INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

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RESPONSIBILITIES AS STATED IN THE ACG BYLAWS

This Committee shall be responsible for developing materials and program concepts to address the needs and interests of the College's international membership and promoting the ACG in the international community.

OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the Annual Meeting for enhancements that would make it more attractive and comfortable to international members by identifying topics of global interest.
2. Consider issues that would make membership of the ACG more attractive and feasible for international gastroenterologists.
3. Consider tangible benefits of membership for international members.
4. Review College publications to identify those which would have value to international members.
5. Establish guidelines for co-sponsorship of carefully selected international meetings by the ACG; coordinate planning of these programs working closely with the Educational Affairs Committee.
6. Oversee the applications and selection of the recipients of the International Training Grants and review the formal final report from the recipients of their experience, including a letter from their mentor.
7. Evaluate the international component of the ACG website.
8. Work with the Board of Governors to clarify roles and responsibilities of International Governors.
9. Perform periodic surveys of international members regarding ACG services to work towards developing materials and programs specifically designed to address the needs and interests of our international members.
10. Host the International Attendee Reception at the ACG Annual Meeting.

International Relations Committee *(cont.)*

COMMITTEE REPORT

International Training Grants

The Committee is responsible for soliciting applicants and evaluating proposals for two International GI Training Grants. One grant supports a gastroenterologist from outside the U.S. to come for training in North America. The other provides support to send a member practicing in North America for short-term specialized training abroad. The applications were reviewed and scored by the Grant Review Subcommittee, and subsequently discussed by the full Committee, with approval of the Board of Trustees. This year, two recipients were selected for the International Training Grant and one for the North American International Training Grant.

2026 International Training Grant Awardees

Dr. Yvonne Nartey from Ghana is currently a GI fellow-in-training at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital and plans to study at Mayo Clinic Rochester under the direction of Dr. Lewis Roberts for four months. Her objectives are to acquire training to address gaps in early detection, risk stratification and longitudinal care in cirrhosis and HCC that currently exist in Ghana. Her training at Mayo Clinic will include two months of focused clinical observership and two months of clinical research, providing a comprehensive and integrated learning experience. Once back in Ghana, she plans to develop simplified clinical protocols and training materials and support the training of healthcare workers to enable task-shifting and scale-up of these interventions in resource-limited settings. Through collaboration with national programs, including the Ghana Health Service and viral hepatitis control initiatives, she aims to contribute to sustainable improvements in liver disease care.

Dr. Mifta Hamid from Ethiopia is currently an advanced interventional endoscopy fellow-in-training at St Paul Hospital Millennium Medical College and plans to study at Mayo Clinic Rochester under the direction of Dr. Vinay Chandrasekhara for two months. His objectives are (1) to become familiar with advanced endoscopic techniques, especially as applied to patients both before and after liver transplantation. These include gallbladder drainage by ERCP and EUS, direct cholangioscopy, treatment of post-transplant biliary anastomotic strictures, and long-limb ERCP in patients with Roux-en-Y biliary drainage; (2) to understand the role of endoscopy in a liver transplantation program, including endoscopic management of gastric and ectopic varices, diagnosis and endoscopic management of cholangiocarcinoma complicating primary sclerosing cholangitis, and nutritional access in the peritransplantation period; and (3) to gain familiarity with common patient management issues after liver transplantation. His aim is to return to Ethiopia with advanced knowledge and procedural proficiency that will directly benefit his patients and strengthen the transplant team.

2026 North American International Training Grant Awardees

Dr. Fnu Vikash is a GI fellow-in-training at the Cleveland Clinic and plans to study at the National Cancer Center Hospital in Tokyo, Japan under the direction of Dr. Yutaka Saito for four weeks. His interests revolve around addressing the gap of integrating endoscopic assessment with histopathologic interpretation, which directly affects clinical decision-making, including appropriate selection of patients for endoscopic therapy versus surgical referral. The training he is seeking at the National Cancer Center Hospital in Tokyo, Japan, where high-volume practice is combined with structured endoscopic-pathologic correlation and multidisciplinary case discussions will help him develop a deeper understanding of lesion characterization using advanced imaging, correlate endoscopic findings with histopathologic features, and learn how these correlations guide decisions among EMR, ESD, and surgical referral. The goal of this effort will be to improve concordance between endoscopic assessment and histopathologic diagnosis, standardize decision-making for endoscopic versus surgical management, and evaluate improvements in endoscopic–pathologic concordance over time.

Other Initiatives

ACG Partnership with The African Esophageal Cancer Consortium (AfrECC)

The Committee is pleased to continue the partnership with The African Esophageal Cancer Consortium (AfrECC) which is dedicated to reducing the burden of esophageal cancer in Africa through clinical care, education, prevention and research. The organization was formed in 2016 and has grown from 23 members in four countries to more than 175 members in eight countries. More information about AfrECC is available on their website at **www.afreccfoundation.org**.

In 2026, the College sponsored faculty for four AfrECC meetings and we are continuing to explore other opportunities.

Social Media

- Oversees the ACG International Facebook page, whose membership is over 6,000, and frequently posts ACG content to members
- Collaborates with ACG's International Governors
- Works with ACG's social media staff for international colon cancer awareness and other initiatives

International Webinar Series

- The subcommittee is working with the ACG International Governors and international GI Societies to create joint webinars.
- In 2026, the following international webinars occurred/will occur:
  - January 27, 2026: Italian Society of Gastroenterology and Digestive Endoscopy (SIGE), "ACG Guideline on Eosinophilic Esophagitis"
  - February 19, 2026: Gastroenterological Society of Taiwan, "The Paradigm Shift from FMT to Live Biotherapeutic Products in the Treatment of Recurrent *Clostridioides difficile* Infection"
  - June 10, 2026: Chilean Society of Gastroenterology, "Gastric Cancer Prevention Strategies in Latin American Countries" (Spanish language webinar)
  - July 28, 2026: Japanese Gastroenterological Association (JGA), "Early Colon Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment"
  - August 5, 2026: Pakistan GI and Liver Disease Society (PGLDS), "Chronic Liver Disease and Its Complications"
  - September 9, 2026: Saudi Gastroenterology Association, "Advances in the Diagnosis and Management of SIBO"

International Abstract Travel Grants
The International Travel Grants consist of a stipend in the amount of $2000 each to the presenting author of the three best abstracts submitted by international authors from countries classified by the World Bank as Lower to Lower-Middle Income. The goal of these grants is to encourage research in gastroenterology in Lower to Lower-Middle income countries and inspire researchers to present their research at the ACG Annual Meeting. Recipients are required to attend the ACG Annual Meeting in-person to receive their grant funding. Authors must not be based in or be a citizen of the U.S. or Canada and all work must have been performed outside the U.S. and Canada.

The 2026 Recipients are: Sri Krushna Prasad Mishra, MBBS (India), Prathiba Krishna Ramanujam Rajasekaran, MBBS (India), and Komal Verma Saluja, MBBS (India).

International Abstract Award
The International Abstract Award is selected from among all abstracts submitted in any category and is presented to one recipient. The primary author may not be based in or be a citizen of the U.S. or Canada and all work must have been performed outside the U.S. and Canada. The award recipient is chosen by the ACG Educational Affairs Committee.

The 2026 Recipient is: Sabeera Mohammed, MBBS (India), "PRISM-AI: A Multi-Modal Fusion Artificial Intelligence Platform Integrating Liquid Biopsy and Radiomics Outperforms Consensus Guidelines in Triaging High-Risk Pancreatic Cysts".

International Breakfast Session at ACG 2026
The Committee is holding an International Attendee Breakfast Session at ACG 2026 on October 12th from 6:45 am - 7:45 am. The focus of this session, geared to attendees from outside the U.S., is "Global Perspectives on the Diagnosis and Management of Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease in Pregnancy." Dr. Lubna Kamani is speaking on "Endoscopy in Pregnancy" and Dr. Mussarat Rahim is speaking on " Liver Disease in Pregnancy."

International Attendee Reception at ACG 2026
The Committee is pleased to continue to support the International Attendee Reception which takes place on Sunday, October 11th from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm at ACG 2026.

ACG Endorsement / Participation in International Meetings

The Committee works with international societies to identify opportunities for the College to affiliate with international societies, as well as to endorse and support international meetings through participation of ACG leaders as faculty. The following were endorsed/supported in 2026.

ACG Participation at 2026 International Meetings:

Japanese Gastroenterology Association 22nd Annual Meeting
February 20 – 21, 2026
Kumamoto, Japan
ACG sponsored 1 faculty member for this meeting.

Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology Annual Meeting
April 10 – 12, 2026
Islamabad, Pakistan
ACG sponsored 1 faculty member for this meeting.

Association of West Indian Gastroenterologists (AWIG) Annual Meeting
April 16 – 18, 2026
Jamaica
ACG sponsored 1 faculty member for this meeting.

Pan-American Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis Organization's VI Congress
April 17 – 18, 2026
Cartagena, Colombia
ACG sponsored 1 faculty members for this meeting.

Mexican Association of Gastroenterology Annual Meeting
November 20-24, 2026
Merida, Yucatan, Mexico
ACG is sponsoring 2 faculty members for this meeting.