Readers will note that the cover of this month’s JACC has changed. This issue begins a year-long commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the American College of Cardiology. As Dr. Sharon Hunt explains in the front of this issue, the next 12 months of JACC will include a reprinting of historical papers of importance published in the College’s official journal.

On November 28, 1949, an organizational meeting of the “American College of Cardiologists” was held in the Park Avenue office of Dr. Franz Groedel, an immigrant doctor who fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s. The charter of the College was granted on December 2, 1949 in Washington D.C. (1). Thus, we begin a year long series of activities to celebrate the first half century of the American College of Cardiology.

It is always instructive to review and understand one’s “roots.” The group who founded the College were mostly immigrant doctors practicing in New York City who felt that the American Heart Association was not meeting the needs of practicing cardiologists when it became a lay organization. The rivalry between the two organizations was intense during those first few years and only later mellowed into the congenial cooperation of today, as evidenced by the development of the combined ACC/AHA practice guidelines.

The published objectives (2) of the American College of Cardiology in 1951 were:

- To promote and advance the science of cardiology and angiology;
- To cooperate with other organizations of practitioners and scientists dealing with the same or related specialties;
- To arrange for mutual meetings of cardiologists and angiologists with scientists interested in cardiovascular physiology, anatomy, pathology, pharmacology and allied sciences;
- To make available free postgraduate training in cardiology and angiology;
- To create cardiological centers for clinical treatment and research in cardiovascular diseases;

• To edit and publish a journal, articles and pamphlets pertaining to cardiology and angiology

As one reviews this list, it is clear that postgraduate education was to become a focus of ACC efforts.

As one reviews the current mission statement and goals of the American College of Cardiology, it is clear that the original objectives are still in place and all the additions reflect the changing nature of medical practice itself.

Mission Statement

The mission of the American College of Cardiology is to foster optimal cardiovascular care and disease prevention through professional education, promotion of research, leadership in the development of standards and guidelines and the formulation of health care policy.

Goals

1. Remain the primary professional association for all cardiovascular specialists in the United States.
2. Provide a comprehensive and innovative program of high-quality continuing medical education for cardiovascular health professionals that is continuously monitored and adapted to address their needs.
3. Produce clinical practice guidelines that are widely used as the most authoritative standards of cardiovascular care by generalists as well as cardiovascular specialists.
4. Become the recognized authority on vocabulary, standards and information structuring relative to cardiovascular diseases and their treatments.
5. Advise federal and state government entities/agencies and private organizations/institutions in a proactive fashion about issues that have the potential to affect cardiovascular health care delivery or cardiovascular specialists.
7. Track, analyze and promote the conduct and dissemination of basic, clinical, cost-effective research in cardiovascular disease, and encourage appropriate types, foci, and levels of research.
8. Monitor and provide a forum for public debate and discussion about ethical issues pertaining to cardiovascular care.

9. Enhance international participation in the ACC.

10. Remain a member-led, financially sound organization with appropriate and effective mechanisms to adapt to the changing health care environment.

All of us can be proud of our College and the important role it plays in American medicine. As we reflect on our “roots” over the next 12 months, we also look forward to a new millennium and the continued leadership of the ACC not only in this country, but internationally.

References


2. Ibid. p. 136.