

2023 POSNA Annual Meeting – Presidential Address

“Lean and Meaningful”



Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to stand here before you as the 39th President of POSNA. POSNA is a tremendous, all-volunteer organization with many amazing things happening. In the next few minutes, I would like to share with you some of the highlights of the past year.

The theme I chose for my year after Min Kocher’s, “Back on Our Feet,” was “Lean and Meaningful.” The goal of “Lean and Meaningful” was to critically assess the structure of POSNA to reduce complexity and increase efficiency in the post-COVID environment, keeping the things that were working well and leaving behind things that were not so we could make room for new opportunities and growth.

With over 1500 members, POSNA is a growing and thriving organization. IPOS[®] and our Annual Meeting in Nashville had record attendance. *JPOSNA*[®], our journal, was made independent of Wolters Kluwer and is growing as well. As we looked for new publishing partnerships, *JPOSNA*[®], at one point, was called “an unproven start-up” and a “very exciting young journal” by the publishing industry. This year we were able to secure over \$350,000 in research grants. Led by our JEDI Committee, our organization continues to place emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I would like to thank the 2020-2023 Board of Directors for all of its hard work (Figure 1). This is an energetic, highly engaged board that really made some tough decisions to drive this organization forward and make it

better. I would like to thank the committee chairs and all the members of the committees. This is an all-volunteer organization, and much of the committee work happens on nights and during weekends. We are grateful to all of you for that.

When I became president in May of 2022, in Vancouver, there were six areas that I wanted POSNA to focus on, including technology, workforce, strategic planning, committee structure, finance, and industry relations, while still maintaining our cultural values and diversity. I would like to take a minute to comment on each of these goals.

Technology: I truly believe that technology is the most important aspect for POSNA today. Technology drives everything we do, from our robust educational platforms to our journal, meetings, and podcasts. Our podcasts have been tremendously successful and have been an unexpected revenue stream. Listening to these podcasts is a great way to get to know your fellow POSNA members better, and I encourage you to use this new digital platform. Because technology is vitally important to our organization, I have asked several Board of Director members, led by Todd Milbrandt, MD, to put together a “10-year technology timeline” to critically assess where we are in 2023 and what our needs might be in the future. As part of this, we have engaged a consulting firm to evaluate our current technology infrastructure as well as to assist in its design and future growth. Technology will only become more important to POSNA in the future.

Workforce Assessment: As I mentioned, POSNA is a growing and diverse organization. For this reason, it is important that we understand the makeup of our current workforce and make plans for future growth.



Figure 1. The POSNA Board is highly engaged and has had to make some tough decisions to drive this organization forward.

Our last Workforce Assessment was published in 2014 and was based on data that is now 10 years old. The medical landscape, pediatric orthopaedic healthcare, and our organization have changed dramatically in the past decade. The Workforce Task Force, led by Woody Sankar, MD, was developed to create models of workforce assessment that not only will be used now but, in the future, as well. We will be presenting very interesting early data at this meeting that will be valuable in helping us plan for the needs of our future workforce and allow trainees to critically assess their future employment opportunities in pediatric orthopaedics.

Strategic Plan: Our strategic plan is solid; however, it only covers 2020 through 2024, and many of the original goals have already been or will soon be accomplished. Please keep in mind that this plan was developed pre-COVID. As we know, healthcare and the macroenvironment in which POSNA operates have changed dramatically since that time, so we must reevaluate our strategic plan and update it as necessary. As POSNA becomes larger and more complex, it will be very important to link our board and committee activities to the strategic plan to make the best use of finite finances and resources.

Committee Structure: As POSNA has grown, our committee structure also has grown, with new committees and charges to those committees being added. Although well-intentioned, it has led to increased complexity and redundancy, and some committees are no longer as relevant as they were when they were started.

This has also made the Committee Application Process (CAP), of which over 160 members participated this past year, more complex. We have undertaken an initiative, led by Dan Sucato, MD, to review our committee and council structures to eliminate redundancy, increase efficiency, and provide room for growth, adding committees as needs dictate. This is much like pruning a tree—cutting limbs that are no longer producing to allow for new growth.

Finances: This past year has been very challenging in terms of the financial environment, with an impending recession, increasing inflation, and changing workforce demographics. We are also now under self-management, which has provided flexibility and opportunities but at the cost of staffing and maintaining an operational budget as well as office space. We know that meetings are only becoming more involved and more expensive, and this is expected to continue in the future. We need to balance the financial responsibility of the organization with the need for education, which is at the heart of what we do. Industry partners who are important to the financial health of POSNA also are critically evaluating the structure and value of meetings. Lastly, we want to ensure that our financial activities and dues structure are relevant and provide maximal member value.

I would like to come back to meetings for a moment. Meetings make up a significant portion of our revenue stream, but also a significant portion of our expenses. Changes have been made to our meeting programming structure that will allow us to be more competitive and

negotiate better hotel and convention center contracts going forward. This is being done through the Long-Range Planning Committee. These changes will benefit POSNA as we move into the second half of this decade.

Culture: People and culture are the “secret sauce” in POSNA. As I mentioned we are a volunteer, mission-driven organization. We also are a diverse organization, the most diverse by far in orthopaedic surgery; however, there is still more work to be done. The healthiest and strongest organizations are those that are built on diversity. We must invest in our people and cultivate the next generation of POSNA leaders. Recently, the first POSNA Leadership Program was launched, a 1-year course on all aspects of leadership, led by Peter Waters, MD.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank Teri Stech, our Executive Director, for all that she does and has done for us over the past 25 years. This is her 25th year with POSNA (Figure 2). Thank you, Teri, for your service and for being my friend. To the POSNA staff, thank you for all the incredible things that you have done to make this organization better. We have an incredible staff. If you have not had the pleasure of meeting these individuals, please take some time to introduce yourself and say hello.



Figure 2. Thank you to Teri Stech, Executive Director, for 25 years of service with POSNA and for being my friend.

I would like to thank my Campbell Clinic Partners for allowing me the opportunity to serve in the Presidential Line. I have been able to do this with full confidence knowing that you were doing an amazing job taking care of patients at home while I was working for POSNA. They say that you are most like the five people with whom you surround yourself in life, and in terms of my work life, I am grateful that you, my partners, are those people. You truly make me better. There are three giants in my career who deserve special thanks: Dr. James Beaty, Dr. William Warner, and Dr. Denis Drummond. All of you have given your time and energy and have invested in me. I am grateful for your mentorship and, more importantly, your friendship over many years.



Figure 3. My wife, Julie, and three sons, Lucas (16), Zac (15), and Jake (9), remind me of what is important in life.

To my wife, Julie, and my three sons Lucas, Zac, and Jake, I cannot thank you enough for allowing me to have this opportunity (Figure 3). You all have been so supportive of me. You give me energy on those tough days and truly remind me of what is important in life. I am so proud of all of you and grateful that you could be here today to share this with me. I could not have done it without you.

In summary, POSNA is an amazing, growing, diverse organization with many exciting opportunities ahead. By getting “Lean and Meaningful,” we will be able to keep the things that are working and provide value to us and leave behind the things that are not working in order to be poised to take advantage of the new opportunities

that may come our way. I am also excited to say that POSNA will continue on this amazing trajectory under the guidance of Dan Sucato, MD, your 40th POSNA President.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Sawyer', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jeffrey R. Sawyer, MD
2022-2023 President, POSNA