Sharks and giants are getting starring roles at the 2019 Vascular Annual Meeting. Both will be part of featured sessions at the meeting, set for June 12-15 near Washington, D.C.

Taking a page from the popular television show, “Shark Tank,” a panel of experts will “grill” applicants submitting SVS Foundation Clinical Research Seed Grants applications. “We think this will be pretty popular,” said Vik Kashyap, MD, chair of the SVS Postgraduate Education Committee.

The 2019 meeting also will bring back “On the Shoulders of Giants,” a very popular session from previous years. “We’ll highlight open surgical techniques that were developed by our leaders in the surgical community,” said Dr. Kashyap, who will moderate “Giants.” Speakers will include many past presidents, all of whom have had a particular influence in certain areas, including cerebrovascular, aortic and visceral disease and lower extremity occlusive diseases. “All of the speakers have had an enormous impact, such as through developing a technique and showing really good long-term results from it,” he said.

The 20-member committee Kashyap chairs slates all the invited sessions for the Vascular Annual Meeting. It’s essentially all of the educational program except abstract-based sessions: breakfast and concurrent sessions, postgraduate education courses, workshops and “Ask the Experts.” The 2018 VAM introduced “Experts,” plus “Tips and Tricks,” which are being combined for 2019. Both session types were held daily Wednesday through Saturday, and several proved so popular that not everyone who wanted to could attend.

The group is now involved in sorting through all of the proposed topics, hoping to have everything slotted this month.

And though VAM draws a crowd in the thousands, learning in audiences of 15 to 20 will be plentiful.

Scientific sessions at the podium draw audiences of hundreds — and are designed to do just that, said Dr. Kashyap. “But small-group sessions are very conducive to learning and people really gravitate to them,” he said.

Recommendations have come from throughout Society membership, many of whom suggested topics applicable to their own careers. While selection is ongoing, a few topics stand out, said Dr. Kashyap, such as physician wellness, including ergonomics and injuries; and helping young vascular surgeons navigate the transition from training to being responsible for patients. Sessions on “my most challenging case” or “worst complication” also are popular, he said.
Dr. Kashyap cited three broad areas of concentration for the committee’s educational program:

- **Clinical didactic content**, focusing on in-depth discussion of experts about a certain topic, such as cerebrovascular, peripheral arterial disease or aortic.
- **Technical content**
  - The small-group format is particularly well-suited to this category, said Dr. Kashyap. “The clinical didactive content is more of an overview,” he said. “The technical sessions will be more specific, such as ‘How do you do THIS in a surgical procedure?’ or ‘How would you approach XYZ?’ Many of our workshops, for example, focus on procedures.”
- **Leadership and professional development topics**
  - These topics lend themselves to both large and small audiences, said Dr. Kashyap. One example would be the nuts and bolts of writing a grant, led by an expert. “What are the steps, what are the skills needed?” he said. “There is an audience for this and similar leadership and professional development topics.”

Scheduling is as vital a concern as topics, said Dr. Kashyap. “We want people to have the opportunity to get to their areas of interest throughout the meeting. And we want to avoid competing sessions on the same topic. We don’t want a leadership session held at the same time as another leadership session.”

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