



5441 E. Williams Circle · Tucson, Arizona 85711-7412
Phone (520) 790-2900 · Fax (520) 790-3200 · www.theabr.org

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Brent J. Wagner, MD

President
Reading, Pennsylvania

Vincent P. Mathews, MD

President-Elect
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Robert M. Barr, MD

Secretary/Treasurer
Charlotte, North Carolina

Cheri L. Canon, MD

Birmingham, Alabama

Donald J. Flemming, MD

Hershey, Pennsylvania

Lisa A. Kachnic, MD

Nashville, Tennessee

John A. Kaufman, MD

Portland, Oregon

J. Anthony Seibert, PhD

Sacramento, California

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Donald J. Flemming, MD

Chair
Hershey, Pennsylvania

Diagnostic Radiology

Sanjeev Bhalla, MD

St. Louis, Missouri

David B. Larson, MD

Stanford, California

Desiree E. Morgan, MD

Birmingham, Alabama

Mary S. Newell, MD

Atlanta, Georgia

M. Elizabeth Oates, MD

Lexington, Kentucky

Stephen. F. Simoneaux, MD

Atlanta, Georgia

Christopher P. Wood, MD

Rochester, Minnesota

Radiation Oncology

Kaled M. Alektiar, MD

New York, New York

Brian J. Davis, MD, PhD

Rochester, Minnesota

Patricia H. Hardenbergh, MD

Edwards, Colorado

Andrea K. Ng, MD, MPH

Boston, Massachusetts

Interventional Radiology

Anne M. Covey, MD

New York, New York

M. Victoria Marx, MD

Los Angeles, California

James B. Spies, MD, MPH

Washington, District of
Columbia

Medical Physics

Jerry D. Allison, PhD

Augusta, Georgia

Kalpana M. Kanal, MD

Seattle, Washington

Matthew B. Podgorsak, PhD

Buffalo, New York

November 19, 2018

Association for Directors of Radiation Oncology Programs (ADROP) c/o Allen Chen, MD
President, Executive Committee

Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology (ARRO) c/o Jenna Kahn, MD, BS
Chair, ARRO Executive Committee

Society of Chairs of Academic Radiation Oncology Programs (SCAROP) c/o
Benjamin Movsas, MD, FASTRO, President

ABR senior volunteers and staff appreciated the opportunity to meet with those ADROP and ARRO members in attendance at the recent ASTRO meeting in San Antonio, and a subsequent meeting with members of the ARRO Executive Committee. We believe that many misconceptions were clarified and issues of mutual concern aired. At those meetings questions were raised and future steps considered, and we felt that a follow-up note regarding specifics of those discussions would be beneficial.

- **Development of core curricula for Physics and Radiation and Cancer Biology:** The ABR has no responsibility or authority to develop curriculum and does not provide educational content, but we certainly have a critical interest in this issue. At an ASTRO-ABR Leadership meeting in San Antonio an agreement was reached that ASTRO would convene a panel to update the existing Physics Core Curriculum and a second panel to develop a Radiation and Cancer Biology Core Curriculum. These panels will include appropriate stakeholders and we have encouraged ASTRO to include ARRO representatives in the process. Our understanding is that steps to accomplish these goals have begun, with an anticipation of rapid completion and availability. The consensus-developed curricula will be linked on the ABR website.

Valerie P. Jackson, MD, Executive Director

Associate Executive Directors

Interventional Radiology
Anne C. Roberts, MD

Medical Physics
G. Donald Frey, PhD

Radiation Oncology
Paul E. Wallner, DO

- **Improvement in the ABR basic science study guides:** Our Physics and Radiation and Cancer Biology Committee chairs have committed to a timely review of the available guides with an eye to improving their usefulness to candidates by providing greater specificity and granularity to the material. We anticipate completion of that process shortly after completion of the core curriculum development noted above. The revised study guides will be posted in full on the ABR website as will reference sources from which exam items will be developed.
- **Timing of administration of the 2019 Physics, Radiation and Cancer Biology and Clinical Oncology qualifying exams:** The ABR understands that administering the exams on successive days may increase candidate anxiety, but the current dependence on the nationally disseminated PearsonVUE test centers severely limits flexibility with regard to scheduling. As we indicated in San Antonio, we did approach PearsonVUE for consideration of a greater interval between the exam administration in 2019, and this option was rejected by them. We have rescheduled the 2020 exams to provide two weeks separation between the basic science and clinical exams. The potential to administer all (or selected) qualifying exams at the ABR Test Center in Tucson is being investigated. This centralization of administration under the ABR roof could provide greater flexibility in scheduling, but as we noted, might cause significant hardship to candidates, requiring travel to, and lodging in Tucson. We await further insight from ARRO and its constituents before we proceed any further with consideration of this option.
- **Development of greater granularity of basic science categories to optimize ability of candidates to understand their strengths and weaknesses:** As we indicated, we are committed to improving candidate's ability to improve performance. We will provide additional granularity in our method of reporting basic science category performance, but as we explained previously, the exam blueprint is such that some of these categories will have so few items as to make analysis of individual performance impossible. Re-classification of the categories will be available on the ABR website before Dec. 31, 2018.

- **Analysis of candidate performance on old versus new basic science items:** As is always the case, some exam items have been previously used and have available performance statistics. This review is being undertaken and results should be available before Dec. 31, 2018. The results of this analysis will be provided to the respective executive committees through their senior volunteer leaders.

We encourage appropriate dialogue to improve transparency of the exam process going forward, but would encourage all ADROP, ARRO and SCAROP constituents to carry out this dialogue through their respective organization representatives. Do not hesitate to contact us if you desire additional clarification.

Sincerely,

Brent J. Wagner, MD
President, ABR Board of Governors

Lisa A Kachnic, MD
Immediate Past President, ABR Board of Governors

cc. Valerie P. Jackson, MD, ABR
Laura Thevenot, BS, ASTRO