

ACAAI Women in Allergy Committee Resource Guide: Leadership

Takeaways from the Women in Allergy’s “Breaking the Mold” call on Leadership. View the slide presentation that was discussed during the call: [Leadership 2025](#).

Leadership is important – it promotes growth, empowerment, working with others and helps combat burnout. Leadership roles – even regional ones – fulfill MOC.

A first step on the journey to leadership is to become a member of the American College of Allergy Asthma Immunology (ACAAI). The next step might be to join an ACAAI committee. Work on committees allows for the exchange of ideas with peers and being exposed to different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Committee work can be the stepping stone to higher level leadership positions with the College, such as committee vice chair, chair and member of the Board of Regents.

Early career allergists (under 45 years old or in practice for 10 years or less) can apply to attend the annual [ACAAI Leadership Summit: Generation Next](#). The weekend event gives participants a foundation for effective communication, preventing and dissolving conflict, advocating for change, coaching others, working with different behavior styles and much more. Participants are also oriented to practical strategies for meaningful involvement and means to establish a pathway to leadership with the College.

Diversity is encouraged for all positions. If you are not sure, please contact someone in a leadership position and make them aware of your interest. For interest in the [Leadership Summit](#) and to learn more about future events, contact [Kate Barcal](#), Associate Executive Director.

Dr. Dana Wallace, ACAAI president in 2010-11, shared her experience that led to leadership roles. She suggested getting involved early in your career, as time permits. Explore these possible opportunities, which may lead to leadership roles:

- Become involved nationally and internationally at ACAAI, AAAAI and WAO - Join committees, participate in workshops at annual meetings, create proposals for session ideas at meetings.
- Become involved in state and regional allergy societies and local medical societies.
- Start or become involved in local groups for women physicians.
- Start a journal club.
- Apply to work on guidelines for the Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters (JTFFP).
- Participate in local health fairs. (Note- if you’re thinking about hosting an asthma screening event, the College has a [planning guide](#).)
- Write papers or articles.

Dr. Luz Fonacier, ACAAI president in 2020-21, shared her experience and suggested:

- Use your strength. Pick an area you are interested in and excel in and get involved in that area. Join committees related to the topic and write papers on the topic.
- Submit session proposal ideas for ACAAI Annual Meetings.
- Become involved in professional relationships, such as mentoring - get a mentor and be a mentor.
- If you’re interested in becoming involved in the WAO, go to WAO-sponsored sessions at meetings and introduce yourself and get to know people.
- Keep trying! If you don’t get a leadership position the first time, try again, especially with higher level positions such as the ACAAI Board of Regents.

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Other information about leadership:

ACAAI provides ample opportunities for leadership roles for all members regardless of the stage of their careers. The strength of our organization is based on the active engagement of the physicians and allied health members who volunteer their time and expertise. Members come from private practice, academics, fellowship programs, industry both nationally and internationally.

The question you may ask is, “Why and how can I become involved?” The first step is to volunteer to be on any one of [ACAAI's 40+ committees](#). This provides an opportunity for an exchange of ideas in allergy and immunology with your peers who come from diverse training backgrounds and practice settings. Committee members promote cross pollination of ideas to serve the College's membership and advance the field of allergy, asthma and immunology.

Early on in one's career, it may be hard to make a time commitment due to too many different constraints, for example, starting a practice, joining an academic institution, research, someone's personal or family life, and/or moving to a new location. Those who have children at home may find it difficult to be away for long periods of time. These health care professionals might not become active until later in their career.

Before one becomes part of a committee, one must be an ACAAI member. The organization offers membership to physicians and allied health professionals of all experience and levels. By becoming an ACAAI member, one has the opportunity to be involved in a prestigious association that addresses the unique needs and goals of the practicing allergist.

The College sends out invitations for volunteers to join committees annually, which requires submitting a formal application. The window for the application usually runs March through mid-April of each year for appointments beginning in November of the same calendar year. The ACAAI Appointments Committee then meets several times during the year to evaluate the applicants to place them on the committee of their choice.

If you do not receive your first choice of a committee assignment, please don't be discouraged. Your first committee assignment gives you an opportunity to learn about the inner workings of the College and expand your professional network. You may be able to take on a new project that challenges you and allows you to gain a new skill set. You can always reapply for a committee that aligns more closely with your interest. A suggestion would be to review the roster of a committee you would like to join by visiting the online [Committee Directory](#) and reach out to the chair and see how you might be able to contribute. They might be able to recommend you for their committee.

Once you are appointed to a committee, it is important to actively contribute. Through committees we are able to respond to the developing needs of our specialty. You can contribute by bringing your unique views and perspectives. It also presents an opportunity to enhance your communication and leadership skills. Committee involvement can lead to further leadership positions, starting as a committee vice chair and moving up to lead as the society's president.

ACAAI has a democratic approach for appointments to committees. One of the College's main goals under its strategic plan is to be an efficient, responsive organization that reflects its membership at large. As such, the Appointments Committee is keen on finding a spot for every member who expresses interest in serving on a committee. Positions for the Board of Regents and officers are selected through

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an application process in the winter and elected by College Fellows every fall. Applications are solicited each January for these positions.

Women in Allergy

The Women in Allergy Committee is an example of just one of ACAAI committees.

The committee's mission is bringing to the forefront, inviting discussion, solving problems, and providing resources for issues that affect women allergists.

Women have been very active in the College and have held a variety of leadership positions from Committee vice chairs, chairs, regents, treasurer, vice president and president.

Women have every opportunity be in leadership positions. Consider Aesop's fable of the tortoise and the hare. Slow and steady wins the race. Volunteer, participate, be involved. Small blocks of time invested over the year/years will prove to be rewarding. Consider participation both on a local and national level.

Read an interview with Dr. Luz Fonacier, past president of ACAAI, on women in leadership, the value of getting involved, and more: [Women physicians should get involved, seek out opportunities to advance in leadership \(healio.com\)](#).