

YES Newsletter—October

Get to Know Your YES Clinical Committee Member: Austin Nakatsuka, MD

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Why did you go into ophthalmology?

I found ophthalmology by accident on a med student rotation in American Samoa where I saw this awesome surgeon, Dr Oo, doing extra cap cataracts. But I almost didn't apply because I was worried about the competitive job market. Thankfully, I made the right choice, pursued ophtho, and was completing my second fellowship when the unthinkable happened and my fellowship director unexpectedly passed away. Two weeks before the end of my fellowship I received a phone call offering the chance to stay at Moran. I was suddenly faced with two choices: A stable job waiting back home in Hawaii vs an academic career in the Mountain West (where I had never previously lived prior to fellowship). After a whirlwind of emotional phone calls, prayers, and plane rides-I took a risk. And now I get to do just about any surgery I could possibly want (congenital glaucoma, iris prostheses, new glaucoma devices in animals, transplants, lasik, dislocated iols, etc. etc.) in the most supportive academic environment one could have.



My point is: Don't ever pass up on what you love just because it's not the "safe" option. Doing so would've cost me the best job in the world.

If you weren't an ophthalmologist or even a doctor, what career would you like to try?

Owning and managing a rental car company that rents functional (not necessarily aesthetically pleasing) cars at very low rates and also a real estate business that does

the same thing with a focus primarily on med students and trainees doing away rotations or 1-year fellowships.

What do you look forward to most at the ASCRS Annual Meeting?

One great joy in my life was going to the Annual Meeting in Las Vegas in 2021 after it had been cancelled in 2020 from the COVID lockdown. I was dying to go back to a meeting (particularly that one), and I think the reason why is I just wanted to be there and see people—the big names I idolized, the friends I love being with, even the reps trying to sell me FLACS. That's the thing about in-person ASCRS meetings, you JUST HAVE TO BE THERE to experience everything about it, which for me is the people.

What place is still on your travel wish list?

The Normandy beaches, Warsaw, Jerusalem, Nanking, Mozambique, Rwanda, Gettysburg. History happened in these places; people suffered and died here. There are so many more, of course, and one could argue that virtually everywhere something of significance happened, but the ones I know of, I want to be able to smell the mountain pines, see the vivid color and pixels of the blades of grass, breathe the dry dust of the people who lived and died in those places so I can understand deeper and wider beyond what you read in a book or watch in a movie. And one day my children may understand and realize there is a better way to treat people.

What's your go-to movie theater snack?

I was donating platelets in college and while sitting there for 2 hours, I was watching *Blood Diamond* (with Leo DiCaprio), and for some reason the needle in my arm was pushing against a vein the entire time. The discomfort I felt from that needle evoked a series of abnormally exaggerated emotional responses throughout the movie and is likely one of the reasons that it is a top movie choice of mine. I was drinking a Sprite. And that is why my answer is Sprite.

Now Accepting 2025 Resident Excellence Award Nominations

The ASCRS Foundation is accepting **nominations** for its 2025 [Resident Excellence Awards](#).

This award [recognizes 10 exemplary residents](#) with consideration given for performance in research, patient care, leadership, and education. Awardees receive a travel grant, 4 nights' accommodation, complimentary meeting registration, and invitations to select leadership and social events at the 2025 ASCRS Annual Meeting.

Submit a nomination by November 8.

“ASCRS is a special meeting. It is enriching and exciting to be surrounded by leaders in our field. It is such a great blend of learning, engagement, and of course, FUN! It was my first time attending, but you can count on seeing me there from now on. I feel extremely grateful to be an ophthalmologist, and this meeting really jump started an

internal excitement/motivation to keep it going! Thank you to the Foundation for considering me and supporting the [Resident Excellence Award] winners every year. I feel so lucky!” —Mahsaw Mansoor, MD, 2024 Resident Excellence Award recipient

Register for the Annual Meeting!

Registration for the [2025 ASCRS Annual Meeting](#), April 25–28 in Los Angeles, California, is now open!

Registration is complimentary for residents and U.S. fellows and is discounted for surgeons in their first 5 years of practice. In recent years, ASCRS has greatly expanded YES-specific offerings at the Annual Meeting. You won't want to miss it!

Submit Your Video for the Annual Meeting

The YES Clinical Committee is in search of case videos for the [Good to Great Surgeon: Working Through Complications Video Symposium](#), taking place at the [2025 ASCRS Annual Meeting](#) in Los Angeles, California, April 25–28.

Submissions are open now through **January 17**.

The Good to Great Surgeon: Complicated and Challenging Cases Video Symposium session, which will take place April 26 from 8:00–9:30 a.m., is an interactive video symposium where presenters, including current residents and fellows, showcase difficult cases and complications that occur in the OR. A panel of surgeons then provides guidance for these complicated cases. Each of the cases will be followed by didactic video pearls concerning complex cases.

[Click here](#) for more information, submission instructions, and other video case submission opportunities. Contact Sheela Patel (spatel@ascrs.org) with any questions.

Attend an ASCRS Live! Event

[ASCRS Live!](#), the new educational dinner series making its way to several cities across the U.S., has open registrations in the following states.

- [San Diego, California](#): November 7, 6:30 p.m.
- [Charlotte, North Carolina](#): November 14, 6:30 p.m.

[Learn more](#) about these CME and networking events.

[ASCRS Live! online modules](#) are free. Find and watch all three CME programs now!

Take Advantage of These Educational Opportunities with ASCRS

- **YES Connect Webinars:** “Speak with Confidence and Command the Stage: A Physician's Public Speaking Webinar,” with moderator Emily Schehlein, MD, and presenters Dagny Zhu, MD, John Berdahl, MD, Rob Melendez, MD, Paul Singh, MD, and Lorraine Provencher, MD, is online now. Access this new webinar [here](#).
- **Ophthalmology Quicksand Chronicles—Eureka Moments! Podcast:** Hosts Nicole Fram, MD, and Elizabeth Yeu, MD, welcomed guest Sumitra Khandelwal, MD, in the [latest episode](#) of their popular ASCRS podcast. [Watch the episode](#).
- **ASCRS Grand Rounds:** The latest episode [“A Different White Dot Syndrome”](#) is on demand.

Helpful Links and Resources:

[ASCRS YES Membership](#)

[ASCRS YES Education](#)

[ASCRS Clinical Education](#)

[ASCRS Online Tools](#)

Official YES Hashtag: #ASCRSYES

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