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For more information about
the UCNS, visit the UCNS
website at 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 neurological subspecialties and the quality of patient care.

UCNS Builds on Foundation of Excellence

As the UCNS enters its seventh year, it continues to build on a strong foundation. Led by former American Academy of Neurology president Stephen Sergay, MB BCh, the founders knew that the UCNS must be credible and transparent to thrive. Accordingly, they called for a governing body that represents not only the five parent organizations but also member subspecialties. A rigorous process for reviewing subspecialty membership applications was established that includes soliciting comments by interested organizations. Subspecialty sponsoring organizations must provide a comprehensive core curriculum, core competencies, and training program requirements that will apply to all accredited programs. The UCNS requires that an accredited program have a sponsoring institution that must assume ultimate responsibility for the program and must meet current Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Institutional Requirements. In order to be eligible to sit for a UCNS certification examination, an applicant must be a

diplomate in good standing of a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Examinations are developed by distinguished committees comprised of experts in the subspecialty. To assure a high degree of reliability, the committees are assisted by independent psychometric consultants.

With these building blocks in place, UCNS has experienced steady growth. Today, UCNS has eight member subspecialties. There are 68 UCNS accredited training programs at North America's finest medical institutions. And the 674 physicians holding UCNS certificates are among the best and brightest in neurologic subspecialties.

In order to serve its constituents better, UCNS has been working on a variety of initiatives described in this newsletter. In addition, UCNS has launched a new, quarterly E-Update to help you stay current on recent developments.

Visit the UCNS Booth at the AAN Annual Meeting

UCNS staff will be on hand at the AAN Annual Meeting in Toronto. Join us at the UCNS booth in the Metro Toronto Convention Centre to have your questions answered and receive information on the accreditation and certification processes, certification and program accreditation applications, and updates on subspecialty members.

UCNS Booth #901 hours:

Monday, April 12 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
 Tuesday, April 13 11:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 Wednesday, April 14 11:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 Thursday, April 15 11:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Important Dates

April 12, 2010: UCNS Board of Directors Meeting

April 15, 2010: Headache Medicine Certification Examination Application Deadline

May 17-18, 2010: Accreditation Council Meeting

May 15, 2010: Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry Certification Examination Application Deadline

July 1, 2010: Accreditation application deadline for fall 2010 review

July 15, 2010: Neurocritical Care Certification Examination Application Deadline

Letter from the Chair



Paul M. Vespa, MD,
FCCM, FAAN

It has been an eventful six months since I became Chair of the UCNS Board of Directors last summer.

Like many organizations, the UCNS has faced challenges during the economic downturn. Revenues in 2009 fell short of expectations, necessitating substantial cuts in expenses. I am happy to report that we were successful in our efforts at cost containment and, while the audit is not yet complete, it appears likely that we will show a small year-end operating surplus.

Since the fall newsletter, there have been some leadership transitions. Allison Brashear, MD, has been elected to serve as the Board Vice-Chair. Imad Jarjour, MD, has been elected to the Board to succeed Leslie Morrison, MD, who stepped down in order to assume greater responsibilities at the University of New Mexico. We thank Dr. Morrison for her many years of service to the UCNS. Thomas Chelimsky, MD, and Daniel Kaufer, MD, have been elected as Board members representing the Autonomic Disorders and Behavioral Neurology and Neuropsychiatry subspecialties, respectively. Recently, David Gordon, MD, joined the Accreditation Council as the representative of AUPN.

As we enter 2010, the UCNS is undertaking several exciting new initiatives. The Accreditation Council is developing an innovative, flexible training program that will allow accredited programs to accommodate research interests and work-life balance needs of fellows. The Certification Council has worked with our psychometric consultants to begin providing enhanced feedback to examinees wishing to better understand the strengths and weaknesses in their examination performance. Staff is working on implementation of a new database management system that will improve the UCNS's ability to facilitate online completion of forms by program directors and examination applicants. Finally, I have appointed a task force to make recommendations regarding a maintenance of certification program for the UCNS. With the strong support of our parent organizations, the UCNS is positioned to move forward with confidence.

Paul M. Vespa, MD, FCCM, FAAN

Accreditation News

Accreditation Annual Fees – Due July 1st

Invoices for accredited program annual fees will begin arriving in May. Payment is due July 1st.

Accreditation Frequently Asked Questions – Now Available

UCNS staff has tracked the most common questions asked by accreditation applicants. Now, answers to these questions have been posted on the UCNS website at www.ucns.org. We hope this will assist applicants by reducing the time spent in preparing materials for Accreditation Council Review and increasing the likelihood of speedy approval.

Program Changes

If you are planning changes in faculty, curriculum, or resources in your UCNS-accredited fellowship, please contact the Accreditation Council. The program change procedure and template letter are available for your convenience on your subspecialty accreditation page at www.ucns.org.

UCNS Accredits New Programs

Congratulations to the following programs that received accreditation from the UCNS beginning July 1, 2010. Newly accredited programs and fellowship directors are:

Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	
University Hospitals Case Medical Center	Alan Lerner, MD
Neurocritical Care	
Cedar Sinai Medical Center	Chad Miller, MD
Jackson Memorial Hospital/University of Miami	Kristine O'Phelan, MD
Johns Hopkins Hospital	Marek A. Mirski, MD
University of Chicago	Jeffrey Frank, MD
California Pacific Medical Center	Jack Rose, MD

Certification News

New Autonomic Disorders and Geriatric Neurology Diplomates

The first Autonomic Disorders and Geriatric Neurology certification examinations were completed in December. The new diplomates are listed on the UCNS website at www.ucns.org.

New Examination Results to Provide Detailed Reporting

In response to feedback from examinees and examination committee members, a new format for examination results reporting has been developed. The Certification Council has implemented the new certification examination results report that is provided to examinees. Features of the new report include:

- Scaled score
- Minimal passing score
- Overall mean score for each of the main content areas as well as examinee's mean score for each of the main content areas
- Quartile reporting identifying examinee's quartile ranking for each of the main content areas

This feedback will provide more detailed information to examinees about individual performance to better assess their strengths and weaknesses.

2010 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Headache Medicine	April 15	October 11–15	Pearson Vue
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	May 15	November 8–12	Pearson Vue
Neurocritical Care	July 15	December 13–17	Pearson Vue

2011 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Neuroimaging	August 15, 2010	January 31—February 4	Pearson Vue
Neuro-oncology	January 15	July 11—15	Pearson Vue
Autonomic Disorders	June 15	November 28—December 2	Pearson Vue
Neurocritical Care	July 15	December 5—9	Pearson Vue
Geriatric Neurology	July 15	December 12—16	Pearson Vue

Staff News

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

In December, Tracy King transitioned to a new position in the American Academy of Neurology. We wish Tracy the best of luck in her new position and thank her for her accomplishments in strengthening the UCNS accreditation process. Amanda Carpenter, who was serving as the UCNS Coordinator, has moved into the role of Accreditation Administrator. Becky Swanson joined the UCNS staff in December as the Executive Assistant, replacing Amanda.

UCNS staff:

Membership and Subspecialty Inquiries

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Becky Swanson, Executive Assistant, (651) 695-2716, bswanson@ucns.org



Board Member Highlight – Lawrence S. Honig, MD, PhD, FAAN



Lawrence S. Honig,
MD, PhD, FAAN

Lawrence S. Honig, MD, PhD, FAAN joined the UCNS Board of Directors in 2009. He is an Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology at the Taub Institute for Research on Alzheimer's Disease and the Aging Brain in New York, NY.

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

I started my career as a basic scientist, trained with a PhD in molecular biology. While doing postdoctoral work in developmental neuroscience, I became increasingly interested in the human applications of the fascinating science, and

thought it would be useful to obtain a medical degree! Once in medical training I found it so interesting that I decided I wished to spend part of my professional time practicing clinical medicine. Neurology, the study of the nervous system, seemed by far the most exciting and fascinating area, both as a scientific frontier, and because of our nervous system is most responsible for our personal capabilities and individual identity.

Where did you train and now, currently practice?

I received my PhD at the University of California Berkeley, and my MD at the University of Miami, Florida. My medical internship and neurology residency were both at Stanford University in California. I presently practice at Columbia University Medical Center in the City of New York / New York Presbyterian Hospital.

What was your first reaction to the concept of neurologic subspecialty accreditation and certification?

It seemed very reasonable to have subspecialty recognition in neurology, since other specialties have increasingly recognized subspecialty expertise, and neurology is a particularly broad specialty.

When did you become involved in the discussions regarding neurologic subspecialty accreditation and certification?

During AAN (American Academy of Neurology) section meetings from 2000 to 2003, there were increasing discussions in which I participated, considering mechanisms for subspecialty accreditation and certification.

Why did you become involved with the UCNS?

With the creation of the UCNS, and development of BNNP certification in 2006, my opinions that subspecialty certification

was valuable in neurology had an outlet: I applied for BNNP certification. During the same time period our departmental division applied to become an accredited program in BNNP. Because the UCNS enterprise seemed a valuable enterprise for increasing understanding of neurology, in 2009, I agreed to join the UCNS board as a representative of the Geriatric Neurology section.

What has been the impact of the UCNS since it was established in 2003?

UCNS is still in a growing phase. Most neurologists seem to value the idea of subspecialty recognition, but there is still uncertainty as to the mechanics of the process, the ultimate value of the process, and the meaning of certification in the increasingly complex health care environment.

What impact do you feel the UCNS will have on the future of Neurology?

UCNS has the potential to clarify for our colleagues in other specialties the spectrum of neurological subspecialties, and to provide for patients and colleagues alike an easier path for specialty expertise consultations.

How will the UCNS process be beneficial to both the generalist and the subspecialist?

It is too soon to state what benefits, beyond subspecialty recognition and clarity regarding physician expertise, might be achieved by the UCNS process.

What would you like individuals in neurology and the public to know about the UCNS?

There should be increasing recognition that neurology is not only a complex specialty but involves a wide spectrum of expertise. Just as there is selection of a particular subspecialty ophthalmologist for cataract versus retina versus muscle disorders, it is important to consider subspecialty in selecting a neurological consultant for neurological disorders such as dementia, neuromuscular, or epileptic disorders.

UNITED COUNCIL
FOR
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SUBSPECIALTIES

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The UCNS is sponsored by five parent organizations:

- American Academy of Neurology
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- American Neurological Association
www.aneuroa.org
- Association of University Professors of Neurology,
www.aupn.org
- Child Neurology Society
www.childneurologysociety.org
- Professors of Child Neurology, see also
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.

