



TSDA News

Thoracic Surgery Directors Association

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President's Greeting

John Brown, MD

As we prepare for the end of one calendar year and the beginning of another, I look back on 2008 as a year of great progress for TSDA. The highly successful [Basic Skills Boot Camp](#) was launched; a new [review workshop](#) for new program directors, association program directors and coordinators is in development for January 2009; online resources were improved and enhanced; and a new [Weekly Curricula](#) was launched. The coming year will bring continued progress and even more new developments.

These are times of changes for CT surgery, and your involvement is critical not only to the strength of TSDA, but to CT surgery graduate education as well. Plan to attend the upcoming [TSDA General Session](#), scheduled for January 24, 2009 in San Francisco. We will be addressing several important issues, including plans for Boot Camp 2009, critical care in the CT surgery curriculum, and ABTS's proposal for a six-year integrated program. Click [here](#) to view preliminary agenda. Suggestions for the meeting agenda are welcomed, and please don't hesitate to contact me directly to discuss any issues you feel should be addressed by TSDA.

On behalf of TSDA's 2008 officers, we look forward to seeing you in January in the city by the bay.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

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2009 Match Dates for 2010 Appointment Year

[National Resident Matching Program](#)

Thoracic Surgery Match Schedule

Registration opens: January 7, 2009

Rank order list system opens: April 8, 2009

Quota change deadline: May 13, 2009

Rank order list closes: May 27, 2009

Match Day: June 10, 2009, 12:00 p.m. ET

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In-Training Exam

Saturday, April 4, 2009

Saturday, April 11, 2009 (back-up date)

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TSDA Meeting Dates

New Program Directors Workshop

Saturday, January 24, 2009

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Moscone West Convention Center

San Francisco, CA

(Room TBD)

[View meeting details.](#)

TSDA General Session

Saturday, January 24, 2009

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Moscone West Convention Center

San Francisco, CA

(Room TBD)

[View preliminary agenda.](#)

TS-RACS Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 25, 2009

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Moscone West Convention Center

San Francisco, CA

(Room TBD)

[View preliminary agenda.](#)

TSDA Executive Committee Meeting

Monday, January 26, 2009

7:00 - 8:30 a.m.

Moscone West Convention Center

San Francisco, CA

(Room TBD)

TSDA Curricula Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

7:00 - 8:30 a.m.

Moscone West Convention Center

San Francisco, CA

(Room TBD)

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TSDA to Host NEW Program Directors Workshop in San Francisco

New Program Directors, Associate Program Directors, and representatives of programs undergoing RRC survey in 2009 are strongly urged to attend this important workshop.

The TSDA will host an accreditation review workshop on Saturday, January 24, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in San Francisco. (The [TSDA General Session](#) will be held from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.) The workshop, facilitated by Walter Merrill, MD and a faculty of experts, will cover a variety of important accreditation topics. The primary objectives of this workshop are:

- to review educational and administrative expectations for thoracic surgery residency program directors, associate program directors, and faculty.
- to present an overview of the accreditation process, and
- to help program directors and faculty prepare for upcoming accreditation site visit.

The workshop is designed for Program Directors (especially those who have been in their positions for less than five years); Program Directors seeking review of the accreditation process; Associate Program Directors; Faculty being groomed for educational leadership positions; Program Directors and Faculty planning for an upcoming accreditation site visit; and TSDA members who wish to learn more about the accreditation process.

The fee to attend this session is \$100 per program for Program Director and one additional surgeon (either Associate Program Director or Faculty). Participants may also register one Program Coordinator at no additional charge; however Program Coordinators may not participate without a physician faculty member in attendance. Registration is required.

Click [here](#) for additional information and to download a registration form.

Questions? Contact TSDA at 312-202-5854 or tsda@tsda.org.

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Plan to Attend the TSDA General Session

Saturday, January 24, 2009

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Moscone West Convention Center (Room TBD)

San Francisco, CA

Preliminary Agenda

Welcome/Opening Remarks: John Brown, MD

STS Meeting Resident Paper Award Presentation: John Brown, MD

TSRA Socrates Award: Bret Mettler, MD

Special Presentations

MD ABTS/Proposal for 6-Year Integrated Program: Richard Feins, MD

JCTSE/New CT Surgery Education Director: Edward Verrier, MD

Boot Camp/Simulation as a Teaching Modality for CT Surgery Residents: George Hicks, MD

RRC Report: Irving Kron, MD

Critical Care in the CT Surgery Curriculum: John Calhoon, MD

TSDA Reports

TSRA: Bret Mettler, MD

Secretary/Treasurer: George Hicks, MD

Curriculum Committee: Curt Tribble, MD

In-Training Exam Committee: John Calhoon, MD

Committee on Ethics & Professionalism: Mark Orringer, MD

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In-Training Exam Set for Spring 2009

New exam now in development.

The TSDA 2009 In-Training Exam (ITE) now in development is scheduled to be administered on April 4, with a back-up exam date offered on April 11. The fee for the 2009 ITE will be \$250 per exam candidate. Information and registration packets are scheduled to mail in early 2009.

The ITE is designed to assess knowledge among current residents in thoracic surgery. Test questions are equally divided between general thoracic and cardiac surgery. The cardiac section will be chaired by Dr. Phillip Hess (University of Florida); the thoracic section will be chaired by Dr. Mark Iannettoni (University of Iowa).

As in 2007 and 2008, the computer-based ITE must be given at the training program site and actively proctored by a Board-certified thoracic surgeon. Home computer access is not permitted. A mandatory pre-exam survey will also be conducted to gauge the residents' opinions of their job-search experiences and other issues.

As in previous years, individual results will be sent only to the resident's program director. It is expected that the program director will meet with individual residents to go over exam results, provide feedback, and identify areas in need of remediation.

For more information, contact Nancy Puckett, TSDA Executive Director, at npuckett@tsda.org, or Beth Winer, TSDA Affiliate Manager, at bwiner@tsda.org.

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TSDA Weekly Curricula Update

Year 2 overhaul implemented.

The end of June 2008 marked the completion of Year 1 of a two-year cycle of the TSDA Weekly Curricula. Year 2 topics began in mid-July with a fresh approach to this important resource. The TSDA Curriculum Committee, chaired by Dr. Curt Tribble with assistance from Dr. Kent Harman (University of Florida), overhauled the cardiac, congenital and thoracic reading assignments for Year 2. The committee is working diligently to revise or replace dated talks posted in the TSDA Education Universe and, when possible, include articles posted online free of charge. The Committee is also striving to incorporate new modalities, including podcasts and streaming videos.

TSDA Weekly Curricula e-mail messages continue to be sent to CT program directors, coordinators, faculty, residents, fellows, and general surgery residents scheduled to begin their CT training in July 2009. Recognizing the value of the [TSDA Education Universe](#) (EU) and Weekly Curricula e-mail messages, the Association of Physician Assistants in Cardiovascular Surgery (APACVS) requested and was granted access to the EU and the weekly e-mails for its membership. The tracked open rate for the weekly message ranges from 25-30% monthly. (It should be noted that recipients who do not utilize the "Download Pictures" function may not be counted in the open rate, indicating that the number of recipients reading the messages is likely higher than reported by the tracking system used by TSDA.)

The Curriculum Committee met on November 7 in Austin, TX during the STSA 55th Annual Meeting. An update will be provided at the January 2009 TSDA General Session.

- View the [88-week core curriculum](#).
- View the complete listing of Year 1 and Year 2 TSDA Weekly Curricula [Cardiac and Thoracic talks and readings](#) (content subject to change).
- View TSDA Weekly Curricula [Readings and References](#).
- View the TSDA Weekly Curricula [E-mail Archive](#).
- Access the complete [TSDA Education Universe](#).

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European Association for Cardiothoracic Surgery: A Resident's Perspective

Faraz Kerendi, MD

I recently attended the European Association for Cardiothoracic Surgery (EACTS) 2008 Annual Meeting and, while in Lisbon, Portugal, I represented TSRA at two committee meetings dedicated to educational activities of the association.

The first was a meeting discussing the proposal of a new "Master Plan" for education of European trainees/surgeons. The basic premise of this plan is to overhaul educational activities which lead to board certification and re-certification, such that those undergoing these activities gain the maximum benefit. These include providing pre-requisite material for specific educational events, implementing pre-and post-testing, and maintaining stringent records in the CTSNet educational profile. In addition, there will be four separate steering committees responsible for overseeing these educational activities in the areas of adult cardiac, general thoracic, congenital, and vascular/endovascular surgery.

The second meeting was the Surgical Training and Manpower (STMP) Committee meeting. Specific goals

discussed during this meeting included:

- Establishing an international cardiothoracic surgery residents organization. The goal of this organization would be to allow for exchange of ideas among residents from different parts of the world. This organization would also be responsible for coordinating one or two annual educational sessions, including an international residents/fellows meeting to be held in conjunction with STS, EACTS, and/or the International Society for Minimally Invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery (ISMICS) annual meetings. Topics for the meetings would be both clinical as well as discussions/presentations related to the training of cardiothoracic surgeons. Funding for international travel was identified as an obstacle. At the past two ISMICS meetings, funding was sought from industry to establish scholarships for international resident attendees. It was proposed that this could be a potential source of funding.
- Establish centers for potential elective rotations both in the U.S. and abroad. Several U.S. residents visit European centers (such as the Leipzig Heart Center) each year and there are European residents who visit the U.S. for training. STMP would like to identify additional centers in Europe that would be willing to host residents for traveling fellowships/elective rotations. Matthias Siepe from Freiburg, Germany was assigned to help compile this list. These programs would be added to the list of educational opportunities currently posted on TSRAnet.org.
- The EACTS Council approved a proposal that the TSRA past-president, as the international liaison of the association, be appointed to the EACTS STMP committee as an ex officio member. It was also proposed that the TSRA representative attend the spring committee meeting, if financially feasible.
- Other topics discussed included re-organization of the EACTS STMP committee, including methods for identification of new members and duration of members' terms. The structure and organization of the TSRA was sought as a template for reorganization of this committee.

I believe the collaboration between TSRA and EACTS will be valuable in multiple ways. It will allow TSRA to expand on available educational opportunities, particularly in techniques not currently performed in U.S. training centers, such as transcatheter valve therapy. It also has potential to increase the number of European trainees who visit the U.S. for fellowships. It will also allow TSRA to recognize previously unidentified issues of interest to both groups, which would be addressed at annual resident/fellow meetings. Finally, this collaboration could help establish contacts for future academic collaboration and scientific investigation.

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TSDA Hosts Inaugural Boot Camp

33 residents gather for hands-on training.

The Thoracic Surgery Directors Association held its first cardiothoracic surgery Basis Skills Boot Camp July 31-August 3 in Chapel Hill, NC. The event provided 33 first-year CT surgery residents with an experiential foundation and hands-on practice in basic CT operating skills with an emphasis on simulation in surgery. Boot Camp was underwritten through 2006-2007 grants from AATS, ABTS, STS and TSFRE. Click [here](#) to view photos of this unique event.

The driving teaching modality for the Boot Camp was simulation, working from the hypothesis that simulation can provide and augment skills sets that will enhance CT surgery residents' education and thereby improve the overall quality of residency graduates. Simulation was used to various degrees and succeeded in providing a realistic – 'suspension of disbelief' – environment. Residents were divided into four squads which rotated through four half-day sessions. Armed with newly-developed simulators, the faculty educators were given specific objectives to achieve with their individual groups. In general thoracic surgery, skills in mediastinoscopy as well as bronchoscopy, and implementation of one-lung anesthesia were practiced in one room, while hilar anatomy, dissection and pulmonary resections were covered in another. On the cardiac front, small- and large-vessel anastomotic techniques were practiced on pig-heart models at various angles using video assessment of skill progression. The

fourth session addressed cardiopulmonary bypass skills utilizing beating pig heart simulation together with non-beating perfused hearts and mock CPB circuits to expose residents to the basics of CPB, trouble-shooting CPB problems, recognizing and responding to CPB emergencies, and practicing the techniques of aortic and atrial cannulation, thus simulating all the steps of going on and coming off CPB. Every resident group had equal exposure to every skill set session. In addition, on the final day of Boot Camp, all residents attended a hands-on wet-lab for aortic root surgery and valve replacement.

To maximize the learning environment, the program was limited to 33 residents. More than 20 faculty members were recruited from across the country, each bringing his or her own specialized skill set to impart on the resident participants. Instruments, tissue, simulators, endoscopes and other necessary equipment and materials were obtained largely through corporate donations, and several vendors were on site to ensure proper set up. Corporate donations provided by Cryolife, Ethicon Endo Surgery, Inc., Immersion Medical, Karl Storz, Medtronic, Olympus America, Pilling Division of Teleflex Medical, Scanlan International, Sorin Group, and St. Jude Medical.

The overall atmosphere of the event was extremely positive. On site, interaction among faculty and residents created a vibrant dynamic that energized everyone. Follow-up surveys of residents as well as their program directors were conducted.

Resident evaluations were collected from 100% of the attendees and feedback was universally positive. Thirty of the 33 resident attendees 'strongly agreed' and three 'agreed' that Boot Camp was time well-spent (overall rating 4.9 on a 5-point scale). Twenty-five residents felt that Boot Camp had exceeded their expectations; eight said Boot Camp had met their expectations. Thirty-two of the residents rated the learning atmosphere 'excellent;' one rated it 'good.' One hundred percent of respondents said they would recommend Boot Camp to another resident. Program director survey results were positive. More than 80% responded that their residents exhibited improved enthusiasm for the specialty following participation in Boot Camp. In addition, 67% saw improved confidence; 54% saw improved technical skills; and 100% indicated they would send a resident to a future Boot Camp. Seventy-one percent expressed interest in participating as faculty at a future Boot Camp.

Plans are underway to host a second Boot Camp. Keep an eye out for more information on TSDA.org and in your e-mail in-box. The TSDA hopes to expand this opportunity so program directors who did not send a resident this year can do so. Boot Camp program directors are also calling for volunteer faculty members to participate in this unique event. For more information about future Boot Camp opportunities, please contact TSDA at 312-202-5854 or tsda@tsda.org.

Click [here](#) to read Dr. George Hicks' editorial in the October 2008 issue of *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery*. The editorial also appeared in the October 2008 issue of the *Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*.

TSDA Boot Camp Program Directors:

John Brown, MD, TSDA President; John Calhoon, MD, TSDA President-Elect; Richard Feins, MD, University of North Carolina; George Hicks, MD, TSDA Secretary-Treasurer

TSDA Boot Camp Faculty:

Ron Angona, University of Rochester; Manjit Bains, MD, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; William Baumgartner, MD, Johns Hopkins Hospital; Katherine Birchard, MD, University of North Carolina; Andrea Carpenter, MD, University of Texas San Antonio; W. Randolph Chitwood, Jr., MD, East Carolina University; Daniel Coore, PhD, University of the West Indies; Thomas Daniel, MD, University of Virginia; Malcolm DeCamp, MD, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; L. Penfield Faber, MD, Rush University; James Fann, MD, Stanford University; James Gangemi, MD, University of Rochester; George Magovern, MD, Allegheny General Hospital; Kamal Mansour, MD, Emory University; M. Blair Marshall, MD, Georgetown University; Walter Merrill, MD, University of Cincinnati; Gordon Murray, MD, West Virginia University; Peter Pairolero, MD, Mayo Clinic; Robert Poston, MD, Boston Medical College; Paul Ramphal, MD, University of the West Indies; Francis Robicsek, MD, Carolinas Medical Center; Valerie Rusch, MD, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Benson Wilcox, MD, University of North Carolina; Cameron Wright, MD, Massachusetts General Hospital

Resident Programs Represented:

Allegheny General Hospital; Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; Boston Medical College; Brigham and Women's Hospital; Duke University; Emory University; Johns Hopkins Hospital; Long Island Jewish Medical Center; Massachusetts General Hospital; Mayo Clinic; Medical University of South Carolina; Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; New York University; Northwestern University; Ohio State University; University of Alabama; University of California-Davis; University of California-Los Angeles; University of California-San Diego; University of Cincinnati; University of Colorado; University of Iowa; University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey; University of Michigan; University of Minnesota; University of North Carolina; University of Pittsburgh; University of Rochester; University of Southern California; University of Texas-San Antonio; University of Texas-Southwestern; University of Virginia; University of Washington

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New Surgical Director of Education Appointed

Dr. Edward Verrier, long-time Program Director at the University of Washington in Seattle, has been appointed Surgical Director of Education for the Joint Council on Thoracic Surgery Education (JCTSE, Inc.). Dr. Verrier will direct the Thoracic Surgery Education Initiative formulated by AATS, ABTS, STS and TSFRE. One of the position's major thrusts will be to improve cardiothoracic surgical resident education, and facilitate and help lead the redesign of the thoracic surgery resident training paradigm, as well as to develop innovative techniques for post-resident education.

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TSDA Contact Information

TSDA

633 N. St. Clair Street
Suite 2320
Chicago, IL 60611
P: 312-202-5854
F: 312-404-5829
tsda@tsda.org
www.tsda.org

TSDA President

John W. Brown, MD
317-274-7150
jobrown@iupui.edu

TSDA President-Elect

John H. Calhoon, MD
210-567-6863
calhoon@uthscsa.edu

TSDA Secretary/Treasurer

George L. Hicks, MD
585-275-5384
george_hicks@urmc.rochester.edu

TSDA Executive Director
Nancy Puckett
312-202-5819
npuckett@tsda.org

TSDA Affiliate Manager
Beth Winer
312-202-5855
bwiner@tsda.org

TSRA President
Bret Mettler, MD
434-982-0332
bam9c@hscmail.mcc.virginia.edu

TS-RACS President
Suzanne Giannotti
203-785-6258
suzanne.giannotti@yale.edu

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Thoracic Surgery Directors Association • 633 North St. Clair Street • Ste 2320 • Chicago IL 60611
Phone: 312.202.5854 | Fax: 312.202.5829 | tsda@tsda.org | www.tsda.org

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633 N Saint Clair Street, Suite 2320, Chicago, IL 60611