

CFMS SGM 2015: President's Update

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It has been a busy year so far for the CFMS executive, and very much so for the President! We kicked off the year with our Fall Executive Meeting in Ottawa in October. Incorporating feedback from previous executives and in order to further develop our team, we began our first meeting with an introduction to governance and strategic thinking, hosted by governance expert Dr. Jim Nininger. This session set the tone for the year, especially in the context of the implementation of our new three year strategic plan.

We also were able to focus on developing leadership qualities in our executive and our membership at large. Building on a relationship developed by Past-President Dr. Jesse Kancir, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) offered our executive the opportunity to take part in an online leadership course entitled Leadership Begins with Self-Awareness. Furthermore, the CMA offered to host a leadership training session for students and residents, which we have incorporated into our upcoming SGM. These fantastic opportunities will allow our executive, and student leaders attending SGM, to further hone their skills as they advocate on behalf of their colleagues across the country!

The CFMS has continued to grow as an organization. We now represent students from each of Canada's 17 faculties of medicine, as we build our membership base in Quebec. Our advocacy efforts grew, and in November we hosted a successful Lobby Day on Parliament Hill advocating for a national Pharmacare strategy. We continue to develop our human resources, and we hired a Lobby Day Coordinator for one month in order to assist with the planning of our Lobby Day.

As CFMS President, I have been honoured to represent my fellow medical students to a wide variety of national medical organizations. I continue to advocate for a fair and transparent residency matching process as a member of the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Residency Matching Committee. I sit as medical student representative on the board of directors of the CMA, where I have helped promote the need for a national Seniors Care Strategy. As part of our bid to make seniors care a ballot issue in the 2015 federal election, I took part in a roundtable session co-hosted by the CMA and MPs Judy Sgro and Hedy Fry, Liberal Health Critic. I also had the opportunity to be a part of the CMA delegation to a Global Symposium on Social Determinants of Health, co-hosted by the CMA and the British Medical Association in London, England. I was proud to see that Canada is a global leader in advocating for our most vulnerable patients, and reminded that as the next generation of this country's physicians, we have a responsibility to find innovative solutions to improve the health of our population as a whole.

Finally, I recently had the privilege of addressing the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health on behalf of the CFMS. I spoke of the need for federal leadership in Health Human Resource planning, as we strive to provide the country with the right mix and distribution of physicians to meet the needs of the population. I also outlined our recommended changes to the Canada Student Loan program, in order to potentially increase the uptake of a Canada Student Loan forgiveness program that aims to recruit new residents and physicians to rural and remote areas.

I am very much looking forward to the remainder of my term as President, and continuing to see the amazing work carried out by all the members of the CFMS across the country!