

# 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ACEP INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADOR CONFERENCE



**10/15/2016  
Las Vegas**

**Conference Proceedings**

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4th ANNUAL ACEP INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADOR CONFERENCE  
**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The 4th Annual International Ambassador Conference took place on October 15, 2016 in Las Vegas, NV. Proceedings were written to describe the aims and objectives of the conference and share the facilitated discussions that outlined the individual experiences, challenges, and needs of current Ambassadors. From these robust conversations, key themes and findings were generated and lessons learned were synthesized from the broader and smaller group discussions. Finally, concrete recommendations for future areas of focus, future directions for the Ambassador Program, and future conference agenda items were made by the Ambassadors in attendance.

The target audience for this document includes current and potential ACEP Lead, Deputy, and Liaison Ambassadors, Resident Representatives, International Section Leadership and members, and the ACEP Board of Directors. The goal is to provide a report that details the events and outcomes of the conference to describe the current state of the Ambassador Program, understand current Ambassadors' experiences, and prepare for future conferences by identifying ongoing areas for improvement and growth.

## **RATIONALE & BACKGROUND**

The 4th Annual International Ambassador Conference was the result of a 2014 ACEP Section Grant awarded by the ACEP Board of Directors to Dr. Christian Arbelaez through the International Section in 2014. The conference is now funded annually with the main purpose of meeting member or section needs, educating the public, and furthering the advancement of emergency medicine.

### **Overview: ACEP Ambassador Program**

The ACEP Ambassador Program's purpose is to provide ACEP leaders and staff with access to a special network of internationally-oriented member experts who can provide advice and information on issues pertaining to the progress and status of emergency medicine in their assigned countries, and to serve as official representatives of the College to those countries. It boasts over 80 countries represented by internationally recognized ACEP members who are actively participating in their assigned countries and collaborating with emergency medicine leaders and their organizations.

The Ambassador represents the College, assists physicians in a foreign country develop their own emergency medicine specialty or society, and/or helps propagate the specialty within that country or society. The society might be an emergency medicine society, a non-emergency medicine society wishing to advance emergency medicine, a certifying body for the specialty, or an academic group in a country without a society.

The International Section Ambassador Committee has a rigorous selection process for the Ambassador Program. Interested individuals must submit a formal letter requesting consideration for appointment and include detailed information regarding their qualifications in the following areas: history of involvement, recent activities in the country, established relationships and contacts, ties to developing emergency medicine, fluency with primary language, and a disclosure statement for possible conflicts of interest with organizations, companies, and/or political ties. Once selected, the Ambassador is expected to develop and regularly update a report that outlines the state of emergency medicine in their respective country.

The responsibilities of the Ambassador are based on the role's dual purpose of being an ACEP international representative in the host country and as a liaison in the US for ACEP members who are interested in working in those countries. Responsibilities include: provide alerts to ACEP's International Relations Manager about important conferences/events, respond to requests for information from US-based EM physicians or residents who wish to become involved, maintain a current contact list for EM leaders in the country, update ACEP's Observership and Rotations website, represent the College as a public relations link between the country's EM group and ACEP, meet with officials as a facilitator to support the development of EM, participate in teaching activities to enhance EM in the country, and collaborate with other Ambassadors, private groups and academic groups on regional projects to enhance EM in a given region.

### **Project Vision**

The Ambassador role responsibilities combined with the self-driven work produce an active Ambassador Program that provides a far-reaching network of emergency physicians and leaders worldwide. Yet, this comprehensiveness is also the source of limitation. With great focus on individual Ambassador activity and the fact that many work on a volunteer basis, it is logistically difficult to bring the entire program together. By not meeting with one another, there is a missed opportunity for Ambassadors to collaborate with one another. The Annual International Ambassador Conference has provided an active path to providing unity and collaboration within the program. These face-to-face meetings give Ambassadors the opportunity to share their experiences with one another and work as a collective to reach their common goal of advancing emergency care.

## CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The Conference assembled over 80 ambassadors and interested International Section members who represented over 70 countries and ranged vastly in years of experience in their role, in their backgrounds, and emergency medicine experiences. The one-day event precedes the ACEP National Conference in order to maximize attendance.

### Task Force

The 4th Annual International Ambassador Conference took place on October 15th, 2016 in Las Vegas. Lead, Deputy, and Liaison ACEP Ambassadors and Resident Representatives representing 70 countries were present. This document outlines the goals and objectives of the conference and summarizes the major topics discussed as part of the planned agenda as well as those topics and themes that emerged from break-out sessions where attendants were able to discuss and share the needs, challenges and solutions they have encountered in the process of emergency medical care development in their respective countries. Lastly, future directions and goals for the Ambassador Program and the next year's conference are outlined in this report.

#### Committee Members

<i>Christian Arbelaez, MD, MPH, FACEP</i>	<i>Taskforce Chair, Lead of Ambassador for Colombia</i>
<i>David Walker, MD, FACEP</i>	<i>International Section Chair, Current</i>
<i>Janet Lin, MD, FACEP</i>	<i>International Section Immediate Past Chair</i>
<i>Terry Mulligan, DO, FACEP</i>	<i>Ambassador Program, Chair</i>
<i>Dina Gonzales</i>	<i>ACEP Staff Liaison International Relations</i>

#### Countries Represented:

Afghanistan	Argentina
Australia	Austria
Bahrain	Belize
Bhutan	Bolivia
Botswana	Belgium
Brazil	Cameroon
Costa Rica	China
Republic of Congo	Colombia
Dominican Republic	Cuba
El Salvador	Chile
Ethiopia	Egypt
Ecuador	France
Georgia	Germany
Guatemala	Greece
Guyana	Ghana
Honduras	Hungary
India	Haiti
Iran	Iraq
Iceland	Ireland
Israel	Italy
Jamaica	Indonesia
Jordan	Japan
Kuwait	Kenya
Madagascar	Lebanon
Mexico	Malawi
Netherlands	Norway
New Zealand	Nicaragua
Nicaragua	Nepal
Panama	Oman
Peru	Philippines
Poland	Paraguay
Rwanda	Russia
Saudi Arabia	Spain
South Africa	Sweden
South Korea	Switzerland
Taiwan	Sri Lanka
Thailand	Turkey
Uganda	Tanzania
United Arab Emirates	Ukraine
United Kingdom	Venezuela
Zimbabwe	Vietnam

## Conference Objectives

1. To bring together the ACEP International Ambassadors who serve as key liaisons for a global network of over 80 countries and organizations.
2. To further develop the ACEP Ambassador Educational Toolkit so that the Ambassador can continue to educate the country's public and emergency workforce on the mission of ACEP and its global advancement of emergency medicine.
3. To help the International Section better understand and implement short and long-term strategic initiatives that align with the ACEP strategic plan of growing ACEP membership by increasing international membership and *Scientific Assembly* attendance, exploring opportunities for ACEP participation and support of meeting outside of the US, and enhancing involvement with IFEM.

## Expected Conference Benefits

By bringing the Ambassadors together within the communicative environment of facilitated dialogue, anticipated benefits will reach beyond the immediate one-day event.

1. Create a more interactive, global network of Ambassadors.
2. Facilitate the sharing of ideas, innovative programs, and best practices, produce a more robust network of resources, and promote more collaboration between the Ambassadors.
3. Continue to execute an Annual International Ambassador Conference that addresses the current needs of the Ambassadors and the Ambassador Program.

## Agenda

The structure of this one-day conference was designed to generate a focused discussion with clear objectives and expected outcomes. As Ambassador Program Committee Chair member, Dr. Arbelaez led the project planning and worked collaboratively with the International Section and Ambassador Program Committee leadership to define the conference agenda. Ms. Gonzalez provided logistical and administrative support.

### Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda

The morning session began with welcome remarks from ACEP and IFEM leadership. They spoke to Ambassadors about the importance of the program and its ongoing relationship with the organizations, answered questions, and provided the perspective of ACEP and IFEM. Additionally, each attendant introduced his or herself and gave a small update about his or her country to the conference in order to facilitate networking and discussions for the rest of the day.

### ACEP Ambassador Program

To begin, Dr. Arbelaez outlined the Conference objectives and goals of the day within the agenda that would guide the day. To lay the foundation for the day's discussions, he presented the Ambassador's qualifications, roles, responsibilities, and guidelines, the roles of the International Liaison and International Representative, and a review of the Ambassador Country Report structure. Attendees were reminded about the ACEP Ambassador Educational Toolkit developed over the last several years and available online and in USB. The Toolkit is organized by level of country development and includes web-based links and supporting documents. Results of the International Educational Survey were presented. Lastly, a recap of the prior International Ambassador Conferences was presented, as was the current state of global emergency medicine.

### Key Themes from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> International Ambassador Conference

Advocacy	Interaction with other ACEP	Primer for Ambassadors
Certification	sections	Program development
CME/MOUs	Leadership	Promotion
Collaboration/Connection	Liaison and Champions	Public Policy
Cultural sensitivity	Maturity	Redundancy vs. Synergy
Diplomacy	Membership	Regional interaction
Education	Mentorship	Resources
Facilitation	National Standards	Rotations/exchange program
Faculty development	Network	Society group development
Governmental interactions	Niche/Differentiation	Specialty recognition
Influence	Online learning resources	Standardization
Infrastructure	Organizational development	Tiered approach
Incentives	Philosophy	Training efforts
	Presence	

## **Lessons Learned from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> International Ambassador Conferences**

- The Ambassadors expressed a commitment to the development of the Ambassador Program and their country specific initiatives.
- The Ambassadors continue to work towards defining ACEP's unique role and how it can offer value to its members that differs from other international organizations without being perceived solely as representing the United States.
- There is increasing interest in further standardizing and formalizing Ambassador education, training, diplomatic mission, and responsibilities
- The cost of membership, travel, and accommodations continue to be a barrier for international physician membership and country liaison conference participation.
- To fulfill the role of Ambassador, representatives collaborate and build multi-level, diplomatic relationships with all stakeholders to allow countries to utilize ACEP's benefits and resources.
- A synergistic, tiered approach based on the maturity of the current EM program and the country's context and infrastructure will enable Ambassadors to help develop EM at the program, organizational, and governmental levels that is both culturally sensitive and resource specific to the country of representation.
- There is widespread interest in the development of regional or continent subgroups for increasing collaboration. ACEP can provide expertise to other countries by creating education and clinical standards through these collaborative efforts.

## **Presentations from ACEP Partners and Other ACEP Sections Working Internationally**

### ACEP-Teleflex Partnership

Michele Fox, RN, BSN, VP of Clinical and Medical Affairs, discussed Teleflex's international work with ACEP in humanitarian projects as well as educational projects involving biological and synthetic models for procedures.

## **Break-out Sessions**

Two break-out sessions were created in order to foster discussions among participants. Although the framework of each break-out session was organized differently, the structure of each session stayed the same. Ambassadors were divided into three separate groups each break-out session. They were asked to appoint a moderator of discussion, a note taker, and a reporter.

### **Seminar Session 1: Recruitment and Training**

- a) Countries Without Ambassadors, Liaison and Resident Reps
- b) New Ambassador Boot Camp
- c) Country Report Standardization

### **Seminar Session 2: Development and Communication**

- a) Roadmap to Residency Development
- b) Central Repository of Literature Supporting Emergency Medicine
- c) Regional Listserv/Newsletter

## **Large Group Reports and Action Plans**

The reporters appointed by each group during each break-out session were asked to present key points discussed during each session. Through these presentations, action plans for the future based on each session's topic were determined.

## **Future Agendas**

Key elements for the agenda of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual International Ambassador Conference were established.

## KEY THEMES AND FINDINGS

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual International Ambassador Program brought together a large community of emergency medicine physicians, fellows, residents, and special guests who represented their countries and were united by a common goal: to advance emergency medicine globally. It was through the group's diversity in thought, commitment to actively listen, and willingness to share their own experiences that the Ambassadors could generate key themes within each conference segment, and identify specific actionable items for the Ambassador Program.

# Break-out Session 1: Recruitment and Training

## Countries Without Ambassadors, Liaison and Resident Reps

Participants agreed that the ACEP Ambassador Program should be expanded by increasing the number of representatives around the world and creating liaisons to increase the benefits for the Ambassadors and their countries. A significant barrier for Ambassador recruitment is the lack of awareness about the program, especially for physicians in countries where EM is not developed, due to a scarcity of networks and connections. Even though physicians are interested in creating liaisons, they have expressed they are occasionally overlooked by the U.S.; thus, find no value in becoming representatives for ACEP. An additional barrier that limits Ambassador recruitment is the economic burden, as it disincentivizes physicians from pursuing ACEP membership. This has been a concern, especially, for Sub-Saharan African countries. To overcome these challenges, coordination and communication efforts must be pursued to recruit members and expand the Ambassador Program. These efforts must also include the availability of funding and scholarship options that reduce this burden for membership and travel expenses. The group discussed several ways to promote the program, explain what it offers to each country, and enhance recruitment.

1. *Advertisement of Ambassador Program within the general ACEP member community*  
Potential avenues could include announcing in ACEP conferences, plenary sessions, publications, newsletters, and mail servers. A representative of the ACEP Ambassador Program could be appointed to each international conference for promotional purposes. Announcements should also be available in multiple languages to avoid unnecessary barriers to communication.
2. *Inter-organizational cooperation*  
Given the interconnectedness of EM physicians around the world, the ACEP Ambassador Program could be further promoted through cooperating organizations. Leaders could reach out to regional and international organizations (such as IFEM, EMRA, ICEM, ACEM, and AFEM) to promote the program in meetings and conferences. This would generate networks that could benefit future Ambassadors and their respective countries.
3. *Increase participation of Ambassador Liaisons*  
The need to intensify recruitment of Ambassador Liaisons with extensive knowledge about health and EM in their country to encourage culturally appropriate interventions. Opportunities include removing the membership fee, providing financial aid, subsidizing travel expenses, providing funding or grants specifically for liaisons, offering free subscriptions to EM journals, as well as providing free textbooks.
4. *Ambassador Recognition*

The Ambassadors should be recognized with an ACEP Ambassador Leadership Award to stimulate their participation.

### **New Ambassador Boot Camp**

The Ambassadors expressed their desire to create a boot-camp to clarify the job description, their role, and expectations, particularly in the different settings and needs of each country. This boot-camp would also serve as a basis to understand the resources and benefits that ACEP and the program offer to its participants to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, a short online course must be created for all ambassadors to complete. First, it should include the definition of the program by defining the roles of each person based on the country's cultural context and development. This section would also include an explanation of the importance of emergency medicine in each country and highlight the availability of shared curriculum and resources. This would include collaboration with the Central Repository of literature supporting EM (see below) and with IFEM/AFEM, and generation of exchange programs within countries. Finally, the third section should include resources available to Ambassadors about the current state of EM, the development of curriculum, procurement of ACEP benefits, and contact information of collaborators locally and internationally. A separate break-out session for new ambassadors, during the conference, was also recommended.

### **Country Report Standardization**

Country reports allow each Ambassador to track progress and identify unique challenges and barriers regarding the current state of EM in their respective country. Country reports have improved significantly over previous years, especially after the inclusion of a free-hand narrative section for qualitative data collection. However, data is extensive and it must be manually inputted, which makes the overall process tedious and time-consuming. Therefore, to improve efficiency of data collection, the overall format of the report needs to be restructured. Comparative data must also be published to evaluate yearly progress and help government agencies to advocate for EM-related issues. Adding a "what's new this year" section to the reports would benefit the distribution of information without requiring others to read them in their entirety and allow publication of new findings in interim reports and section newsletter. Collaborative partnerships could be implemented to increase the contributions to country reports and data collection.

## **Break-out Session 2: Development and Communication**

### **Roadmap to Residency Development**

There is a large demand for the development of emergency medicine residency programs around the world. Some countries, like India, have a strong established EM specialty, with the existence of university programs and national boards. In some countries, residency programs have started before recognition of the specialty. In others, like Thailand, governments usually require recognition before the establishment of a residency program. Many have failed to succeed in the development of these programs due to many challenges encountered along the way. The group proposed the creation of a toolkit on the steps of residency development which could encompass two main aspects of a program: the development of a curriculum and training of residency program directors. This toolkit would eventually serve EM physicians with instructions on how to start a residency, program director's manual and educational materials, and action plans for future development.

One of the main challenges discussed within the group was the lack of standardized content within the established curricula in each country. IFEM currently has a global consensus curriculum online, but it does not include actual content. Asking ACEP for support in the creation of an online curriculum available for download would eliminate redundancy and inefficiency, like what AFEM developed. The content could include podcasts, literature, PowerPoint presentations, timelines for the development of programs, how to become a program director, and literature to support the need for time protection during the development period. This should also include the administrative aspects of residency planning such as logistics and the supply chain, as well as assistance to find jobs after residency. To prevent this curriculum from being out of context and outdated, it should include a modular curriculum that can be adapted depending on epidemiology and local health issues in each country. The duration of programs would also depend on local contexts that determine if the optimal time is 3 years versus longer than 3 years.

Translation to multiple languages is also of great importance to allow its use in different countries. Having this platform free of charge would be particularly beneficial to low-income countries, which have already expressed their interest and have more economic constraints than middle- or high-income countries. More importantly, ACEP can offer more than just content, such as the philosophy of EM, how to think as an EM physician, professionalism in clinical practice, higher level analytical thinking, and evidenced-based medicine. Moreover, there is high demand for the training of residency program directors. This is especially true since they must learn about unique aspects of EM such as triage, patient flow, administrative responsibilities, staff and medical education, and the promotion of financial equity. The groups discussed multiple options for training that included: an ACEP program director fellowship; ACEP program director courses during scientific assemblies or via online; ACGME program director boot camp; telemedicine teaching; faculty development through the Ambassador Program; and providing scholarships to program directors from other countries to train in the U.S. Regardless of the training method used, the group agreed that they should provide a certificate that would be valuable as a credential for future program directors.

### **Central Repository of Literature Supporting EM**

The Central Repository of literature supporting EM helps promote EM where it does not exist or where it is not recognized as a specialty. Once an Ambassador is assigned for a new position, they should be directed towards the Central Repository to inform themselves on the multiple resources supporting them and their promotion of EM. Recommendations included further advancing the toolkit with subfolders to further organize articles and creating a link on the ACEP website for easy accessibility. New categories should be included in the repository such as disaster relief and non-clinical EM issues (e.g. health management). The groups also discussed several themes that should be incorporated, such as work that supports the efficacy and value of EM, describes the challenges of international medicine, portrays the current state of EM, presents guidelines for management of common pediatric illnesses, and offers recommendations on how to tackle common problems and challenges in EM abroad. In addition to literature, links to other international organizations (like IFEM and AFEM) as well as renown non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The group also suggested developing an online portal for the Ambassadors that could include a wide array of resources. A social media app (Slack App) where physicians could communicate with the Ambassadors via messaging systems would be of great use. The ACEP Web Committee could develop this social media. The portal could also incorporate a ‘show and tell’ for EM residencies to share best practices and experiences around the world. Furthermore, it could include evidence of sustainability by exposing the demand for newly trained EM physicians in the market, and showing stories of success locally and internationally. Finally, this could include a web-based global health training module for U.S. based physicians traveling and working abroad.

### **Regional Listserv/Newsletter**

Communication improvements were discussed within the group in order to increase the program’s efficiency. Given that some Ambassadors mentioned the difficulty of navigating the website and the importance of social media nowadays, the group proposed that a social media coordinator should be assigned to each region to set up different

accounts to promote the program and allow inter-connectedness between the Ambassadors. Suggestions included an Ambassador leading a Facebook page, creation of regional WhatsApp groups, and the creation of regional listserv accounts to increase dissemination of information to Ambassadors.

## AMBASSADOR TOOLKIT AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Ambassador Toolkit is a group of documents that provides the Ambassadors with resources to educate potential members about ACEP and benefits of membership, effectively communicate valuable information through an outlined strategy, and to promote practices and services that increase Ambassadors' visibility amongst potential members. Throughout breakout and plenary sessions participants recommended the development and addition of new elements to the Toolkit or to a central repository accessible to ambassadors. These are some of the recommended items:

- Repository of exam materials for emergency medicine residents
- List of observerships for international residents
- Forum for ambassador to share resources and experiences
- Support letters from ACEP
- Materials in languages other than English
- Articles in supporting the importance of emergency medicine as a specialty
  - Difference between EM and family medicine or critical care
  - Cost-effectiveness
  - Public health importance

## LESSONS LEARNED

The Ambassadors that attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual ACEP International Ambassador Conference expressed a commitment to the development of Ambassador Program and their individual work. Through their conversations and interactions, lessons about validating EM in the international scene, the role of the Ambassador, and best practices were generated. They will be used to further refine and improve the Program so that, moving forward, Ambassadors can effectively fulfill their responsibilities

- Comprehensive communication can enhance the ACEP Ambassador Program and the extent of its purpose by providing information on how to get involved, how to get in-country liaisons more involved, and the creation of communication channels were a few examples discussed.
- Increased Ambassador Liaison involvement was deemed valuable and participants suggested the creation of a benefit package for liaisons that could include information on ACEP membership, free journal access, scholarships for travel, and online education courses.
- Ambassador development was encouraged through the development of an Ambassador Boot Camp and increased use of the Ambassador Toolkit.
- The development of EM residencies continues to pose many difficulties for physicians around the world given the administrative, financing, and regulation implications. The ACEP Ambassador Program could be of value in the assistance of the development of residency programs via a wide array of resources.
- Education materials must expand to online educational materials, live web courses, and non-clinical education and training and a collaboration with IFEM and AFEM may allow for a streamline of resources and avoid redundancy.

## NEXT STEPS

At the end of the conference, attendees came together in an open comment plenary session to develop the following list of steps to work on during the year and to continue to improve the Ambassador Conference.

### Recruitment and Training

- Create a working group to advertise the Ambassador program through as many networks as possible to fill all the country positions.
- Increase liaisons, Ambassadors, and work force, especially in sites lacking them. Bring in more liaisons to the ACEP Ambassador Conferences by using international section grants.
- Change the liaison grant/scholarship to ‘fellowship’ so they could have action items and commitments throughout the year, and request consistent data collection and analysis.
- Determine if liaisons need to be members or associated with ACEP, and simplify the liaison approval process.
- Strengthen collaboration with EMRA to help facilitate work by creating a specific role with unique job descriptions
- Determine if Ambassadors should collaborate with IFEM to guide new regional EM programs in navigating their own certification process.
- Guarantee transparency for the funding and sponsorship process, which is currently unclear and separate from the Ambassador Program
- Develop strategies to decrease the financial burden on the participants and make travelling more affordable, such as promoting room-sharing.

### Ambassador Boot Camp

- Create a working group to develop a plan for the boot camp including target audience, content, process, and implementation into the broader Ambassador conference.

### Country Report Standardization

- Create a working group to re-evaluate the current country report format and make recommendations for the re-design of an easier and more robust report generation that can be used to track trends in the country.
- Select Ambassadors to give short presentations on Country Reports as an advertising strategy.

### Development and Communication

- Create a working group that will develop a comprehensive communication strategy for the Ambassador program.
- Improve communication between all groups and regions by using an online portal and Slack app.
- Create a forum for Ambassadors to speak to each other, such as developing WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Inquire about the possibility to present about the Ambassador program at ACEP. Create outcomes that can be measured by the Ambassadors during each conference.

### Ambassador Toolkit

- Create a working group who will continue to build on the Ambassador toolkit with links, online resources, and place it in a space that is easy to reach by the Ambassadors.