

LEADERSHIP PAGE



ACC International An Overseas Perspective



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The Maseri-Florio International Lecture has become a highlight of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Annual Scientific Session. The lecture, established by a grant from Professor Attilio Maseri, MD, FACC (1,2), and carrying the names of both Dr. Maseri and his wife, has featured many distinguished individuals on a variety of important topics over the last 16 years (Table 1).

Huon Gray, MD, FACC, joined this distinguished group at ACC's 2017 Annual Scientific Session (ACC.17) in Washington, DC, as this year's Maseri-Florio Lecturer. Dr. Gray, who is a past member of the ACC Board of Trustees and a past chair of ACC's Assembly of International Governors, addressed ACC's international growth and goals. Over the past decade, Gray has been a key figure in the development and progress of ACC's international strategy, and his lecture was a fascinating and comprehensive overview, which I have asked him to reprise below.

—Mary Norine Walsh

The ACC is, and should always be, a membership organization principally for cardiovascular professionals working in the United States. I start with this rather blunt personal opinion because the College's international initiatives require the support of U.S. members and should never be viewed as competing with their interests. After all, members of the College who work outside of the United States have their own national (and regional) societies to which they owe their first allegiance. This paper covers some of the history of the ACC's international activities and growth, and the benefits these efforts bring to all who work toward achieving its mission globally.

The College's foundations are rooted internationally. Franz Groedel, MD, MACC (1881-1951), helped establish the German Cardiac Society in 1927, and after

escaping from Nazi Germany, settled in New York where he was elected president of the New York Cardiological Society. This later became the ACC in 1949 (3). In the early 1960s, Eliot Corday, MD, MACC, a Canadian by birth and president of the ACC (1965-1966), developed the International Circuit Courses, where U.S. cardiologists would visit other countries to teach and collaborate with colleagues. In addition, many ACC members, both then and now, have ancestral roots in countries outside of the United States and, indeed, many first-generation immigrants are currently working as part of cardiovascular teams.

Given these international dimensions to the College from its earliest days, it is perhaps surprising that it had no defined international strategy until the Board of Trustees established a task force to do this in 2002 (4). An International Associate membership category was created, and further work led to the development of the College's first international mission statement: "To enhance cardiovascular health through sustained collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and resources for cardiovascular care worldwide." Five international priorities were also identified:

1. Increase knowledge exchange of cardiovascular science and health care delivery.
2. Increase the ACC's presence and visibility as a leading cardiovascular organization.
3. Increase goodwill to facilitate ACC's mission in developing countries.
4. Enhance services to address international member needs.
5. Increase participation in ACC-sponsored programs and services.

These priorities may seem unsurprising when viewed from a current perspective, but when the

TABLE 1 Maseri-Florio Lecturers

2002	Attilio Maseri (Italy)	<i>Inflammation Atherosclerosis and Acute Coronary Syndrome</i>
2003	Magdi Yaqoub (United Kingdom)	<i>Heart Failure: Lessons From the Titans</i>
2004	Hein J.J. Wellens (the Netherlands)	<i>The Quest for Cure of Cardiac Arrhythmias: An Historical Perspective</i>
2005	Patrick Serruys (the Netherlands)	<i>From Mechanics to Genetics: A Journey Through the World of Interventional Cardiology</i>
2006	Salim Yusuf (Canada)	<i>The Global Epidemic of Cardiovascular Diseases: Divine Curse or Failure of Progress?</i>
2007	Ulrich Sigwart (Switzerland)	<i>Three Decades of Endoluminal Therapy: Problems Solved and Problems Created</i>
2008	Peter Sleight (United Kingdom)	<i>Music, Mantras, & Prayer: Importance of the Autonomic Nervous System in Circulatory Control</i>
2009	Karin Schenck-Gustafsson (Sweden)	<i>Gender and Sex in Cardiology: Does it Matter?</i>
2010	Jean-Pierre Bassand (France)	<i>Improved Outcome in ACS without Excess of Bleeding: A Dream Come True?</i>
2011	Michael Ruda on behalf of Eugene Chazov (Russia)	<i>Development of New CV Drugs Based on Human Protection System Studies</i>
2012	Antonio Colombo (Italy)	<i>Personal Insights Leading to Scientific Developments</i>
2013	Alain Cribier (France)	<i>The Development of Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement: A 20-Year Odyssey</i>
2014	A. John Camm (United Kingdom)	<i>Antiarrhythmic Drug Development—Done and Dusted?</i>
2015	Harlan Krumholz (United States)	<i>Outcomes Research, Implementation Science, and International Collaboration: A Potent Combination for Improving Cardiovascular Health</i>
2016	Jagat Narula (United States)	<i>Atherosclerosis in 4-Dimensions and Promoting Cardiovascular Health Globally</i>

ACS = acute coronary syndrome; CV = cardiovascular.

Board of Trustees approved them it set the College on an international trajectory that, despite its origins, had not previously been articulated. There were understandable concerns about a more global perspective diminishing the importance of domestic priorities, and some members were suspicious that precious College resources could be diverted from, among other things, its national advocacy activities. However, it was not until 2007 that resources were approved to provide staff time (0.5 of a whole staff member's commitment in the first instance) to help further international activities.

In addition to the vision of College leaders at the time, the ACC's Annual Scientific Session was increasingly dependent on international support, both in meeting attendance and in submission of abstracts. Roughly 35% to 40% of meeting attendees were international, and more than 50% of abstracts were submitted from outside the United States.

TABLE 2 ACC International Membership

Member Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Fellows (2,925 in 2008)	3,526	3,662	3,860	4,062	4,116
Fellows-in-Training	1,030	1,372	1,945	1,628	1,764
International Associates	1,329	4,248	6,882	8,965	9,718
Cardiac Care Associates	56	51	144	200	178
Total	6,425	9,838	13,291	15,378	16,404

ACC = American College of Cardiology.

This proportion has remained relatively constant over the last 10 years, creating a strong appetite among overseas cardiologists and other members of the cardiovascular team to participate in ACC activities and to join various membership categories (Table 2). Also, the Fellow of the American College of Cardiology (FACC) designation is increasingly seen as a mark of distinction—a recognition of professional achievement—based on surveys of ACC international members.

The years that followed 2007 saw continuous change and development, involving many members serving on task forces and working groups, too many to be named in person but who deserve great recognition for their commitment and determination to see the College widen its horizons. Among the changes:

- The membership application process for non-U.S. cardiologists was simplified.
- Tiered membership dues were introduced to reflect high-, middle-, and low-income countries.
- An International Lounge was established at the ACC Annual Scientific Session.
- Joint ACC/International sessions are held at the ACC Annual Scientific Sessions (n = 25 at ACC.17).
- CardioSource and subsequently CardioSmart were translated into Spanish (2008).
- Leadership attendance at National Societies' meetings overseas has gradually increased (n = 52 during 2016).

Two other developments deserve specific mention. Until 2009 the International Committee of the ACC consisted mainly of U.S. members who had an interest in the College's international affairs. This later transitioned to an International Council of which membership was predominantly made up of overseas members, with wide geographic representation. The second development was the introduction of International Chapters. Their creation followed protracted discussions; protracted not because of significant objection within the College or among its members,

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