

## Importance of Developing the Field's Future Leaders

**S**NMMI's new strategic plan provides the necessary framework to ensure the ongoing advancement of the specialty. A critical component of that advancement is the development of new professionals for leadership roles within nuclear medicine and the society. To facilitate that process, SNMMI created the Future Leaders Academy, which had its first meeting in February in Palm Springs, CA. The primary goals for the academy are to teach team building and other leadership skills in addition to providing valuable networking opportunities for participants.

The selection of participants was based on an application process in which more than 20 applications were received. Each participant was required to be a resident, fellow, or in-training scientist—or to be within the first 7 years after residency or training completion—and to be a member of SNMMI for at least the past year (2012–2013).

Working from the formula that teamwork, innovation, vision, leadership, inspiration, and motivation equal success, the 2-day program brought together 12 young professionals (9 physicians, 3 scientists) who not only had the opportunity to network with leading physicians and renowned scientists but also learned the crucial role leadership plays in career enhancement. The participants brought a range of interests and perspectives to the multiday program, including those of clinicians, laboratory and clinical investigators (both MD and PhD), trainees, educators, and society leaders.

The academy began with an introduction on the rationale for the program's implementation, as part of the first day's agenda. Day 2 provided participants with a facilitated in-depth review of different leadership styles, such as charismatic, innovative, or pace setter. Critical components of effective communication, such as active listening, clarity, and empathy, provided a framework for discussing how clinicians feel and actions they can take to enhance communication with patients, colleagues, and peers. Participants then discussed key concepts specific to conflict resolution, effective negotiation, work/life balance, and ethics and professionalism.

Current leaders, including SNMMI committee chairs Erin Grady, MD, David Brandon, MD, and Andrei Iagaru, MD, and I shared our perspectives and experiences in transitioning to leadership roles. The panel approach was used during this portion of the workshop because it allows for immediate engagement with the participants. During the discussion I explained that in my career I had been lucky enough to work with Bob Henkin, MD, who ignited in me an interest in becoming involved and emphasized the idea that we have an obligation to our profession to do so.

In view of the technological and practice advances affecting the field, it is important to understand the issues and concerns that will be affecting the society over the next 10 years. I led a discussion on this topic, focusing on critical questions that must be asked and the key information leaders will need to know to be effective.

Sharing expertise and collaborating with partners who can bring forward their unique talents to solve problems of mutual concern are important leadership traits. Over the years, the SNMMI has been a leader in forging strategic collaborations. Hossein Jadvar, MD, PhD, SNMMI vice-president elect, provided an excellent overview on the need for SNMMI to continue to work collaboratively with other organizations, despite potential obstacles, to address current and future challenges affecting the field and profession.

Scott Holbrook, BS, CNMT, provided an engaging summary of the society's interaction with the Technologist Section (SNMMI-TS) and the ways in which both organizations have been strengthened by that collaboration. The SNMMI-TS has undertaken its own successful leadership development program, now entering its seventh year.

The program concluded with an overview of SNMMI's structure, providing participants with a detailed view on how the society works, the decision-making process, and the ways in which policies are developed and implemented. The roles and contributions of the committees and councils were discussed. Participants learned about several possible leadership roles to which they might apply.

Leadership is defined in many ways. One that I particularly like is: "Leadership is the art of leading others to deliberately create a result that wouldn't have happened otherwise." Feedback from academy participants was overwhelmingly positive. We will be using that feedback to evaluate this year's program and consider opportunities for improvement as we move forward with plans for next year's academy.

This new program, coupled with the existing council/center intern programs and the young professionals' activities, will assuredly increase the interest of potential qualified clinicians and investigators in the society and generate a talented group of new leaders for the field and SNMMI.



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