

Newsletter

SPRING 2022

**Research
Foundation**

American Society of
Colon & Rectal Surgeons



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Ronald Bleday, MD, Research Foundation of the
American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons
(ASCRS) President

It has been an honor to have served as President of the Research Foundation of the ASCRS these past two years. We have had a unique two years managing the Research Foundation through the pandemic. We have become more efficient and collaborative via Zoom and Teams but have missed the social camaraderie and interaction of our in-person meetings. We look forward to the upcoming years where we have the best of both worlds: Efficient virtual working groups and wonderful in-person meetings starting with Tampa. The most important message I can convey before we list the accomplishments is a huge thank you to the staff of the Research Foundation, the work of the Scientific Committee, the input of the Young Researchers committee and the counsel of the Board of Trustees. It has been a privilege to work alongside such great team members as we navigated into this new post-pandemic paradigm.

The past two years have seen the continued wonderful work of the Scientific Committee under the leadership of Dr. Fergal Fleming and Dr. J. Joshua Smith. The Board has also been extremely helpful in offering guidance on the Foundation's scientific goals. A list of the awards is on our website, but I would like to highlight the recipients of our Career Development Awards: Drs. Cyrus Jahansouz, Lawrence Lee, and Amy L. Lightner. The "CDA" is the best investment in our scientific future. We are proud to have had such wonderful young investigators. We have also partnered with industry in two areas: A Robotic Grant initiative supported by Intuitive Foundation and a Research Council Industry Collaborative that supported a grant into the definition and treatments of anastomotic leaks. With the Robotic grants, our partnership with Intuitive Foundation has made significant academic strides as it relates to robotic surgery in colorectal patients. With the latter grant, Dr. Patricia Sylla has been funded to take on this project. Anastomotic leaks are perhaps the most significant cause of morbidity and mortality in our field, and we still struggle to even define the problem.

This past year we have had discussions around a new strategic plan for the Foundation. We felt it was time to re-evaluate our structure, fundraising tactics, and grant priorities with the new post-pandemic realities. The process has been extremely valuable. We hope to have a document to share with our Board, the ASCRS leadership and our membership in the next few months.

Newsletter Highlights

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President

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Over the past year, we have completed an important transition to an online grant submission portal that facilitates applicants, the reviewers, and our office in the administration of our mission. The change was overdue. Already the process is more efficient. It is iterative with the vendor so we can improve each year. We also were able to do an in-depth review of the Salvati Award. In consultations with the Salvati alumni group, we were able to define the mission more clearly and separate the funding. The award will be disbursed every other year to a clinical research project. Other critical policy changes were discussed and implemented. This policy work can be tedious, but it is important as a foundation for our work. Finally, as with other parts of the ASCRS, we have had an improvement in our accounting and legal support. We are grateful to the staff that help us complete our tasks.

As we look ahead, we are exploring new ways to fund our mission. We have a group of committed donors and the support of industry. We hope to be creative in this new hybrid world in expanding our donor universe with our members and with our corporate partners. I am grateful to be surrounded by such committed and intelligent professionals. Our members are simply the best. They have vision, energy, and passion for exceptional patient care. With all our efforts, the Research Foundation will continue to raise and award funds in support of research and educational programs related to colon and rectal diseases.

Respectfully,
Ronald Bleday, MD

STRATEGIC PLAN

Activity is underway to implement the recently approved 2022-2024 Research Foundation Strategic Plan. In 2021, a survey was administered to members of the Board of Trustees, Past Presidents, committee members and donors eliciting thoughts on the future of the Research Foundation and its focus should be over the next several years. The survey results became the basis for the new strategic plan including specific goals, strategies and tactics.

ONLINE GRANT SUBMISSIONS

The Research Foundation has moved from pen, spreadsheet and manual review to an online grant submission portal. The portal streamlines and simplifies how the Research Foundation manages the receipt of applications and the Research Committee's peer review process.

NEIL H. HYMAN, MD AWARDED MENTOR AWARD FOR 2022-2024

Established in 1992 by the Research Foundation of the ASCRS, the Mentor Award is conferred biannually in a joint decision by the Young Researchers Committee and the Research Foundation Board of Trustees. This honor recognizes a member of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) who has made exceptional contributions to the education and career development of trainees and other colleagues through their commitment to both clinical and scholarly pursuits. This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated by example their own career accomplishments and outstanding leadership skills in addition to dedicating their own time to further the careers of younger colleagues.

On behalf of the Young Researchers Committee and Research Foundation Board of Trustees, we are honored to present the Mentor Award to Neil H. Hyman, MD, in recognition of his commitment and dedication to training and mentoring.



PAY IT FORWARD FOR A PATAGONIA®

By Elizabeth Wick, MD, Research Foundation of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) Vice President

The Research Foundation continues to support colorectal surgeons as they ask essential research questions in our field. Some of the most impactful awards and grants have gone to residents and early career colorectal surgeons. Many of our grant recipients have presented at the ASCRS Annual Scientific Meeting, published in *Diseases of the Colon and Rectum* and gone on to secure additional funding from competitive sources. We are fortunate to have this resource for our field and look forward to supporting the next generation of colorectal surgeon researchers.



DONATE

We hope that you will showcase your pride in the Research Foundation by considering making a donation of \$1,000 by May 15th. If you can support at this level, we would like to offer you a Patagonia® Better Sweater, embroidered with the Research Foundation's new logo.

Your donations to the [Research Foundation Fund](#) or [Meet the Challenge](#) are welcome at any time. Click "DONATE" at the top right of FASCRS.ORG to make your gift.

Thank you to all of you who so have generously donated to the Research Foundation. We appreciate your support today and every day!

NEW LOGO

Notice anything different with our look? The Research Foundation's new and improved logo brings synergy to the ASCRS logo and includes the traditional blue from the colon cancer awareness ribbon and orange for the small bowel.



RESEARCH FORUM

We invite you to join us during the 2022 Annual Scientific Meeting from 2:45 – 3:45 p.m. EDT on Monday, May 2nd, in Tampa, Florida, for the Research Forum. The Research Forum is a venue for members of our Society to present basic and translational science which serves as the knowledge base for the clinical care of patients with colorectal diseases. The Research Forum allows works in progress to be presented and constructively critiqued. This helps further these projects and provides an opportunity for residents and fellows to participate in the Annual Scientific Meeting. Drs. Nelya Melnitchouk and Russell Farmer will co-moderate this session.

Meet the Challenge at #ASCRS22

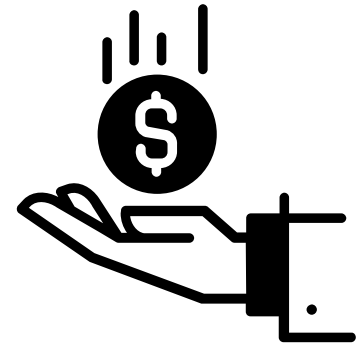
Join colleagues at the 2022 Annual Scientific Meeting and Meet the Challenge for the Research Foundation of the ASCRS. This year, your donations to the Meet the Challenge campaign will earn you tickets to the Welcome Reception carnival activities. The Riverwalk area outside of the Tampa Convention Center will be transformed with carnival games, food truck stations, a beer garden and many other surprises you'll have to see for yourself!



SCAN ME

FINANCE AND BUDGET

The Research Foundation of the ASCRS ended 2021 with total assets of \$9,145,550, which includes \$8,569,618 in the Vanguard Investment account and \$511,427 in the Salvati Fund Vanguard account which was separated from the main account during 2021. Liabilities were only \$169,201. Total revenue before investment earnings was \$78,549 with expenses of \$370,428, resulting in a net loss of \$291,879 before investment earnings, which was better than the budgeted net loss before investment earnings of \$347,520. Our two investment accounts earned a total of \$1,054,914. These results are unaudited.



SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH: CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD

The Career Development Award (CDA) was created to provide young surgeons support for initiating and developing academic careers in the colorectal surgery field. First awarded in 2001, the CDA provides funding of up to \$75,000 each year for two years.



In 2018, Amy L. Lightner, MD, of Cleveland Clinic received the Foundation's Career Development Award for her study titled, "Safety and efficacy of mesenchymal stem cells for the treatment of CD".

"The Career Development Award has allowed for our clinical trials in cell therapy for Crohn's disease to flourish. We have been able to study mesenchymal stem cells in patients with a fistula in the setting of an ileal pouch anal anastomosis. We have been able to treat 25 pouch patients with fistulas and have seen significant impacts on quality of life."



In 2015, Timothy Ridolfi, MD, MS, of Medical College of Wisconsin, received the Foundation's Career Development Award for his study titled, "Alterations in Colonic 5-HT Receptor Density Following Low Anterior Resection"

"Receiving the ASCRS Career Development Award helped further my research goals in many ways. Not only did it provide the necessary support for completing the project outlined in the grant application, but it also allowed me to develop critical research infrastructure early on. Having these tools in place allowed for future successful grant applications and projects. The findings of the project funded by the award also allowed for a thesis required in achieving a master's degree in Clinical and Translational Science. I am extremely grateful for the Research Foundation's investment in my early career."

Leadership and Committees

The primary mission of the Research Foundation of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons is to raise funds to support research and educational program leading to improved patient care. The Research Foundation thanks the following committees for their service and dedication of the last year.

- [Research Foundation Board of Trustees](#)
- [Research Foundation Research Committee](#)
- [Research Foundation Young Researchers Committee](#)