

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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Ontario Regional Representative
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I. DESCRIPTION OF POSITION:

The primary roles of the CFMS Ontario Regional Representatives are outlined in the bylaws, which state that executives in this position should represent the six Ontario member medical schools (Western, McMaster, Toronto, NOSM, Queen's, Ottawa) and their students at the Executive meetings, and to undertake projects that further the goals of the CFMS.

The goal of representation is achieved through close communication with the provincial medical student organization, Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA). Effective communication between the CFMS and OMSA ensure that redundancies between organizations are eliminated, and that the CFMS can work to provide national response to issues raised provincially. The CFMS Ontario Regional Representatives attend all OMSA executive meetings, either in person, via videoconference, or via teleconference.

As members of the CFMS Executive Committee, the Ontario Regional Representatives also initiate projects that fall under the strategic plan or otherwise address gaps in the CFMS organizational mandate. In addition, they aid the CFMS Vice Presidents in achieving their project goals during the elected term.

This year, in addition to representing the CFMS Executive at the OMSA Executive meetings, my portfolio largely involved developing the CFMS Wellness Program in concert with the National Wellness Officer.

II. ACTIVITIES

Meetings Attended:

1. CFMS Fall AGM – Sept 23-25, 2011 – Calgary
2. Wellness Teleconference – Oct 3, 2011
3. Wellness Teleconference – Oct 11, 2011
4. CFMS Executive Meeting – Oct 14-16, 2011 – Ottawa
5. OMSA Videoconference – Oct 16, 2011
6. Wellness Teleconference – Oct 18, 2011
7. Canadian Conference on Physician Health – Oct 28-29, 2011 - Toronto
8. Wellness Teleconference – Nov 2, 2011
9. CFMS Exec Teleconference – Nov 13, 2011

10. CFMS Executive Meeting – Jan 20-22, 2012 – Toronto
11. OMSA Meeting – Jan 21, 2012 - Toronto
12. CFMS Exec Teleconference – March 13, 2012
13. CFMS SGM – April 12-15, 2012 – Banff
14. CFMS Executive Meeting – Aug 25-26, 2012 – Montreal
15. CFMS AGM – Sept 27-30, 2012 – Winnipeg

Portfolio Updates

Project Areas

A.) Ontario Representation (in concert with OMSA)

The Ontario Regional Representative position is unique from other Regional Representatives on the Executive Committee in that much of the lobbying and representation roles are already well covered by the Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA). As a result of their mandates, the CFMS Ontario Regional Representatives largely exist as consultant members who attend the OMSA executive meetings and make an effort to remain updated on the events run by each organization. When in-person meetings are not possible, the Ontario Regional Representatives attempt to engage in video or teleconferences to maintain an open line of communication between the organizations. This year, communication has been maintained by including the CFMS Ontario Regional Representatives in the OMSA email group. As a result, we are able to openly communicate with the OMSA executives about provincial reports that have national consequences, such as when producing a press release response to the Drummond Report in Ontario.

B.) Wellness Portfolio

The wellness portfolio that I set out to accomplish at the beginning of my term had three major parts – (1) Creating and administering a National Wellness Survey to assess the wellness needs of our membership, (2) Develop a method to allow the Wellness program to become self-sustaining, and (3) Revamp the CFMS wellness website to be up-to-date and useful to the CFMS membership.

The first part of this portfolio was on its way on January 1, 2012, whereupon the online-administered survey was closed, and a total of 990 survey participants were registered. The data of this survey will be compiled into a poster and report to be presented at the 2012 AMA-BMA-CMA International Conference on Physician Health in Montreal, Quebec. Following this presentation, the survey data will be made public to each individual school through the wellness representatives who make up the Standing Committee on Undergraduate Medical Student Wellness.

The second part of this portfolio has been primarily accomplished through the development of a Standing Committee on Undergraduate Medical Student Wellness at SGM 2012. This committee will have its first teleconferences/Skype meetings

following AGM 2012, and will be the primary source of wellness programming for the CFMS. This committee will be self-sustaining through already-existent mechanisms at each school, and will be responsible for upkeep of the wellness website and providing innovative wellness opportunities for CFMS members. This has been further accomplished by establishing a budget line item for Wellness, which now falls under the VP Services portfolio.

Finally, one of the biggest ways I sought to enhance the CFMS Wellness program was through the revamping and integration of a wellness website into the currently existing CFMS website. In the past, the Wellness program had its own website governed by a third party company, and as a result lost the rights to its own content. In collaboration with the IT Office Sr and National Wellness Officer, a new Wellness Website will have its graphic design and structure completed by AGM 2012. The content will be principally provided by the CFMS membership, and will focus on a multi-media and user-friendly stop for a variety of wellness resources. Perhaps most importantly, this website will feature a crisis section, which will direct members to province-specific help lines for themselves, or to help a peer in need. Eventually, I hope that this resource page can be given to each member student in the form of a magnet given out with the CFMS clipboards in the first year presentations.

C.) Additional Misc CFMS Projects

Prior to AGM, I had been involved in the selection committees for the Student Initiative Grant (SIG) funding, 2012 SGM Travel Funding, and CFMS Representative to the CMA Council on Health Care and Promotion (CHCP). In this capacity, I was involved in evaluating and ranking candidates who applied for those positions.

Additionally, throughout the year, I liaise with the National Wellness Officer, the CFMS Representative to the CMA Council on Health Care and Promotion, and the CFMS Representative to the College of Family Physicians of Canada's Executive Committee to remain abreast of pertinent updates from each of these committees.

III. FOLLOW-UP, VISION, GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS POSITION

The role of the Ontario Regional Representative allows for considerable flexibility in assisting other CFMS Executive members with portfolio projects in addition to spearheading our own initiatives. One of the major challenges associated with this flexibility is the lack of sustainability of projects initiated by Regional Representatives.

For this reason, I chose to focus my energies in aiding the development of a sustainable Wellness program for the CFMS membership. I strongly believe that this goal has been accomplished through the creation of a structured standing committee with a budgetary

line in place. As a next step for the Wellness Standing Committee, I hope they will be able to continue to make the wellness website a useful resource for students. I also hope they will move forward and conduct a broad survey of all classes to mirror the “Happy Docs” survey conducted in 2008 by CAIR. I believe that valuable information will be gleaned from this sort of study, and will continue on in an advisory role to help push this project forward if necessary.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

One of the challenges of this position exists in clarifying the opacity of the roles and responsibilities of the Ontario Regional Representatives in and around issues dealt with by OMSA. This year, as was true of last year, neither Ontario Regional Representative received funding to attend OMSA executive meetings. As such, involvement at the meetings were limited to half hour videoconferences, or in-person meetings when a representative could arrange transport to the location of the OMSA meeting. This poses a significant obstacle for meaningful participation in the OMSA meetings. As there are many areas of overlap in the roles of the Ontario Regional Representatives and OMSA, it might be beneficial to commit some level of funding to send at least one Ontario Regional Representative to each OMSA executive meeting.

Another broad challenge of the Ontario Regional Representative position is that traditionally, there is little to no continuity in projects started by previous Ontario Representatives. As a result, it is very difficult to effect sustainable change if the portfolio pursued is of a long-term nature. My advice to future regional representatives is to bite off just enough for your one-year term, and work towards tidying up your project or creating a committee to continue your work if its something that is important to the organization as a whole.

Melanie Rodrigues
Ontario Regional Representative
2011-2012