

My Fellow Associate Members,

I am pleased to submit my letter of intent for the position of AAST Associate Member Secretary. Over the past several years, the Associate Membership has become one of the most rewarding aspects of my professional career. It has provided opportunities to collaborate with outstanding colleagues, develop meaningful educational initiatives, and build relationships that have shaped me as a surgeon, educator, and leader. I am incredibly grateful to the mentors, colleagues, and friends who have invested in me throughout this journey, and I hope to continue giving back to an organization that has given me so much.

My involvement within the Associate Membership has allowed me to serve in several leadership roles, including Vice Chair of Education, Chair of the Education Committee, and currently as the Education and Research Councilor. During that time, I have had the privilege of working alongside exceptional teams to expand many of our flagship initiatives. Together, we grew the Turnover Time educational platform, developed the Career Catalyst Webinar Series, established new collaborations such as the EAST Surgical Critical Care Podcast, created educational lunch sessions for the Annual Meeting, produced Associate Member-specific manuscripts, and helped create additional opportunities for Associate Members to engage in education, scholarship, research, and leadership. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication and creativity of the many volunteers who have devoted their time to our organization.

As proud as I am of what we have built, I also believe it is the right time for new leaders to continue advancing the educational and research mission of the Associate Membership. Leadership is about creating opportunities for others to succeed, and I look forward to supporting the next generation of education leaders while contributing to the organization in a different capacity.

The role of Secretary aligns well with my greatest strengths: organization, communication, and collaboration. Throughout my leadership within AAST, I have been recognized as someone who enjoys bringing people together, developing efficient systems, and ensuring that projects move forward through consistent communication and follow-through. I believe these qualities are essential to helping our Associate Membership continue to grow.

If elected, my priorities would center on three themes: communication, collaboration, and transparency. Our Associate Members are leading meaningful work across education, research, mentorship, advocacy, and professional development, but many members may not be aware of projects occurring outside their own committees or of opportunities to become more involved. As Secretary, I would work to strengthen communication between committees, improve transparency around ongoing initiatives and leadership opportunities, and promote greater collaboration across the Associate Membership. By better connecting our members and our committees, we can amplify the work already being done while creating more accessible pathways for engagement, scholarship, and leadership.

The Associate Membership has always been strongest when its members feel connected—not only to their own committee, but to the broader mission of AAST. I hope to help cultivate an environment where every Associate Member understands how they can contribute, where committee successes are shared across the organization, and where collaboration becomes the norm rather than the exception.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to continue serving the Associate Membership. It would be an honor to serve as your next Associate Member Secretary, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside all of you to support the growth, engagement, and future leadership of our organization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josh Dilday', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Joshua Dilday, DO, FACS