ASA Medical Student Component:

Guide to Building an Active Anesthesia Interest Group
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1. Introduction
The purpose of this guide is to inform medical students about Anesthesia Interest Groups (AIGs), offer tips for establishing a new AIG, and suggest ways for existing AIGs to improve. Information included in this guide is neither applicable to each AIG nor meant to be all-inclusive; however, it is meant to serve as a guide that students may use to promote anesthesiology in their medical schools.

2. What is an Anesthesia Interest Group?
Anesthesia Interest Groups are independent groups of students from different medical schools across the country whose members share a common interest in anesthesiology. The purpose of AIGs is to promote education, communication, advocacy, research, and networking among students and physicians. AIGs are led by Executive Officers and overseen by Advisors. An Executive Officer particularly important to AIGs is the ASA MSC Delegate, who acts as the liaison between an AIG and the ASA Medical Student Component (MSC).

3. New Anesthesia Interest Groups
Many medical schools already have an active AIG, although some may not. For schools without an AIG, it is suggested that students interested in anesthesiology start a student group. It can be a lot of work but starting a student group can be rewarding for all students involved because it offers a unique opportunity to work closely with faculty to bring ideas to fruition. Procedures for starting a group may vary at each school, but the following should be considered:

1. Student Interest – How many students are interested in participating in an AIG? In what capacity are students willing to be active in the group?

2. Faculty Support – Is there a faculty member who is willing to help start a student group? Will he/she be available during group meetings? Is this faculty member going to be a practicing physician anesthesiologist or an instructor at the medical school?

3. Becoming Official – What steps are necessary to become a “recognized” student group at each medical school? What documents will be needed?

4. Leadership – Who will act as student and faculty leaders, and in what capacity?

5. Group Activity – How many meetings will be held? What will be the focus of the meetings?

6. Funding – Typical costs are spent on purchasing food, simulation lab space, or gifts for guest speakers. How will your AIG fund its events? Will it be sponsored through the medical school office of student affairs? Affiliated anesthesiology department? The faculty advisor? Fundraisers? Membership dues?

4. Existing Anesthesia Interest Groups

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Once established, AIG members should spend most of their time improving the group. Important issues to consider are:

- **Group Activity** – How active should the AIG be? What activities are best for the AIG?
- **Member Responsibilities** – For what will each member be responsible? In what capacity will Executive Officers act?
- **Capacity for Improvement** – In what ways can the group offer more to students, physicians, and the community?
- **Leadership** – Are the current leadership positions right for the group?
- **Governing Rules** – Are the group bylaws current?
- **Communication** – Is the student email list up to date? Is the website current and representative of the AIG?

All these considerations are important for new and existing groups. We recommend they be discussed amongst student and faculty leaders.

### a. Leadership Positions

Anesthesia Interest Groups should be led by students and faculty members who will enhance student involvement in anesthesiology. Student leaders are AIG Executive Officers and faculty members are AIG Advisors. Both are important for a successful AIG.

- **AIG Executive Officers**
  
  Executive Officers are selected by members of each medical school. They are recognized as the AIG leaders. Each school’s AIG will decide for itself the selection criteria for a leadership position. Below is a listing of suggested Executive Officers and a brief description of each role:

  - **AIG President**: Oversees and organizes activities and meetings and is involved with contacting departmental faculty
  - **AIG Treasurer**: Manages all AIG monies, expenses, and reimbursements, as well as oversees fundraising activities
  - **AIG Secretary**: Maintains communication to the larger medical student community by sharing meeting minutes, ensuring ASA MSC newsletter delivery, and updating group websites
  - **AIG M1 Representative**: Serves as the liaison between the AIG and the new M1 medical student class, spreads awareness for anesthesiology amongst M1s, and helps where needed
  - **ASA Medical Student Component Delegate**: Communicates with the ASA Medical Student Component to maintain contact with the national office and provide group
updates throughout the year. Also responsible for attending the ASA House of Delegates Session during the ANESTHESIOLOGY annual meeting each October. Students are nominated or selected by their respective school. ASA MSC delegates may also act as another Executive Officer, such as President. Terms for ASA MSC Delegates are from July 1 – June 30. See also item 6 Responsibilities of the Delegates in the ASA MSC bylaws. ([http://www.asahq.org/about-asa/component-societies/asa-medical-student-component/bylaws](http://www.asahq.org/about-asa/component-societies/asa-medical-student-component/bylaws))

- **AIG Advisors**
  AIG Advisors are faculty members who participate in group activities. They should be leaders in the school and may or may not be associated with an anesthesiology department. Including younger and older anesthesiologists provides opportunity for educating students about the development of the specialty. Suggested AIG Advisors are listed below:

  **Department Faculty Advisor:** Usually a physician anesthesiologist. Presides over group meetings and activities and offers advice. Typically, AIGs only have one faculty advisor; however, two advisors would help ensure that there is always at least one faculty member able to preside or attend meetings and activities.

  **Teaching Scholars:** Usually an anesthesia resident. Attend clinical simulation activities and teach medical students clinical skills. Usually the faculty advisors will be able to recruit the residents who are working with them to perform these duties.

  **Subspecialty Mentors:** Department faculty listed by subspecialty of anesthesia who are willing to act as student mentors.

  **Research Mentors:** Faculty who participate in anesthesiology related research who are interested in having students work on their projects or help in their labs.

- **b. Group Activities**
  Group activities provide students with the opportunity to learn about anesthesiology outside of classroom and clinic responsibilities. Provided below is a list of activities and event topics that AIGs may pursue throughout the academic year:

  - Regional anesthesia simulation workshop (e.g. anatomical models, neuraxial and peripheral nerve blocks, epidurals, spinals)
  - Vascular access simulation workshop (e.g. IVs, art lines, central lines)
  - Airway management simulation workshop (e.g. intubation, LMAs, BVMs)
  - Organizing shadowing in the various subspecialties of anesthesiology
  - Research opportunities in anesthesia
  - Residency application session with residency program director
  - Interview tips session with M4s

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• Deciding to do away rotations and finding housing
• Career decisions workshop
• Attending a residency fair or meet-and-greet together
• Inviting a lawyer to speak about medical malpractice and popular misconceptions
• Volunteering and community service activities
• Inter-student tutoring/mentoring
• Faculty mentoring
• Attending resident lectures
• ASAPAC involvement

c. **Lecture Series**
Lectures are a great way to educate students. Physician anesthesiologists are usually invited to provide their insight. Don’t forget to write a thank-you card or give them a small gift of appreciation! A list of lecture topics geared for medical students is listed below:

• Kickoff Lecture - What is Anesthesiology? I Don’t Just Put People to Sleep
• Residency panel with residents and residency program director
• Pain medicine lecture
• Critical care/ICU lecture
• Pediatric anesthesia lecture
• Obstetric anesthesia lecture
• Bioethical issues in anesthesiology (e.g. assisted suicides, lethal injection)

d. **Student-Mentor Activities**
Special events with students and mentors promote relationship building. A list of proposed activities is listed below:

• Post-boards party
• Exploration of local restaurants
• Sports event outing
• Anesthesia residents meet and greet
• Annual departmental party

e. **Community Service Activities**
Community service activities are a great way to give back to the community and promote the specialty of anesthesiology. A list of suggested community service activities is listed below:

• Preoperative counseling for adults (literature) and pediatric cases (props)
• Pain management at rest homes
- Volunteering for a trauma center/critically ill patient care

f. **Suggested Links for Student Webpages**

AIG webpages are important for communicating with members and providing helpful materials to students. A list of useful links that may be included on AIG websites is provided below:

- ASA main website
- ASA MSC home page
- ABA home page
- Anesthesia and Analgesia
- AAMC Careers in Medicine - Anesthesiology
- AMA’s FRIEDA residency program search
- Research Opportunities
  - FAER scholarship home page
  - Boston Children’s Hospital Pediatric Anesthesia Clinical & Research Internship (PACaRI)
  - Vanderbilt Anesthesia Summer Internship Program
- Specialty Societies
  - Ambulatory
  - Cardiac
  - Critical Care
  - Neuro
  - Obstetrics
  - Pediatric
  - Regional
  - Society for Education in Anesthesia
  - Society for Technology in Anesthesia
- Examples of Student Interest Group Websites:
  - Oakland University William Beaumont
  - University of Washington
  - University of California – Irvine

5. Conclusion

Anesthesia Interest Groups are independent groups of students at each medical school led by Executive Officers and Advisors. AIGs are autonomous with structure and leadership, as determined by each respective medical school. However, all groups share a similar purpose – to promote anesthesiology. Student involvement is essential for attracting the best and brightest to the specialty of anesthesiology, and the ASA MSC recognizes the importance of increasing student involvement through Anesthesia Interest Groups and attracting students to serve as ASA MSC Delegates.
This document is meant to serve as a guide for students interested in anesthesiology, to offer suggestions for starting new AIGs, and provide tips for strengthening existing AIGs. If you have any questions pertaining to AIGs, the Governing Council of the ASA MSC and staff members of the ASA are available to help. Questions may be directed to medicalstudentcomponent@asahq.org.