New Orleans locals use the word *lagniappe* to mean “a little something extra.” ACFAS 2019, February 14–17 in New Orleans, will offer you more than a little something extra—spectacular special events—to make your conference experience extraordinary.

Start on Thursday, February 14 with the Premier Connection Opening Event at Mardi Gras World, where “every day is Mardi Gras!” Peek behind the parade curtain to see how Mardi Gras floats are built then reconnect with colleagues, classmates and friends while enjoying delicious food, drinks and local music.

Give a hearty round of applause and congratulations to the Manuscript, Poster, Honor and Merit Award winners on Friday, February 15 during the annual ACFAS Honors and Awards Ceremony and also cheer on the new Fellows as they receive their College keys.

Be sure to visit the Exhibit Hall each day of the conference to scope out the latest industry products, scan your badge, meet friends for lunch and stroll *(continued on page 8)*

### ACFAS 2019 SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

- **Resident and Student Networking (by invitation) at Mardi Gras World**
  - Thursday, Feb. 14
  - 5:15–6:15pm

- **The Premier Connection Opening Event at Mardi Gras World**
  - Thursday, Feb. 14
  - 6:15–7:30pm

- **ACFAS Honors and Awards Ceremony**
  - Friday, Feb. 15
  - Noon–1pm

- **Meet Scientific Poster Authors**
  - Thursday, Feb. 14 and Friday, Feb. 15
  - 1–2pm

- **Wrap Party at the National World War II Museum**
  - Saturday, Feb. 16
  - 6pm
ACFAS is without question an education-focused special interest group. “Proven Leaders, Lifelong Learners, Changing Lives” is our motto and we do a pretty good job of sticking to it in our daily business as an organization. One key area of attention and great success has been the ACFAS Recognized Fellowship Initiative, which started in 2010 and has evolved into a highly visible part of our College. Individual fellowship programs meeting/exceeding a list of specific criteria are officially “Recognized” by the College, which will in turn provide these programs support and visibility.

How?
It is important to understand that the ACFAS Recognition program is NOT an “Accreditation” process. If a fellowship program desires accreditation or is required to do so by its institution, then the Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME) would be the group to provide this evaluation. However, in keeping with the trend of most other surgical specialties in the country, most foot and ankle surgery postgraduate fellowships are nonaccredited. Funding is a major reason fellowships would choose to be nonaccredited, as this allows the program to receive corporate educational grants, as well as the fellow to serve as a “junior attending” and to submit charges for patient care services. Most hospitals will not support a fellowship salary, as there is no federal reimbursement for fellowships in our specialty.

Why?
I did one of the early postgraduate fellowships in our profession at the University of Texas from 1998–1999 when I had just completed residency training. Since this was a new concept at the time, I remember some of my attendings wondering WHY I would want to do a fellowship after three years of residency. Some of them were even insulted by my choice as they felt it was a statement that the training I received in residency was somehow insufficient. Untrue for sure. Fellowships are something that augment and enhance your level of training and are often a pathway for those who seek to include education and research as part of their future practice. My fellowship was responsible for the career path I am on today, and it heavily enabled my academic and clinical work I do daily.

Now, as a residency director and former fellowship director, I highly recommend fellowship training to just about all my residents and students. I firmly believe having fellowship-trained foot and ankle surgeons in our profession makes us all more visible, more credible and more valuable to the healthcare system. If we want parity, then we must do the work, and our training models must mirror those of our surgical colleagues. This doesn’t mean that everyone has to do a fellowship to be a credible surgeon. However, in following with the rest of healthcare, we should have a cohort of our profession that receives more than the minimum required specialty training and can serve to elevate the level of care we all offer.

The ACFAS Recognized Fellowship Initiative currently has 46 approved programs, and the CPME website currently lists 13 accredited fellowship programs. There are also a handful of nonrecognized/nonaffiliated fellowships in the country. If you do the math, with approximately 600 DPM residency graduates annually in the United States, only 10 percent will be able to complete fellowship training. Is there a right or wrong percentage for this? I have no idea. The list of ACFAS Recognized Fellowships is certainly growing, and the Fellowship Committee is working diligently to make sure that growth is justified and constructive. We are very much attuned to valid concerns of quantity over quality. We must ensure that “ACFAS Recognized Fellowship” is a branding that is earned and monitored so resident applicants can be assured they will receive the added training experience they expect. I don’t think any of us can know the “right” numbers or ratios that will optimize this process, but I do know the ACFAS Fellowship Committee is focused on high quality and consistency as the best path forward.

So, to fellowship or not to fellowship? I do feel strongly we need high-quality postresidency fellowship programs, and I do believe we all benefit from them. The graduates of these programs are currently the leaders in many aspects of education and research for our specialty. I have experienced firsthand the fact that having the distinction of fellowship training can make a career-defining difference, and I am proud that ACFAS is helping navigate this pathway for our profession.

Questions for Dr. Steinberg? Write him at president@acfas.org.

John S. Steinberg, DPM, FACFAS
ACFAS President
Spring into 2019 with ACFAS On the Road

Start your new year right—join us On the Road this spring and see just how much you can accomplish when you work “In the Trenches” together with your colleagues.

Day 1 of this two-day seminar and workshop kicks off on Friday night with the presentation, “Controversies and Complications.” Bring your own work cases to share with faculty and your fellow attendees.

Dive right into spirited lectures and discussions on Day 2 then practice what you have learned in two hands-on sawbones labs focused on fixation options, osteotomies and other procedures. Faculty will close the seminar with handy “Tips, Tricks and Quips” you can draw from when working on your toughest surgical cases.

Register now at acfas.org/ontheroad.

2019 On the Road Schedule

**April 26–27, 2019 (Friday/Saturday)**
Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek
Orlando, FL

**May 3–4, 2019 (Friday/Saturday)**
Hilton Americas Houston
Houston, TX

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2019 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**February 13, 2019 (Wednesday)**
Residents’ Day
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA

**February 13, 2019 (Wednesday)**
Coding & Billing for the Foot & Ankle Surgeon
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA

**February 13, 2019 (Wednesday)**
Lateral Ankle Instability: It’s All About the Soft Tissue & the Bone
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA

**February 13, 2019 (Wednesday)**
Grand Rounds: Optimizing Outcomes for Your Most Challenging Cases
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA

**February 14-17, 2019 (Thursday–Sunday)**
ACFAS Annual Scientific Conference
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA

**March 23–24, 2019 (Saturday/Sunday)**
Foot & Ankle Arthroscopy
Orthopaedic Learning Center
Chicago, IL

**April 26–27, 2019 (Friday/Saturday)**
ACFAS on the Road—In the Trenches
Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek
Orlando, FL

**May 3–4, 2019 (Friday/Saturday)**
ACFAS on the Road—In the Trenches
Hilton Americas Houston
Houston, TX

**July 20–21, 2019 (Saturday/Sunday)**
Foot & Ankle Arthroscopy
Orthopaedic Learning Center
Chicago, IL

**August 10–11, 2019 (Saturday/Sunday)**
Foot & Ankle Arthroscopy
Orthopaedic Learning Center
Chicago, IL

**October 18–19, 2019 (Friday/Saturday)**
Foot & Ankle Arthroscopy
Orthopaedic Learning Center
Chicago, IL

**November 16–17, 2019 (Saturday/Sunday)**
Foot & Ankle Arthroscopy
Orthopaedic Learning Center
Chicago, IL

*To be waitlisted for sold-out courses, contact Maggie Hjelm at hjelm@acfas.org.*
Taking the time to promptly and accurately document your cases can make all the difference in how you are reimbursed for your services. Here, Danielle Butto, DPM, FACFAS of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center (Hartford, CT) and Marnell Moore, DPM, FACFAS of Happy Feet Podiatry LLC (East Orange, NJ) share their views on the importance of timely documentation in both group and private practice.

**Why is timely and accurate documentation so important?**

**DB:** Without your documentation, billing levels and codes cannot be entered properly. In a hospital setting, residents must be able to refer to your notes, and office staff may use your notes to answer patients’ questions or to schedule tests and surgeries. Also, the time stamp on your notes is critical should any legal issues arise.

**MM:** It is just as what we learned in podiatry school: If you do not document your cases, you did not do them. Documentation not only serves as proof that you treated your patients, it protects you legally and financially.

**How can foot and ankle surgeons assess their documentation procedures to determine what is working and what is not?**

**DB:** First assess how long it is taking you to document. If you have several days where you cannot get your charts done or you have hours of charting left at the end of the day, your documentation procedures may need to change. It can be helpful to include a setting in your electronic medical record (EMR) system that notifies you if your charts are not closed within 48 hours.

**MM:** I write down my notes when meeting with patients and then dictate into my EMR later. This allows me to spend more face-to-face time with patients, and it helps me see where my procedures can be streamlined.

**How can foot and ankle surgeons improve documentation procedures and processes within their practice?**

**DB:** Templates are helpful, but it is best to use skeleton outlines that can be customized to reflect each patient’s exam. Copying and pasting your notes can save you time, but it can also lead to errors.

**MM:** Yes, copying and pasting can be a time saver, but you must also include specific details, such as when the patient last saw his or her primary doctor, blood pressure readings or even recent life events the patient may have experienced.

**How can a practice ensure that all physicians are following consistent documentation procedures?**

**DB:** A training program is especially important for new practitioners. You can also conduct a quarterly audit by pulling three or so random samples of practitioners’ notes to see if documentation is consistent.

**MM:** Every week, my practice manager reviews all documentation for the patients we see. If anything is missing, the doctor(s) is alerted. The practice manager also performs a monthly review of patient documentation to ensure that everything is in place for all providers.

**How can foot and ankle surgeons best write records that communicate clearly to the records’ possible audiences, such as other physicians or insurers?**

**DB:** Write your notes as if you are presenting the patient to someone else and you need to paint a clear picture of the patient’s condition.

**MM:** I use electronic templates to communicate clearly and stay organized, but I make sure that any details I add to a patient’s record, such as pain level, are easy to read and understand.
With so many demands on foot and ankle surgeons’ time, what can they do to ensure that they have enough time to properly document cases without rushing through them or making errors?

**DB:** It depends on your practice’s flow and how you prefer to document. Some physicians choose to document while the patient is in the room. Others prefer to build documentation time into their appointment slots. For example, a follow-up appointment is built into the schedule for 15 minutes with 10 minutes of face-to-face time with the patient and five minutes of documentation. Also, the use of medical scribes is becoming more popular in busier practices.

I personally use Dragon dictation, which allows you to dictate in real time directly into the medical record. If I have time, I will dictate my notes immediately following the visit before I see the next patient. If I do not have time, I will make notes and then complete the day’s dictations before I leave the office.

**MM:** You need to develop a routine and stick to it. Think of your patient cases as your baby and your notes as food. The baby cannot survive without food! Decide on a documentation schedule that works best for you. This could be at the end of the day, during after-work hours or within three business days.

I used to be swamped with documentation work on the weekends, but now that I dictate my notes, I have much more free time. And I make it a habit not to leave the office until I have finished dictating all of my notes at the end of the day.

Based on your experience, what advice do you have for those who may be struggling with their documentation procedures?

**DB:** Use a template that works for your practice. While it may take time to build the template initially, it is well worth it in the end.

**MM:** Your notes are just as important as your patients, and they can make or break you. Proper documentation also helps you comply with the law and Medicare requirements. Make your notes a priority and designate a specific timeframe to dictate them so you do not fall behind or become overwhelmed.

**3 Quick Tips for Improving Your Documentation**

1. Establish a system that works for you and your office.
2. Consider using a dictation system.
3. Be open to internal audits, which can provide great feedback.

Looking to increase your media savvy so you can effectively promote your practice and also speak confidently to the media on ACFAS’ behalf? Then join us for free formal media training sessions during ACFAS 2019, February 14–17 in New Orleans to learn PR basics and easy-to-use media strategies.

Your personalized one-hour training session with a professional media trainer will include:

- One-on-one media training
- On-camera training with feedback
- Tips for speaking to the media

To reserve your session, contact Melissa Matusek, ACFAS director of Marketing and Communications, at melissa.matusek@acfas.org. Slots are limited, so sign up now!
Don’t Forget to Pack Your CV for the Sixth Annual ACFAS Job Fair!

If you are looking for a new job or plan to expand your practice, bring your updated CV to ACFAS 2019, February 14–17, 2019 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and head to the ACFAS Job Fair, provided by ACFAS Benefit Partner PodiatryCareers.org.

Located in the Exhibit Hall, the Job Fair allows you to post your CV and open positions at ACFAS 2019 and to arrange onsite interviews with employers present at the conference.

Take a moment to ensure your CV best represents all you have to offer: schedule one-on-one time with a professional CV reviewer. The reviewer will have appointments available for the first two days of the conference during Exhibit Hall hours and can provide sound advice on how to make your CV stand out from other candidates. Don’t delay as appointments fill up quickly!

A photographer and makeup artist will also be available to take free professional headshots for your CV and social media profiles. If you cannot make it to New Orleans, don’t worry—all positions received before the conference will be posted in the PodiatryCareers.org booth.

Watch Your Mailbox for Your Dues Reminder

ACFAS has mailed hardcopy membership dues reminders for the 2019 calendar year to all Fellow and Associate members. Pay your dues online at acfas.org/paymydues or by mail or fax once you receive your reminder. Payment is due by December 31, 2018.

Visit acfas.org and the Member Center to learn how to maximize the member benefits you receive from ACFAS.

In Memory

Stuart J. Bass, DPM, FACFAS
West Bloomfield, MI

Irwin H. Frank, DPM, AACFAS
Rancho Santa Fe, CA

James H. McClain, DPM, FACFAS
Sturgis, MI
Congrats to Our 40-Year Members!

ACFAS congratulates those loyal and dedicated members who have been a part of the College since 1979. In appreciation, the following 40-year members receive automatic Life Membership status with ACFAS:

- Nicholas Bradlee, DPM, FACFAS Troy, MI
- D. Hugh Fraser, DPM, FACFAS Powell, WY
- Gerard J. Furst, DPM, FACFAS East Setauket, NY
- Donald R. Green, DPM, FACFAS San Diego, CA
- Michael A. Mineo, DPM, FACFAS Houston, TX
- David C. Novicki, DPM, FACFAS Milford, CT
- Robert L. Potempa, DPM, FACFAS Chicago, IL
- Scott E. Rickoff, DPM, FACFAS Pensacola, FL
- Randall J. Sarte, DPM, FACFAS Sacramento, CA
- Barry L. Scurran, DPM, FACFAS Alamo, CA
- Gary J. Sherman, DPM, FACFAS Brooklyn, NY
- Larry Weiss, DPM, FACFAS Detroit, MI

When Donald R. Green, DPM, FACFAS, joined ACFAS in 1979, he knew he made the right decision. “The College not only served as the educational arm of our profession, it protected foot and ankle surgeons at a national level and gave us status and respect on par with other medical specialties,” he says.

Dr. Green taught for eight years at the Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine (now Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine) before settling in San Diego where he now practices. He remembers how, through ACFAS’ support, surgical residencies were first established in California, and he appreciates how his ACFAS membership has connected him with colleagues, residents and leaders in foot and ankle surgery. “We have a strong, influential membership,” he says, “and we always make sure to help and support each other.”

As Dr. Green nears retirement, he reflects on the importance of continuing ACFAS’ legacy and encouraging younger practitioners to become involved with the College. “Many young DPMs don’t know ACFAS’ history or how far we’ve come in advancing the profession,” he explains. He recommends that seasoned foot and ankle surgeons like himself take time to relay their experiences to younger generations so they can do their part to move the profession forward.

Dr. Green hopes newer ACFAS members enjoy a fulfilling career, as he has, and will go on to celebrate their own 40-year memberships with the College. “Our profession is a hidden gem, and it allows you to specialize in so many ways, whether it’s pediatrics, sports medicine or biomechanics,” he closes. “Foot and ankle surgery is a great way to make a living and a great way to make your mark on the profession as well.”

“ Our profession is a hidden gem, and it allows you to specialize in so many ways, whether it’s pediatrics, sports medicine or biomechanics.” — Donald R. Green, DPM, FACFAS
Robert L. Potempa, DPM, FACFAS

Robert Potempa, DPM, FACFAS, realized two things once he received a letter from ACFAS notifying him of his Life Membership status. “I was delighted that I no longer need to pay dues and now have a few more extra bucks in my pocket to spend on my grandkids,” he laughs, “but I realized how lucky I am to have had a career for this long that I still love and enjoy.”

Joining ACFAS 40 years ago seemed like a natural progression for Dr. Potempa as he began his career. “ACFAS was the best organization to join and a stepping stone to board certification,” he recounts. “I appreciated having access to the Division and national meetings and to The Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery (JFA S).”

He notes that while his membership has helped him stay current in new concepts and technology within a rapidly evolving profession, it has also allowed him to develop close friendships with members over the years.

“Many of my close-knit friends joined ACFAS at the same time I did, and we’re still friends to this day,” he shares.

For Dr. Potempa, the most memorable part of his 40-year membership was passing his fellowship exam. He counts his term as Midwest Division president from 1981–1982 as another highlight. “We voted to approach the American College of Foot Orthopedics’ members to engage and collaborate with them on meetings and topics,” he explains, “and in 1982, we held our first joint meeting.”

Dr. Potempa’s advice for new ACFAS members is clear—read JFAS, go to meetings and get involved in committee work. For other 40-year members like himself, he says to make the most of this life stage. “Enjoy an abbreviated work schedule, more time with your family and the fact that you can still be relevant and make a difference in this world.”

“ACFAS was the best organization to join and a stepping stone to board certification.”

— Robert L. Potempa, DPM, FACFAS
Save Time & Stay One Step Ahead with SLRs

Between work demands and personal commitments, finding time to stay on top of the current literature can seem next to impossible. Fortunately, ACFAS’ Monthly Scientific Literature Reviews (SLRs) are just a click away to help you catch up on the latest medical research.

Jennifer C. Van, DPM, FACFAS, knows how to make the most of SLRs. As part of an academic teaching institution at the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine, Dr. Van works closely with students and residents and routinely incorporates SLRs into her didactic and clinical teaching.

“SLRs provide concise synopses of recent journal articles and cover different specialties, such as vascular surgery, plastic surgery, anesthesia and sports medicine, as they relate to foot and ankle surgery,” she explains. “I use them to broaden discussions with students and residents and to keep myself up to date on research that could affect my own surgical decision making.”

Here, Dr. Van shares three ways you can take full advantage of SLRs in your practice.

1. Refer to SLRs at any stage of your career.
   “SLRs are helpful across the spectrum,” says Dr. Van. If you are a seasoned foot and ankle surgeon, SLRs can assist you in staying up to date on new research, techniques and methods. If you are a recent graduate, SLRs reinforce the principles you already know and keep you engaged in evidence-based medicine.

2. Incorporate SLRs when talking with colleagues and patients.
   “It’s not uncommon for us as foot and ankle surgeons to pick each other’s brains about new research, and SLRs can offer fresh perspectives on where things are headed,” Dr. Van shares. “Evidence-based medicine is crucial. Additionally, educating ourselves is a way to advocate for our patients. I also encourage patients to do their own research prior to surgical procedures, and SLRs prove invaluable in this regard.”

3. Use SLRs as a springboard for your own research ideas.
   Dr. Van notes how sometimes reading an SLR can lead you to ask more questions, such as, “I wonder what the outcome would have been if the researchers had used a different procedure or protocol?” or “Would the results have been different if they had done it this way or that way?” Also, SLRs often outline the study’s limitations and how the study could have been made stronger. Consider using SLRs as a starting point for your own research study that could help fill in these gaps in the literature.

Visit acfas.org/SLR to read this month’s SLRs and to browse through the complete SLR archive dating back to 2009.

“SLRs provide concise synopses of recent journal articles and cover different specialties, such as vascular surgery, plastic surgery, anesthesia and sports medicine, as they relate to foot and ankle surgery.” — Jennifer C. Van, DPM, FACFAS
MARKETING TOOLBOX TALK

Each issue of ACFAS Update answers a question about how to market your practice and generate referrals from other healthcare providers. This issue’s featured Q&A explains how to best make use of the Take a New Look fact sheets and referral guides.

Q: How do I use the Take a New Look fact sheets and referral guides in my practice?

A: The fact sheets and referral guides are educational tools that describe who foot and ankle surgeons are, what they do and how they can be helpful to referral audiences. Use them when meeting one-on-one with referral partners or distribute them when speaking or exhibiting at conferences.

Remember, the information in the fact sheets and referral guides is targeted to other healthcare professionals, not consumers, so we do not recommend printing out copies to leave in your waiting room.

Increase Your Practice’s Reach & Visibility with Winter FootNotes

Don’t put a freeze on your year-end practice marketing efforts. Take the chill off with the winter edition of FootNotes, available now in the ACFAS Marketing Toolbox, and use it to both promote your practice and educate your patients.

Articles in this issue include:
- Don’t Invite Gout to Your Holiday Feasts
- Ice-Related Falls Can Wreak Havoc on Ankles
- Keep Your Feet Safe at the Gym in the New Year

An editable space is included on page 2 of FootNotes where you can add in your practice contact information. To maximize your reach, distribute copies of FootNotes to your patients or post the file on your website and social media pages.

Visit acfas.org/marketing to access infographics, PowerPoint presentations, healthcare provider referral tools and other free resources to spotlight your practice no matter the season.
Boost Your Year-End Practice Marketing Efforts with New PPTs

Promote your practice while also giving your patients the facts on two common conditions—chronic ankle instability and peripheral arterial disease. Download our new free PowerPoints, *Chronic Ankle Instability & Ankle Sprains: One Thing Can Lead to Another* and *Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD): Those Cold Feet Could Mean Poor Circulation* available now in the ACFAS Marketing Toolbox and make them work for you.

Use the PowerPoints and their accompanying scripts when speaking with patients in your office or when presenting at community health events this winter. Go one step further and project the PowerPoints as slideshows in your waiting and exam rooms or post them on your practice website and social media pages. Be sure to also customize Slide 16 in each file with your contact information so prospective patients can get in touch with you.

Access the complete library of PowerPoint presentations at [acfas.org/marketing](http://acfas.org/marketing) as well as other free resources to market your practice throughout the year.
Update

in this issue

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