North and South Texas: Stronger Together

Sharmila Dissanaike MD FACS and Tien Ko MD FACS
Goal:

• Set the stage for a closer relationship between the two chapters that would lead to sustained collaboration and joint ventures

• Hold a combined annual meeting of the North and South Texas Chapters

• Combine Advocacy efforts at state level; “Lobby Days”
Path:

• Obtained commitment from both sides for this venture (2-3 years)
• Identified leaders from each side
• In-person discussions at Clinical Congress, Leadership and Advocacy meeting, TASQ and Texas Surgical Society meetings
• Regular phone meetings by leaders in the planning phase
• Support of ACS membership and chapter offices
• Obtained grant support from ACS for Lobby Day efforts
• Logo and slogan!
Lobby Day

- Two Lobby days in Austin while Congress was in session
Success!
Set the ground rules:

• 50-50 partnership in everything including planning, fund raising, profit and loss sharing.
• Divide the responsibilities between the two administrative staff, taking advantage of each strength.
• Centralize fund raising effort
• Combined program committee to plan sessions, invite speakers, evaluate abstracts and select moderators.
• No registration fee for students and residents who were presenters.
Meeting Planning:

• Keep the length of the meeting the same from Thu night to Sat morning.
• Thu afternoon/evening was for Lobby Day or industry sponsored workshops.
• Accept the same or greater number of abstracts compare to the individual chapter meetings.
• Decide to run concurrent oral sessions based on topics and electronic poster sessions.
Program Planning:

- Program Committee chaired by Dr. Lillian Kao from South Chapter and Dr. Rosa Cuenca from North Chapter.
- Equal north-south representation at all levels such as moderators, oral presenters and judges.
- Individual Jeopardy Competition on Thu night then North-South Jeopardy final on Fri night.
- Combined Surgical Skill competition.
- Combined social events – executive council dinner.
- Kept each Chapter’s named lectureship
- Chapter specific event were the council meeting and business meeting
What did we learn:

• Combine meeting is a great way to synergize political lobbying efforts and initial collaborative efforts in state wide projects such as quality improvement.

• Combine meeting is great way to energize the individual chapters.

• It does require a lot of planning and coordination as well as compromises.

• It is a joint venture requiring equal partnership.

• Future joint meeting every 4-5 years.

• Joint Advocacy Day each year