



Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma
Advancing Science, Fostering Relationships, and Building Careers

**Summary of May 31 – June 6, 2015
Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management
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*Dr. Brownstein was the recipient of the 2015 scholarship jointly sponsored by
EAST and the American College of Surgeons.*

*For more information on this annual scholarship, please visit
<http://www.east.org/career-management/scholarships>*

The Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management was a pivotal experience for me in my development as an academic surgeon. This summary is a brief overview of my reflections of the impact the course and subsequent ACS Advocacy and Leadership Summit had on me. Keep in mind as you read this, my situation is unique in that while I'm chronologically in the middle of my career, I technically am at the beginning. Just five years after reentering into the practice of surgery, and specifically acute care/trauma and critical care after retiring to raise my children presents unique challenges. I do not fit neatly into any one category and have had to seek out opportunities to maximize my learning curve on all fronts.

The initial program advanced my understanding of the state of health care today in terms of economics, politics and complex operational issues. While everyone else in the course had been participating as surgeons as these issues were unfolding, I had been witnessing the previous decade as a consumer not a provider. I appreciated the review much like I did the review courses I took regarding the clinical and technical practice of surgery prior to reentering formally. With that foundation, I have found myself better equipped to speak the language so to speak in meetings and interactions with my division chief, department chair and other leaders in the health care system I work in. I also have a greater appreciation for the complexities facing the hospital administration and Dean. Overtime, I have developed a positive reputation with those entities, which I could not have done without this training. I also anticipate this educational experience has facilitated consideration for me to have leadership roles at my institution.

There were leadership and management topics covered that also helped me accelerate my learning curve in terms of being more aware of my surroundings and how best to navigate. Acutely in the year of this scholarship, contract negotiations came up in several arenas and I had a much better foundation and approach thanks to this course. One area I have come to realize that I enjoy is collaboration across department. I know the information I received on leadership style, conflict resolution and relational coordination will be critical as I work to develop new programs.

The Leadership and Advocacy Summit in April was terrific. Both components augmented our initial exposure on these topics last June. I was particularly glad to see that residents are encouraged to go and have since discussed with our program director the need to facilitate our department sending a resident annually. The mechanism by which the ACS advocates on Capitol Hill is a model I want to emulate at a state level. I have initiated some conversations regarding how best to do this with trauma specific outreach. These have just been at the local level but perhaps could evolve into something EAST or the ACS COT could facilitate. I am still in the initial phase of establishing my area of focus at my institution so as yet I have not found the right arena for my efforts in these two organizations. I hope to continue to attend the Leadership and Advocacy Summits annually as it will be a means to further advance my skills and guide me in focusing my efforts.

One suggestion I have for the program is to develop some mechanism for graduates of this effort to be linked to facilitate future growth and networking. One of the most treasured part of this scholarship was the opportunity to meet the other people attending the course. Perhaps having "reunion" events at the annual ACS meetings and then specifically at any of the sponsoring societies' annual meetings. Also linking all participants together with a user friendly electronic directory and perhaps including their area(s) of interest that could be edited as people evolve/take new positions etc. The greatest challenge is how to sustain momentum in the context of busy clinical practice and the day to day challenges we all face trying to take care of our patients, our families, ourselves and build a career, service to our institutions and scholarship endeavors.

I continue to recommend the Executive Leadership Program and specifically the Policy Scholarship to colleagues as the benefits are significant in personal growth and development.