropriate sleeping quarters that are **safe, quiet, and private**." In 2003, the ACGME instituted duty hour standards secondary to "concerns that restricted sleep has a negative effect on performance, education, and well-being." It is likely that an extension of this statement has led to more specific guidelines with regard to call rooms.

This change in wording will affect most residency programs in the US since most call rooms are not private and house multiple residents each night. A single page will disrupt the rest of many individuals. **Changes will be necessary in order to promote patient safety and resident well-being, and to avoid jeopardizing the hospital's accreditation status because of institutional noncompliance.** It is the responsibility of the Designated Institutional Official (DIO) for assuring compliance with ACGME and Institutional Requirements. The need for adequate and appropriate call room space must be properly addressed.

David A. Edelman, MD

Member, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Detroit, MI

Get involved with your local ACS Chapter!!!

The College exerts its influence through its 100 local chapters. Chapter membership is open to all Fellows and RAS members of ACS, and it provides a forum for young surgeons to share their thoughts and experiences with more experienced surgeons.

The New York Chapter of the American College of Surgeons is pleased to offer FREE membership to ALL surgical residents!! This opportunity is available to both categorical general surgery residents as well as to residents in other surgical specialties. The New York Chapter wants YOUR input so that we may do a better job of representing your needs and concerns. Please get involved – you are the future!!

For further information or questions about the New York Chapter, please contact Amy Clinton, Executive Director, at nycofac@yahoo.com.

Danielle A. Katz, MD, FACS

CYS Liaison to RAS-ACS
Syracuse, NY

Free Resources Available on Vascular Surgery as a Career

The Society for Vascular Surgery has several resources available for residents on vascular surgery as a career. If you are interested in learning more about vascular surgery, send an e-mail to communications@vascularsociety.org to:

- Speak directly with a vascular surgeon about career opportunities.
- Receive a free DVD that features vascular surgeons discussing their careers.
- Subscribe to *On the Cutting Edge* e-newsletter which reports on new training programs, up-to-date vascular research, and other vascular-related information in which residents may have an interest. Send your e-mail address to communications@vascularsociety.org to be included on the e-newsletter distribution list.
- View back issues of the society's e-newsletter at <http://www.vascularweb.org/studentnews>.
- Stay informed about the latest vascular-related news at <http://www.vascularweb.org>.

Emily A. Kalata

Society for Vascular Surgery
Chicago, IL

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 online *ACS Surgery Textbook*
- free Clinical Congress 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/index.html>

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 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 Joan Wellington.

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