

Southern Society for Clinical Investigation

Official Journal - *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*



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Dear SSCI Members,

As your 2017 President, I wanted to provide an overview of the success of our recent annual meeting, ongoing activities within the organization, and our activities this coming year.

Despite changing our traditional Thursday-Saturday format to Saturday-Monday (due to the last minute change of venue for the NBA All-Star Game), the meeting was one of the most successful in recent history. We had a total of 766 registrations which was an increase of 6% over SRM 2016 and a 19% increase over SRM 2015. Of the 766 registrants, 489 were trainees and 200 were members of the partnering societies. The theme of the meeting was “Harnessing the Immune Response”. We heard outstanding plenary session lectures on both Sunday and Monday. At the SSCI Presidential Symposium, Dr. Nadine Rouphael of Emory University spoke on “Systems Vaccinology” followed by Dr. Padmanee Sharma from MD Anderson Cancer Center on “From the Clinic to the Lab: Investigating Immune Responses to Immune Checkpoint Therapy”. The Joint Plenary on Monday also featured Dr. Stephanie Cormier from the University of Tennessee who spoke on “Respiratory Immunology in Response to the Viruses and Environmental Toxins” and Dr. Gregg Silverman from New York University whose title was “Lupus and the Microbiome”. In addition, Dr. Patrice Delafontaine from the University of Missouri delivered an outstanding talk entitled “IGF-1 and Cardiovascular Disease” at the Karl T. Weber Distinguished Lecture in Cardiovascular Medicine. The Joint Plenary Poster Session was a resounding success including presentation of 387 posters. The subspecialty oral presentations sessions were well attended and provided opportunities for exposure for our trainees and young investigators.

We wish to again congratulate Dr. Perry Rigby from LSU who received the Mentor of the Year Award for postgraduate mentorship and Dr. Richard McCallum from Texas Tech-El Paso received the Mentor of the Year Award for his role with junior faculty.

The primary goal of the SSCI is mentoring students, trainees and junior faculty in the hopes of attracting them to academic medicine. In addition, such mentorship helps to ensure the success of junior faculty engaged in ongoing clinical investigation and those perhaps testing the waters of an academic career. At SRM 2017, we were able to offer 137 travel awards totaling \$98,450 with \$65,400 of this amount funded by the SSCI. During the SSCI Chairs/Residents Forum, we heard an inspiring lecture by Dr. Tonette Krousel-Wood entitled “Medicine, Miracles, and the Role of the Physician Scientist”.

One of the cornerstones of our society is the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*. It is important to recognize that this is the second oldest medical journal established in 1820. Under the ten year leadership of Dr. David Ploth, the journal has increased in stature with an improving impact factor.

Over the last year, we changed to a new publisher, Elsevier, which will provide us more flexibility and financial security over the long term. I hope you are enjoying its new look. This past year an intense search for a new Editor took place as Dr. Ploth's term was coming to an end. I would like to thank the Editor-in-Chief Search Committee and the Publications Committee for their hard work with this effort. Four outstanding candidates were interviewed, all of whom would have done an outstanding job. Dr. Jesse Roman from University of Louisville was selected as the candidate to be put forward on the ballot as next Editor. He has hit the ground running and will bring new content and vitality to the journal with a long-term goal of further improving its visibility as well as its impact factor. The Editor and Assistant Managing Editor will reside at the University of Louisville. Ms. Sarah McCann, Managing Editor, will continue in her role in Charleston. This continuity will help immensely in the transition from Dr. Ploth to Dr. Roman. I hope you will continue to see the journal as a resource for your life-long learning as well as a place for submission of your outstanding research.

The Founders' Medal Award, which was created in honor of Dr. Tinsley Harrison, honors a member who has made outstanding contributions to the SSCI. This year Dr. David Guidot of Emory University was given this prestigious honor. Dr. Guidot has been unwavering in his commitment to the organization in general and to fostering young faculty specifically for many years. He is an outstanding role model for all of us in academic medicine, and this award is richly deserved. He has served on our Council and Executive Advisory Committee for a number of years and will be the incoming President next year. A request for nominations for the Founders' Medal Award will be distributed in the near future. ***The deadline for nominations is May 15.***

Each June at our Mid-Year Retreat, the Council meets for one day to take care of society business, the committee chairs report on their activities, and we plan the upcoming meeting with our partner societies. Over the last several years, our committees have been much more active providing a renewed invigoration of our responsibilities to our membership and improvement in our offerings. One of my goals this year is to expand our membership. Our Membership Committee, co-chaired by Drs. Sushma Cribbs and Stan Nahman, will be actively involved in this process.

During the past year, our bylaws were reviewed and updated. We appreciate the efforts of the Bylaws Committee led by Dr. Robert Means. These are available at <http://www.ssciweb.org/constitution.php>. One of the main changes for this iteration is the removal of the Nominating Committee and the formation of a new Governance Committee. We believe this will streamline the process and provide greater oversight for the society. The bylaws revisions will also allow our members to vote electronically rather than voting at the annual meeting.

The SSCI's Visiting Professor Program has now been active for several years and is a great success. ***The deadline for applications is May 1.*** Please visit the website to learn how to invite one of our professors to your institution - <http://www.ssciweb.org/visiting-professor-program.php>.

Please consider a contribution to the Fund for Academic Medicine (FAMe). Through this fund, we are able to provide the travel awards and hope to be able to soon offer small grants to junior faculty. We believe this will be a major step forward for the society and our members. Information regarding making a donation can be found at <http://www.ssciweb.org/index.php>.

We owe much to our Past President, Dr. Monica M. Farley, our SSCI Counselors and the Executive Advisory Committees as well as the many efforts of our Executive Director, Ms. Joan Kemp. This past year we have retained the services of Ms. Pamala Schmidt from the Tulane Center for Continuing

Education to further assist our society with its administrative functions. The Tulane CCE group has worked with us for many years, and it is a natural extension of their current work with the regional meeting to further assist the SSCI.

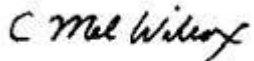
SRM 2018 will be held in New Orleans on February 22-24, 2018 in our traditional Thursday-Saturday time frame. In collaboration with the S-AFMR and SSPR, we have decided on a theme of our meeting of "The Microbiome". This is an important topic which is evolving rapidly and one we believe will be an outstanding topic for our annual meeting. ***Please note the abstract deadline for SRM 2018 will be October 6, 2017.***

A lot of good things are happening with your organization. The officers and councilors have been very active in your regard. The exciting changes planned by the new editor of *The American Journal for the Medical Sciences* will only enhance the visibility of our organization.

The membership nomination deadline is September 15. Information regarding the nomination process can be found at <http://www.ssciweb.org/membership.php>. We hope that you will consider nominating members to our organization.

Please plan to attend SRM 2018 as a mentor to our young investigators and aspiring academicians, to see old friends, and enjoy all that New Orleans has to offer. If you have any suggestions for the meeting or other issues related to the SSCI, I will be delighted to speak to you personally.

Sincerely,



C. Mel Wilcox, MD, President
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