

Resident's Monthly Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 9

January, 2011

FELLOWSHIP INTERVIEW EXPERIENCES

In continuation of last month's article on fellowship applications, here are my experiences and tips for fellowship interviewing and compiling your rank list. As a preface, I am a 3rd year ophthalmology resident who applied for a cornea and refractive fellowship for next year. As stated last month, there is a lull from submitting your application and the start of your interviews. This is a great time to attend conferences and lectures to learn more about the subspecialty that you are about to interview for. Stay positive and patient as programs review applications and interview at different times. Having applied to many programs (50 plus), I was rewarded with about 10 interviews. The 10 programs were varied in setting and emphasis, with the majority being private practice non-university programs. The interview trail proved to be a trying, long, and expensive process that was very rewarding.

Although interview season normally starts in November and December, my first interviews were in October. I purposely scheduled interviews as early as I could to allow more flexibility for future dates. Also to reduce costs and time away from clinic, I grouped as many interviews as I could. My first marathon was a triangle of New York-Albany-Boston.

As a conscientious resident, I did all the prerequisite preparation. From getting a hair cut to buying a new suit, I wanted to look as professional as I could. Contacting previous mentors and residents who had an affiliation or experience with the programs I was interviewing with allowed me to gather their impressions. I searched PubMed and the internet looking for the program director and their research interests. I reviewed my application and my research, making sure to know the specific details of everything on my CV and application. I carried copies of all my updated materials and preplanned all my travel routes and times. Having never visited some of the cities, GPS and smart phones were invaluable.

Each interview usually consisted of spending sometime in clinic, a tour of the facilities, time with the current fellow, and a more formal interview with attendings. Ubiquitous questions from attendings included: why did I want to go into the subspecialty, how comfortable I was with surgery, my case volume, what do I envision after fellowship, and to elaborate about my research. Talking to the fellow gave me the most insight about working with the attending, the culture of the office, and their experience of the program. Interviewing with such accomplished and credentialed program directors was both rewarding and intimidating. Meeting respective giants in the field, I learned a lot about what makes them so successful and about their unique insights to the field. It is important to keep in mind that they asked to meet you and determine whether or not they can work with you. Stay comfortable, relaxed, and honest. It is natural to second guess ourselves afterwards, but surprisingly things probably went better than you think.

Afterward, mandatory thank you letters help to open a line for future communication between you and the program. From the interview to the match, there is usually a black hole of silence and worry. Although disconcerting and unhelpful in making your rank list, this is normal. There is little resource for looking up programs, so it is best to take notes about your impressions of the program, the director, and the city. In the end, I created my ranking based mainly on my interaction with the director and the past fellows, but your priorities might differ.

Despite all your guessing and second guessing, the match result will probably surprise you. I was fortunate to be accepted into a great program and look forward to a challenging year. Hopefully my experiences can help you reach for your dreams, help you become more marketable in increasing competitive times, and help pave the way for more osteopathic residents to get into fellowship. Good luck, and don't forget to register for the next ACA in May 4-8, 2011 at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Arizona as well as the resident travel grant.

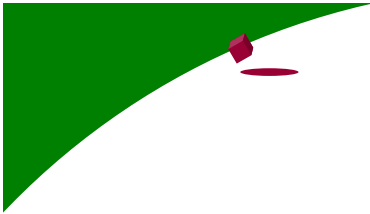
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Deadline for submission of Scientific Poster Applications is March 1, 2011.

The complete poster instructions and application form are available on the AOCOO-HNS website. Go to www.aocoohns.org, click on "Meetings", then click on "ACA".

There is a limited amount of space for posters this year, so adhere to the March 1st deadline. The AOCOO-HNS cannot guarantee a poster board for applications received after March 1st.





2011 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC POSTER PRESENTATION DURING THE 95TH ANNUAL CLINICAL ASSEMBLY, MAY 4-8, 2011

LOEWS VENTANA CANYON RESORT, TUCSON, ARIZONA

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCIENTIFIC POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

Scientific poster presentations provide you with the opportunity to exchange in-depth information on a one-to-one basis and are an excellent medium for unusual or multiple clinical case presentations. Simply prepared with photographs and laboratory information, scientific poster presentations encourage the exchange of findings and treatment results. Any aspect of ophthalmology or otolaryngology/facial plastic surgery may be presented in a scientific poster session. Only fixed posters may be presented. Audiovisuals such as slides and videotapes may not be part of your presentation.

*A resident poster stipend of up to \$300.00 is available from the AOCOO-HNS Foundation, Inc. to the **FIRST THREE RESIDENTS IN BOTH SPECIALTIES** who submit their scientific poster application, along with itemized expenditures for preparation of the poster. The resident poster stipend will be paid following the presentation of the poster at the Annual Clinical Assembly.*

In addition, members of the Awards Committee will judge all scientific posters presented, and a cash prize will be awarded for the best scientific poster presentations in each specialty. This cash award applies to resident members only.

Your presentation should contain succinct headings that organize and logically display the information. Graphics should be explicit and brief. Elaboration is best done verbally, as if it were an oral presentation using slides.

The poster display should focus on Hypothesis or Objective, Methods, and Results or Outcomes.

The AOCOO-HNS Foundation will provide a 4' x 8' freestanding poster board to display each scientific poster presentation. The covered poster board will accept longer pushpins, but not thumbtacks.

All illustrations should be made up prior to the meeting. Keep illustrative material simple. Illustrations must be easily read from distances of about 3' or more. Charts, drawings and illustrations should be similar to those you would use in making slides. Prepare and bring with you to the meeting everything needed for your presentation – figures, tables, diagrams, equations, etc. Bring pushpins (no thumbtacks) for mounting your materials. **Do not mount your presentation materials on heavy board, as it may be difficult to keep in position on the poster boards.**

GUIDELINES:

This concept of presenting scientific posters affords an opportunity to have your work viewed by an audience in a simple and cost-effective manner. The following suggestions are offered to assist you in setting up a successful scientific poster presentation.

1. A short and legible introduction and summary of conclusions are essential.
2. Keep the text and figure legends explicit and brief.
3. The simple use of color can add emphasis effectively.
4. Written material should be printed in a large typeface. Use heavy block letters where possible.

Roll poster materials and insert them in large mailing tubes for use in transporting them to the meeting. You should bring them yourself. You are required to mount your own display. Display boards will be provided by the Annual Clinical Assembly Committee.

IMPORTANT: *In accordance with the AOCOO-HNS Basic Documents for Residency Training, in lieu of one (1) resident annual paper requirement, the resident may develop a scientific poster presentation at the Annual Clinical Assembly, reviewed and approved by the program director. An abstract of the poster presentation must be reviewed by the Council of Medical Education.*

Deadline for submission is March 1, 2011. Poster presentations submitted after March 1 will not be included in the Official Program.

The complete poster instructions and application form are available on the AOCOO-HNS website. Go to www.aocooHNS.org, click on "Meetings", then click on "ACA".

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Did You Know . . .

The Resident Newsletter is your vehicle to stay in touch with other ophthalmology and otolaryngology residents, from New York all the way to Nevada, from Pennsylvania to Missouri.

If you have information of interest, simply email it to info@aocooHNS.org.