Specialty/Field Questions

1. a) What are the best things about your specialty?
   - Reconstructive Surgery and the variety of procedures that one gets to perform.
   - There is a high degree of patient satisfaction

   b) What are the worst things about your specialty?
   - Heavy patient loads.

2. Why did you choose your specialty?
   - I chose plastic surgery because of the variety & highly technical nature of the different procedures that one gets to perform. It provides a lot of flexibility in lifestyle as well as a wide range of surgical sub-specialties.

3. What types of clinical cases do you commonly see?
   - Plastic Surgery cases range in variety from pediatric reconstructive procedures to cranial-facial, peripheral nerve, microsurgery, wrist reconstruction, cancer reconstruction, burn reconstruction, and cosmetic surgery.

4. Briefly describe a typical day.
   - Days vary depending on whether you’re in the operating room or clinics. A day can start in either a reconstructive or cosmetic clinic, and the surgery days also vary as to whether they are reconstructive or cosmetic in nature.

5. A) What are the varieties of lifestyles within your field?
   - There are a wide variety of lifestyles within the field. Although each person will be expected to take a certain amount of call, the amount of clinic or operating time that is taken can be dictated by the physician. Generally speaking, most plastic surgeons work greater than sixty hours a week.

   B) Specifically, how able is your specialty to accommodate family life?
   - This is comparable to other specialties.

6. How do you see your discipline changing over the next decade?
   - Plastic Surgery is always growing and changing. New advances in reconstructive surgery are continually being made and applied to the field. The largest challenge in Canada in the next decade will be the shrinking size of the workforce and increasing size of the population. There will be increasing demand to train more plastic surgeons and increasing job availability for those who are graduating.

Residency Program Questions

1. a) What are you looking for specifically in an impressive candidate?
   - The number one thing we look for in a candidate is the ability to work in a team. Can we work closely with this person for the five years that it takes to train them? Can we trust them? Are they going to be a hard working candidate?

   b) What can a potential candidate do now in order to be an appealing applicant to your program?
   - The potential candidate should have some exposure to research (not necessarily in the field of Plastic Surgery). They should demonstrate themselves to be ethical, hard-working, and a good team player.

2. How is your residency program organized? (i.e. year by year breakdown and schedule of rotations)
3. What is your residency program’s orientation and focus?
   - Our program is focused on training plastic surgeons to be outstanding reconstructive surgeons, and physicians as a whole.

4. What is the availability of experiences in subspecialty areas during training?
   - The availability of experiences in Plastic Surgery is probably one of the greatest in all the surgical domains. There is a wide variety of fields that one can enter, with significantly different paths.

5. Are there sufficient elective opportunities during training to explore your special interests?
   - Yes. This information is included in the brochure provided.

6. What is the on-call schedule during each year of residency?
   - Schedules vary depending on the number of residents on service at a given time; however they stay within the PARA guidelines.

7. What distinguishes the U of A program from other programs?
   - We are one of the few programs in the country that have a strong background in all domains of plastic surgery. The clinical volume and caseload that a resident gets exposed to is larger and more diverse than any other program.

8. Who can we contact for more information or to set up electives?
   - The Undergraduate Office of Surgical Education would be happy to answer any questions regarding student electives or shadowing. Please e-mail specsurg@ualberta.ca or go to http://surgery.med.ualberta.ca/Education/Education/Electives/Pages/default.aspx for more information.

9. How competitive is it to get in, and then to succeed in your field?
   - This used to be an extremely competitive field to get into, and it is still very difficult. The number of residency positions has increased over the past several years to be approximately twenty-two to twenty-three across the country. At any one point there are thirty-five to forty-five serious candidates applying to these programs. This is much better than it was ten years ago, when there were only eight to nine positions and fifty-five to sixty serious candidates. Although it is still difficult, there is more opportunity to get in than one might think.

10. Is there active and/or required research in your residency program?
    - There is required research during the residency program. The residents are expected to present at three meetings, and to have one article prepared and ready for submission.

11. What local, national or international conferences would be of benefit to candidates interested in your residency program?
    - While there are many conferences that a student can attend, it would be especially beneficial to attend a conference at which they are presenting a paper.