

Distinguished Alumni

Q&A with Former DIII YPC Representatives: These interviews are meant to take a candid look into the approach and point of views from previous representatives of District III's Young Professionals Committee.



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What does it mean to engage and give back to the profession?

We are only as strong as our members. The more people that are involved, discussing, serving, and challenging each of us to be better the more we can move forward. Not everyone is called to be a leader or accepts the challenge, but everyone has a role, a purpose to serve in our profession. Whether it national or local, one parent or an entire conference center of people, every impact an AT makes on some level is vital for all of us. I want to be an example to my students, my peers, and even seasoned ATs. I want to give back to a profession that has given me so much. It is about being proud of who we are and what we can do. If I have some way I can serve our profession I want to do it.

What led you to participate in the YPC?

Like many YPs, I felt a calling to be involved in our profession, but wasn't sure how. I looked through different committees, but didn't have any experience compared to many of the "seasoned" committee members. I helped once as one of "Jay's Helpers" (Jay Sedory) to make phone calls to members encouraging them to vote. A few months later I saw the email to the SC membership requesting applicants for the SC YPC position. I thought I could do it, but I was nervous because no one knew me. I took a chance, and it worked out they asked me to serve.

How do you mentor or inspire others (students, patients, peers)?

First, I try to lead by example – professional behavior and appearance, engage in conversations and yet willing to listen, patient yet stern when appropriate. Often times people reflect your behavior. If I expect a particular demeanor or action from them I should be the first to give that. Second, I want to be approachable. I want people to know and feel that they can come to me with questions, concerns, ideas, or to vent and I will listen, try to help if I can, and be honest with them. Third, they need to know that I truly care about their learning or professional development. I want to help them succeed and be happy.

What can other ATs do to help?

So many times the answer to this question is "get involved", but then people don't know how or there is no formal position for them. I absolutely agree that getting involved is one of the best ways to help. However, I would remind ATs that getting involved does not always mean being on a committee or publishing research or lobbying. At the simplest level helping is promoting the profession through behavior and conversations, knowing your opinion matters, knowing your vote matters, and knowing your impact on a patient's life, even for five minutes, matters. Once someone acknowledges this, the bigger opportunities to help or "get involved" start to fall in place.

What is your advice to YPs?

So much! Do not be intimidated by “seasoned” ATs. Many of them are passionate about helping YPs. Do not be afraid of making mistakes, taking chances, and difficult situations. Every opportunity, even challenging ones, has a lesson in it. It’s hard to balance wanting to prove yourself and seeking assistance. Be confident, but not afraid to receive constructive feedback. Remember to take care of yourself – life balance! Do things that make you happy, everyone needs a break from work.