



#### CAST Committee

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Charles Branch, Jr. MD  
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#### Members

Perry Ball, MD; Neurocritical Care

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Joanna Fifi, MD; CNS-Endovascular, NESAC Chair

Doug Kondziolka, MD; Functional

Linda Liau, MD; Tumor

Cormac Maher, MD; Pediatrics

Vincent Traynelis, MD; Spine

Griffith Harsh IV, MD (RRC Chair Ad Hoc)

Dan Resnick, MD (ABNS Secretary Ad Hoc)

Dear Colleagues:

Happy New Year! We are writing to share a few of the accomplishments of CAST, a committee of the SNS, in 2020 and to inform you of upcoming changes in 2021.

#### 2020 Accomplishments:

1. The **administrative support of CAST** moved to the ABNS office in Q 3 of 2019. Linda Kvall-Boynton, CAST Coordinator, has done an extraordinary job in making the transition as smooth as possible.
2. Check out our **website** at [sns-cast.org](https://sns-cast.org).
3. A **new software platform, SM Apply**, is being used to accept, review, manage and track CAST fellowship applications. The process is proving to be more efficient for applicants and reviewers.
4. **Annual fellowship program reports** were required for the first time in 2020 and proved to be very useful. The process is intended to be constructive, with each program being given ample time to correct any deficiencies. This should avoid the possibility for accreditation to be withdrawn. Each CAST sub-committee is revising the list of required information. The new data submission requirements will be sent out to programs by Spring, 2021.

*We welcome your feedback on how to continue to improve the application and annual review process. E-mail [CAST@abns.org](mailto:CAST@abns.org)*

5. The Neuro-Endovascular Surgery Accreditation Committee (NESAC) met throughout the year and **revised the requirements for Central Nervous System Endovascular Surgery (CNS-ES) fellowships**. One change is to allow a 2-year option for programs that want to include preliminary training in catheter skills as part of the designated fellowship time. This will be helpful to programs that want to train graduates of foreign programs who require J1 visas through the ECFMG. Another change is the requirement for having ACGME diagnostic radiology residency rather than a neuroradiology fellowship. This is now consistent with the ACGME program requirements for endovascular fellowships. A third change is to allow graduates of neurological surgery, neurology or radiology training programs to have access to CNS-ES fellowships. The prior requirement was to have board certification in neurology or radiology. All graduates of CNS-ES fellowships must eventually achieve primary board certification via their respective boards as one requirement to achieve a Recognition in Focused Practice in CNS-ES.
6. **Neuro-critical care has a committee that is revising standards and reviewing applications for fellowships in neuro-critical care**. The Neuro-Critical Care Accreditation Committee is chaired by Dr. Perry Ball (Dartmouth Department of Neurosurgery). The new standards are expected to roll out in January 2020 and will be posted on the CAST website.

## **2021 Blueprint:**

### **1. Elimination of ADS data submission**

As a result of several of the accomplishments listed prior, it has been decided that, at the end of this current academic year, CAST will no longer require fellowship programs to submit data into ACGME's ADS. This should eliminate some of the administrative burden experienced by CAST fellowship coordinators and directors, while allowing CAST to review data necessary for continued accreditation. Instructions on exactly what will be expected in annual reports to CAST will be sent out prior to the June 2021 due date.

### **2. New CAST Skull Base Fellowship**

After extensive discussion with members of the Cerebrovascular and Tumor Joint Sections of the AANS and CNS, a new fellowship program category was developed: Skull Base Surgery. Specific program requirements will be posted on the CAST website in early 2021 with instructions on how to apply for accreditation. Existing programs in Cerebrovascular Surgery or Surgical Neuro-oncology may wish to transition to a Skull Base fellowship.

### **3. CAST Fee increases**

As a way to maintain and grow the CAST fellowship accreditation program, the Society of Neurological Surgery Executive Council, approved fee increases for 2021. There will be an annual program management fee of \$250. The fee for a new fellowship program accreditation application will be \$2,500 rather than \$2,000. The five-year fellowship renewal fee will be \$1,250, increased from \$1,000. A paid renewal fee will cover the annual fee for that year.

Together we will continue to improve neurological surgery sub-specialty fellowship program accreditation.

CAST is committed to maintaining standards of training in neurosurgical sub-specialties and to support outstanding training environments for fellows who wish to pursue subspecialty training.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Barbaro, MD; CAST Chair



Charles L. Branch Jr., MD; CAST Secretary/Treasurer