

Focused on Fellowship: Tonda Silva, DPM



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Tonda Silva, DPM, is just months away from starting an advanced reconstruction fellowship with The CORE Institute in Phoenix. Read on to learn why she has decided to pursue a fellow-

ship and what she is doing now to prepare for this next exciting stage of her career.

Why have you decided to pursue a fellowship?

Although I feel confident in my surgical training and the knowledge gained in residency, I wanted to build on that strong foundation with more advanced training in reconstructive surgery, specifically total ankle arthroplasty.

Did you also consider applying for a job? Why or why not?

I did not apply for jobs. Most fellowships respond by November, and I believed that timeline would give me sufficient room to explore other options if I did not receive a fellowship. Applying, visiting and interviewing for fellowships is quite time-intensive, and I wanted to devote all of my energy and focus into the application process.

Which fellowships did you apply for and why?

I primarily looked at reconstructive fellowships. I only applied to fellowships where I knew former fellows had positive experiences or to programs with a good reputation among trusted peers. I applied to six great programs in total.

What was the fellowship interview process like?

Every program I visited had a different process. The majority of the programs did not have a formal interview but instead were one- to two-day visitations to meet the attendings, talk with the current fellow and get a sense of the day-to-day experience.

You have been accepted into Dr. Ryan Scott's fellowship in Phoenix. What made you decide on Dr. Scott's program?

I liked the surgical volume numbers, the diversity of cases and that the three main doctors all did different foot and ankle fellowships. I felt like I would be getting the best from their experiences. Also, with there being so few fellowship-trained female podiatric surgeons, I was excited about Dr. Melissa Galli's presence and availability as a mentor.

What are you doing now to prepare for your fellowship?

The last few months have been spent preparing for the surgical boards and ensuring that I passed all sections. I am currently brainstorming research ideas so I can start projects immediately upon beginning my fellowship.

What advice do you have for someone considering a fellowship? Why should they, or should they not, consider a fellowship?

I would say think critically about why you want to do a fellowship, and make sure you have a good "why." Every fellowship interview will ask you why you are seeking this additional year of training. If you are hoping to gain more knowledge, skills or research during that time, then pursue it.

Also talk to as many people as possible and ask questions. As a student or a resident, work hard to make connections at conferences and with your upper residents. I talked with several fellows, and most were very eager to impart their knowledge and share their experiences. Use your relationship with sales reps, too. If they have a colleague who regularly works with a particular fellowship director, talk to them to get an idea of how much the fellow does in the OR, how the director acts, etc.

On the flip side, a fellowship may not be a good choice for you if you cannot discern a specific skillset you wish to build upon or you have been offered your dream job and the employer is not willing to hold the position for a year. Also, if you have a family to support, delaying a full salary for an additional year may not be advisable.

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You turn to ACFAS' monthly **Scientific Literature Reviews (SLRs)** to stay one step ahead of medical research that could affect your own cases, but are you taking full advantage of SLRs in your day-to-day practice?

Kelsey Millonig, DPM, MPH, a resident member of ACFAS, frequently uses SLRs in her work at the Franciscan Foot and Ankle Institute in Tacoma, Washington. "As a resident, I understand how important it is to have read current literature, and SLRs provide an excellent review of foot and ankle studies from other medical journals," she says.

SLRs offer a unique outside view of new research and expose foot and ankle surgeons to articles or journals with which they may not be familiar. "Due to time constraints and work demands, it can be difficult for us as foot and ankle surgeons to find time to read studies published in other journals. SLRs broaden our

perspective and give us a snapshot of what other fields are researching that is relevant in foot and ankle surgery," Dr. Millonig explains.

She believes foot and ankle surgeons at any stage of their career can use SLRs in pursuit of the "why," meaning a resource that can help guide clinical decision-making and treatment plans. Having quick access to overviews of the evidence also gives foot and ankle surgeons a strong knowledge base when speaking with colleagues or patients.

Dr. Millonig asks all ACFAS members, from students and residents in training to those with decades of experience under their belt, to put SLRs to work in their daily practice. "SLRs are a valuable resource that we can all make use of in our treatment regimens," she concludes.



"SLRs broaden our perspective and give us a snapshot of what other fields are researching that is relevant in foot and ankle surgery."

—Kelsey Millonig, DPM, MPH

DID YOU KNOW...?

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Podcast Highlights for Students and Residents

- Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems
- Your First Complication: Guide to Navigating Through the Political Minefield at Our Hospital
- The ABCs of Applying for Fellowship
- The Price of Success: Managing Student Loans
- The Three-Year Tour: How & Why You Should Maximize the Residency Experience
- Team Approach to Diabetic Limb Salvage



Student Clubs Spring into Action

ACFAS Student Club Members had plenty of opportunities to perfect their surgical skills alongside seasoned ACFAS leaders this spring! Follow ACFAS on **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram** and **LinkedIn** to see photos from recent Student Club workshops and events.

Here are a few recent snapshots:



Temple University ACFAS Student Club Hand Tie Workshop



2019–2020 ACFAS President & Barry Alum Chris Reeves DPM, MS, FACFAS Hosts a Case-Based Lecture for the Barry Student Club



Des Moines University ACFAS Student Club External Fixation Workshop