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Association for Academic Surgery

The Association for Academic Surgeons 2001-2010: a decade of inclusiveness



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ABSTRACT

The Association for Academic Surgery (AAS) was established to inspire and develop academic surgeons. Since its founding in 1966, each decade has been marked by continued growth and innovations. The era of 2001-2010 was a decade notable for its focus on inclusiveness and diversity. In those ten years, the AAS grew its membership from all surgical backgrounds, established defining programs that remain today, and invested substantially in international outreach. In this article, we review these historical highlights and will demonstrate that the AAS remains the most important home for the young academic surgeon.

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Introduction

The Association for Academic Surgery (AAS) was founded in 1966 with a mission to inspire and develop academic surgeons.¹ Since that time, the AAS has grown from a small cadre of laboratory-based surgeon-scientists to a diverse group of surgeons, trainees, and students from all parts of the world. From outcomes to education and basic to translational science, the current AAS membership is markedly different from its founding version, but one still focused on the primary mission. While each subsequent decade has been marked by major accomplishments, the decade of 2001-2010 was a notable period of growth for the AAS. In those 10 years, the AAS grew its membership from all specialties of surgery,

established defining programs still recognizable today, and invested substantially in international outreach. Based on a philosophy of inclusiveness, the AAS recognized that its core strength, energy, and sustenance would come from diversity in its people, ideas, and leadership. Now well into the 21st century, the AAS remains the premier organization for developing academic surgeons. In this article, we review historical highlights of the AAS from the decade of 2001-2010.

Partnerships and outreach

Many surgical societies, both big and small, were present at the turn of the century. Recognizing the mutual benefits of

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Table 1 – AAS partner societies.

Society name
American Board of Surgery
American College of Surgeons
Association of Surgical Education
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Women Surgeons
National Association for Biomedical Research
Plastic Surgery Research Council
Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Society of Black Academic Surgeons
Society of University Surgeons
Surgical Outcomes Club

partnerships, the AAS established important long-term relations with fellow surgical societies.² These included, to name a few, the Society of University Surgeons (SUS), American College of Surgeons, and Society of Black Academic Surgeons (Table 1). Partnership with the SUS was particularly important in this decade and continues today with AAS members often “graduating” from the AAS to the SUS. These collaborations have resulted in carefully coordinated meetings such as the Academic Surgical Congress (ASC) and several education programs. As academic surgeons, members of the AAS were also inevitably involved with other specialty societies and these dual roles helped to establish relationships with organizations such as the Plastic Surgery Research Council and National Association for Biomedical Research. The Surgical Outcomes Club, which held its first scientific session in 2005 in San Francisco, was another important society whose mission and membership continues to overlap with the AAS. All these partnerships, and future ones in

development, continue to enhance the strength and vigor of the academic surgical community.

Academic Surgical Congress

One of the greatest accomplishments in the history of the AAS was the inaugural ASC held at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, San Diego in February 2006.³ This meeting placed the AAS and SUS in one geographic location and created a dynamic gathering of academic surgeons from all specialties and rank. The success of this first joint meeting was beyond expectations with more attendees (731) present than the combined members of the AAS and SUS. Furthermore, the number of abstracts at the meeting totaled 494 which was more than the total number presented at the AAS and SUS meetings combined the year before. AAS President Matthias G. Stelzner MD delivered the presidential address entitled “Loud and Clear Now—Advocacy and Academic Surgery,” and Louis J. Ignarro MD gave the Founder’s Lecture entitled “Nitric Oxide as a Signaling Molecule in the Cardiovascular System.” The Committee on Education Panel held a discussion on “Training the Surgeons of Tomorrow: The Revolution in Surgical Education.” To encourage medical student participation in the AAS and ASC, the AAS Student Diversity Travel Grant was established soon thereafter in 2007. Surgical education was a central theme in ASC meetings from 2007-2010 due to the significant limitations in Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) work hours established in 2003. Subsequent ASC meetings also focused on workforce disparities (2008), the glass ceiling for women and minorities in surgery (2009), and international outreach (2010).

Growth of the Academic Surgical Congress (ASC)

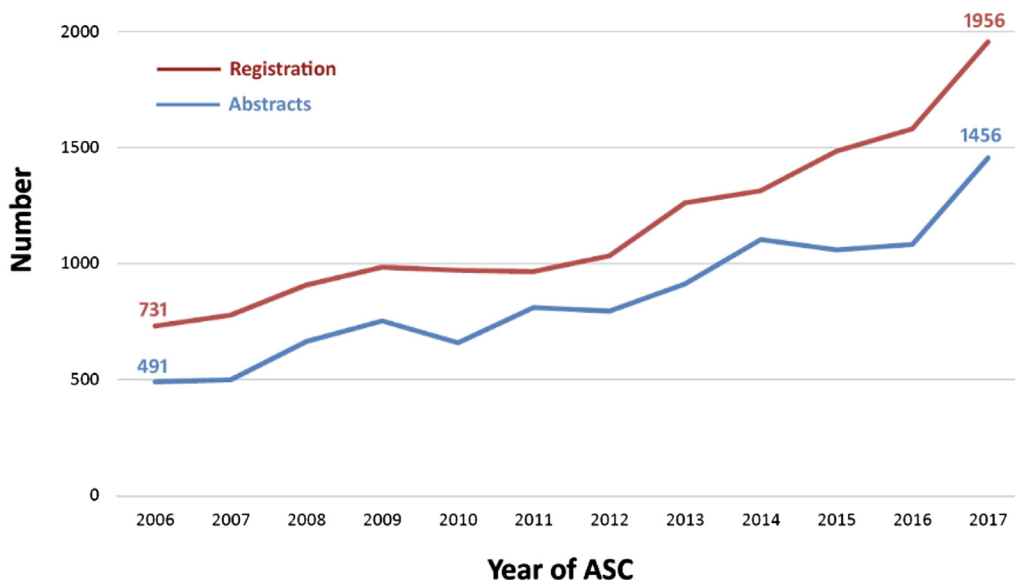


Figure – Growth of the Academic Surgical Congress (ASC) in abstracts and registration from 2006-2017. (Color version of figure is available online.)

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