



ACFAS Board Position on CME Curriculum and Speaker Selection

Approved by the ACFAS Board of Directors, March 21, 2018

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons is widely recognized as the gold standard of CME programming in the specialty. Drawing upon the collective wisdom of 7,500 board certified or board qualified members provides the College a distinct advantage over other CME providers in selecting faculty for its programs, but it can also open the College to criticism since members rightfully feel a sense of ownership in their organization. As ACFAS and its programs grow in stature and size, the Board of Directors has adopted the following statement to clarify its faculty selection processes.

Governance and Accountability: ACFAS is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board delegates curriculum and speaker selection to various committees. There are Board liaisons and staff liaisons to each committee. Both liaisons offer advice, counsel, institutional memory, and/or administrative support, but do not engage in committee decisions per se. Final decisions rest with the committee via the chair. If there is a disagreement, the matter will be adjudicated by the Board. If a liaison acts inappropriately, it should be reported to the President and/or Executive Director. All reported deviations of authority must be corroborated by multiple sources.

Financial and Ethics Accountability: While the College is a not-for-profit organization, it must operate its programs at a minimum breakeven level or make a profit that subsidizes other programs. ACFAS strictly adheres to CME provider standards that prohibits industry influence in content or speaker selection. All sponsorships are unrestricted educational grants with no quid pro quos to industry. Speakers with numerous financial and duality of interest conflicts, even unrelated to their lecture, can reflect negatively on the organization. See www.acfas.org/conflicts for all ACFAS financial conflict and duality of interest policies, the most stringent policies in the foot and ankle surgical specialty.

Topics are selected first, based on surveys and other determinants. Then, the following speaker considerations are all weighed in varying degrees. Nothing is set in stone. Our committees need flexibility, not rigidity, to produce successful programs year after year. This statement primarily refers to the Annual Scientific Conference (ASC); but may also refer to single-topic programs.

Minimum Expectations - A speaker shall be/have:

- Licensed and in active practice. Attendees expect speakers who are routinely performing surgery and understand today's clinical/surgery environment.
- (For DPMs) An ACFAS Fellow member with at least five years in practice. Attendees expect experienced speakers.
- Have completed an ACFAS faculty application (for new applicants).
- Attended recent annual scientific conferences and/or other ACFAS educational programs to be aware of current speaking practices, content, and attendee expectations.



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Additional factors to be considered: What committees may consider in varying degrees, but are not limited to:

- Speaker experience, platform skills, research activity, time management abilities and adherence to the spirit of the program will be considered in faculty selection.
- Where is their talent best suited? Large/small group, workshops, etc.?
- Accurate and complete financial conflicts or dualities of interest must be fully disclosed via the online ACFAS Financial Conflicts and Duality of Interests Disclosure Form. Bona fide research funding that does not personally inure to the speaker is exempt. Conflicts must never compromise or bias the content delivered.
- Do they perform the procedure?
- Are they active in research? Published?
- Changing demographics of the profession
- Is each presentation fresh (within the College or externally)? If not, what's new that they bring to our audience?
- Past speaker evaluations will be taken into consideration as a benchmark of speaker effectiveness for future programming.
- Willingness to speak on multiple assigned topics. (Multiple topics are often assigned for cost-effectiveness.)

Finally, in a professional society of 7,500 members, speakers should understand that each invitation is a one-time invitation, not an “in perpetuity” guarantee. They should expect to be rotated on and off in the best interests of the program and the College. Committee volunteers are legally obligated to put the College’s interests first. Lobbying committee members to advance private agendas is not permitted, pursuant to a separate board policy.

We hope this statement provides transparency about how ACFAS selects CME curriculum and speakers. If you have any questions, please contact the ACFAS president at president@ACFAS.org.

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