



Vascular Surgery Interest Group (V-SIG) Toolkit

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Forward

Vascular surgery is a broad discipline dealing with the large scope of vascular diseases including arterial and venous diseases. Managing such diseases include medical therapy, minimally invasive procedures, and surgical intervention.

Vascular surgery is a versatile and flexible profession and is therefore a platform for innovation in basic and clinical research, as well as surgical education. There is an ever-growing need for young, passionate, and enthusiastic vascular surgeons to tailor to the needs of an aging population at risk for vascular diseases.

The Society for Vascular Surgery® (SVS) is a not-for-profit professional medical society, composed primarily of vascular surgeons, that seeks to advance excellence and innovation in vascular health through education, advocacy, research, and public awareness. SVS is the national advocate for 3,350 specialty-trained vascular surgeons and other medical professionals who are dedicated to the prevention and cure of vascular disease.

Within the SVS, members of the Medical Student Section, General Surgery Resident Section, and the Vascular Surgery Trainee Section form a collection of dedicated students and young surgeons devoted to the promotion of vascular surgery through governing councils and committees, research interest groups, vascular annual meeting planning groups, and many other activities.

As a next step in the national and international promotion of vascular surgery, the development of vascular surgery interest groups is crucial. The following toolkit will facilitate the development of such interest groups and provide a step-by-step planning to make a vascular surgery chapter a reality.

Becoming an SVS Medical Student Liaison

Why become a student liaison?

There is an increasing number of 0+5 integrated vascular residency programs developing around the country in an attempt to provide well qualified and trained vascular surgeons to meet the growing need created by the aging population in the United States.

Choosing a residency requires early, deliberate and focused experience in a specialty.

The SVS is dedicated to the recruitment of medical students to potential careers in vascular surgery, by helping to guide this connection/process for medical student. One important way to do this is with SVS medical Student Liaisons.

As a SVS Medical Student Liaison you will be a key point of contact for interested students at your institution, the SVS office as well as like-minded students across the country. Becoming an SVS Medical Student Liaison provides early experience with vascular surgery faculty and leaders, personal leadership experience and the opportunity to increase awareness about careers in vascular surgery, research opportunities, and to engage in community service activities with other students.

If you are interested, please email studentresident@vascularsociety.org or call 800-258-7188.

How to start a Vascular Surgery Interest Group Chapter

Starting a vascular surgery interest group (VSIG) is easy, and provides a multitude of opportunities for those considering a career in Vascular Surgery. The interest group offers students early exposure to surgery, promotes involvement in vascular-related research, and provides valuable career mentorship.

Creating the Right Forum for V-SIG

Prior to starting a VSIG, we recommend gauging student body interest at your home institution. A great forum to use is your general surgery interest group. There is not a minimum number of students needed to start a VSIG, however there are certain administrative roles that must be filled. If you feel as though these roles would go unfilled, a single individual can hold multiple titles. Another option to consider is teaming up with other students from a neighboring medical school. The SVS office can help you identify other interested students and programs with active VSIGs in your area.

Contact studentresident@vascularsociety.org or 800-258-7188 for more information.

Obtaining faculty support

Whether you decide to create a VSIG at your institution or form a regional group, it is critical to have faculty support. A list of designated faculty members can be found on the SVS Website, however if there are no designated faculty mentors at your institution, support can be garnered by simply asking a vascular surgeon at your institution. Consider approaching faculty who are known for their interest in student education or who have participated in medical student lectures. Faculty support is a requisite for success, providing educational direction, funding opportunities, and mentorship. Residents and fellowship are also great resources.

Creating Interest in a V-SIG Chapter

After meeting with your faculty advisor and developing an action plan, you are ready to hold your first meeting. You do not need endorsement from the Society for Vascular Surgery to do so. Your first meeting allows you to determine the level of interest, appoint leadership roles, and discuss future activities members would like to participate in.

Building a V-SIG Leadership Team

Splitting responsibilities amongst others will decrease stress and increase efficiency. Roles and responsibilities include:

- **Chapter President –**
 - Scheduling and running meetings, which includes setting the agenda for each meeting and for the year;
 - Organizing chapter activities;
 - Communicating with officers on a regular basis and delegates responsibilities accordingly
 - Working closely with faculty advisor

- **Vice President / SVS Medical Student Liaison–**
 - SVS medical student liaison keeping track of opportunities offered by SVS and other vascular organization;
 - Creating and maintaining V-SIG social media platforms
 - Assists the Chapter president

- **Secretary/ Treasurer –**
 - Recording meetings (minutes) and distributing them after each meeting;
 - Documenting chapter events and sending reminder communications to members
 - Recording chapter expenses and keeping a balance

Creating a Social Media Presence

Social media provides multiple avenues to highlight your interest group and increase participation. Many groups have created a website or use social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms also allow you to engage with other interest groups and highlight your institution's involvement. Links to these accounts can be found beside each registered V-SIG on the SVS website.

The Society of Vascular Surgery's social media presence is listed below:

Facebook: @VascularHealth

Instagram: @societyforvascularsurgery

Twitter: @VascularSVS

Registering your V-SIG chapter

Once you feel you have ample student involvement for a successful VSIG chapter and have gained approval from your institution, please register it with the SVS Medical Student Section by emailing studentresident@vascularsociety.org. The SVS office can help you advertise your V-SIG's activities and recruit interested students and connect with your other V-SIG leaders.

Planning your V-SIG year

Obtaining chapter funding

Ideally, a VSIG should be affiliated and supported by its respective vascular surgery Division. The division can often provide food and refreshments at events which undoubtedly will boost attendance. The division can also provide logistical support as well as access to industry partners. Most industry sponsors have a robust infrastructure for educational support. Every VSIG should have at least one leader to serve as a liaison between the VSIG and its respective vascular surgery division, which will streamline organizing events.

C.O.R.E. Activities

While vascular surgery may be the primary focus of the group's interest, remember that should not be the only goal. Providing a forum where students can get early exposure to surgery is equally important. Keep this in mind when planning events. Also, don't forget that undergraduate pre-meds may be interested in these activities. SVS has a wealth of resources such as available mentors and speakers, research publications, and can supply V-SIGs with DVDs/PowerPoint presentations, and other materials.

Career

- Invite attendings (in both private practice and academia) and residents/fellows to come speak to students on a variety of topics including:
 - Why vascular surgery?
 - Research opportunities in vascular surgery
 - What are the major differences between private practice and academia?
 - Women in vascular surgery
 - How to become a competitive 0+5 or 5+2 residency candidate
 - Pre- and Post-Match panels
 - Current research in vascular surgery (clinical, basic science, etc)

- Case presentations

Promote mentorship:

- Create a formal program of connecting interested students with faculty
- Faculty/Resident/Student mixers/dinners
- Help set-up shadowing experiences (OR, clinics, wards)

Outreach

Help run a health table at a local health fair or other suitable venue

- Topics that can be addressed include:
 - Smoking cessation
 - Stroke prevention
 - Abdominal aortic aneurysm awareness/screening
 - Importance of diet and exercise
 - Diabetes screening
 - Hypertension screening
 - Peripheral arterial disease screening (Get good practice doing Ankle- Brachial Indices (ABI)! You'll be a pro by the start of residency).
 - Venous disease screening and information (including varicose veins, stasis dermatitis, stasis ulcers)
 - Breakthroughs in vascular surgery research: basic and clinical research topics

Provide vascular-related services at a local free clinic. This can be used as a service and educational opportunity.

- Consider having faculty teach students how to screen for AAA using Doppler ultrasound and provide this service to older patients
- Attempt proactive screening for venous disease
- Will provide opportunities for students to practice a complete cardiovascular exam on each patient
- Again, another chance to get practice calculating ABIs

Consider applying for an American Medical Association Foundation Healthy Living Grant in the areas of Nutrition/Physical Fitness or Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Smoking Prevention. Consider applying in conjunction with students interested in Cardiology and getting departmental support by coming up with ideas that can be implemented locally or regionally. Find more information at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama/ama-foundation/our-programs/public-health/healthy-living-grants.shtml>

Research

- Visit the Student/Resident/Trainee section of the SVS Website (<http://www.vascularweb.org/studentsresidentstrainees/Pages/default.aspx>) to find research opportunities you can post to email lists.
- Apply for travel scholarships to attend meetings through the regional (e.g. Midwest Vascular Surgical Society Medical Student Program) and national societies (e.g. Society for Clinical Vascular Surgery). The SCVS has an industry-sponsored scholarship program for 0+5 trainees and senior General Surgery residents to be involved in the conference, including their Top Gun Competition.
- Present research projects and enter regional and national competitions (e.g. Karmody e-poster competition at SCVS), designed to showcase student-involved research.
- Journal Clubs
- Solicit research opportunities from faculty and provide information for interested students

Education

- Workshops (e.g. simulation lab, suturing workshops): This is one of the easiest events to create at your local VSIG. Partner up with your vascular surgery division to create a workshop and provide food and drinks. Working with attendings, fellows, and residents will help get the appropriate resources for the V-SIG workshop. Ask the division for spare grafts and expired sutures. The general surgery department will often have a skills lab with suturing practice kits. Industry sponsors can provide hands-on endovascular simulation training as well as samples of various endovascular tools.
- Rounds with the Chief of Vascular Surgery or with the vascular fellows/residents
- Shadow clinical experiences
- Scrubbing workshops
- Non-invasive vascular lab
- Organize study groups
- Create a vascular surgery rotation tip sheet
- Join a vascular interest Podcast – such as Audible Bleeding or many of the detailed Podcasts available on the SVS website <https://vascular.org/career-tools-training/develop-my-training-career/podcasts>

Social Events

- Dinner with faculty members and/or vascular residents
- If attending a conference – ask if you can be involved in a mentorship program where you are partnered with an attending or trainee (either from your own or another institution). Many of the larger conferences try to involve medical students in the

conferences and make the process less intimidating by providing a mentor to introduce them to the educational (and social) opportunities to be gained at conferences.

Tips on running a V-SIG chapter

Communication is key!

- Consider starting a vascular-specific email list or sending out information via the surgery interest group email list, if one exists.

Plan regular meetings

- This can ensure momentum continues throughout the year. Meetings can be held monthly, each semester, or quarterly.

Create a list of goals and monthly/yearly activities

- This can help with setting agendas for each meeting, delegating responsibilities as needed, providing a plan of activities that group members can look forward to, and helping to ensure that the year will be a productive one.

Make sure events aren't scheduled during stressful time periods (e.g. exam blocks)

- No explanation needed!

Try not to pack too much or too little into the year

- Medical students are busy people so be aware of others' time constraints. At the same time, if you schedule too few events, you may lose chapter momentum and enthusiasm.

Continue to recruit students throughout the year

- Don't just send emails to group members. Continue to advertise events to the wider student body.

Websites and Resources

Choosing a Career in Vascular surgery

- Why Be A Vascular Surgeon?
<https://www.mdedge.com/vascularspecialistonline/article/109908/why-be-vascularsurgeon#>
- SVS Student/Resident/Trainees Section
<http://www.vascularweb.org/studentsresidentstrainees/Pages/default.aspx>
- SVS YouTube site vascular surgery in review: Vascular surgeons talking about what the specialty is about.
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC07514E28EEAC7C8>
<https://vascular.org/career-tools-training/develop-my-training-career/podcasts>
- SVS Podcasts also are available on the *SVS YouTube Channel*.
- Audible Bleeding: A good weekly podcast exploring interesting topics in vascular surgery.
<http://audiblebleeding.libsyn.com/>
- Choosing a career in surgery: American College of Surgery
<http://www.facs.org/residencysearch/>
- ACS Surgery interest group. Good to join if you do not have a V-SIG. consider advocating for a V-SIG at your institution.
<https://www.facs.org/medical-students/sigs>
- <http://www.surgicaleducation.com/mc/page.do?sitePageId=33846&orgId=ase>
UCSF's Surgery Interest Group (well done web site example)
<http://sig.surgery.ucsf.edu/>
<http://www.facs.org/residencysearch/>
- FREIDA (search for the latest vascular surgery programs)
<https://freida.ama-assn.org/Freida/user/viewProgramSearch.do>
- NRMP Match Statistics
<http://www.nrmp.org/data/index.html>
- Association for Surgical Education: Resources for Surgical Trainees (Medical Students, Residents, Fellows)
<https://surgicaleducation.com/for-surgical-trainees/>

Vascular societies that support medical students

- Society of Vascular Surgery
<https://vascular.org/>
- Vascular & Endovascular Surgery Society (VESS)
<https://vesurgery.org/>
- Midwestern Vascular Surgical Society (MVSS)
<https://www.midwestvascular.org/annual-meeting/mock-oral-medical-student-programs/>
- Eastern Vascular Society
<https://www.easternvascular.org/page/Scholarships>
<https://www.easternvascular.org/surveys/fitb.asp?qs=54efc8461c455bd2b6f5d24ba7b525>
- Southern Association for Vascular Surgery
<https://savs.org/index.cgi>
- New England Vascular Society
<http://www.nesvs.org/home.html>
- Western Vascular Society
<http://westernvascularsociety.org/>
- Rocky Mountain Vascular Society
<https://www.rockymountainvascular.org/>

Explore Online Skill Resources

- Basic Surgical Knot Tying

Duke suture course:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL004UXX1Ux84S5nwzTaH06rBidJWnTYXZ>
- Patch closure of an artery
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swme3xM0y28>
- End to side Anastomosis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FbszWj2Ggw>
- Choosing a career in surgery

<http://www.facs.org/residencysearch/>

Peripheral Vascular Surgical Society
<http://www.pvss.org/>

General medical student web sites
<http://www.studentdoc.com/>
<http://www.studentdoctor.net/>