The 2018 Vascular Annual Meeting featured nearly 1,800 attendees, just shy of the record; phenomenal science; a wide range of educational programming; and new session formats with overflow attendance.

Organizers consider the meeting a success and are evaluating attendee feedback to make sure next year’s meeting builds on past achievements, said Matthew Eagleton, chair of the SVS Program Committee, which oversees VAM. “We have received a lot of positive feedback,” he said.

“Some of our new initiatives were extraordinarily well-received,” he said, citing in particular the new small-group “Tips and Tricks” and “Ask an Expert” sessions. These popular courses filled quickly, with overflow attendance, and the committee will consider including the sessions again and perhaps expanding them in the future.

Also receiving accolades:

- Not only the team-oriented theme (“Home of the Vascular Team – Partners in Patient Care”) but also sessions highlighting the value of the vascular team and collaboration among team members
- An afternoon of special programming for physician assistants
- The Society for Vascular Nursing’s Annual Conference, held at the same time as VAM
- Three forums, including the E. Stanley Crawford Critical Issues Forum, which explored the critical shortage of vascular surgeons, the John Homans lecture, and the Roy Greenberg lecture
- Outstanding abstracts presented in scientific sessions

Attendees also liked the breadth of programming throughout the meeting, said Dr. Eagleton. “Of course, as happens when sessions coincide, attendance can be lower than expected in a session,” he said. “This is something we will continue to work on, to provide the most educational opportunities for the greatest number of people and to continue to emphasize the science, which has always been the mainstay of the meeting. VAM is the premier meeting for the introduction and discussion of new science and that’s something we will continue to preserve."

In fact, organizers plan to expand the volume of abstracts by 25 to 30 percent for next year. They also will continue to look at the meeting’s structure in new ways to maintain a clear focus on the scientific sessions and to provide a variety of educational sessions across the entirety of the meeting, he said. “Over the next couple of years, we’ll be looking at new ways of organizing the meeting to meet the needs of all attendees.”

Dr. Eagleton noted that while new initiatives were well-received, the traditional scientific sessions and postgrad sessions were well-attended and most hands-on workshops were sold out as well. “The old favorites remained
favorites," he said.

The committee will review all the evaluations and feedback in planning for VAM 2019. “If people have specific ideas or topics they’d like to see explored, tell us,” said Dr. Eagleton. Send ideas and comments to education@vascularsociety.org, referring to VAM in the title line.

“I think we’re moving in a great trajectory for next year,” he said, thanking all who worked on the meeting. “It’s a lot of people putting in a lot of effort.”

The 2019 Vascular Annual Meeting will be June 12 to 15 at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Md., just outside Washington, D.C. Scientific sessions will be June 13 to 15 and exhibits will be June 13 to 14.

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