FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – 2016

Program: Orthopedic Surgery - Dr. Angela Scharfenberger

**Specialty/Field Questions:**

1. a) What are some strengths of your specialty? What draws and keeps people in your specialty?

*Orthopedic Surgery focuses on the musculoskeletal system. Surgeries positively affect patient’s functions and quality of life. Surgeries often focus on decreasing pain. Surgeries are varied, as are the patients. People with a love of surgery and musculoskeletal system are drawn to Orthopedics*

b) What are some common complaints your specialty?

*Long Hours*

2. Why did you choose your specialty?

*I loved the functional aspect of Orthopedics - that the surgery brought patients back to enjoying life. I loved the trauma – that is fixing broken bones.*

3. What types of clinical cases do you commonly see?

*Orthopedics is extremely varied, encompassing every area of the body. The cases seen depend on the area of sub specialization including Spine, Pediatrics, Total Joints, Trauma, and subspecialty based on area of body (shoulder, elbow, hand, hip, knee, ankle). We deal with trauma and arthritis predominantly.*

4. Briefly describe a typical day.

*My day starts and 7am with ward rounds. On an OR day I would typically be in the OR from 7:30-4pm. Thereafter further rounds. On an “On Call” day the day starts at 7am and finishes at 11pm. This time is spent in the OR. If further emergency cases come in we may work through the night. Clinic days run from 8 am – 4pm. In general I do 1 to 2 OR days and 1 day of “On Call” in a week, with 1-2 days of clinic.*

5. a) What are the varieties of lifestyles within your field?

*Lifestyle depends on area of sub specialization and size of center where one works. There are opportunities for an Academic Practice, or one focusing on Research. Orthopedics is not a “lifestyle” specialty. Most Orthopedic Surgeons work long hours. Having said that, we take plenty of holiday time.*

b) Specifically, how able is your specialty to accommodate family life?

*Surgeons are obligated to take call, which is, in general, no more than 1 in 4, but can be as little as 1 in 10 depending on the center. The rest of the schedule is then determined by how hard the surgeon wishes to work.*
6. How do you see your discipline changing over the next decade?

Over the next decade I see Orthopedic Surgery becoming more streamlined and efficient. That is better organized intake clinics and care maps to maximize available OR time and still serve our patient population. Our specialty continues to evolve with respect to technology (for example minimal invasive surgery).

Residency Program Questions:

7    a) What are you specifically looking for in an impressive candidate?

Commitment to the specialty, able to work as a team member, good psychomotor skills, some research experience.

b) What can a potential candidate do now, in order to be an appealing applicant to your program?

Exposure to specialty through electives, summer research projects.

8. How is your residency program organized? (i.e. year by year breakdown and schedule of rotations)  See attached brochure

9. What is your residency program’s orientation and focus?

To prepare a well-rounded surgeon who can enter community practice or pursue sub-specialty practice after fellowship training

10. What is the availability of experiences in subspecialty areas during training?

All areas of subspecialty are covered during the residency program at UofA

11. Are there sufficient elective opportunities during training to explore your special interests?

There is a one month elective in second year, and an additional 3 month block in 4th year.

12. What is the on-call schedule during each year of residency?

1 in 4

13. What distinguishes the U of A program from other programs?

Our program allows for good rapport between staff and residents. Good exposure to clinical material and opportunity to get good surgical experience
14. a) Who can we contact for more information or to set up electives?

Sharon Dopulos 780-407-6042 or dopulos@ualberta.ca

b) Specifically, is there a list of residents whom we can call or email?

See above

15. How competitive is it to get in, and then to succeed in your field?

The number of applicants varies from year to year, but most who want to get into Orthopedic Surgery are successful.

16. a) Is there active and/or required research in your residency program?

Residents are asked to complete research projects during pgy2, 3 and 4 years. It is hoped that they will have a publication by the completion of their residency

b) What role does research play in your career?

Depends on the surgeon and their preferences.

17. What local, national or international conferences would be of benefit to candidates interested in your residency program?

None necessary at medical student level but if interested the Canadian Orthopaedic Assoc. their meeting would be a reasonable choice