**I. DESCRIPTION OF POSITION**

The Vice-President of Government Affairs (VP GA) has a variety of duties related to leading and coordinating local, provincial, and national advocacy efforts of the CFMS. More specifically, the VP GA serves as Chair of the CFMS Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC) and leads the organization of the annual CFMS Lobby Day in Ottawa. In conjunction with the National Officer of Health Policy, the VP GA guides the Committee on Health Policy in a regular review of existing policy documents and the creation of new documents. The VP GA will also actively collaborate with the Vice President Education on issues related to education that require political involvement. Finally, the VP GA will represent the CFMS to various external committees and organizations as deemed necessary by the president and executive.

The CFMS Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC) exists to both solicit the broader opinion of Canadian medical students on a wide variety of issues as well as to help take action at the local, provincial, and national levels. The CFMS GAAC is composed of the Chair (VP GA) and one to two representatives from each CFMS member school, selected by the individual medical societies. The mandate of the CFMS GAAC includes, but is not limited to:

1. Provide a grassroots framework to determine and advocate for the interests of the CFMS and its membership;
2. Cultivate leadership and advocacy skills in CFMS membership, and provide further opportunities for involvement with CFMS;
3. Assist with CFMS national lobbying efforts.

**II. ACTIVITIES**

Meetings attended:

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| DATE | MEETING | LOCATION |
| Sept 22-25, 2016 | CFMS Annual General Meeting | EDMONTON, AB |
| Oct 4, 2016 | Advocacy Strategy Teleconference | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 4, 2016 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 8, 2016 | Teleconference with CFMS President | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 15, 2016 | CFMS Education and Advocacy Teleconference | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 15, 2016 | CFMS Executive meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 17, 2016 | CMA Event with FPT | TORONTO, ON |
| Oct 19, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 23, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Oct 30, 2016 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 4-6, 2016 | CFMS Fall Executive Meeting | OTTAWA, ON |
| Nov 5, 2016 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 11-12, 2016 | CFMS NOHP interviews | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 13, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 14, 2016 | CMA Advocacy Training Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 17, 2016 | Teleconference with NOHRP | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 20, 2016 | Budget Meeting with CFMS VP Finance | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 24, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Expert Consultation | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 26, 2016 | Teleconference with NOHP | TELECONFERENCE |
| Nov 27, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 1, 2016 | CMA Lobby Day Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 3, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 4, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 4, 2016 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 13, 2016 | CFMS HHR Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 13, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 16, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 17, 2016 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Dec 29, 2016 | CFMS Website Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Jan 6-8, 2017 | CFMS Winter Executive Meeting | TORONTO, ON |
| Jan 12, 2017 | CMA Lobby Day Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Jan 15, 2017 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Jan 24, 2017 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Jan 25, 2017 | Teleconference with NOHP | TELECONFERENCE |
| Jan 31, 2017 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Feb 6, 2017 | Health Canada Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Feb 10-13, 2017 | CFMS Lobby Day | OTTAWA, ON |
| Feb 25, 2017 | CFMS Executive Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| Mar 12, 2017 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| March 17 | Health Canada Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| March 21 | Teleconference with Opioid Project Supervisor | TELECONFERENCE |
| April 1-3 | OMSA Lobby Day | TORONTO, ON |
| April 9 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| April 20 | Public Policy Forum Gala | TORONTO, ON |
| April 28-30 | CFMS Spring General Meeting | WINNIPEG, MB |
| April 30 | AFMC eHealth Committee Meeting | WINNIPEG, MB |
| May 2 | Meeting with Public Health Agency of Canada | TELECONFERENCE |
| May 8 | CFMS Resolutions teleconference | TELECONFERENCE |
| May 10 | CFMS Executive Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| May 11-12 | AMS Meeting | TORONTO, ON |
| May 24-25 | Opioid Summer Studentship Interviews | TELECONFERENCE |
| May 28 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 7 | CFMS Executive Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 13 | AFMC eHealth Subcommittee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 13 | CFMS Resolutions Working Group | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 22 | AFMC Opioids Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 27 | AFMC eHealth Subcommittee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 28 | CFMS Resolutions Working Group | TELECONFERENCE |
| June 28 | CFMS Cannabis Task Force | TELECONFERENCE |
| July 4 | CFMS Resolutions Working Group | TELECONFERENCE |
| July 7-9 | CFMS Executive Meeting | CALGARY, AB |
| July 18 | Provincial HHR Planning Meeting | TORONTO, ON |
| July 20 | CFMS Resolutions Working Group | TELECONFERENCE |
| July 20 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| July 26 | AFMC Opioids Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| August 19-22 | CMA General Council | QUEBEC CITY, QC |
| August 27 | CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| September 5 | CFMS Cannabis Task Force | TELECONFERENCE |
| September 6 | Meeting with CDM | TELECONFERENCE |
| September 11 | CFMS GAAC Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| September 19 | CFMS Executive Meeting | TELECONFERENCE |
| September 22-24 | CFMS AGM | OTTAWA, ON |

**III. PRIORITIES AND PROJECT AREAS**

CFMS Lobby Day: The Opioid Crisis

On February 13th, 2017, the CFMS held one of its annual flagship events – Lobby Day. Over 60 medical students from across Canada met with Members of Parliament and Senators in Ottawa to discuss action on the opioid crisis, focusing on upstream factors such as chronic pain and access to mental health services. This year we had the privilege of meeting with the Minister of Health to discuss our ask and the role of learners in addressing the problem. We have also formed a partnership with Health Canada to continue work on this project and have included commitments for the updated Joint Statements. Our efforts were featured on CBC in Calgary, and further efforts by our UBC team to lobby their provincial government garnered significant local coverage in British Columbia. We are glad to see Canada’s policy makers are taking this issue seriously and hopefully meaningful changes are forthcoming.

This year one of my focuses has been on continuing to advocate beyond Lobby Day itself. Our work with Health Canada has spring-boarded these efforts. Through our participation in upcoming National Opioid Summit follow-up activities, we have worked with other national organizations to develop long-term projects on the topic, specifically around training and education in the medical education setting and the evaluation of the crisis as a complex system. I have worked to liaise closely with the AFMC to advocate for student input in curricular design. Summer studentships were developed to address these topics. Student grass-root and peer-to-peer education initiatives have also played an important role in this continuing advocacy. Naloxone eduation and training sessions were brought to nearly every university this year with the reaminder planning events for this coming Fall term.

This year, the research committee for the 2018 lobby day began working at SGM and throughout the summer. Through broad consultation within the CFMS they narrowed down and selected a lobby day topic for the upcoming year.

Local Initiatives

While CFMS Lobby Day is an event with significant reach and political impact for our federation as a whole, the grassroots advocacy events organized by our local reps allow for tremendous impact at the level of our individual members. Highlights of local events this year include provincial lobby days, including a newly developed lobby day in PEI. Other successes include the development of the Lightbulb Moments Campaign and launch event in Hamilton, ON on April 11, the organization of naloxone training at medical schools across the country, debates on public vs private healthcare, municipal lobby days, poverty pledges, a maternal health summit, and town halls with a provincial health minister.

Health Human Resources

The CFMS has been working hard to address the current climate of health human resource (HHR) planning in Canada this year. Our efforts have been two-fold; evaluating and sun-setting the old and outdated positions held by the CFMS and revisiting these ideas in 2017, as well as developing a long-term vision for HHR planning in Canada. We have been working closely with the Education portfolio to advocate for a system that provides students with sufficient information to make career decisions and work with external stakeholders to adequately develop models that inform HHR planning in the country for the future.

Position Paper Process

Since SGM there has been a significant push to revise the position paper process. With increasing engagement from members the number of papers up for discussion has skyrocketed, and it has become difficult to discuss papers and positions in sufficient depth at meetings. Over the last year we have evaluated systems used by other organizations, and, in light of previous CFMS generations in which primarily motions were discussed rather than papers, our team has been developing an alternate system for publication of position papers. They are currently finalizing a system that balances input and critique from diverse members with efficient publication of papers. New process revisions include increased feedback opportunities prior to general meetings, a consent agenda for technical changes, and clarity of submission requirements.

Advocacy Tracker

The COHP worked tirelessly all year to develop the advocacy tracker this year. They have been developing a method for applying metrics to our position papers so we can track our advocacy efforts well in to the future. They have pulled out every key points and recommendation from every position paper passed by the CFMS, and have developed updates as to what has been done to date on the file. We plan to publish it on the CFMS website and maintain updates on it with the passage of new papers over the coming year.

Cannabis Legislation

Over the summer, a cannabis task force was developed to conduct research on the current changes to legislation and health implications. They have been narrowing down areas of focus and creating in-depth analyses on the topics. A report is being generated but not yet complete. Stay tuned for SGM 2018 for further updates.

Taxation Legislation

The government affairs portfolio has been keeping a close eye on the tax policy changes announced over the summer and the implications for physicians. We have continued to keep an open discussion as to how this affects students and have worked to advocate for student financial priorities, including tuition and loan repayment. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and advocate as needed.

Pharmacare

We continue to work with partners such as Canadian Doctors for Medicare on the pharmacare topic. In the last year our goals have focused more on continued student education and advocacy at the local level. We will continue to prioritize these items within the pharmacare portfolio in the coming year.

Liaising with the FMEQ

We continue to strengthen our relationship with the FMEQ working on cross-Canada advocacy projects. Not only do we invite one-another to federal and Quebec Lobby Days, but we have also worked on advocacy surrounding tobacco legislation, including the development of a formal submission to Health Canada in consultation. We hope to continue supporting them, particularly on this topic, in the province of Quebec.

**IV. FOLLOW UP, VISION, GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS POSITION**

This year has been a blast. We have made huge strides within the portfolio, expanding its capacity within the CFMS, as well as externally to our stakeholders. Continuing to remain active on our opioids, pharmacare and cannabis portfolios will be crucial as developments continue in each at the national level. The increased time available to work on lobby day will allow for further in-depth consultation this coming fall and a stronger advocacy plan. Goals for the coming year will include strengthening our advocacy on student-specific issues including financing and health human resource planning. We will also roll out the recommendations of our resolutions task force. Thank you to all members for allowing me to represent you this year!

**Sarah Silverberg, B.Arts.Sc.**

**MD Candidate 2018 | University of Toronto**

**Vice President Government Affairs |Vice-Présidente aux affaires gouvernementales**

**Canadian Federation of Medical Students | Fédération des étudiants et des étudiantes en médecine du Canada**

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