American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry®

Academy News

The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry® is dedicated to advancing the art and science of cosmetic dentistry and encouraging the highest standards of ethical conduct and responsible patient care among cosmetic dentists.

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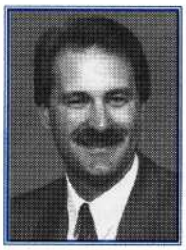

President's Message

by Dean Lodding, DDS

"The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry® is dedicated to advancing the Art and Science of Cosmetic Dentistry and encouraging the highest standards of ethical conduct and responsible patient care among cosmetic dentists". This line is quoted from the first line of the AACD Mission statement. The two main ways in which the AACD fulfills its mission are by offering superior educational opportunities, and by promoting and supporting a respected Accreditation credential.

To fulfill our function of offering superior educational opportunities, the Conferences Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as CAC) was formed in the early part of 2000. The Board of Governors was established in 1999 to provide an apolitical arm of the AACD that would oversee and coordinate all aspects of the credentialing process. They are working with great effort and diligence to help make the entire Accreditation process fair and achievable.

The CAC is a new committee of the AACD that will in essence place the planning and implementation of all educational conferences in the hands of a collective group of members who will plan and oversee the programs offered.

The CAC is an exciting and progressive way of structuring a committee for the purpose of planning a meeting. It is truly a "brain trust" of a diverse cross section of AACD members who provide their inputs to represent the many segments of the AACD. The CAC will plan programs designed to truly give the members what they want in an educational experience.

The AACD has planned it's first ever fall meeting this September at The Greenbrier, a resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. The theme of the fall meeting is "Celebration of Excellence: An Advanced Clinical Resort Weekend". It is designed to be small intimate meeting that provides a combination of higher-end clinical presentations in a Five-Star resort setting.

The Academy's main meeting of the year is still obviously the Annual Scientific Session meeting held every spring. This is, and will continue to be, the main educational event of the year for the AACD. We want to make it an educational and social "event to remember" for each of our members.

It will be the function of the CAC to insure that the annual meeting is the "best of the best" of any educational opportunities you may experience. It will be designed to have a consistent flow for each day of the meeting. Each day will start out with a general session where the entire group will be together for a session of interest to all attendees including dentists, laboratory technicians, dental team members, and guests. These sessions will be informative and packed with energy.

Following the daily general session, the meeting will then break into different "tracks". There will be clinical, practice management, laboratory, and personal development tracks. A main emphasis of each track will be to provide as much hands-on personalized learning experiences as possible. The lecture format is, and will continue to be, a vital part of the meeting, but more and more members are asking for the interactive type of learning experience. The CAC has been responsive to this request and will give the members what they want. We plan to bring back the "Breakfast and Lunch with the Clinicians" format. In addition, there will be poster presentations and table clinics on cutting edge cosmetic procedures and other aspects of comprehensive care.

We want to provide ample opportunity for interaction between attendees and presenters.

Dennis Wells, this years' Chairperson for the CAC, has challenged each and every speaker to make his or her presentation personalized and "new". We don't want to expose our members to the "same old, same old" you may have heard before in many different venues. We want the Annual Scientific Session to be the cutting edge meeting of the year where you will have an opportunity to learn and elevate yourself personally and professionally. Due to the continuity in planning for the meetings that the CAC provides, each year's meeting will continue to build upon the previous meeting. Each year the CAC will evaluate what worked the best for the previous year's meeting and continue to provide more and more of what the members want.

In addition, a very important part of the experience for each year's annual meeting is the social events. The AACD is the largest cosmetic dental organization in the world with approximately 5000 members in over 40 countries. When you get that many exciting, vibrant people together it is important to provide them with some fun experiences that they'll never experience at any other dental meeting. The CAC has put together a package of social events for the meeting in Boston that you won't believe. We're planning on providing non-stop fun at a "Boston Teeth Party" and in addition we're going to have some well-known entertainment that will surprise you. Stay tuned for details.

The AACD knows it must remain the leader in cosmetic dentistry to continue to be an important part of our members' lives. We want our members to look forward with enthusiasm to coming to the Annual Scientific Session each year.

The sky is the limit as we look to contribute to the human experience of each of our members!

Dean Lodding

A View from Inside the Exam Room

Michael R Sesemann, DDS

I applied for an Accreditation review in 1996. As the process unfolded, I tried to pick the brains of as many Accredited Members as possible. I literally sought them out and questioned the heck out of them. What I discovered was that a shroud of mystery surrounded Accreditation, especially the judging component. No one seemed to know exactly what went on behind closed doors that allowed them to pass.

So it was with particular excitement and curiosity that I set forth to the San Francisco meeting. This conference would be different, not only because it was my first as an Accredited Member, but because I was going to get a view from inside the examination room as an examiner candidate. This article is my first-hand account of what I observed.

For the Accreditation Committee, Credentialling staff, and examiners, the meeting begins the weekend prior to the annual meeting. There are countless hours of preparation by **Lisa Phelps** and the AACD staff. Before the exams can take place, ground work must be laid through a series of meetings. My first was the requisite Examiner Training meeting to insure consistency amongst the various exam rooms. CONSISTENCY was indeed the objective. VALIDITY TESTING was the method. Various cases were shown and individually scored. Frank discussions followed in order to clarify and standardize the scoring process.

With the memory of presenting to the board of examiners fresh in mind, I found validity testing to be very reassuring. It required examiners to operate on the same value system. Inspiring words from **Jimmy Eubanks**, **Larry Addleson,** and **Chip Steel** underscored the responsibility examiners hold to the Academy, its members, and our profession in general. As a result of this preparation, I believe the San Francisco examiners were defined, knowledgeable, and focused. This shows that changes by the Board of Governors and Accreditation Committee members are taking place, making the process more consistent, less subjective, and with a defined system of scoring.

This new scoring system is covered in detail for all upcoming candidates at the Accreditation Criteria meeting. Each candidate virtually begins with a perfect score, with points then being deducted for criteria violations — violations assessed by a shared set of standards. The result is that with good attendance at workshops and the Accreditation Weekend, a candidate can now get a clearer picture of how his/her case stacks up and what must be done to receive a pass. My reaction to this new process can only be described as envy.

Another perk of this examination evolution is that a candidate now has better odds of passing. Past cases required passage from four out of five examiners (80%). Now the majority rules. If a simple majority of the examiners in the room grade a case as a pass, then a pass is given. There is no influencing of opinions. Examiners vote independently without discussion and without knowledge of their peers' judgment. In addition to being more objective, this makes the Accreditation process more candidate-friendly.

Viewing the process in action made me realize just how much the examiners want to see successful cases. When presentations were shy of the required criteria for passage, they agonized over their judgment of the failure, particularly if the candidate was on the right track but not quite at the required destination. Having had a failure myself, I was pleased to see this show of compassion.

On a related issue, I never witnessed prejudicial or special consideration given to any candidate because of who they were, who they knew, or where they were educated. In fact, it was quite the opposite. The examiners couldn't have cared less where a candidate was trained. Focus was instead on the dentistry. It passed or failed on its own merits, period.

The most profound improvement in Accreditation process is the proper dissemination of information. The Board of Governors, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, has taken steps to supply upcoming candidates with invaluable, timely, and straight-forward information. Numerous workshops (Photography, Accreditation, and Criteria), meetings, memos, a new workbook and continuing education weekends will help future candidates move down the path of Accreditation with greater ease.

The new workbook will be issued later this year to give every candidate a reference guide. I have seen the prototype and it is amazing. Carefully crafted by **Nathan Blitz**, **Chip Steele,** and **Corky Willhite,** this workbook will be absolutely invaluable to the Accreditation candidate who is unfamiliar with the meticulous nature of properly performed cosmetic dentistry. It will succinctly define the Accreditation criteria and, via illustrations, show the zone of excellence necessary for passage.

In closing, I wish each and every candidate well. My experience in San Francisco provided first-hand knowledge that the shroud of mystery surrounding Accreditation has been lifted. For those of you who can persevere the intensity of the Accreditation process and can develop your skills through tough self-examination, I say without reservation: Successful completion of Accreditation at the AACD is the best feeling you can receive in dentistry.

Just ask any Accredited Member. Then do it!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

At the AACD we understand the growing needs of our membership and know that you would like to see value-added services offered. We also know that the need to provide quality employee benefit programs at affordable prices is of particular importance to our membership.

Over the past several months we have been researching the possibility of offering a sponsored group health insurance program. We are at a stage in the development of this program where we NEED to collect more specific information about your company's employee population.

You will be receiving an e-mail in the near future asking you to complete a census information sheet. This information sheet is currently posted on our web site (www.aacd.com). If you do not have Internet access, please call us at 1-800-543-9220 and we will send you a hard copy.

It is CRUCIAL for you to participate in this survey since there would be a financial advantage to having a nationwide PPO Network working directly with the AACD. Once this information is compiled, we will have a basis to pursue health insurance options on behalf of our membership.

We can only become a better organization with YOUR HELP. Thank you in advance for your time.