

Young Professionals: Their Importance to SNM Now and in the Future

Education plays a strong, central role in SNM's success; it is one of SNM's 5 primary strategic goals. Within that goal, a particular area of focus is educating and attracting younger members. Although the more seasoned SNM members possess the advantage of years of experience, young professionals typically bring a surge of enthusiasm for the profession as well as a natural knack for mastering computer technology. Their presence and involvement will help carry SNM successfully into the future.

At present, SNM is facilitating programs that will allow young professionals to become involved with SNM at multiple levels. With an intern in place on each SNM council and most committees, the younger generation has a voice in the planning and operation of SNM activities—but SNM would like to see even more active participation from its younger constituency.

The Young Professionals Committee (YPC)—which was formed to facilitate interaction between SNM and young nuclear medicine residents, fellows, physicians, and scientists—held a summit in September to discuss its goals and initiatives. This collaborative session resulted in identifying many new ways to reach out to people entering the field and encourage them not only to join but to begin a life-long, mutually beneficial relationship with SNM. SNM will begin this initiative by offering free membership to residents and graduate students throughout the course of their training. In addition, mentoring residents and young scientists will be a top priority for engaging these members of our community early on in their careers, while giving them the tools they need to excel and advance in the field.

The YPC plans to incorporate facets of Web 2.0 into its educational outreach efforts. Through webinars, podcasts, social networking, and videoconferencing, the YPC is hoping to engage the younger generation and allow them to take advantage of educational offerings in a way that suits their preferred methods of accessing information.

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote education, SNM also has best practices for young professionals' education in mind. At the upcoming Radiological Society of North America's annual meeting, a joint task force from SNM and the American College of Radiology will meet to create guidelines on how nuclear medicine physicians should be trained in the future. Although many pathways to nuclear medicine currently exist, this group promises to

identify novel and emerging approaches that can raise the standards of education to new levels.

Once again, the SNM Annual Meeting will offer a unique educational opportunity for young professionals. The Nuclear Medicine Board Review Course, which is held during the weekend of the Annual Meeting and organized by the YPC, is a historically well-attended event that brings in either residents who are about to graduate or practicing physicians who are required to be recertified every 10 y. Because passing the board examination is critical to securing a job, this is an area of great interest to nuclear medicine physicians embarking on their career paths, and SNM is obligated to ensure it is a first-rate educational opportunity that will leave students well prepared to pass the board exam in the fall.

The YPC currently organizes several continuing education (CE) events at the Annual Meeting that are aligned with young residents' and medical students' interests, including the Knowledge Bowl, the Robert Lull Forum (held in conjunction with the American College of Nuclear Medicine's Residents' Group), and several other CE courses. The YPC is also planning to hold a luncheon this year, which will provide a great way to draw in new members.

Especially as the older generations of SNM members and leadership are aging and retiring, it is necessary to have young professionals actively involved and ready to take SNM in the right direction. If these promising young physicians and scientists can become engaged in the society early on, there is no doubt that they will quickly become valuable members and position themselves as better professionals with bright futures. Therefore, SNM will make attracting enthusiastic young professionals and encouraging their participation in the society a high priority. The growth and livelihood of SNM—not to mention the advancement of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging—depend on it.



Michael Graham, PhD, MD

*Michael Graham, PhD, MD
SNM President*