

## The President's Letter

October 19, 2018

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am excited to report that we received a record number of abstracts for the Southern Regional Meeting in New Orleans next February. Our Executive Director, Joan Kemp, shared with me this week that we surpassed the '700 mark' for the first time since she began keeping records in 1992. This year's total of 727 abstract submissions is a wonderful sign that our society and the annual meeting are in vibrant health. Of course, we share this 'good health' with our sister societies who join with us every year to host the Southern Regional Meeting in the Crescent City.

We look forward to hosting this record number of abstract presenters and seeing our fellow SSCI members at the meeting in February. As I outlined in my previous President's Letter, we are modifying the format of the joint session with the Southern Section of the American Federation for Medical Research (S-AFMR), to create a more integrated program that reflects our close relationship and common endeavors. I am confident that this session will retain all of the elements that have made it one of the highlights of the meeting while introducing exciting new features. For example, I shared with you earlier this year that longtime SSCI member, Dr. Solomon Solomon at the University of Tennessee, has made a generous and enduring contribution to honor his parents to create the Nathan Solomon & Irene Oransky-Solomon Medical Student Research Awards that will be presented in the joint session. I just finished reading all of the medical student abstracts that we received, and I cannot overstate how impressed I am with the quality and diversity of these submissions. Their mentors are to be commended, and the research experiences these students have had at our many member institutions will lay the foundation for many wonderful academic careers in coming years.

I also wish to share again in this letter that the SSCI Council and its Executive Advisory Board has engaged in multiple discussions over the past few years regarding the future of the SSCI and ensuring that we attract and retain new members from member institutions. At the meeting in New Orleans, we will be presenting specific recommendations to both broaden and strengthen our membership and will be asking SSCI members to vote on these proposed changes. In parallel, we will report on our aggressive fundraising campaigns including our goal to complete the endowment for the Fund for Academic Medicine (FAMe) by 2022. I hope that all of you will go to our dynamic and recently upgraded website and make a contribution to this fund.

I want to close this letter with a few personal remarks. First, my wife and I became new grandparents a few months ago when our daughter and son-in-law brought baby Nora into the world. The past few months have been wonderful for us and have also led me to reflect on the passage of time. I moved to Emory in 1995 and attended my first Southern Regional Meeting in February of 1996. My daughter was 7 years old and she and her younger brother, along with my wife, traveled with me to that first meeting. My daughter is now an amazing young woman engaged in socially conscious urban renewal in Atlanta, and my son is a second-year resident in Internal Medicine at UT-Southwestern in Dallas. He plans to make a career as an academic clinician-educator, and we could not be more proud of both of our children. The 'southern region' has become home for us, and the SSCI has been a source of joy and rewarding collegial interactions. I have not missed a Southern Regional Meeting since that 'first date' with the SSCI and look forward to seeing everyone at my 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive meeting this coming February. I am slower and certainly much grayer than I was in 1995, but with a record number of young colleagues presenting their work, I know that I will have a spring in my step and the comfort in knowing that the future of the SSCI is a bright one.

Warmest regards,

David M. Guidot, MD  
President, SSCI