

September 16, 2015

Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education
633 N St. Clair Street, 23rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60611

Re: Carolyn E. Reed Traveling Fellowship, post-award report

I used my TSFRE Carolyn E Reed Award to spend two weeks with Dr. Robert Cerfolio for intensive training in robotic thoracic surgery. NYU has made the wide spread integration of robotic surgery an institutional priority and therefore attainment of robotic skills is crucial to my advancement within my department. At the receipt of the fellowship I designed a training curriculum with 4 phases which would fulfill my robotic credentialing at NYU. It included: 1) 40 hours of simulator training, 2) two weeks of intense training with Dr. Cerfolio, 3) practical specialty specific training with Intuitive, and 4) proctored robotic cases at my institution.

The majority of the funds were spent on the intensive training with Dr. Cerfolio. It was an incredible experience that I consider invaluable to my surgical education. Because I had obtained an Alabama medical license and UAB hospital privileges I was able to actively participate in every case during the time I was at UAB. Dr. Cerfolio has large robotic volume so in a relatively short period of time I was participated in a wide variety of procedures including lobectomies, segmentectomies, thymic, esophageal and bronchoplastic procedures. My robotic skills and confidence were increased beyond what I had anticipated. I learned basic robotic console skills, patient positioning, and port placement. But more importantly Dr. Cerfolio was able to share concepts related to case selection, education, surgical team management, and intraoperative problem solving that are unique to the robot. I believe the most unique and essential aspects of the Carolyn E. Reed Award was that it allowed me to put my clinical, academic, administrative, and even personal responsibilities aside for an extended period so that I could immerse myself in the process of obtaining a new surgical skill set. I was entirely focused on this one process. This is nearly impossible at the mid-point of one's surgical career and would not have been supported by my department without the funding from the TSFRE. I highly encourage to others to pursue a similar training paradigm.

Three weeks after returning from UAB I participated in Intuitive's two-day specialty specific practical training with porcine and cadaver training modules. There were two other thoracic surgeons participating in that training session, but I felt my skills and understanding of the robot far exceeded theirs because of my time with Dr. Cerfolio. I already knew how to place ports, dock the robot, exchange instruments, and expose the surgical field. Therefore my bedside assistant and I were able to spend our efforts almost entirely on the finer aspects of hilar dissection and vessels division.

I have received provisional credentialing in robotic thoracic surgery at my institution and scheduled my first proctored robotic cases for the end of this month. The TSFRE Carolyn E Reed Award has helped to facilitate and push every step in this process forward. I am indebted to the TSFRE and all the supports of the Reed award for allowing me this incredible educational experience.

Sincerely,



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