Dear Fellow Neurologic Educators,

It is indeed my honor to serve for the next 2 years as the chair of the Consortium of Neurology Clerkship Directors (CNCD). I have been involved with the American Academy of Neurology in a number of roles and can say with certainty that the AAN is strongly committed to medical student education and educators. The medical student pipeline is a major priority of the education committee and as you may be aware, the AAN recently received a generous grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to study this specific issue. The goal of the grant is to increase the number of students entering neurology by 25% and the aims include determining specific factors that lead medical students to choose neurology as a career, to develop engaging multimedia resources to inspire students to pursue careers in neurology and to expand and enhance SIGN. As clerkship directors, we are on the front lines of the pipeline issue, often advising students when they are at their decision making point. The work that comes out of this grant will hopefully assist us to better understand the factors that motivate, or perhaps even detract, our students from selecting neurology as a career. Additionally, the work of the grant will provide us with some additional resources to which we can direct our students.

One of my major goals as chair of the CNCD is for us to not just focus on the education we provide students, but on how we can develop our own skills as educators and foster our own academic careers. Whether we are rookies or veterans, there is always more to learn about how to run a great neurology clerkship. Only by sharing best practices can we advance our skills as neurology educators. It is also critically important that we consider our own career development arc. Being an academic educator is about clinical teaching but also curriculum development, education administration and for many of us, education research. These are bona-fide academic pursuits and can be used, if documented properly, to help us get promoted. Teaching at the clerkship director level should be more than a “side-job,” it can and should be a mechanism by which we can advance up the academic ladder. That said, CNCD leadership are working to develop a “re-boot camp” for clerkship directors as part of the 2017 CD/PD conference clerkship director’s afternoon breakout session and likely for 2018 will develop a workshop on career development through clerkship leadership. These ideas are in the planning stages and I would love to hear your ideas about these sessions. I would love to have some clerkship directors to help me develop these concepts into reality, so please reach out to me if you are interested!

I look forward to working with all of you over the next few years. As you can see I think exciting times lie ahead and only together can we achieve success. Feel free to email me anytime at jos9046@med.cornell.edu.

Joe Safdieh, MD, FAAN