

American College of Osteopathic Surgeons

Executive Director

Position Profile

January, 2012

This profile provides information about the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons (ACOS) and the position of Executive Director. The profile is designed to assist individuals in assessing their interest in and qualifications for the position.

The search for the Executive Director of the ACOS is being conducted by Association Strategies, Inc., 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to the Association Strategies, Inc., website: www.assnstrategies.com. To learn more about the ACOS, go to www.facos.org. The deadline for applications is June 15, 2012.

Executive Director Position Profile **for the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons**

Profile Methodology

The profile for the position of Executive Director of the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons (ACOS) was developed using organizational data; discussions with key stakeholders, leaders and staff; and responses to an online survey of volunteer leaders. The survey was conducted to identify and prioritize the skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and qualities required and desired in an Executive Director. Information regarding programs and services, organizational and cultural factors, and challenges and opportunities for the ACOS was also developed from the survey responses and discussions as well as the ACOS web site.

About the Organization

The ACOS is committed to assuring excellence in osteopathic surgical care through education, advocacy, leadership development, and the fostering of professional and personal relationships. Founded in 1927, the ACOS provides ongoing educational programming in order for members to obtain and retain Board certification in the practice of osteopathic surgery. Osteopathic surgeons attend medical school and participate in residency programs; as practitioners, they may be solo practitioners, participate in a group practice, or may be engaged in medically-related research. Most ACOS members describe their primary practice as general surgery, while others focus on urology, cardiothoracic and vascular, neurological, plastic and reconstructive, or other subspecialties.

The ACOS, a 501(c)(6) organization, is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. The association has a \$2 million operating budget and seven staff. The ACOS provides its members with opportunities to obtain education, exchange practice experiences and knowledge within surgical disciplines, and advocacy on members' behalf and in collaboration with certification boards and affiliated bodies. A vibrant community, ACOS members work to identify the best possible outcomes for patients by combining emphasis on a holistic view and approach to healthcare with state of the art medical techniques and practices.

The ACOS represents its members with the state and federal policy makers and regulators in healthcare to obtain the most advantageous position, funding for residencies, and reimbursement outcomes to enhance their ability to practice medicine to the benefit of their patients.

Structure, Governance and Staff: The Executive Director reports to a 16-member Board of Governors. Under the direction of the Executive Director, the professional staff administers the programs, services and activities of the organization. The staff, under the direction of the Executive Director, supports the work of:

- Specialty Disciplines of Cardiothoracic and Vascular; General Surgery; Neurological; Plastic and Reconstructive; and Urological and
- Sections for Residents and Students seeking to become Osteopathic Surgeons
- Member participation in committees that focus on membership development, recognition, and engagement.

Key External Interactions: In addition to working closely with the Board of Governors, staff and volunteer leaders, the Executive Director represents the interests of the ACOS through interaction with a wide range of affiliated associations and certification boards, including the American Osteopathic Association, the American Osteopathic Board of Surgery, the American College of Surgeons, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, etc. Successful management of these relationships is essential to the success of ACOS members.

Strategic Organizational Focus: The ACOS has identified a preferred future for both Osteopathic Surgery and for the ACOS. In this plan:

The Preferred Future for Osteopathic Surgery by 2014 includes:

- Osteopathic surgical certification and continuous certification are universally recognized by regulators, healthcare organizations, payers, and patients.
- There are improved and increased numbers of high-quality postdoctoral surgical and subspecialty surgical training positions.
- Osteopathic students are attracted into osteopathic surgical residencies.
- Practicing osteopathic surgeons have broad access to excellent continuing medical education (CME).

The Preferred Future for ACOS by 2014 states that the ACOS:

- Supports a valid certification process and implementation of continuous certification.
- Assures that there is high-quality postdoctoral and continuing education for osteopathic surgery.
- Maintains viability, evolves as an association, and collaborates with other organizations for the benefit of the membership.

To achieve this future, the ACOS has created a strategic plan that seeks measurable achievement in the following goals:

1. Assure high-quality postdoctoral education for osteopathic surgery.
2. Assure high-quality continuing education for osteopathic surgery.
3. Support AOBS in maintaining a nationally recognized certification process and the implementation of continuous certification.
4. Assure the ability of osteopathic surgical specialists to practice.
5. Strengthen ACOS' Advocacy Efforts.

Also included in the strategic plan is a management goal and objectives:

Goal: Maintain viability, evolve as an association, and collaborate with other organizations for the benefit of the membership.

Objectives:

1. Define the pathway of entry to ACOS leadership (timeline).
2. Offer a formal leadership training program every three years.
3. The Board of Governors will adopt the strategic plan, and annually the president will assume responsibility for implementation of the plan.
4. Maintain an ACOS staff member for CME to assist volunteers to identify educational needs and develop programs.
5. Conduct a scan of the external environment to determine how it will affect the osteopathic surgeon and the association by 2012.

Programs, Services and Resources

Members generally give ACOS high marks for its offering of programs, services and resources, particularly the Annual Clinical Assembly and its programming content; publications and practice guidance documents; networking opportunities; and web-based resources. Key programs and services include the following:

1. Conferences and events: The ACOS Annual Clinical Assembly is the College's most visible event and includes education sessions, training courses, networking events, exhibits and sponsorship opportunities. Numerous other programs are held throughout the year and provide medical education courses for CME credit and Board certification.
2. Career resources: The ACOS Career Center offers resources for students, residents, and practitioners regarding career opportunities.
3. Professional practice discipline-based groups: ACOS offers opportunities for members to participate with peers in their sub-specialty discipline areas; these disciplines are represented in the governance structure and provide educational content focused on these areas.

4. Publications and resources: Members receive the *ACOS News*, a monthly newsletter, as well as periodic announcements and communications to keep them informed of current and relevant events, issues, and activities.
5. Representation/Advocacy: Important to the professional practice of surgeons, the ACOS represents their interests to federal policy makers, regulators, and the numerous bodies who provide oversight, rules and policies governing medical education, residency and licensure.
6. Surgical Training Programs: The ACOS delivers a highly-valuable, accredited program of training courses designed to maintain professional excellence and continually ensure that osteopathic surgeons can practice with the most current knowledge of techniques and improved patient outcomes.

The ACOS has a rich legacy of developing stringent educational standards for surgical training programs and mandatory continuing education requirements; the establishment of the Annual Clinical Assembly (ACA); and the reorganization of the Board of Governors to better represent the membership and meet its professional needs. The ACOS has fought to stop unethical surgical practices, protect the rights of osteopathic surgeons to care for their patients nationwide, and gain recognition for the osteopathic profession from the allopathic community and the federal government. The challenges facing osteopathic surgeons today are great, and there is much uncertainty about how health system reforms and other changes in the delivery of medical services will affect the science and art of medicine. Two things are certain, however: Change is inevitable and the ACOS will greet it as an opportunity to further achieve the highest standards for surgical care.

Organizational Culture

The ACOS staff describes the organizational culture as a highly rewarding environment, due in large part to the opportunity to work with a dedicated and collaborative volunteer workforce with whom they have a very positive relationship of mutual respect and appreciation. Staff members are described by stakeholders in positive terms as dedicated, responsive and hard-working, with a strong sense of member service and professionalism. They credit staff with accomplishing a substantial amount of work with lean resources. The staff is appreciative of their long-tenured executive director described by others as a compassionate, committed professional with a “do whatever it takes” approach to leading the organization. Staff members describe the office environment as one that supports team work, cross-training, mutual support, and a level of informality and flexibility, while extremely professional, appropriate to a small-staff organization.

While remaining current with issues and changes in the regulatory and policy environment, stakeholders suggest that the primary focus in the near future will be in the arena of strengthening the medical education offerings and programming quality. Additionally, exploration of online information dissemination remains an area of interest to members.

The ACOS leadership is described as passionate and dedicated to the mission of the College, highly professional, and alert to the ongoing environmental changes affecting members' professional practice. Some cite the need for an increased focus on member development, engagement and growth as a key strategy for assuring needed influence and direction for the strategic issues facing the profession.

The membership at large feels well-served by the ACOS's resources and support for the profession, but they are concerned about the viability and credibility of their profession within the healthcare provider community, third-party payer issues, and the shift in employment from independent practitioners to employment in medical groups.

Challenges and Opportunities

Stakeholders agree that the rapidly changing healthcare environment, financial pressures and changes in the business models in the provider communities create both challenges and potential opportunities if the organization can move effectively and efficiently to take advantage of them. A key component of the needed strategy is based on the relationships and positioning with affiliated organizations and building support for expansion of residency opportunities.

Executive Director Position

Responsibilities: The Executive Director is responsible for providing leadership for the organization, in collaboration with the Board of Governors, on matters of governance, mission, vision and strategy; developing and managing the professional staff; maintaining and protecting the financial stability and resources of the organization; overseeing all College activities and operations to ensure accomplishment of the organization's goals; serving as the primary liaison with all governmental and regulatory agencies and with the leadership of national medical organizations, especially surgical organizations; maintaining a positive public relations program; and serving as the official spokesperson for the College when appropriate. The Executive Director ensures that ACOS activities and programs further the mission of the organization as established by the Board.

Education and Experience: The ideal candidate will have a Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential and a Bachelor's degree (an advanced degree in business or health administration is considered an asset); a minimum of six years of executive or senior-level management experience in a healthcare association or organization; or an equivalent level of experience and education. Knowledge of current healthcare reform issues and medical education

and credentialing strongly preferred. Previous experience as a Chief Executive Officer is an asset but is not required.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate experience and success in the following areas:

1. Building consensus among diverse constituencies;
2. Developing, managing and motivating a high-functioning professional staff and an effective relationship with the Board and other volunteer leaders;
3. Developing and deepening relationships with affiliate organizations, other national surgical organizations, and navigating organizational relationships with differing as well as overlapping interests;
4. Advocating for professionals to ensure educational proficiency, excellence and accreditation and overseeing program quality;
5. Leading an organization with routine and regular turnover of volunteer leadership with diverse styles;
6. Employing an effective public relations program to raise the profile and reputation of an organization among external and internal audiences;
7. Financial and business acumen to ensure short and long term stability of an organization's assets, including development and cultivation of revenue sources;
8. Proficiency in public speaking;
9. Establishing and strengthening operations, communications systems and processes;
10. Development of advanced educational programming to advance a profession or industry;
11. Understanding of technology in current business/organizational settings; and
12. Developing and implementing strategic business plans and initiatives, and identifying organizational goals, needs and resources.

Behavioral and Personal Attributes: The following attributes are important to the candidate's success in the position of Executive Director:

1. Visionary leadership and foresight, in order to capitalize on opportunities, identify challenges, anticipate and respond to course changes warranted by an every-changing industry environment, and identify/secure the resources necessary to ensure organizational success.
2. Strong interpersonal, written and oral communications skills, with the ability to deliver clear and effective messages to all stakeholders;

3. Ability to build consensus among diverse constituencies and related organizations in order to further common goals and objectives and to leverage resources and influence;
4. Ability to build and maintain strong alliances and partnerships with related organizations;
5. Ability to position an organization to nimbly respond to change in a turbulent environment;
6. Understanding of best practices in association management and their implementation;
7. Demonstration of a high level of honesty, integrity and standards of conduct; and
8. Possession of a sense of fairness, compassion, optimism and patience with others.

Measures of Success: In the initial year of employment, the Executive Director will be expected to accomplish the following:

- Create and maintain a positive culture among the staff and in the College;
- Develop positive and productive relationships with allied organizations;
- Understand the nature of osteopathic medicine, the ACOS as an organization – its history, culture, and future
- Ensure that past progress is maintained and work proceeds toward future goals;
- Enhance and protect the financial resources of the organization; and
- Improve organizational systems and processes.

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