Introduction
I am greatly honored to have been chosen to represent the American College of Surgeons as the 2019 Traveling Fellow to Germany. I am an academic Pediatric Surgeon-Scientist. My clinical training in Pediatric Surgery led to my interest in understanding the mechanisms and developing therapies for congenital diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, particularly Hirschsprung disease. I run an NIH- and ACS-funded basic science research laboratory focused on enteric nervous system and gastrointestinal mucosal immune development and function as it relates to congenital and acquired disease in pediatric patients. My interest in applying for this ACS Traveling Fellowship stemmed from my desire to promote the mission of the ACS - improving the care of the surgical patient and to safeguarding standards of care in an optimal and ethical practice environment.

This spring, over the course of three weeks, I was able to visit three leading centers for Pediatric Surgical care and research and attend the 136th Congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Chirurgie (DGCH) in Munich. In addition to my hosts in each city, whom I will mention in the report below, I am tremendously thankful to the American College of Surgeons for the opportunity; Kate Early, MA, International Liaison and Scholarships Sections of the ACS, for all of her assistance in trip planning and arranging connections; Univ-Prof.Dr.med.Dr.h.c. Norbert Senninger, MD, FACS, President of the ACS German Chapter, for meeting with me at the 2018 ACS Clinical Congress and helping arrange my itinerary; Prof. Dr. med. Ernst Klar, MD, FACS, ACS Governor for Germany, for his hospitality during the DGCH meeting; and my partners in practice in Memphis for caring for my patients and allowing me the time away to fully immerse in this valuable experience.

Berlin: Klinik und Poliklinik für Kinderchirurgie, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin
Hosts: Frau Prof. Dr. med. Karin Rothe and Priv.-Doz. Dr. med. Marc Reismann

My hosts in Berlin were Frau Prof. Dr. med. Karin Rothe, chief of pediatric surgery and Priv.-Doz. Dr. med. Marc Reismann, director of pediatric surgery research, both at the Klinik und Poliklinik für Kinderchirurgie, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin. After an uneventful flight from the US, I was welcomed at the airport by Dr. Reismann who pointed out many historic landmarks throughout Berlin as he escorted me to my hotel. Once I was settled in, we went on a sightseeing excursion just outside of Berlin, in Potsdam, where we visited Sanssouci, the summer palace of Frederick the Great. Marc filled me in on many facets of German history over the course of the tour. We had a far-ranging conversation on many topics that are universally-challenging in academic surgical practice; mentorship, time and work-life balance, and building a clinical niche.

The next morning, I joined the entire Department for their morning sign-out and rounds, a tradition that was replicated at each center I visited with only minor variations. At this meeting, every member of the team, all students, trainees, and faculty, are present to discuss patients that presented overnight, along with the pertinent imaging, and then bedside rounds are conducted, led by the chief, Prof. Rothe. Following rounds, some of the group breaks off for the operating rooms, while the remainder gather together in a break room for breakfast – breads & rolls along with coffee. This break room serves as a central point for the team over the course of the day.

During my time at the Charité, I was able to join the team in the operating rooms to observe a complex airway reconstruction in conjunction with ENT, as well as more straightforward cases...
like appendectomy and hernia repair. We discussed surgical instrumentation and technology such as integrated laparoscopic and imaging, which I found varied widely from center to center as my trip progressed. I also had the opportunity to spend time in clinic, on rounds, and in informal discussions with Dr. Stefanie Märzheuser, an expert in pediatric colorectal conditions. We saw a wide spectrum of patients and debated, mostly with agreement, the optimal approaches for both common and uncommon anomalies and post-operative problems. Dr. Märzheuser is deeply involved in SoMA, a patient/parent-led advocacy group for children with anorectal anomalies, and we discussed the critical role of surgeon involvement in these types of efforts.

Finally, I was able to visit the basic science research labs, which are housed on the adult side of the Charité campus. Here, I saw the animal surgery facilities, advanced imaging, and ex vivo setups for organ conditioning between harvest and transplantation. My time in Berlin also included visits to the Langenbeck-Virchow Haus, which houses the headquarters of the German Surgical Society as well as many of the sub-specialty societies, including Pediatric Surgery. I was also able to visit an old hospital that has been purchased by Karl Storz and converted into a conference center and training venue for advanced laparoscopy.

I was able to take some time to see the sights in Berlin as well, walking along Unter den Linden, marveling at the Brandenburg Tor, visiting surviving fragments of the Berlin wall, and of course, Checkpoint Charlie. Following my time in Berlin, I boarded the high-speed train to Mainz to continue my journey.

**Mainz: Klinik für Kinderchirurgie, UNIVERSITÄTSmedizin Mainz, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität**

Hosts: Univ.-Prof. Dr. med. Oliver Muensterer, Dr. med. Jan Gödeke and Dr. med. Stephan Rohleder

My host in Mainz was Univ.-Prof. Dr. med. Oliver Muensterer, chief of pediatric surgery. Prof. Muensterer and I had met years previously as he had completed his Pediatric Surgery training in the US and was on faculty in Alabama and New York prior to taking over the Department in Mainz. I was met at the train station by Dr. med. Jan Gödeke, one of the faculty in the Department, and he escorted me on a walk through the city and along the riverfront to my hotel. Later that first evening, Dr. Gödeke and Dr. med. Stephan Rohleder, both of whom had completed portions of their training in the US, took me to a traditional restaurant in the heart of the old city where we sampled the local cuisine and the wines that Mainz is known for.

Over the next few days in the children’s hospital, I was able to join the team for rounds and in the operating room. While Mainz was the smallest city and center that I visited, theirs was the only center with a fully-integrated minimally-invasive operating room for children’s surgery! Here, the operating rooms are located in the adult hospital, which requires children to travel through a tunnel between buildings. The group in Mainz developed a truly innovative solution to this potentially scary journey for children – a series of specially designed tiles line the hallways and ceilings and an image of a plane flying is projected from the foot of the child’s bed as it rolls along, so the child’s attention is on the plane rather than the remaining surroundings. This setup won an architectural design prize and is really quite impressive.

Many of our discussions over my time in Mainz centered on academic progression. We discussed the value of fellowship in the College, collaborating locally, nationally and internationally to answer difficult clinical questions, and transitioning into leadership roles over the course of one’s career. I was also fortunate to be invited to attend a fundraising concert for the children’s hospital. This
was a night of listening to French and German cabaret songs in a venue overlooking the city. I also had a lovely dinner with traditional schweinshaxe with Prof. Muensterer and his wife.

Mainz is perhaps best known as the birthplace of Johannes Gutenberg and home of the printing press. I visited the Gutenberg museum, saw a working model of a printing press as it would have existed in Gutenberg’s time, and viewed the Gutenberg Bibles that are housed at the museum. I was also able to visit St. Stephen’s cathedral, which is one of the few in the world to house stained glass windows by Marc Chagall. The deep blue hues and ethereal glow were truly amazing. Finally, it was time to move on to Munich. Prof. Muensterer and I shared a train and were able to continue our discussions en route.

**Munich: 136th Congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Chirurgie and Haunersches Kinderspital, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München**

DGCH Hosts: Univ-Prof.Dr.med.Dr.h.c. Norbert Senninger and Prof. Dr. med. Ernst Klar  
Hosts: Prof. Dr. med. Dietrich von Schweinitz and PD Dr. med. Michael Berger

My final stop was in Munich, at the DGCH, where I was hosted by Univ-Prof.Dr.med.Dr.h.c. Norbert Senninger and Prof. Dr. med. Ernst Klar. My first day started with the ACS Germany Chapter meeting, where I gave a brief presentation on my trip up to that point, as well as some background on myself, my research and my clinical practice. We then walked around the conference venue and I was astounded to see that there were café areas setup for lunch where they served sausages and alcohol-free beer for all of the attendees. I spent a few hours over the week on the exhibition floor trying out new technology that hasn’t yet made it to the US, including new energy devices. Over the week during the meeting I was able to attend a number of sessions on Pediatric Surgery including sessions with scientific abstracts as well as discussions of wellness and sustainability of one’s career.

I also was able to visit the hospital where I was hosted by Prof. Dr. med. Dietrich von Schweinitz and PD Dr. med. Michael Berger. Here, I joined the team for their morning sign-out, which was conducted in a larger room with radiology in attendance, as well as on bedside rounds. I was able to observe Prof. von Schweinitz during a complex hepatobiliary tumor surgery; a real treat as he nears retirement in the next year. Dr. Berger and I discussed liver surgery in neonates; he has developed a nice program that encompasses the spectrum from resections for tumors through transplants for multifocal disease and other indications. Dr. Berger also invited me to attend a social gathering of the Pediatric Surgeons from around the country that coincided with the annual meeting.

Finally, I was able to spend one afternoon sightseeing in Munich. Sitting at a café on Marienplatz was a fantastic vantage point for watching the Neues Rathaus glockenspiel automats act out their routines. I browsed the stalls at Viktualienmarkt, an outdoor market, and was amazed the variety of sausages available. And of course, no visit to Munich would be complete without a visit to the BMW museum; here I was able to see how their manufacturing operations intertwined with and influenced German history.

**Final thoughts**

As stated in the application, the fellowship encourages the international exchange of surgical science, practice, and education, and helps the Fellow establish professional and academic collaboration and friendships. I can say with certainty that my trip this spring accomplished all of those goals. Danke schoen to the ACS and all of my hosts!
Brief author biography

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Dr. Gosain received his bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland (1996). He received his MD degree from Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia (2000). He completed an NIH Research Fellowship in Burns and Trauma at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Illinois (2006). He received his PhD in Cell Biology, Neurobiology and Anatomy from Loyola University Chicago (2006). He completed his General Surgery Residency at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Illinois (2008). He completed a Pediatric Surgery and Pediatric Surgical Oncology Fellowship at University of Tennessee Le Bonheur Children’s Medical Center and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee (2010).

Dr. Gosain is certified by the American Board of Surgery in General Surgery and Pediatric Surgery. He specializes in minimally-invasive General and Thoracic Pediatric Surgery, with a specific focus on colorectal disease (Hirschsprung disease, anorectal malformations, inflammatory bowel diseases including Crohn's disease and Ulcerative Colitis) and liver tumors (hepatoblastoma). Dr. Gosain's directs the Pediatric Surgery Research Laboratory at the Children’s Foundation Research Institute of the Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital. His NIH-funded laboratory research focuses on the development of the Enteric Nervous System and Gastrointestinal Mucosal Immune System.