

United We Stand: Combined Annual Meeting of ASDS and ASCDAS

By the time this editorial is published, the combined annual meeting of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS) and the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology & Aesthetic Surgery (ASCDAS) will most likely be a footnote in the archives of dermatology history. During the onset of the recession in 2008, leadership of ASDS and ASCDAS felt an appropriate response to the economic uncertainty was to economize and gain efficiency. The outcome was to hold a combined, or conjoined, annual meeting for both organizations as a onetime event in 2009. As the year progressed, leadership of both organizations endeavored to work as coequals, dividing a complex, scientific program agenda into 2 roughly equal parts, assigning moderators, inviting faculty, and constructing an agenda. Executive staff from ASDS and ASCDAS coordinated meeting details, such as meeting spaces, room assignments, and committee meetings, to avoid conflicts.

Consequently, what was the net result? An amazing program that encompasses all of the major aspects of surgical and cosmetic dermatology rolled into a single meeting event that provides attendees with the potential to experience an unparalleled educational experience.

Naturally, some may ask what is next. Responding on behalf of ASCDAS, it is my pleasure to announce that under the leadership of our next president, James Spencer, MD, MS, and our executive director, Larry Bodkin Jr, MS, ASCDAS will be holding its traditional annual meeting once again in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2010. This meeting will be held in the fourth quarter and promises to be the premier annual event for aesthetic and cosmetic dermatology.

Was combining the meetings a good idea? It depends on the evaluations from the meeting attendees. After all, it is in their best interest that we all work diligently. Certainly, the meeting's agenda covers everything attendees could ask for in terms of efficiency. The speakers are acknowledged experts in their respective fields, the topics are timely, and there will be an international perspective presented by our colleagues from abroad. Of course, Phoenix, Arizona, is sure to please. Famous for the climate of the Sonoran desert, the exquisite flair and

flavor of Southwestern cuisine and ample opportunities to explore the museums, art galleries, and heritage of its rich, multicultural roots, Phoenix is one of the most desirable cities to host a conference such as this year's conjoined meeting.

As the evolution of an organization progresses from dreams to reality, from a concept to delivery, and from deep thought to hard work, it reflects those who have strived to make it all happen. This year's meeting, unique as it has been with regard to the collaborative nature between ASDS and ASCDAS, is really the cumulative efforts of all of those who have preceded us in leadership. To all of the thought leaders, board members, past leadership, staff, and industry supporters who guided, poked, and prodded ASCDAS to fill a niche unfilled by contemporary organizations and societies, a large amount of gratitude is in order. As ASCDAS prepares to enter its second decade of education to the core specialties of aesthetic practice, it is poised to maintain the unique role it has carved for itself. It is a role that helps to define the very nature of what constitutes aesthetic practice in the specialty of dermatology and dermatologic surgery, and a position that facilitates the interchange of methods, products, ideas, information, and tools between members of the specialties and industry partners.

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As part of the process of guiding the future of aesthetic dermatology, ASCDAS has dedicated itself to the role of mentor in resident education. Serving as an interface between senior thought leaders and those in the earliest stages of their careers, ASCDAS has consistently provided the finest in education to those residents and fellows who seek to further their knowledge of cosmetic dermatology.

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Again, without the generous and consistent support of industry, this level of attention to the education of residents and fellows would simply not be economically feasible.

As president of ASCDAS in 2009, it has been a pleasure to work with the board members, leadership, and executive staff to help develop a blueprint for the future of ASCDAS. This year-long effort has reexamined all aspects of ASCDAS with regard to our future.

The culmination of these efforts has been the realization that ASCDAS has indeed done a great job in holding an annual meeting; however, we could have done more to assist in those requests from a wide variety of other groups in organized dermatology to support their meetings in the teaching of cosmetic dermatology. Perhaps community-based education in contrast to a large annual meeting that requires attendees to travel would be a beneficial option.

A new feature of ASCDAS will be to begin this process of traveling to different regions of the country to develop a local approach to cosmetic dermatology education. Further information regarding times and locations of these regionalized meetings will follow.

In closing, 2009 has been a wonderful year of collaboration, growth, and of course, economy. As the nation appears poised for an economic rebound, ASCDAS is similarly prepared to once again explore new territory in pursuit of its mission to educate dermatologists and core specialists in the expanding and exciting world of aesthetic and cosmetic dermatology.

Stay tuned for more exciting news from ASCDAS in 2010!

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