

Christy Bailey-Byers
Director of Accreditation Services
ARC/STSA
6 West Dry Creek Circle, Suite 110
Littleton, CO 80120

Dear Mrs. Bailey-Byers,

I hope this letter finds you well. As the Program Director for Surgical Technology at Angelina College, I am writing to present an innovation plan proposal aimed at addressing the current challenge of educator turnover and the lack of formal educational preparation for surgical technology educators. This proposal is designed to enhance the quality and stability of surgical technology programs by developing and implementing a comprehensive educator training program.

As you are aware, many Certified Surgical Technologists (CSTs) transition directly from clinical practice to teaching roles without formal educational training. This shift can be particularly challenging for those assuming responsibilities as program directors, didactic instructors, lab instructors, and clinical coordinators. The lack of pedagogical and leadership training often results in inconsistent teaching practices, difficulties in curriculum management, and higher educator turnover. Such instability can significantly impact student retention, program effectiveness, and ultimately, the quality of patient care.

We cannot afford to let the high turnover rates of program directors continue. The impact of this issue ripples out to affect the quality of surgical technology education and, ultimately, patient care. By failing to address this now, we risk undermining the stability of our programs, which could have long-term negative consequences for both students and the healthcare industry as a whole.

To address these issues, I propose the development of a formalized training program for surgical technology educators. This program will include modules specifically designed for the unique roles within surgical technology education, including program directors, didactic instructors, lab instructors, and clinical coordinators.

The training program will focus on the following key areas:

- Program Directors: Leadership and program management, accreditation compliance, and student recruitment/retention strategies.
- Didactic Instructors: Curriculum development, instructional design, adult learning theory, and assessment strategies.

- Lab Instructors: Hands-on teaching techniques, simulation-based learning, and sterile technique/infection control.
- Clinical Coordinators: Clinical site management, student mentoring, and evaluation of clinical experiences and student performance.

This modular approach ensures that educators are fully prepared for their specific roles, ultimately improving the consistency and quality of education provided to surgical technology students.

By equipping CSTs transitioning to educational roles with the necessary skills and knowledge, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reduce turnover rates: Educators who are well-prepared for their roles are more likely to remain in their positions, improving program stability.
- Enhance student retention and success: Students will benefit from consistent, high-quality instruction, leading to better engagement and outcomes.
- Improve program performance: Programs with strong leadership and skilled educators are better positioned to meet accreditation standards and produce highly qualified CSTs.

I believe ARC/STSA's support and endorsement of this educator training initiative would be instrumental in its success. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further with you and explore potential partnerships to ensure the program aligns with ARC/STSA's standards and goals for surgical technology education.

Thank you for your consideration of this important initiative. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate with ARC/STSA to elevate the quality of surgical technology education and contribute to the future success of both educators and students in our field.

Sincerely,

Stefanie Vaughn, BAS, CST, FAST
Program Director, Surgical Technology
Angelina College