

TSDA General Session
May 1, 2010
Toronto, Ontario

TSRA Report
Joe Turek, MD, TSRA President

The TSRA has been active over the past year with a primary focus on surgical education. Specifically, the TSRA Executive Committee has played a critical role in:

1. Establishing a mentorship program for “STS Looking to the Future Scholarship Award” winners.
2. Hosting a luncheon at the STS entitled, “A Look into the Future of Cardiothoracic Surgery”.
3. Awarding the Socrates and McGoon faculty teaching awards.
4. Teaming with the JCTSE and TSDA to identify exceptional teachers in each cardiothoracic residency to drive the implementation of a new curriculum.
5. Populating the TSRA-initiated database of advanced training opportunities.
6. Planning for the AATS Resident’s Luncheon to be co-hosted with the AATS Immediate Past President, Dr. Thomas Spray.
7. Creating the 2010 Resident In-Service Training Exam Survey.

Thirty exceptional general surgery residents from different programs around the U.S. were invited to the STS 46th Annual Meeting under the “STS Looking to the Future Scholarship Award.” Through the mentorship program, arranged by Dr. Stephen Yang and the TSRA, award recipients had an opportunity to meet with faculty and cardiothoracic residents, attend the scientific sessions and social events, and learn about the scope and practice of the field.

As part of the STS 46th Annual Meeting, the TSRA hosted a resident/fellow luncheon on the topic "A Look into the Future of Cardiothoracic Surgery." Dr. James Fann from Stanford University talked about the role of simulation in the training of cardiothoracic surgeons, and Dr. William Cohn from the Texas Heart Institute talked about some of the newest technologies in cardiothoracic surgery. The session was well-attended.

Also at the STS 46th Annual Meeting, the Socrates teaching award was announced. This award is given out annually by the TSRA to a senior faculty member recognized by cardiothoracic residents as an outstanding surgical educator. This year’s recipient was Dr. William Baumgartner of The Johns Hopkins Hospital.

We have recently finished the selection process for the Dr. Dwight C. McGoon Award. This award is given annually by the TSRA to an outstanding young faculty member in cardiothoracic surgery in recognition of his or her commitment to resident education and mentorship. Dr. Michael J. Weyant of the University of Colorado at Denver has been selected as this year’s winner. He will be presented with the award at the AATS Annual 90th Meeting.

An important challenge in cardiothoracic surgery training is the re-development of a curriculum that can better serve contemporary cardiothoracic surgery. As part of this effort, the TSRA has agreed to identify key people that are exceptional teachers in each cardiothoracic surgery residency around the country that can help redesign the current curriculum and drive the implementation of new techniques of teaching and training. Over the last few months, the TSRA Executive Committee has personally contacted each resident in ACGME-accredited thoracic training programs to obtain this information. This database has been supplied to the TSDA and JCTSE.

In the process of contacting each U.S. thoracic surgery resident, data was also obtained regarding the availability of additional training opportunities at each institution. These opportunities span from one-month observational electives to yearlong accredited fellowships. With this information, a database of advanced training opportunities has been created. This should serve as a centralized resource to those seeking electives during their training period or fellowships following the completion of thoracic training. The current database can be found on the TSRA Web site, www.TSRAnet.org. The database will undergo a significant upload once all of the recent resident input has been compiled. To date, we have catalogued over 60 elective opportunities. We would appreciate any additions or modifications to our database by thoracic program directors.

The Cardiothoracic Residents' Luncheon will take place on Monday, May 3, 2010 during the AATS 90th Annual Meeting. This year's luncheon will be co-hosted by the TSRA and the AATS Immediate Past-President, Dr. Thomas Spray. It was felt that combining the resident luncheons into one event would promote greater attendance, less duplication of programming efforts and serve as a better use of AATS financial resources. The luncheon will focus on the immediate future of the specialty and will be delivered by a distinguished panel of discussants. Dr. Walter Merrill, Councilor of the Thoracic Surgery Directors Association Executive Committee, will discuss the job market and impending workforce shortages. Dr. Edward Verrier, Surgical Director of the Joint Council on Thoracic Surgical Education, will talk about how the new curriculum will affect training and impact the field over the next 10 years. Dr. William Baumgartner, Executive Director of the American Board of Thoracic Surgery, will speak to the importance of early mentorship, its effect on recruitment, and importance in replenishing the workforce.

Finally, the TSRA has produced a 24-question resident survey taken by all thoracic residents participating in the 2010 TSDA In-Training Exam. Survey topics include educational debt, impact of the 80-hour week, the job market, and perceptions of simulation training and integrated training programs. Many of these topics have been surveyed over the past five years and should provide some interesting longitudinal data. This data will be disseminated to program directors in the near future.