President's Message

Dear Members,

Hope the summer is treating everyone well; it is a time of rest, relaxation and renewal for my family and me. It has been my pleasure to lead this great organization during the past 9 months. I am humbled everyday by the passion and energy of all our members and volunteers that I see propel forward the mission and vision of AWS. The vision for my presidential year was simple- to work on bolstering the reach of the AWS through critical partnerships with chairs of surgery, other societies and industry so that we can better fulfill our mission of inspiring and enabling women surgeons to realize their goals. In each committee report you will see some of the new and exciting results of these new partnerships. New programming this year includes a Signature Speaker Series to help ensure women surgeons are at the podium every time, a Diversity Visiting Professor Program in conjunction with the Society of Black Academic Surgeons (SBAS) A, a Joint Surgical Leaders Fellowship Program with the American Surgical Association.

Continued ...
The AWS Conference 2018 was a full day with a scientific session, professional development panels, and a broad range of networking opportunities that originated as a simple sign for a breakfast with women surgeons 37 years ago. The day started off with an outstanding Medical Student and Resident poster session. Each year the committee receives an increase in submissions and the selected posters were outstanding. President Sareh Parangi kicked off the day with a welcome and the introduction of the kickoff speaker, Dr Caprice Greenberg who spoke on “Gender Equity: We’re Talking the Talk But It Is Time To Walk the Walk”. We were then treated to an intriguing presentation by Dr. Smita Sihag, AWSF Grant recipient, on her supported research: Molecular Profiling of Gastroesophageal Cancer. The first scientific session of the day was a new format session entitled Landmark Papers in Surgery. Key papers from seven different subspecialties were highlighted by residents who had been mentored by experts in the field.

The morning continued with an outstanding panel entitled: Dare to Lead: Leaning in Without Falling Over. Featured panelists included: Dr. Matha Geiger - Daring to Lead in Your Practice: How to Show Up and Have More Influence; Dr. Luanne Thorndyke - Strengths of Women as Leaders; and Dr. Shaghayegh Alabadi - Pitfalls of Leadership for Women. These thoughtful leaders then shared a discussion on “One Thing I Wish I Had Known About Leadership Before I Started.”

The Keynote address for the Conference was delivered by Dr. Melina Kibbe and was entitled “Implications of Sex Bias in Research.”

The afternoon kicked off with a “Story Slam.” Four women submitted their personal stories and then received coaching on delivering their stories for an audience by MassMouth. It was truly moving and inspiring to hear these intimate stories of struggle and resiliency. Following those emotional shares, we were treated to an interesting panel on: Success and Failure: Two Sides of the Same Coin that featured the following presentations: “Teaching Confidence and Autonomy” by Dr. Shari Meyerson, “Bouncing Back from Failure” by Dr. Jo Shapiro, “Imposter Syndrome:
Sunday at the annual conference featured concurrent workshops in the morning with a Negotiation Bootcamp and a Mock Residency Selection session for medical students. The afternoon kicked off the AWS Coaching Project with coach training for 52 attendings. Massmouth also held a storytelling workshop to help members find their own voice and tell their stories.

**Concurrent Sunday workshops at the Annual Meeting**

**AWS Foundation 2018 Award Winners**

Olga Jonasson Award – Dr. Anne Mosenthal

Nina Starr Braunwald Award - Dr. Sharona Ross

Kim Ephgrave Visiting Professor – Dr. Geeta Lal

Past Presidents’ Honorary Member Award – Dr. Ronald Maier

Hilary Sanfey Outstanding Resident Award – Dr. Rebecca Hoffman

Patricia Numann Medical Student Award - Dr. Lisa Bevilacqua

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**Department of Surgery Supporters**

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Many, many thanks to the Departments of Surgery that generously supported the 2018 Annual Conference!
Presidential message continued

In March of this year, AWS committee chairs, executive committee members and liaisons got together in Chicago for a strategic planning session. With great energy and input from everyone a new vision statement was crafted for the AWS - Equity, diversity and inclusion for all surgeons- and we have moved forward with fine tuning our goals for the next 5 years. (see the vision statement later in the report). Immediately after our strategic planning session we sponsored diversity within our own society through placement of three new liaisons on our council from SBAS, Society of Asian Academic Surgeons and the newly formed Latino Surgical Society. With your help and enthusiasm, we will work within this strategic framework to strengthen this great organization for the next generation of women surgeons. We are in a watershed moment where each of us is important in the palpable culture change that is happening within American Surgery. Lets work together and cherish this momentum.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in San Francisco, come by and say hi!

Sareh Parangi, MD
AWS President

Student Chapters

Last year's AWS National Medical Student Committee had one of the most productive years in its history. We increased our AWS Medical Student Chapter numbers by 30% and currently work with student leaders at over 70 medical schools across the nation and world. We created new workshops for chapters to run locally, and facilitated Regional Conferences in the New England and Southeast regions, in addition to the National Conference, which houses our annual Starr Research Forum.

A new research coordinator position was also created. A research survey was performed which examines perceptions and experiences of gender in surgery among male versus female surgeons as they relate to: (1) experiences of gender discrimination, (2) concerns about mentor/mentee relationships, and (3) potential interactions with other types of diversity (e.g. language, religion, race/ethnicity, age). For this upcoming year, we are excited to continue growing our AWS Medical Student Chapter network and pursue new initiatives in alignment with the AWS Strategic Plan.

The committee will focus on the following:

1. developing a structured mentorship program for underrepresented minority medical students,
2. expanding AWS medical student chapters,
3. increasing collaborative relationships between chapters and their departments of surgery,
4. fostering regional cohesion and chapter retention through regional conferences,
5. research and specialty-specific resource development.

Soul Cycle 2018

Student, resident and full members of APSA had a morning of exercise at the AWS/ACS conference last year in a fast paced soul cycle class. Join us this year as we repeat the event:
Sunday, October 27th.
AWFS Flywheel Sports Charity Ride
8:30-9:30 am
Flywheel Sports
71 Spear St

Dr. Meredith Duke, Chair, Membership Committee
The Communications Committee has seen substantial growth in the last year, with an impressive number of followers, likes, interactions and downloads across all our social media platforms:
- Instagram: 20,000 followers
- Facebook: >9000 likes
- Twitter: >22,000 followers
- Blog: Average 1,600 users per month
- Podcast: Average 300+ downloads for each episode

The Communications Committee serves as a wide platform for the promotion of AWS activities. In addition, the committee adds value to the AWS through an outstanding array of quality content and provides a means for interaction and engagement with both members and non-members. Instagram continues to have recurring posts: Motivation Monday, Women Operating Wednesday, Female Surgeon Feature Friday, Surgical Instrument Saturday, and Shout Out Sunday. Instagram also features women operating and the day in the life series. Facebook now features LIVE interviews and the AWS influencers series. Twitter monthly tweet chats continued this year:

- Nov 2018 #LeadershipDevelopment
- Dec 2018 #SoMe
- Jan 2019 #GrantWriting
- Feb 2019 #GlobalSurgery with @WomeninThoracic
- Mar 2019 #Bullying
- April 2019 #InternTips
- May 2019 #GlobalSurgery #IntlCollaboration
- June 2019 #DearIntern
- July 2019 The effects of #TimesUp and #MeToo

Collaborations: The high visibility profile of the AWS on social media has encouraged other groups and associations to collaborate and strengthen their bond with the AWS. Communications Committee activities have facilitated these interactions and cross-collaborations, for example: Twitter tweetchats have been co-hosted with RAS-ACS, AAS, WITS, and SAGES. Instagram and the Blog have been hosted by women in various specialties, and the Podcast has started to include women in Urology.

The Fourth Sunday of the month, the Blog features the #DearPat Series which turns 1 this year! Questions are submitted by residents or students and answered by a member of the executive council. Check out the blog at http://blog.womensurgeons.org and sign up for an email subscription!

The AWS Podcast series continues this year. Featured podcasts have included: Meredith Fineman on “Graceful Self-Promotion,” an interview with Dr. Sharona Ross, Nina Starr Braunwald award winner, an interview with Dr. Anne Mosenthal, Olga Jonasson award winner, an interview with Dr. Melissa Kaufman, past President of the Society of Women in Urology, an interview with Dr. Jayme Locke, publications chair for the Society of University Surgeons, and Reflections on a Career in Academic Surgery by Dr. Carol Scott-Conner. These podcasts are available on Itunes, Spotify, GooglePlay and the Libsyn website.
**AJS Editor Report**

The AJS editors are pleased to report that they received 85 submissions for the AWS issue of the American Journal of Surgery special issue. They received manuscripts addressing basic science, clinical research, disparities, education and gender issues. Submissions spanned over 10 subspecialties and more than one country. We were able to accept 25 excellent manuscripts.

**Clinical Practice Committee**

The Clinical Practice Committee focuses on assessing the needs of and developing resources for women surgeons in diverse types of surgical practice. We recently partnered with a medical student AWS member who has developed resources for hospitals and Muslim women surgeons to help minimize barriers to OR sterile dress that still respects the clothing restrictions of the religion.

Currently the CPC has workgroups focused on assessing the specific needs of surgeons in rural environments as well as military surgeons. The goal is to identify resources that could be of benefit for each of these surgical communities and help develop those resources to be available for the AWS membership.

We are also working on a Digital Resources Library to create a list of study resources for all levels of trainees that have been vetted for quality of content. This is a collaborative effort with the Medical Student and Resident committees, and the goal is that this becomes an evergreen resource with regular updates as the web options for studying change over time.

**Publications Committee**

The Publications committee has multiple exciting projects underway and is constantly looking to assist and support other projects. Currently, members of the committee are working on revising the AWS Pocket Mentor, writing a review paper on Surgical Ergonomics and Issues for Women Surgeons, writing a review on Negotiation Best Practices, an instructional piece on How to Review a Paper and a new project highlighting Women Surgeon Innovators. We have sponsored collaboration on the AWS Sexual Harassment project and we have responded to calls from outside organizations for articles of relevance about Women in Surgery.

**National Recognition Committee**

The AWS National Recognition committee is comprised of the Past President (chair), Immediate Past President (vice-chair), AWS ACS Governor, AWS WISC liaison, resident committee representative, medical student committee representative, SBAS representative, HeForShe task force representative, AWS Foundation representative, and past AWS ACS governor.

Our mission is to identify women surgeons for nomination to officer positions (primarily in the ACS), awards, traveling fellowships, honorary fellowships to other organizations such as American Surgical Association. As such we have created an ever-growing bank of candidates with CVs for consideration for various awards and positions. The committee reviews the candidates and makes recommendations to the AWS Council for approval before submission. We have had a successful track record of having our nominees selected to ACS Mary Edwards Walker Inspiring Women award, ACS Icons in Surgery and ACS officer positions. We will continue to increase our pool of women surgeons and broaden our scope to include nominations or letters of recommendation for speakers, chairs of surgery or division chief positions. In addition we are seeking identification of other awards in the specialty societies or national organizations for which we can nominate these women.

Left to Right:
Dr. Kandace McGuire, Chair, AJS Editor
Dr. Sasha Adams, Chair, Clinical Practice Committee
Dr. Marion Henry, Chair, Publications Committee
Dr. Christine Laronga, Past President and Chair, National Recognition Committee
Resident and Fellow Committee

Members of the Resident and Fellow Committee have worked this year to continue efforts and sustain many of the recently established and successful projects. These include Dear Pat, the Coaching project, the STARR Poster Contest and a variety of social media efforts. As many of these projects have become integrated in other AWS committees such as the Communications Committee, our members have continued their involvement. Additionally, our committee members have been increasingly engaged with the AWS leadership and other committees. Members have contributed to the recent revision of the Pocket Mentor, served as reviewers for the AWS AJS edition and participated in annual conference planning. We are working to strengthen our relationship with the Medical Student Committee through joint projects, hoping to establish improved retention of students as they transition to residency.

Grants and Fellowship Committee

The Committee has successfully secured increased funding from Ethicon for the AWS Ethicon Research Grant. A total of 25 grant applications were received. In order to aid those in the application process, the committee published a blog on successful grant writing in January 2019 and also hosted a Tweet chat on the topic in conjunction with the Communications Committee, moderated by Drs. Carrie Sims, Genevieve Boland and Geeta Lal. Funding for a new AWS Signature Speaker Series was obtained from KCI. In conjunction with liaisons from SBAS and SAAS, a Joint Diversity Lecture Series is being developed. Two visiting professorships will be developed: an AWS-SAAS Visiting Professor and an AWS-SBAS Visiting Professor.

AWS New Strategic Plan

| GOAL 1: EQUITY - AWS will work to eliminate equity barriers for all surgeons. |
| Strategy 1: AWS fosters awareness and promotes improvement of parity issues in surgery. |
| Strategy 2: AWS uses collaborative relationships to forward the mission of AWS. |
| Strategy 3: AWS identifies and pursues leadership and diversity opportunities for women surgeons |

| GOAL 2: PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT - AWS promotes healthy, thriving surgeons at all stages and in all practice models. |
| Strategy 1: AWS creates and enhances resources and programs for surgeons at all career stages and in all practice models. |
| Strategy 2: AWS provides a community that engages and connects surgeons at all career stages and in all practice models, here and abroad. |
| Strategy 3: AWS cultivates personal development and wellness. |

| GOAL 3: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS - AWS provides an innovative business model that ensures an inclusive, vibrant, and collaborative organization. |
| Strategy 1: AWS enhances its role as a valued partner with other organizations in the surgical community. |
| Strategy 2: AWS creates an innovative and growth driven business model. |
| Strategy 3: AWS establishes methods for better communication, collaboration, and accountability within, between, and outside its committees. |
| Strategy 4: AWS works to increase the value of membership |

Dr. Patricia Martinez Quinones, Chair, Resident and Fellow Committee

Dr. Geeta Lal, Chair, Grants and Fellowship Committee
AWS contracted with Sentergroup, Inc. as a full-service management company in November of 2017. In June of this year, Sentergroup was acquired by MCI, a global leader in engaging and activating audiences, an independently owned company headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. For service delivery to AWS, the acquisition delivers immediate access to MCI USA’s market insights and scale, reinforced by MCI’s 2,500+ professionals in 60 offices and 31 countries.

The following highlights showcase just a few of the many accomplishments this past year and the strength of the AWS and MCI partnership:

**Governance Highlights**

- Developed an online dashboard portal with unique leadership access to provide updates on critical reporting metrics on membership, marketing, meeting performance, strategic key performance indicators, and governance documents.
- Executed a Strategic Planning Session in March 2019 with a comprehensive three-year plan for implementation.

**Annual Conference Highlights**

- In the first year of management, AWS celebrated a record-breaking 2018 Annual Conference, exceeding sponsorship revenue by 92% and more than doubling conference attendance from the year prior. With enhanced, cohesive branding and a multi-pronged strategy for sponsor outreach, the first AWS Annual Conference executed by MCI USA turned out to be the most successful to date for AWS.
- In addition to reaching out to the customary exhibitor and sponsor prospects, MCI executed a new campaign to chairs of surgery. Over 30 surgery chairs took advantage of the opportunity, resulting in over $100,000 in sponsorship revenue.
- **Results**
  - 80% increase in attendance (375 attendees in 2018 vs. 179 in 2017)
  - Budgeted net income exceeded by 30%

**Membership Highlights**

- MCI’s strategic application of a new AMS (association management system) allowed AWS to immediately replace inefficiencies with automated solutions that freed up valuable staff and volunteer time. Automatic and invoice-less renewals have allowed the organization to shift resources to member recruitment.
- MCI report templates and integrated online sign-up forms provide the Board with a more accurate picture of their engagement health.
- After its first year with MCI, AWS is enjoying an automated and sustainable pathway for students to advance to full dues-paying members. This has allowed the organization to make informed decisions while taking new risks to further its mission.
- **Results**
  - 45% increase in dues-paying members after year one
  - 62% increase in dues revenue generated after year one
  - For the first time ever, retention rates were tracked
  - 18% participation in automatic renewal
Marketing Highlights

Strategic Marketing Strategy for Growth & Engagement

- Professionally branded and strategically disseminated e-alerts and newsletters have helped drive traffic to the AWS website, up 24% in user traffic in 2019 so far. With an average email open of 38% and click through rate of 15%, AWS communications perform slightly better and right on trend with association industry benchmarks, respectively (Average of 35.6% open rate and 15.6% click rate according to Higher Logic’s 2017 Association Benchmarking Report).
- Led predominantly by AWS volunteers and supported by staff, AWS social media continues to grow exponentially. As of August 2019, AWS fans/followers have increased 21% on Facebook, 16% on Twitter, and 61% on Instagram since the start of the year, with a total audience of over 58,000.
AWS in the News

The Association for Women Surgeons made national news this summer in the AAMC article: Where are all the Women in Surgery? [https://news.aamc.org/diversity/article/where-are-all-the-women-in-surgery/](https://news.aamc.org/diversity/article/where-are-all-the-women-in-surgery/)

AWS Council member, Dr. Stephanie Bonne recalls the overt sexism she faced as a medical student and describes ways she has tried to improve the situation for women students and residents today. AWS President Dr. Sareh Parangi explains that “life happens during residency,” and women need to see that it is possible to enjoy a rewarding surgical career and a life outside of the hospital. AWS President-Elect, Dr. Sharon Stein explains “There are 1,000 steps to get us to parity. ... Among those steps are asking women to take on opportunities instead of assuming they will be too busy and creating structured interviews that clearly define job characteristics before automatically looking for men to fill the role.” The article goes on to highlight many of the AWS Programs including the new Signature Speaker series for mid-career women and the AWS Coaching Program for women residents and faculty.

AWS Past Presidents Dr. Susan Pories and Dr. Myriam Curet were among surgical women leaders featured in an article by Education and Career News: The Value of Mentorship in Developing Women Surgeons. [https://www.educationandcareernews.com/women-in-surgery/the-value-of-mentorship-in-developing-women-surgeons/](https://www.educationandcareernews.com/women-in-surgery/the-value-of-mentorship-in-developing-women-surgeons/)

In this article, Dr. Sandra Wong, Chief of Surgery at Dartmouth and Treasurer of the Society for Surgical Oncology stated, “Women in surgical careers are gaining momentum, but we are not at critical mass yet. While my career has been shaped in many ways, I definitely have benefited from women who were on the leading edge and made it possible for women to be leaders in academic surgery.”

(Left) AWS Members represented the Association on multiple panels and keynote speeches at the International Surgical Society World Congress of Surgery in Poland, August 2019. (Right) Dr. Sherry Wren is honored as the inaugural #SheforShe award winner by Women In Surgery Africa at COSECSA in December 2018. (Below) Check out the AWS’s Gender Equity Toolkit page for resources regarding harassment, pay equity, and more. [https://www.womensurgeons.org/page/genderequity](https://www.womensurgeons.org/page/genderequity)