

POLITICAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE



History

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students operates on the three pillars of services, communication, and representation. At CFMS' Annual General Meeting 2007 (September 2007, Kanata, ON), a resolution was passed to form a Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) to determine political and social issues important to medical students. This group was mandated to play an important role in the annual CFMS Lobby Day, but also to address these issues on an ongoing basis.

Mission/objectives

The mandate of PAC includes, but is not limited to:

1. Outlining educational, political, and social issues of importance to medical students,
2. Determining potential future topics and assisting in document preparation for CFMS Lobby Day,
3. Promoting ongoing regional lobbying efforts.

Although a main focus of CFMS' federal lobbying revolves around the annual CFMS Lobby Day, PAC was created in the spirit of coordinating year-round regional "grassroots" lobbying efforts.

Operations

PAC is composed of one Chair (see PAC Chair description below) and one representative from each CFMS member school, one of whom assists in the role of Vice-Chair. The school representatives are selected by the member school's CFMS Representatives and medical school society. Selection criteria are established individually by each school. One PAC Vice-Chair is then selected from among the school representatives by the CFMS Executive.

PAC representatives are selected for a one-year term with the opportunity to re-apply after the completion of their term. Ideal candidates for this position should demonstrate an interest in student issues, be able to represent the opinions of their student body, and be motivated to work with students across the country. Previous experience with politics, lobbying, or drafting media documents is welcome but not necessary.

Due to the wide geographical distribution of its members, most operations of PAC are conducted electronically via an online forum with periodic teleconferences. Each member of PAC is invited, and strongly encouraged, to participate in CFMS Lobby Day in Ottawa.

In addition to its own meetings, PAC works closely with Lobby Day MRPs and CFMS Public Relations Officer.

Current activities

Since its inception in December 2007, PAC has worked in a number of areas.

CFMS Lobby Day (February 2008, Ottawa, ON)

- document preparation: letters to Minister of Finance and Health, informational materials for MPs
- delegate selection

- assisting with operations on training day
- contacting MPs

year-round lobbying efforts

- environmental scan to determine local student interests
- generating policy statements for approval by CFMS Executive
- revising current CFMS policy statements as needed
- participating in the Letters to the Editor campaign in conjunction with CFMS Public Relations Officer
- supporting local efforts (ex. pan-Alberta Lobby Day with collaboration between the University of Alberta and University of Calgary)

Schedule

These PAC Terms of Reference will be reviewed at CFMS BAGM 2009.

Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) Chair

Responsibilities

While the CFMS PAC was created to solicit the broader opinion of Canadian medical students on a wide variety of issues, the role of the Chair is to guide and synthesize these discussions.

The duties of the PAC Chair include, but are not limited to:

1. Overseeing PAC discussions, both via online forum and teleconference,
2. Summarizing and synthesizing these discussions for periodic review with the CFMS Executive,
3. Being aware of current CFMS policy statements, and of those policy statements needing revision,
4. Communicating pertinent information from the CFMS Executive, especially with CFMS Lobby Day MRPs to make sure that there is a good flow of information between Lobby Day organization and member schools. (The CFMS PAC Chair should be copied on all communication to lobby@cfms.org)

The duties of the PAC Chair should not be confused with those of the CFMS Lobby Day MRPs, whose primary focus is to manage the preparations and follow-up of CFMS Lobby Day. Though there will likely be questions from PAC participants on how to proceed with Lobby Day planning, the PAC Chair will be most responsible for guiding the discussion of the PAC and facilitating concrete outputs by this group, as described in the PAC Terms of Reference.

The PAC Chair is assisted in his/her duties by the PAC Vice-Chair, who is selected by the CFMS Executive from among the school representatives on PAC.

Qualifications

The position of PAC Chair is filled by one member of the CFMS Executive. This role is taken on for a one-year term coinciding with the CFMS Executive selection process.

Review

This description of the PAC Chair will be reviewed at CFMS BAGM 2009.