IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT

JOHN C. PRESTOSH, FACOEP-D

In July I participated in the Finance Committee meeting held in Chicago. This committee has worked diligently to correct recent financial problems that have arisen in our college. I would like to congratulate all the members who have given of their time to help our organization proceed in a positive direction.

I have represented ACOEP on COOMB for the past two years. As you are aware, this committee was formed to help fight against completing the many “merit badges” that emergency physicians are faced with. COOMB meets on a monthly basis and all national EM organizations offer input as to how best we can represent the membership of each of our colleges. There are many avenues open to this group and ongoing active communication exists between COOMB and national/state organizations. This does continue to be a slow process; however, we never expected to immediately have success. This does continue to be a month to month process.

As my term of Immediate Past President comes to a close, I would like to thank the college for the opportunity to have served in several leadership positions over the past years. I am honored to have been able to represent ACOEP on the national level of Emergency Medicine. I look forward to our college moving onward and continuing to be a positive voice representing our membership and the patients we treat.
When I became president, I issued the Giesa Challenge to bring a colleague and introduce him/her to our conferences. I am happy to announce that there have been over 225 new attendees who have been referred to an ACOEP conference in the last two years.

In Chicago I reported that through the support of WestJem, ACOEP is able to provide our members with new opportunities for publication in 2 peer reviewed journals – the ACOEP EM CPC Case edition (with pub-med numbers) and the FOEM Abstract Competition. After almost a year, the WestJem ACOEP Abstract Supplement will be released in time for the scientific assembly. This marks ACOEP’s first scholarly publication. Many thanks to John Ashurst, DO for his commitment and tremendous amount of work reformattting the abstracts and making this endeavor a reality. The CPC Case edition anticipated to be ready for publication by the spring.

The ACGME Common Program Requirements (CPR) that went into effect July 1, 2019, eliminated protected time for core faculty. The loss of protected time for core faculty would have a significant impact on residency programs and caused a major uproar in the academic community. ACOEP signed onto a letter speaking against the proposed changes. As a result, the ACGME convened a Task Force composed of Review Committee chairs, resident members, and members of the Board of Directors. The Task Force proposed a change that would allow the individual Review Committees to specify the level of support required for the educational activities of core faculty members. Effective October 19th, the proposed changes to this CPR have been posted on the ACGME website for review and comment. After the 45 day period of public comment, The Task Force will review submitted comments and make any needed changes in the requirement. Revision meetings should occur in February. Please make your voices heard.

OON Surprise Billing has been the number one advocacy focus in emergency medicine over the past year. ACOEP has worked with ACEP and has signed onto numerous letters against the current OON surprise balance billing, advocating for fair reimbursement for physicians, and ensuring that patients are protected. At the ACEP Council meeting last week, ACEP announced that the Ruiz-Roe surprise billing bill now has 100 co-sponsors. Wonderful!

At Spring Seminar, Jennifer Axelband, DO brought to the Board of Directors brought an injustice against AOA board certified physicians. AOA board certified practicing Neuro Critical Care physicians do not have a certification pathway in critical care. The AOA does not have board certification in Neuro Critical Care. The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) has created a board certification process for ABMS certified physicians, but they do not recognize AOBEM board certification. I suggested that Dr Axelband contact Joshua Prober, legal counsel for the AOA and ask him to address this issue. Mr Prober contacted the ABPN and ABMS regarding the possibility of AOA-certified physicians qualifying for neuro-critical care certification. Recent follow up from Mr Prober states that ABMS is open to this ad its Committee of Certification has given preliminary approval, subject to final approval by the ABMS Board of Directors. ACOEP is currently exploring solutions to a similar issue regarding EMS medical directors who entered practice prior to the advent of EMS fellowships. More to follow.
It hardly seems like two years since I was sworn in as ACOEP’s 20th president. Being president of ACOEP has been an exciting and challenging, yet humbling experience. It is the pinnacle of my career. I have been proud to represent our organization.

During my presidency, I have collected 25 room keys. I have held on to them as a token, each of them represents one of many opportunities I had to represent ACOEP, the osteopathic profession but more importantly you the members of the college. Although I interacted with many organizations, no organization’s staff has impressed me more than ACOEP. I am glad that I have had the privilege of working closely with them, I appreciate the trust that they placed in me and their dedication to ACOEP.

I have had a unique opportunity that only 12 other members of our college have experienced. I had the opportunity to work closely with an amazing executive director and to be part of her legacy. Janice Wachtler has been at the helm of ACOEP for 27 years. As the stabilizing force of ACOEP, she has shared her insights with the presidents and has helped educate us (avoid pot holes) as we make decisions to best guide our organization. I am truly grateful for her friendship and the wisdom that she shared with me.

Of all my accomplishments during my presidency, the most meaningful experience has been my relationship with each of the members of the Board of Directors, especially the executive committee. As the president of ACOEP it is easy to take credit for everything, but the real work is done behind the scenes with a lot of input from the Board, executive director, staff, committee members, and the membership. Thank you everyone for your dedication, hard work, and support over the past two years.

Remember ACOEP, we still got this!
As Chris Giesa's term comes rapidly to its conclusion, it is time for all of us to make formal transitions and assume our new roles. It has been a great honor and privilege to serve under Chris as President-Elect, and I am confident she will continue to provide me with valuable mentorship, and ACOEP with outstanding leadership, in her coming role of Immediate Past President.

We have enjoyed the support of our ACOEP Board, committees, and staff as we represented our members to the medical community and beyond. Knowing that our ACOEP team is always there to support us has given us a great sense of comfort during a time when we as a College and as a community faced significant expected and unexpected challenges and opportunities.

Following Spring Seminar, ACOEP's summer season is traditionally internally focused, with less travel and external activities. Most of my work has been in support of Dr. Giesa, and working with key committees to move our agenda forward.

In light of the impending retirement of our Executive Director, we hired the Reed-Scott Consulting firm to assess our internal operations and structure. After months of work the consultants provided initial recommendations at Spring Seminar, which the Board endorsed.

Many recommendations surrounded financial management included decreasing overhead and realigning the staff structure. Together with the rest of our Executive Committee and our Interim Executive Director Adam Levy, we have worked to reduce our expenses to improve our long-term financial health. As a member of the Finance Committee we have made crucial decisions to create fiscal viability and security. A major component of this is moving to a new office. Throughout the summer staff has moved the office to a size-appropriate workspace in the same building, which has significantly decreased rent costs.

We continue to engage externally with the AOA, as well as advance our advocacy collaborations with other emergency medicine organizations. We continue to attend all AOA functions in order to collaborate with AOA leadership and advance our concerns such as certification, CME, and related issues. This has been enhanced by ACOEP member Kevin Klauer becoming AOA Executive Director. We also continue to participate in the EM Workforce Study, a sign of respect and appreciation for our unique role and constituency.

In addition to these organizational roles, I continue to represent you and ACOEP on the ACEP Federal Government Affairs Committee and as a voting Commissioner on the Emergency Medicine Action Fund. These relationships are a critical part of our current Strategic Plan and allow us to impact major initiatives surrounding regulations supporting prudent layperson payments, “surprise billing,” and other issues that have a direct impact on the size of your paycheck. I also had the honor of representing you at the International Conference for Emergency Medicine in Korea in June, something I did at no expense to the College.
A key theme for both Dr. Giesa and myself has been transparency and outreach, attempting to engage our entire Board into decision making whenever possible. It is my intent to rapidly move us to being as transparent or more than any other EM organization. Along with our desire to be increasingly responsive to our committees and general membership this is a work in progress, and I urge you to help us by feeling free to contact me with any questions or concerns that you have.

Finally, while Dr. Giesa and I have collaborated to assure that she is finishing strong with her hand firmly on the helm we have also accelerated our efforts during both the officer and Executive Director transitions. This will include the Board meeting and a Strategic Planning Retreat conducted at the end of Scientific Assembly. We will then follow this up with staff operational planning. We will continue to be successful now and beyond without pause. For those who feel prepared to step up their involvement in our College now is the time to let me know.

In closing, I encourage anyone with a concern or issue that you believe we should be working on, or an opinion on our ongoing policies and activities to contact me at any time resuter@gmail.com. Your input is valued!

Bob

Robert E. Suter, DO, MHA, FACOEP-D, FIFEM
Welcome to all of our members of the college to beautiful Austin, Texas. I hope that the weather and atmosphere of this new venue provide all of you with relaxation and a quality educational experience! We look forward to enjoying this new venue with all of you and encourage you to check out the local scene in Austin….as the locals say, “Keep it weird!”

My report is listed online for your review. Since our Spring Seminar, ACOEP has made great strides. The summer was a time of transition for our home base as the staff prepared for a move to a new office, still in the AOA building in downtown Chicago. They are now fully operational in the new headquarters. The new lease saves ACOEP considerable money on reduced overhead, and also takes advantage new technology to allow staff to work in a more flexible environment.

Our events continue to push the envelope of quality, engaging medical education. We realize that as the AOA has made the decision to eliminate Category 1A CME requirements for recertification, however we are confident that our events will remain competitive in this ever-changing field. Thank you for being a part of the 2019 Scientific Assembly, and we ask that when you return home, you spread the word of all that ACOEP has to offer.

In 2015 ACOEP provided a half day of lectures at OMED, and again recently in Baltimore. Looking ahead to the future, ACOEP will continue periodically provide education at OMED. This allows us to provide critical education to a large audience while still maintaining our independence.

Lastly, it is my duty as secretary of the college to officially announce Jan Wachtler’s retirement from her position as executive director of ACOEP. Jan has been a mentor to all of us during our careers. She has seen many of us progress from medical students to residents, to attendings and board members. Jan has been the face of ACOEP for over 30 years and is synonymous with ACOEP. She has helped guide this organization from a small “band of brothers” to a large, extended family that continues to earn national recognition for its devotion to the principles of osteopathic medicine and educational programs that are second to none. On a personal note, I would like to thank Jan for her guidance, leadership and devotion to ACOEP. From all of us, Jan, please accept our sincere thanks and gratitude for your service and friendship. You will always be the cornerstone of what this organization was built upon……leadership, professionalism and care.
Treasurer Report, Fall 2019

Timothy Cheslock, DO FACOEP

This year the College has seen an overall decline in financial position. While several factors have played a role in this, the largest has been unrealized anticipated revenues from events and programs during the past few fiscal cycles in addition to cost over runs on a few of those events. The continued decline is in part due to the effects of the Single Accreditation System, loss of GME subsidy from the AOA, and continued effects from the loss of the management contract for outside affiliates. Our overall income decreased over the last fiscal year by approximately $625,000. While our budget had planned for a loss of revenue, the total loss exceeded our budget line items by a significant amount. In anticipation of a loss of revenue, the operations of the college needed to be streamlined and additional measures were taken to mitigate the loss.

The college is now in a new office space that has a smaller footprint, but still provides adequate space for our staff to function in a comfortable environment. This savings alone has been significant in not only cutting our rent, but also in the associated expenses related to utilities and other costs associated with the physical plant. The AOA has been very understanding of our position and has been a great partner in allowing us to modify our lease to remain within the AOA building.

The loss of our GME programs to SAS necessitated a realignment of staff within the office. In addition, other staff changes have been made over the last year which will garner additional substantial savings in the current fiscal budget both in salary and staff benefits.

One of our largest expenses during the year has been our educational programs. The continued support of our membership by attending our programs is crucial to future viability. Therefore, you will continue to see a high-quality CME events now and into the future. We have made changes in the back end of planning and orchestration of the meeting to provide the same high quality at a more reasonable expense to the college while not affecting the overall experience to the attendees.

In a top down review of the budget it was noted that many contracts for services associated with operations of the college have not been updated or renegotiated in several years. This was responsible for another significant loss of income for services that were either outdated or no longer needed. Thanks to the diligent work of Adam Levy, I am happy to report that every one of our outside vendor contracts have been reviewed and renegotiated to be in line with our current needs. This will save us considerable expense moving forward.

Our current book-keeping process has also received an overhaul by the same accounting firm that has performed our audits. We now have a much more streamlined accounting system that
can provide real-time updates and allow us to see a realistic current financial position. This will allow a quicker response from the board to any deviations from budget going forward and allow for immediate actions that will prevent future losses.

Due to the efforts of our Interim Executive Director, the entire office staff, the executive board and the entire board of directors, I feel we are now in a much more stable situation than we were just six months ago.

We have recognized the need to move forward with a financial manager/controller whose primary responsibility will be to help streamline our operations from a financial standpoint and ensure our stability moving forward. The office will be posting for this position once the completed job description has been approved by the board.

Having survived the transition to SAS, we need to develop new approaches to ensure the ACOEP remains an important part of the Osteopathic Community and a recognized pillar within the house of Emergency Medicine. This will include ways to remain relevant to all Osteopathic Emergency Physicians, regardless of whether they are AOBEM or ABEM boarded. Providing value for your membership in our organization is a goal that we cannot lose sight of. Advocating for the profession and our patients continues to be part of our mission as well. Thank you to all our members for your continued support of the ACOEP. If you would like to become more involved, please let us know! Our future remains dependent on your continued unwavering support!