

## CONTENTS

Letter from the Chair .....2  
 Board Member Highlight .....2  
 Certification News .....3  
 Examination Schedule .....3  
 Diplomate Highlight.....4  
 Accreditation News .....5  
 Program Director Highlight .....5  
 Newly Accredited Programs....6  
 Staff.....7

### UCNS Chair

Paul M. Vespa, MD

### Secretary/Treasurer

Imad T. Jarjour, MD

### Directors

Robert J. Baumann, MD

José Biller, MD

David J. Fink, MD

Deborah I. Friedman, MD

Andrew B. Lassman, MD

Laszlo L. Mechtler, MD

Paul A. Nyquist, MD

For more information about the UCNS, visit the UCNS website at [www.ucns.org](http://www.ucns.org).

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties is to provide for accreditation and certification with the goal of enhancing the quality of training for physicians in neurologic subspecialties and the quality of patient care.*

## *The Tenth Anniversary and Beyond*

By John Kohring, UCNS Executive Director

As we move into the fall of our tenth anniversary year, this is a good time to celebrate our recent success and reflect on the challenges that lie ahead.

Since the spring, we have accredited 14 new fellowships in eight subspecialties. This brings the total of UCNS-accredited programs to 120. The spring accreditation application deadline (June 1) has passed. We received 16 new applications for accreditation. In short, interest in accreditation of fellowships continues to be strong. The deadlines for submitting applications for our three 2013 certification examinations have passed. The total number of applications was 868, which substantially exceeded our projections. If past performance on these examinations is any measure, our total number of diplomates will exceed 2,000 by the end of the year. Strong 2013 accreditation and certification revenues mean that we should see a substantial year-end surplus. This is cause for celebration.



*States with UCNS-Accredited Programs*



*States with UCNS Diplomates*

Despite our success in 2013, the future will be challenging. Because insurers and providers of electronic health records systems have been accustomed to recognizing only American Board of Medical Specialties member board certification, some diplomates have encountered difficulties receiving adequate compensation for work in their subspecialties. The UCNS Board of Directors has recognized this problem and is reviewing steps that we can take to address it. We will seek the assistance of the American Academy of Neurology and other partners as we move forward with this initiative.

## UCNS Diplomates Encouraged to Complete Survey

On October 1, we sent a short survey to diplomates as part of our ongoing effort to better understand their needs. If you have received the survey, please take a moment to complete it; your responses will be helpful to us as we develop our strategies for the future.

### Important Dates

**October 21, 2013**  
UCNS Accreditation Council Meeting

**December 1, 2013**  
Accreditation application deadline for spring 2014 review

**February 1, 2014**  
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry certification examination applications available

**November 8, 2013**  
UCNS Board of Directors Meeting

**January 1, 2014**  
Headache Medicine certification examination applications available

## Letter from the Chair



Paul M. Vespa, MD,  
FCCM, FAAN

Since our spring newsletter, there has been a new addition to the UCNS Board of Directors. Paul Nyquist, MD, MPH, has been elected to serve a two-year term as the representative of the Neurocritical Care (NCC) subspecialty. Dr. Nyquist, Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery, Neurology, Anesthesiology, and Assistant Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins, replaces Anthony A. Amato, MD, FAAN, who completed his term as the representative of the Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology subspecialty.

I also want to welcome Lori A. Schuh, MD, FAAN, whom I have appointed chair of the Accreditation Council. Dr. Schuh is Vice President of Academic Affairs at Spectrum Health in Michigan. She replaces David Good, MD, FAAN, who completed his term at the end of May.

At the spring meeting of the Board of Directors, we discussed the challenges that face UCNS as we enter our second decade, including the obstacles that some UCNS diplomates face in being adequately compensated for their subspecialty services. I appointed a task force to review this matter. In addition, we will be reaching out to our constituents and neurology leadership to learn more about how we can help overcome these obstacles. We have recently sent out a survey to learn more about our diplomates' experiences with reimbursement. We will use the results of this survey to develop our strategic response to this challenge. I will update you on our progress in future issues of *UCNS News*.



Paul M. Vespa, MD, FCCM, FAAN

---

## UCNS to Present at ANA Annual Conference

UCNS Executive Director John Kohring will speak at the Neurology Chair Development Course being sponsored by the Association of University Professors of Neurology.

The course will be offered at the American Neurological Association's Annual Meeting in New Orleans on October 14. Mr. Kohring's presentation, *UCNS and Subspecialization in Neurology*, is a part of the course *Post-Residency Training in Neurology*.

## Board Member Highlight — Laszlo L. Mechtler, MD



Laszlo L. Mechtler, MD

**Laszlo L. Mechtler, MD**, Medical Director of the Neuro-oncology Department and the Headache Center at Dent Neurologic Institute and Associate Professor of Neurology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, is currently serving on the UCNS Board of Directors, representing the Neuroimaging subspecialty.

### Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of neurology?

My father inundated my childhood with stories of how our family came from a long list of doctors. In fact, I still have my great-great-great-grandfather's medical diploma from 1865 on my office wall. My parents reminded me daily about how they were unable to pursue the noble field of medicine in Hungary because of World War II; an event which forced their families to immigrate to Australia. Here my father became an auto mechanic and it is where I was born and raised. Until my early twenties, I worked with my brother and father as an auto mechanic in Buffalo, NY, where my family had relocated. Although I truly feel that being a physician is a "calling," the long and difficult hours working on cars nudged me into the field of medicine.

Since that time, I have pursued my "calling" with passion. I chose the field of neurology because my first conscious memory of any disease state was my cousin's passing due to a brain tumor. Hence, I became interested in Neuro-oncology. During my residency, I was fortunate to have trained with Dr. William Kinkel and Dr. Larry Jacobs; both pioneers in the field of Neuroimaging (NI) and past presidents of the American Society of Neuroimaging (ASN). Their unyielding opinion that Neuroimaging is a fundamental and an indispensable part of the practice of neurology has been engraved in my psyche.

*Continued on page 3*

# Certification News

## Letter from the Certification Council Chair



Gregory Gruener, MD,  
MBA

We are winding down 2013, and what a year it has been! I am amazed to report that 748 physicians applied to take the Neurocritical Care examination, far exceeding even our grandest projections. The strong turnout demonstrates the value of the UCNS certificate.

In addition to reviewing applications, the Certification Council has been working with the Board to implement several policy initiatives. As the practice track winds down for several of our subspecialties, UCNS has launched its new faculty diplomate program. This program may allow some faculty members of UCNS-accredited programs to sit for certification examinations even if they do not meet the current eligibility criteria. Certification earned under this program remains in effect only if the diplomate remains in his or her UCNS fellowship faculty appointment. More details can be found on the UCNS website at <http://www.ucns.org/globals/axon/assets/10375.pdf>.

Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA

## 2014 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Headache Medicine	April 15, 2014	October 6-10, 2014	Pearson VUE
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	May 15, 2014	November 3-7, 2014	Pearson VUE
Neural Repair and Rehabilitation	July 15, 2014	December 14-19, 2014	Pearson VUE

## Headache Medicine Practice Track Pathway Extended

The practice track pathway of eligibility for the Headache Medicine (HM) exam has been extended. The practice track will now close after the 2014 application cycle. After 2014, only those who have completed a UCNS-accredited HM fellowship will be eligible to apply for the examination. Please visit <http://www.ucns.org/go/subspecialty/headache/certification> for more information.

## Board Member Highlight Continued from page 2

### How do you think UCNS benefits the field of neurology?

NI is unique among all neurological subspecialties because of the difficulties neurologists have had pursuing and practicing in the field. Historically, neurologists, who are uniquely qualified to image the nervous system, have been ostracized and excluded from organ-specific imaging. It is important for academic neurology and its leadership to recognize the importance of NI. The UCNS was founded by individuals, such as Dr. Stephen Sergay and Dr. Francis Kittredge, specifically to protect and give legitimacy to subspecialties of neurology, especially NI. The ASN has embraced this model and is fully supportive of UCNS's mission.

The development and accreditation of NI fellowships for neurologists is crucial and imperative for the future of NI. The certification of neurologists who can pursue an academic and clinical career in NI is an undeniable right that neurologists have. UCNS is the vehicle that will make this clinical career path come to fruition.

### Which sponsoring organization do you represent?

Although I represent the American Society of Neuroimaging (ASN) on the UCNS Board, I also have UCNS certification in Neuro-oncology and Headache Medicine. I am the Chief of Neuro-oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute and serve as the Director of the Headache Center at the Dent Neurologic Institute. My multiple UCNS certifications underscore my conviction and belief in the importance of UCNS.

### If you had not chosen medicine, what career would you have chosen and why?

I would have made my father proud as a foreign auto mechanic. However, medicine chose me. What we do is noble. The art of medicine is to be nurtured and handed down to future generations. I take pride in being a part of this mission.

## Diplomate Highlight



*R. Ronan Murphy,  
MBChB*

**R. Ronan Murphy, MBChB**, Assistant Professor in the University of Kentucky Department of Neurology, has an academic affiliation at the Sanders Brown Center of Aging in Lexington, KY. Dr. Murphy's specialty interests include dementia, TBI, stroke and expanding the application of teleneurology.

### **Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the fields of Geriatric Neurology and Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry?**

My interest in cognition and behavior goes back as long as I can remember. This led to my interest in medicine and then neurology specialty training; however it was through clinical experience with patients and families that my interest in geriatric and behavioral neurology really began to mature. Through my neurology practice, I became aware of the difficulties physicians have in recognizing cognitive disease early. This fostered my interest in dementia screening, and in the exciting possibilities for treatment development through research. I also had an intensely personal experience with neurological disease in a family member. I learned greatly from the truly compassionate physicians and other professionals involved, as I was humbled in the role of an overwhelmed family member despite my professional training as a neurologist; I know from discussion with my peers that this experience is not unique. This changed the way I experienced visits with patients enduring neurodegenerative disease in particular, and also with their families. Knowing the family plight from personal experience, I better understood how the current medical model will often fail to live up to the needs and expectations of patients and families. With the increasing burden of dementia, and scarce resources, there is a worsening problem, and research to help us do better is truly urgent. I felt the need to do more to improve my skills, and make a meaningful contribution to the field.

The decision to leave full-time clinical practice and pursue my interest in dementia and behavioral neurology through fellowship training was not an easy one. Leaving a stable clinical practice, while supporting a young family, led to some soul searching and seeking career advice from those I felt were knowledgeable in this field. The professional mentorship I received from Professor James Leverenz at the University of Washington, and Professor Daniel Wilson, then president of the American Neuropsychiatric Association, was invaluable, and I have no regrets about my decision.

### **Why did you decide to seek UCNS certification in multiple subspecialties?**

I felt the process of seeking UCNS certification was helpful in that it provided a framework and improved my fellowship training experience. It helped me seek out the training and educational opportunities that would ensure comprehensive knowledge in the subspecialty. Certification in Geriatric Neurology (GN) and then in Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry (BNNP) seemed a logical progression, as it paralleled the course I took in training to gain an overview of cognition and behavior from a clinical as well as research perspective. My first steps toward more formal specialty training were in stroke and dementia clinical care. Then participating in a dementia clinical research clinic, the GN certification path was obvious. With my training at the VA including significant exposure to TBI and PTSD in particular, the BNNP certification was the next step. The structured curricula for these certifications helped me learn the material more quickly.

### **How has UCNS certification benefited you?**

Beyond the personal satisfaction of achieving the certifications, I feel the standardized examination objectively validated my efforts. This certification demonstrates that the recipient has reached a standard of expertise in a subspecialty area, and can be informative to peers, patients and employers. That being said, I feel that achieving certification is really a gateway to lifelong learning in a subspecialty.

### **When you are not working, what is your favorite vacation destination and why?**

As a novelty-seeking person, I'm tempted to say "somewhere I haven't been before," but in reality any vacation time I get these days is not about where, but with whom. I value every moment with my wife and two children, ages two and three, whether it be in some far-flung destination, or in the back yard.

# Accreditation News

## Letter from the Accreditation Council Chair



Lori Schuh, MD, FAAN

It has been a big year for the Accreditation Council. This is my first letter as Chair and I extend my appreciation on behalf of the Accreditation Council to the leadership and dedication of David Good, MD, FAAN. Dr. Good served on the Accreditation Council for six years, the final two as Chair. Under his thoughtful guidance, the Accreditation Council accomplished much, and I look forward to continuing the work that he started. Earlier this summer, David Gordon, MD, FAAN, also completed his term on the Accreditation Council, and we thank him for his service.

Several new members joined the Accreditation Council this summer. Angela Hays, MD, and Jennifer Kriegler, MD, are representing the Association of University Professors of Neurology and Clifton Gooch, MD, FAAN, is representing the American Neurological Association. Dr. Hays is the Neurocritical Care Program Director at the Medical University of South Carolina, Dr. Kriegler is the Program Director of the Headache Medicine program at the Cleveland Clinic, and Dr. Gooch is the Department Chair at the University of South Florida College of Medicine.

Dr. Hays, Dr. Kriegler, and Dr. Gooch join me and the rest of the distinguished members of the Council as we review the increasing number of programs seeking UCNS accreditation. I am happy to report that as of June 1, 2013, UCNS has accredited programs in all nine of its subspecialties, including accrediting its first programs in Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology and Neural Repair and Rehabilitation. UCNS-accredited programs total 120, with an additional 16 new programs to be reviewed during the upcoming fall agenda. These are impressive numbers and I look forward to continuing to report UCNS's strong progress as my term continues.

Lori Schuh, MD, FAAN

---

## Program Director Highlight



Maria-Carmen Wilson, MD

**Maria-Carmen Wilson, MD**, Director of the Headache & Pain Center at Tampa General Hospital, is the Program Director of the University of South Florida Headache Medicine fellowship.

### Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of Headache Medicine?

I was born and raised in Spain. My initial inclination was not medicine but the study of arts and philosophy. My mother, who was a young widow and a professor in nursing school, advised me that a career in nursing would be a lot better for me, that I was perfectly suited for it. I decided to follow her advice and fell in love with medicine along the way. After I obtained my RN degree I completed my MD. I married an American navy officer stationed in Spain and moved to the US where I trained in neurology followed by a fellowship in pain medicine. I was assigned an article for journal club that discussed advances in the pathophysiology of migraine and the basis for migraine-specific medications. I became extremely interested in the field 20 years ago! Perhaps suffering from migraines myself had something to do with it.

### Why did you choose to seek UCNS accreditation for your program?

To offer a structured program based on adequate competencies and skills, obtaining UCNS accreditation was essential.

### What do you think attracts fellows to your program?

The fact that it was established 20 years ago and is truly multidisciplinary, including an infusion suite, physical therapy, biofeedback, psychology, integrative medicine, and an interventional component. Our fellows interact and cross train with the neurology-based ACGME-accredited pain medicine fellowship. The fact that the program is in beautiful Florida is part of the allure.

### What book is on your night stand right now?

*La Marca del Meridiano* by Lorenzo Silva and *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak. I like to read in both Spanish and English.

## Annual Fees to Increase

The UCNS annual accreditation fee will increase in 2014. This is the first increase by UCNS in accreditation fees, and is necessary to cover administrative costs associated with the rising number of UCNS programs. The annual fee will increase from \$1,150 to \$1,500. Accredited programs pay the annual fee by July 1 every year. This fee increase also affects the new program application fee, which includes the first year's annual fee. This fee will increase from \$3,150 to \$3,500 effective June 1, 2014. The continuing accreditation fee of \$1,000 will not increase.

## Submit Program Changes to UCNS

All programs are reminded that certain program changes must be submitted to UCNS for approval. If you are planning changes in faculty, curriculum, or resources in your UCNS-accredited fellowship, you must notify the Accreditation Council. The program change procedure and template letter are available at <https://www.ucns.org/go/about/program>. Programs failing to notify the UCNS of any changes may be in danger of an adverse accreditation action, up to, and including, loss of accreditation. All changes in program directors, program duration, and certain resources require approval prior to any changes being made to the fellowship directory.

## Apply for UCNS Accreditation by December 1

The deadlines for fellowship programs seeking accreditation have changed. UCNS is now accepting applications until December 1, 2013. Programs approved following this deadline may be accredited as of June 1, 2014. The next deadline for program applications will be June 1, 2014.

## UCNS Accredits New Programs

Congratulations to the following programs that were reviewed during the spring 2013 meeting and received accreditation from the UCNS effective June 1, 2013. A complete list of UCNS-accredited programs is available at <http://www.ucns.org/apps/directory/>. Newly accredited programs and fellowship directors are:

<b>Autonomic Disorders</b>	
Medical College of Wisconsin	Thomas C. Chelimsky, MD, FAAN
National Institutes of Health Clinical Center	David S. Goldstein, MD, PhD
<b>Behavioral Neurology &amp; Neuropsychiatry</b>	
Mount Sinai School of Medicine	Amy S. Aloysi, MD
<b>Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology</b>	
Washington University in St. Louis	Alan Pestronk, MD
<b>Geriatric Neurology</b>	
University of California, Los Angeles	John M. Ringman, MD
<b>Headache Medicine</b>	
University of Miami	Teshamae S. Monteith, MD
Yale University	P. Christopher H. Gottschalk, MD
<b>Neurocritical Care</b>	
North Shore University	David E. LeDoux, MD
University of California, Irvine	Cyrus K. Dastur, MD
University of Mississippi	Hartmut Uschmann, MD
Yale University	Kevin N. Sheth, MD
<b>Neuro-oncology</b>	
Stanford University	Paul G. Fisher, MD
University of Chicago	Rimas V. Lukas, MD
<b>Neural Repair and Rehabilitation</b>	
Weill Medical College of Cornell University/Burke Rehabilitation Hospital	Michael J. Reding, MD

## Questions About UCNS?



Becky Swanson  
Executive Assistant

Becky Swanson is the UCNS Executive Assistant. Diplomates, applicants, and programs calling with general inquiries will usually start by talking with her. If you have a question you would like answered in this section, email her at [bswanson@ucns.org](mailto:bswanson@ucns.org).

### Q: What constitutes a program change for my UCNS-accredited fellowship program?

A: UCNS must be notified and approve any major changes including, but not limited to:

- A change in program director
- A change in institutional sponsorship
- Loss of significant resources including key faculty
- Discontinuation of rotations to participating institutions
- A change in length of program
- A change in complement of fellows

UCNS will forward your information to the Accreditation Council for consideration. UCNS staff will facilitate communication between the Accreditation Council and the program director. UCNS staff will notify the program of the Accreditation Council's decision. Programs *must* notify UCNS of these changes. Failure to do so may result in an adverse accreditation action. Please visit <http://www.ucns.org/go/about/program> for more information.

### Q: Do I need to use the template letters provided by UCNS when applying for certification?

A: Yes. The template letters are designed to provide the Certification Council with verification of the information listed in your application in the most concise way possible. Deviation from the templates may introduce information that is confusing or misleading. Failure to use the language provided in the template letters may result in the denial of your application. Please be sure that all letters are on institution letterhead and contain an appropriate signature.

---

## Staff

UCNS staff is available Monday-Friday to answer your questions regarding subspecialty membership, accreditation, and certification.

### Subspecialty Membership Inquiries

John Kohring, Executive Director, (612) 928-6106 [jkohring@ucns.org](mailto:jkohring@ucns.org)

### Certification Inquiries

Todd Bulson, Certification Manager, (612) 928-6067 [tbulson@ucns.org](mailto:tbulson@ucns.org)

### Accreditation Inquiries

Amanda Carpenter, Accreditation Manager, (612) 928-6065 [acarpenter@ucns.org](mailto:acarpenter@ucns.org)

### General UCNS Inquiries

Becky Swanson, Executive Assistant, (612) 928-6050 [bswanson@ucns.org](mailto:bswanson@ucns.org)

UNITED COUNCIL  
FOR  
NEUROLOGIC  
SUBSPECIALTIES

201 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
[www.ucns.org](http://www.ucns.org)

Newsletter Editor  
John Kohring, UCNS Executive Director  
Tel: (612) 928-6399  
Fax: (612) 454-2750  
Email: [jkohring@ucns.org](mailto:jkohring@ucns.org)

The UCNS is sponsored by five parent organizations:

- American Academy of Neurology  
[www.aan.com](http://www.aan.com)
- American Neurological Association  
[www.aneuroa.org](http://www.aneuroa.org)
- Association of University Professors of Neurology  
[www.aupn.org](http://www.aupn.org)
- Child Neurology Society  
[www.childneurologysociety.org](http://www.childneurologysociety.org)
- Professors of Child Neurology, see also  
[www.childneurologysociety.org](http://www.childneurologysociety.org)

## SUBMIT STORY IDEAS

Any news or story ideas for UCNS readers?

We would like to hear from you. Submit feedback regarding this issue and/or story ideas for future issues to the UCNS Executive Office.

