

Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the ASPS/ACAPS Resident Education Curriculum: A Model for Collaboration, Adaptation, and Sustainability

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Summary: The Resident Education Curriculum (REC) is one of the most widely recognized learning resources for plastic surgeons in training. The efforts that went into developing this program came from numerous individuals all driven by the same purpose – to create a lasting, up to date repository of all things plastic surgery related. As the program enters its 10th year of existence a closer look at the origins and evaluation is warranted. (*Plast Reconstr Surg Glob Open* 2020;8:e3131; doi: 10.1097/GOX.0000000000003131; Published online 25 November 2020.)

In the late spring of 2007, members of the Association of Academic Chairmen of Plastic Surgery (AACPS, now ACAPS) gathered in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for the annual business meeting. At the board of directors meeting, rising AACPS president Rod Rohrich commissioned the Education Committee to develop a national curriculum for plastic surgery education. At that time, the AACPS Education Committee was led by 2 young educators in plastic surgery: Joe Losee (Chair) and Jeff Janis (Co-Chair) (Fig. 1). Over the next 2 years, they would work to develop what is currently known as the Resident Education Curriculum (REC). A key element to the development of the REC was creating a partnership with ASPS/Plastic Surgery Foundation. Then ASPS Board Vice President Keith Brandt helped bring the resources and reach of ASPS to the REC during this early conceptual phase. In 2009, at the AACPS annual meeting, Losee presented the board with the ambitious blueprints for the resident curriculum committee (Fig. 2). To move forward, the fledgling committee acquired administrative support from John Everson, the then Director of Online Learning for ASPS, who began to set up the web-based platform that would house the REC. To generate the content for the REC, a number

of well-known surgeons from across the country were recruited to lead subcommittees. An excerpt from the initial request for content reveals the complexity of the task:

Dear ASPS/AACPS Curriculum Committee Members,

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Curriculum Committee. As you know by now, the AACPS and ASPS have joined forces to develop a standardized and comprehensive plastic surgery educational vehicle. To this end, a comprehensive outline of plastic surgery topics or curricula has been developed divided into seven (7) sections (head and neck, upper extremity, aesthetics, etc). Seven (7) subcommittees have been gathered, each addressing an individual section. Each subcommittee has a co-chair from the ASPS and AACPS. The subcommittee co-chairs have been charged with developing an individual standardized module for each of the many topics within their section (ie module topic: cleft lip, section: head and neck). Sub-committee members will be assigned a topic and asked to create a module for that topic.

With the efforts of numerous volunteer committee members, the content for the REC was built. Under John Everson's guidance, and with the administrative help of Melanie Kirk and Stephanie Hermes, the REC would be built and housed as a component of another fledgling ASPS initiative known as the Plastic Surgery Education Network. At that time, Greg Evans had worked to develop this web-based educational forum for plastic surgeons in practice. It made sense to conform the REC modules and content to the Plastic Surgery Education Network. In the early phases, the initial content for each module included a set of objectives, a pre-test, a reading assignment, a didactic lecture, an oral board type cases, and a post-test. After much work and troubleshooting, on April 1, 2011,

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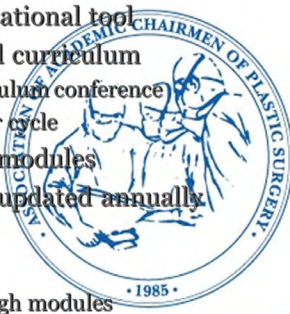


Jeff E. Janis, MD

Fig. 1. Photographs of Joseph E. Losee, MD and Jeff E. Janis, MD, who were asked to develop a national education curriculum. This would become what is known as the “resident education curriculum” (REC). Now featured on the EdNet platform, the REC has over 2000 users.

Concept

- On-line educational tool
- Standardized curriculum
 - Core Curriculum conference
 - 3 and 6 year cycle
- Topic based modules
- Maintained/updated annually
- Residents
 - Password
 - Work through modules



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Fig. 2. A slide taken from Dr. Losee’s 2009 presentation at AACPS, outlining the initial concepts of the REC committee.

the Plastic Surgery Education Network and REC went live with version 1.0.

In the first few years, Losee and Janis were joined by Don Mackay to help promote and launch the REC. Additional contributions from Ed Luce and financial grants from the Hoopes Foundation helped boost the content and enhance modules. Each year a specific goal was established to update or modify the modules (eg, adding better audio or adding more surgical videos). As the committee evolved, it became important to involve more members. Specifically, the committee thrived off the energy and efforts of early career surgeons to build on the original module constructs. With the addition of

a 5-star rating system, it became possible to have the resident users evaluate the modules and suggest modifications. In this way, the REC became a living document, always evolving and updating. As committee members rotated on and off, efforts were made to capture the contributions of previous module leaders. Analogous to Wiki concepts, the REC modules evolved to become conglomerate pieces of work from numerous authors. As the quality and user interface of the REC improved, numerous residency programs began to utilize the REC as the backbone of their didactic programs. This was made especially relevant by the trainee progress tracking feature available to program directors. Residents not only were using the system to learn, but gained a more important role in content creation and validation, as REC committee members.

To ensure sustainability, Losee and Janis developed an ascension plan that assured each module had a chair and co-chair so that programmatic memory would not be lost as committee members rotated off. The committee chairs would ascend FROM the position of module authors to maintain continuity. In this way, the REC was one of the first of its kind in either ASPS or ACAPS to function using an ascension model. This eventually became the template for the current ASPS Committee Policy, which has enacted this blueprint for just about all committees.

Now with over 100 modules, the REC is a comprehensive go-to resource for US and International residents with nearly 2000 users. In 2018, with the administrative support from Adriana Rivera, the platform was modified and became known as ASPS EdNet. The program was further expanded to include a vast array of surgical videos, landmark papers, clinical cases, and updated test questions.

While the culture around learning has evolved, the REC has adapted to become more interactive and engaging. As one of the first web-based surgical education vehicles, the REC has led the way in its innovative approach to teaching and sustainability. Now entering its 10th year in existence, the REC has proved to be a valuable offering to future ASPS member plastic surgeons.

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