

The Society of Neurological Surgeons

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Message from the President



M. Sean Grady, MD

...And the pandemic is winding down, at least in the U.S., and at least for now. Our annual meeting will be held just prior to the CNS meeting in Austin this October, planned for two very busy days with our usual social event on Friday Oct. 15 at the Bullock Museum in Austin, giving a local sense of the Austin community that has become so vibrant. We then return to the usual May sequence in May 2022 in Detroit, hosted by the Department of Neurosurgery at Henry Ford. Amen to that!

The effects of the pandemic, particularly in the residency match process, continue to be felt at multiple levels with a variety of proposals from different medical organizations aimed at equity and inclusion, as well as reducing the financial hardship associated with the multiple in-person interview process. Fortunately Dr. Stacey Wolfe, as chair of the Medical Student Committee, and Dr. Cormac Maher, as our representative to the Organization of Program Directors Association, are representing our interests at a national level to avoid the "cookie cutter- one size fits all" mentality that seems to pervade some of these national organizations. No other resident training program is 7 years in duration, so the "fit" between a resident and a program is critical. And

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sometimes, that takes in person visits. Those can be made more efficient (and fewer!) to achieve an equitable result for everyone.

All of us are taking stock of what to keep and what to toss post pandemic, both in our departments as well as in the Society of Neurological Surgeons. Certainly, the virtual platform has a great deal of efficiency for some of our meetings but without doubt, we, and everyone else in the medical and education community know the value of the in person connections we make at critical meetings. I will say that Grand Rounds today now has experts from across the United States sharing knowledge in a way that is reminiscent of the founding of the SNS, when the field was in its infancy and neurosurgeons traveled to each other's institutions to see cases performed and discuss challenging clinical problems. I do hope this continues, with the occasional "visiting professorship" added back to enable the personal wisdom, discussion and networking that takes place in that format. This is especially true for the residents and younger faculty who are finding their way in our field.

As the SNS president during this pandemic year, it has been a privilege to work with incredibly dedicated leaders throughout the organization who have continued our mission of "advancing the quality of care of neurosurgical patients by promoting excellence in education and research." That being said, I'm looking forward to sharing drinks and conversation with you in Austin!

SNS Secretary's Report by Nathan Selden, MD, PhD

The Society of Neurological Surgeons continues to pursue its mission of supporting medical student, residency and fellowship training in neurological surgery and academic programs and departments in the U.S., even as our members and their institutions seek to emerge from what we hope are the latter stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is some of what SNS programs, committees, and leaders have been up to:

- The 2021 SNS Annual Meeting, originally scheduled to occur in May, has been delayed until October 14th to 16th and will be held instead in Austin, Texas, immediately prior to the CNS Annual Meeting in the same city. Outgoing President, Dr. Sean Grady, and Past-president, Dr. Karin Muraszko, will address the gathering. In 2022, Henry Ford will instead host the SNS Annual Meeting in Detroit from May 21st to 24th.
- Because of delay of the SNS Annual Meeting, business was transacted and new officers elected at the SNS Virtual Annual Business Meeting on Saturday May 22nd, followed by a meeting of the SNS Executive Council.
- The SNS Junior Resident Courses and the SNS PGY1 Boot Camp Courses will again be held this spring and summer utilizing a combination of online lecture and interactive content plus local program simulation resources to fulfill the SNS curriculum.
 Online course leader Dr. Martina Stippler and her team are submitting a peer-review article reporting approaches and outcomes from this effort last year.
- The One Neurosurgery Summit organizations have continued to meet virtually, with a major concentration of effort on a specialty-wide model policy for professionalism and also on the impact of the pandemic on residency recruitment, interviews, and the match. A virtual Summer Summit occurred Thursday, June 10th 2021.
- SNS Historian Dr. Kim Burchiel has finalized a special 100th SNS Anniversary Membership Volume, with historical notes and biographies of SNS members current and past, which is currently in press and will be distributed to active and senior SNS members in early summer.
- The SNS Committee on Medical Students, led by Dr. Stacey Wolfe, continues to provide information and advice as well as issue recommendations regarding sub-internship rotations and the residency interview and match season. The Committee has broadly communicated these recommendations and associated FAQs through the SNS website, program e-mailings, and appearances by Committee leadership and SNS officers in various national webinars. The Committee is already planning for the next, presumably hybrid, application cycle with input from a series of national surveys and a virtual program director and administrator town hall on April 8th.

- The SNS Curriculum Committee, under the direction of Dr. Nick Bambakidis, continues work on collaborations with the ABNS, CNS, and AANS to develop curricula supporting residents studying for the ABNS primary and neuroanatomy examinations.
- The SNS continues work with the ACGME on the PDPQ project as one of three representative specialties in this ACGME pilot project for a national residency QI curriculum. The initial 4 participating programs have now expanded in Phase 2 to a group of about 20 programs, with leadership from Drs. Cormac Maher and Deb Benzil.
- SNS-CAST fellowship accreditation activities continue, located at the ABNS headquarters office in Rochester, MN, under the leadership of Drs. Nick Barbaro and Charlie Branch. Record numbers of fellowships are now accredited, with major growth in surgical endovascular neurosurgery, critical care, and other areas, plus launch of a new fellowship accreditation pathway for skull base neurosurgery.
- Representatives to the One Neurosurgery Summit have completed a white paper on the last two decades of advances in neurosurgical education and training in the United States, which is now in press at the *Journal of Neurosurgery*, accompanied by an editorial by journal Editor, Dr. Jim Rutka, and editorial response by the lead authors.
- The One Neurosurgery Summit Professionalism Task Force, led by Drs. Karin Muraszko and Jim Rutka, has completed its work and published a white paper outlining a model policy document that has been endorsed by all Summit organizations. The SNS Executive Committee has revised our own policies and, with the membership, approved an enabling SNS bylaws change.
- The SNS continues to update and improve its online functionality for both the SNS website (under the leadership of Dr. Sepi Amin-Hanjani and in collaboration with administrative partners, the CNS) and CAST (in collaboration with administrative partners, the ABNS).
 We now a have a twitter account@SNS_Neurosurg.

The SNS remains committed to and focused on its mission to support U.S. academic neurosurgery programs in facilitating outstanding education for neurosurgical residents and fellows and encouraging the engagement of medical students interested in a career in neurosurgery, as well as supporting governance best practices in neurosurgical departments and training programs. I very much look forward to seeing everyone in person in Austin in October!



As we continue to navigate how to gather safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, the SNS leadership has moved our 2021 meeting to Austin, Texas, on Oct. 15 and 16. This two-day meeting will take place prior to the start of the CNS Meeting.

Our program will encourage everyone to explore the evolution of neurosurgery and clinical practice through the forward-looking theme of "The Next Hundred Years." We believe you will all enjoy the opportunity to come together to discuss and debate our future. This is what we have planned:

Thursday, Oct. 14: Join us for an opening reception and council dinner.

Friday, Oct. 15: The morning session will focus on the future of resident education. We will draw from the important content that is traditional included in the Saturday portion of our program. The session will include RRC Common Issues and the Mock RRC Session. We will also explore virtual interviews, and Dean of the Dell Medical School at the University of Texas – Austin, Dr. Clay Johnson, will join us to share his vision for the intersection of UME and GME in the coming decade.

We will continue to focus on the future of neurosurgery education on Saturday afternoon, but also look at research within our specialty. Drs. Nelson Oyesiku and Jim Rutka will lead a roundtable on the future of our journals, and we will talk about the key role of diversity in neurosurgery. The Grossman award lecture will take place on Friday afternoon as well.

The day will conclude with the long-awaited opportunity to dine together, catching up with our fellow SNS members and quests.

Saturday, Oct. 16: In the morning, we will turn our attention to the next 100 years of clinical practice, including how to teach our residents and colleagues. We will hear from thought leaders across our subspecialties on the transformations we expect in functional, vascular, spinal, pediatric and trauma neurosurgery, focusing on how these advances can best be taught to our residents.

The final session will feature the Winn Award before tackling exciting and important neurosurgery topics like artificial intelligence (AI), bioinformatics, social media and meeting new patient expectations post-pandemic.

It has certainly been a memorable and unexpected 15 months, and the SNS is thankful we are able to convene with our members to continue this important work together.

Along the way, we also encourage you to explore Austin and see what it has to offer, including live music, food trucks and Austin-style BBQ. The fall season will be a wonderful time to see the city and to gather, catch up and learn about the future of neurosurgery.



SNS in Austin Nicholas Barbaro, MD

It is exciting to have the Society of Neurological Surgeons come to Austin for their Annual Meeting. October is a terrific time to be in Austin with the exceptionally hot summer months behind and the somewhat cooler, wetter months ahead. Average temperatures in Austin for October range from 60 at night to 80°F during the day.

Austin is the capital of Texas, home of the University of Texas, and the center of a large and growing tech community, anchored by Dell. At the same time, Austinites have adopted the slogan "keep Austin weird" as a reminder of its roots as an eclectic, Bohemian community that embraces diversity and free spirits. Austin calls itself "The Live Music Capital of the World" because of the thriving music scene. Although the bar and music scene on 6th Street may be a more than the average member of the "Senior Society" can handle, some members may be interested in exploring the various restaurants and clubs throughout Austin.

In addition to the iconic music and other cultural events that bring people to Austin, there are outstanding restaurants, museums (one of which we will explore on Friday evening), and hiking trails. Local food favorites include Texas barbecue, tacos (find some breakfast tacos), and Texas beef. The Capital Building is located in the center of town and sits on a beautiful park that makes for a pleasant walk. A unique aspect is the emergence of thousands of bats that "summer" under the Congress Avenue bridge and emerge every evening just before sunset to feed on insects over the Colorado River. They are visible from specific locations along the water or from one of the tour boats that do a city tour along with providing prime locations for observing this unique natural phenomenon.

There is something for everyone in Austin, which is a reason that is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. We look forward to seeing y'all here in October.



Texas State Capitol Building

The Senior Society Annual Business Meeting was held on May 22, 2021. President Dr. Sean Grady began the meeting by introducing and welcoming the newly elected members: Ketan Bulsara, Justin Cetas, Lola Chambless, Ian Dunn, Bharat Guthikonda, David Harter, Mark Johnson, David Langer, Jamie Ullman, Madison Michael, Clemens Schirmer, Alejandro Spiotta, Jamie van Gompel, and Reza Yassari. Secretary Dr. Nate Selden then gave an update on the membership, which include 219 active members, 103 senior members, 45 honorary members, 117 senior non-dues paying members, and 50 inactive members. Nonattendance penalties for members were suspended for 2020 due to COVID-19. A ballot measure had been approved for 12 new members to be initiated to achieve the limit of N=220 at the next meeting. A moment of silence was conducted for Walter Whisler, MD from Chicago, who is now deceased.

Dr. Selden continued with a summary of the Mission Committees. This included details of the CoRE Committee accomplishments with new hybrid Boot Camp programs for 2021. The Medical Student Committee has had increased in activity (with the pandemic as a catalyst) that has changed the nature of medical student rotations, sub-internships, and solicitation of recommendation letters. The Meeting Committee was then commended for a successful 2020 virtual meeting. The 2021 meeting was moved to a timepoint immediately preceding the CNS meeting in Austin, Texas. The Detroit meeting has been moved to May 2022. The 100th Anniversary SNS Book has also been delayed, but will be going to press soon. The Research Committee is working on a research-related skills graduation requirement, as well as a milestones-compatible research curriculum. The CAST Committee is continuing to improve and streamline the accreditation and application system and website. The Newsletter Committee launched its first edition in June and December of 2020. The Web Committee has launched a new SNS website. Finally, an ad hoc Social Media Committee has been formed, and a Twitter account has been launched.



Lyndon B. Johnson Library

Dr Selden continued by noting that the SNS has now partnered with the CNS for operations and finances. This includes IT infrastructure. Calls were then made for the Medical Student Teaching Award, and nominations can be emailed to Dr. Stacey Wolfe at sqwolfe@wakehealth.edu. Future annual meeting dates and locations were then announced, with the 2021 meeting being October 14-16 in Austin, TX and May 21-24, 2022 in Detroit. Subsequent meetings will be in Dallas, TX, New York City, NY, and Cleveland, OH.

Proposed constitution and bylaws amendments were then presented, beginning with a summary of professionalism policies. The proposed change was:

Article II

The Executive Council will:

6. Maintain and enforce policies that require high standards of professional conduct at Society meetings and events, avoidance of professional conflict of interest, respect for others, non-discrimination, and ethical provision of patient care. Compliance with such policies will influence election to and maintenance of membership, committee appointments, representation on meeting programs, participation in educational events, and nomination for elected office. The Executive Council may impose sanctions including expulsion, upon approval by two thirds of its voting members.

This bylaws change was discussed, then voted upon, and passed.

A new slate of officers was presented. This included President-elect: Sander Connolly, Vice President: Deborah Benzil, Member-as-large: Sepi Amin-Hanjani, and Nominating advisory: Stacey Wolfe. The slate was confirmed by vote. That concluded the Secretary's report

Dr. Ganesh Rao then produced the slate for 12 new SNS candidate members which was voted upon. This was followed by the Treasurer's report, presented by Dr. Rich Byrne. Financial statements were reviewed demonstrating that the organization is in solid financial stead, being "on the road to improved fiscal position through expense control and modest revenue increase." Dr. Grady thanked Drs. Byrne, Benzil, Barrow, Muraszko, and the CNS staff for their efforts in bringing the society to improved financial footing. Dr. Grady then concluded the meeting by turning the SNS gavel over to Dr. Waren Selman virtually.

Update on SNS Virtual Resident and Intern Bootcamps 2021

Dr. Martina Stippler, Director of Neurotrauma, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Dr. Gregory Zipfel, Chair, Department of Neurological Surgery, Washington University School of Medicine
Dr. Nathan Selden, Chair, Department of Neurological Surgery, Oregon Health & Science Center

Last year was our first year to hold our SNS PGY1 bootcamp and resident course virtually. The resident satisfaction rating compared favorably to the in-person courses from 2019 (Fig 1). 72% to 83% of residents perceived the content and delivery of the virtual course as good to excellent. There was no significant difference in how participants felt about the amount of didactic content covered during the virtual bootcamp compared to the in-person courses in 2019. In the virtual boot camp evaluations, 90% to 95% of interns rated the topics the hands-on portion of the virtual intern bootcamp as very relevant (see figure 2).

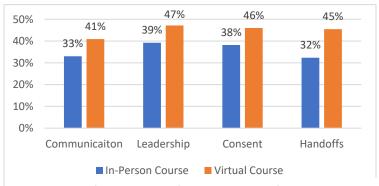


Figure 1: Satisfaction rating of resident courses for virtual and inperson bootcamps. Percentage of students who rated the learning activity as excellent, divided by topic.

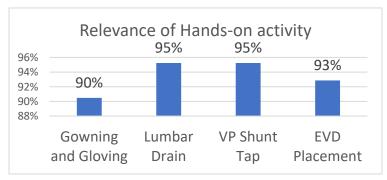


Figure 2: Percentage of interns rating the hands-on portion of the virtual bootcamp as very relevant. Displayed by activity.

We utilized the SNS web page to host all the teaching material needed for the virtual bootcamp and junior resident courses. The recording material is available for one year. Web analytics run on February 2021 showed that the course material was viewed 1076 times after the course. The average time on the course webpage was 68 minutes. Thus, the virtual content allowed for continued access and should be considered moving forward even during in-person format.

The junior resident course this year took place Thursday, May 20 to Friday, May 21, 2021. The PGY1 boot camp will take place Friday, July 23 to Saturday, July 24, 2021, under the leadership of Drs. Michael Haglund, Carolyn Quinsey, Martina

Stippler, and Greg Zipfel.

We will keep the PGY1 bootcamp format the same for the 2-hour hands-on portion. We will cover EVD placement setup, LD placement, VPS taps, and gowning and gloving, facilitated by a local faculty member and moderated via zoom. We will expand the didactic portion to 4 hours. Based on resident feedback, the session discussing the consent process will be moved from the junior resident course to the PGY1 bootcamp. Additionally, we included a virtual interactive case-based session to discuss first steps in management of the most common neurosurgical emergencies.

The junior resident course will be held over two days, and this year we will be including a virtual case-based OR catastrophe scenario simulation to the curriculum to emphasize case based and active learning. Other topics to be covered are leadership, breaking bad news, risk management, and hand-offs.

Based on input from CoRE, the SNS officers endorsed a plan to move back to regional bootcamp courses in July 2022, to capture the professional development and culture-building benefits, and to ensure all PGY1 residents have full access to training. No definitive decision has been made regarding the junior resident courses, although they have traditionally hosted more complex immersive simulators that cannot be reproduced at the single program level.

Cost analysis showed dramatic differences with the virtual format- \$6,950, compared to more than \$300,000 for all three in-person junior resident courses. Faculty hours with virtual format was reduced from 700 to 38 hours. This difference is balanced against the mission of the courses, which include both simple and complex standardized simulations that represent core experiences for early stage residents prior to practice in the live clinical environment. It has been shown that didactic content can be taught well virtually, but hands-on instructions and simulations are better taught, and in some cases can only be taught, in person.

What is most important, is the hidden curriculum of all SNS courses: mentorship, networking, and camaraderie which cannot be replicated virtually. Hence, a hybrid approach of an inperson boot camp and virtual resident course might be an acceptable compromise, shifting remaining didactic content to a virtual pre-course environment and focusing in person presence on intensive simulator based experiences that reduce onsite course length and contain cost to necessary levels.

Medical Student Committee

Stacey Q. Wolfe, MD, Chair

Bernard R. Bendok, MD Ketan Bulsara, MD Lola Chambless, MD Mark S. Dias, MD Gerald A. Grant, MD Costas Hadjipanayis, MD Jason Heth, MD Brian L. Hoh, MD Judy Huang, MD Michael T. Lawton, MD Madison Michael, MD Jonathan P. Miller, MD Peter Nakaji, MD Clemens Schirmer, MD Alejandro Spiotta, MD Jamie Ullman, MD Jamie Van Gompel, MD Reza Yassari, MD Gregory J. Zipfel, MD Susan Panullo, MD, ex-officio Aruna Ganju, MD, ex-officio Raj Mukherjee, MD, ex-officio Jonathan Lee Wilson, MD, exofficio Kathy Guzman, ARANS Pam Lane, ARANS Stephen Bowden, MD, Resident member



Medical Student Committee Update: Navigating Change in the Next Recruitment Cycle Stacey Quintero Wolfe, MD, FAANS

We have made it through one pandemic recruitment cycle, but it is not over yet. The SNS Medical Student Committee is employing learned strategies from the previous virtual recruitment cycle to optimize upcoming cycles. The Society of Neurological Surgeons supports continued study of the pros and cons of virtual interviews postpandemic and has performed an in-depth study and discussion of interview practices with multiple stakeholders, including medical student applicants and programs, in order to inform our recommendations. It is imperative to minimize costs and maintain equity; however it was clear from applicants that there were many aspects of programs that they could not fully evaluate, which is critically important in the 7-year training process for neurological surgery. Over 92% recommended against another all-virtual platform.

In order to ensure a safe and equitable experience for all applicants and programs for 2022 match, the specialty of neurological surgery will abide by the recommendations ratified by the SNS executive committee:

- In accordance with AAMC recommendations, each neurosurgery applicant will be limited to one (1) external neurosurgery rotation which must start on or after June 1, 2021.
- Given the importance of the applicant experience in neurological surgery prior to committing to a career path, each student should do 1-2 rotations of neurological surgery at their home institution (minimum 4 weeks).
 - a. Students without a home program should perform 2 rotations of neurological surgery at the closest ACGME accredited program (adopted home program), or 1 rotation at the "adopted home program" and 1 external rotation.
 - The SNS encourages students to gain a diverse medical education through rotations in a broad spectrum of subspecialty medical and surgical rotations in addition to neurosurgery, in preparation for residency.
 - c. Rotations should be based upon the SNS Goals and Objectives for Acting

Internships

https://www.societyns.org/medicalstudents/external-medical-studentrotations

Neurological Surgery supports a hybrid system of initial virtual interviews and an optional secondary in-person component for 2021-2022. Data-driven development of a national policy to ensure equity, fiscal responsibility, and education for the in-person component of the recruitment cycle in ongoing. SNS Medical Student committee has a task force currently working on guidelines for this format and recommendations will be submitted to the membership for comment in August, 2021. The ERAS release date for applications is Sept 29, 2021, and complete applications, including Dean's letters, will be available at this time.

Additionally, in May 2021, the Coalition for Physician Accountability (ACCME, ACGME, AACOM, ABMS, AMA, AOA, AAMC, ECFMG, FSMB, LCME, NBME, NBOME & NRMP) made 42 recommendations regarding resident recruitment. Most are reasonable, specialty-specific, and things we are already doing. However, there are 9 that we have concerns with and responded to in collaboration with Katie Orrico from the Washington Committee and Krystal Tomei from the AMA. We are strongly opposing recommendations that create redundant administrative work, and have suggested alternative approaches. Two of these are considered below:

A. Interview Invitations: It is become nationally recognized that the current system of releasing interview invitations is suboptimal, with a first-come, first-serve basis. A proposal has been made to have a single release date for each specialty. The SNS recognizes that it is undesirable for applicants to have to answer an interview invitation immediately, which can interrupt their education during the initial interview months, and seeks to obviate this with a strong recommendation that programs

Medical Student Committee Update: Navigating Change in the Next Recruitment Cycle-continued

release only the number of invitations that matches their number of interview slots, and hold these invitations open for 48 hours to allow students to respond without fear of losing this interview slot. An additional recommendation may be for a single interview invitation release date of Oct 20, for the entire specialty. This would allow programs 3 weeks to review applications from the ERAS Sep 29 release date, but may impact programs wishing to offer early interviews the last week of October. Please provide input about whether this would be workable for your program SQWolfe@Wakehealth.edu

B. Letter of Recommendations: Similar to last year, LOR templates have been recommended. During the 2020-2021 recruitment cycle, neurosurgery implemented structured evaluation letters (SELs) to try and improve granularity in evaluation, applicant stratification, and equity. This was widely used by over 75% of evaluators and was based on SELs used by plastic surgery and emergency medicine, and over 70% of evaluators found slight or significantly improved utility of the templates compared with traditional LOR. However, post-recruitment analyses of the SEL and a specialty-wide survey showed that there are multiple areas of concern. Almost 40% of applicants were scored

as being in the top 10% — a mathematical impossibility. There was no perceived improvement in the comparative scoring of each applicant, although there were helpful trends across the applicants that each evaluator scored. It is clear that further optimization of LOR templates is needed, and there is a task force dedicated to this process. Their recommendations will be distributed for comment from the membership in June.

While we have accomplished a tremendous amount, truly, we have just begun. The SNS Medical Student Committee remains hard at work, adapting to the changing landscape and keeping the goals of safety and equity at the forefront. This year has given us the opportunity to innovate, and harness the opportunities afforded by technology. These advances could have lasting benefits, but critical study is required. It will take everyone's input to understand and optimize this process.

Please join me in heartfelt thanks to every member of this committee, who has served tirelessly to help execute a successful recruitment cycle in the midst of national crisis. We look forward to hearing from each of you. SQWolfe@Wakehealth.edu

Apply for the Washington Committee/AMA Fellowship Today!

The AANS/CNS Washington Committee provides eligible neurosurgical residents and fellows an opportunity for a richer, more diverse and actionable experience in health care policy and advocacy — in both the regulatory and legislative arenas. The Washington Committee/AMA Fellowship is a two-year fellowship providing the successful applicant with a liaison position on the Washington Committee and participation in the American Medical Association's Resident & Fellows Section as the AANS/CNS resident or fellow delegate.

The Washington Committee is seeking applications at this time. The deadline for submission is August 31, 2021. The applicant's program or fellowship director must provide written confirmation and approve the prospective fellow's full participation in the program.

Click here for more information and to download the fellowship application.

