

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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Vice-President Government Affairs

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I. DESCRIPTION OF POSITION

The Vice-President Government Affairs has a variety of duties related to leading and coordinating the CFMS's local, provincial and national advocacy efforts. According to the mandate of the CFMS, the Vice-President Government Affairs of the CFMS shall:

- a) Hold the Office of Chair of the national Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee;
- b) Lead the CFMS Annual Lobby Day on Parliament Hill;
- c) Oversee and encourage the CFMS's local, provincial, and national advocacy efforts; and
- d) Represent the CFMS to various external committees and organizations as deemed necessary.

II. ACTIVITIES

Meetings Attended:

1	2013-09-29	Transition Meeting with VP GA Thomas McLaughlin	Teleconference
2	2013-10-02	Quebec Advocacy with VP FMEQ	Teleconference
3	2013-10-08	GAAC Meeting	Teleconference
4	2013-10-19	CFMS Exec Meeting	Ottawa, ON
5	2013-10-20	CMA Political Action Committee Meeting	Ottawa, ON
6	2013-10-21	CMA Political Action Committee Meeting	Teleconference
7	2013-10-24	CFMS General Manager Lobby Day Logistics Meeting	Teleconference
8	2013-11-03	Global Health NOHRP Interviews	Teleconference
9	2013-11-03	GAAC Meeting	Teleconference
10	2013-11-04	NOHP Meeting	Teleconference
11	2013-11-06	GAAC Alberta Rep Meeting	Teleconference
12	2013-11-08	Meeting with NORP to discuss Lobby Day logistics	Teleconference
13	2013-11-14	Optional GAAC Lobby Day Topic Meeting	Teleconference
14	2013-11-21	Global Health NORP Interviews	Teleconference
15	2013-11-30	CFMS Exec Meeting	Teleconference
16	2013-12-01	NORHP Meeting	Teleconference
17	2013-12-01	GAAC Meeting	Teleconference
18	2013-12-04	Advocacy Toolkit Meeting	Teleconference
19	2013-12-08	GAAC Research Committee	Teleconference
20	2013-12-08	Lobby Day Meeting - NORP and VP Global Health	Teleconference
21	2013-12-14	COHP Meeting	Teleconference
22	2013-12-23	GHA Lobby Day Meeting	Teleconference
23	2014-01-05	GHA Lobby Day Meeting	Teleconference
24	2014-01-05	NORHP Lobby Day Meeting	Teleconference
25	2014-01-11	CFMS Executive Meeting	Toronto, ON
26	2014-01-12	CFMS Executive Meeting	Toronto, ON
27	2014-01-12	GAAC Meeting	Teleconference
28	2014-01-14	COHP Role Meeting: VP Global Health, NOHP	Teleconference
29	2014-02-01	Lobby Day GAAC / GHA Meeting	Ottawa, ON
30	2014-02-02	Lobby Day Training	Ottawa, ON

31	2014-02-03	Lobby Day	Ottawa, ON
32	2014-02-05	CFMS Executive Teleconference	Teleconference
33	2014-02-10	Advocacy Toolkit Meeting	Teleconference
34	2014-02-18	COHP DME Meeting	Teleconference
35	2014-03-02	GAAC Meeting	Teleconference
36	2014-03-18	CFMS Executive Meeting	Teleconference
37	2014-03-30	COHP Meeting	Teleconference
38	2014-04-06	GAAC Meeting	Teleconference
39	2014-04-06	CMA Political Action Committee Meeting	Ottawa, ON
40	2014-04-07	CMA Doctors in the House	Ottawa, ON
41	2014-04-08	CMA Doctors in the House	Ottawa, ON

Project Updates and Priority Areas

Advocacy Toolkit

A team of medical student volunteers from across the nation have also worked to create a practical advocacy resource to be featured on the CFMS website by AGM 2014.

Advocacy Training

The GAAC has assisted the CMA in surveying medical schools across Canada to determine the extent of the existing advocacy training available in formal and informal curricula. The CMA will use this information to develop an advocacy curriculum for future medical student use.

Committee on Health Policy

This year saw the creation of the National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP) and the Committee on Health Policy (COHP). This committee of 12 members has been tasked with ensuring policy papers are updated and of consistent format. The COHP will help set the policy direction of the CFMS.

Grassroots Events and Provincial Lobby Days

The GAAC representatives have conducted numerous successful advocacy grassroots events at the local level. This year also saw the development of multiple provincial Lobby Days. The CFMS has been in communication with the FMEQ to help support the development of a Quebec Lobby Day.

Health Human Resources

Health Human Resources (HHR) has been identified as a priority area for medical students and the health care system at large. For the third consecutive year, the CFMS has proposed a Lobby Day "Ask" relevant to HHR. The CFMS President attended the HHR Summit in Ottawa in February 2014 to continue to engage on this important issue.

Lobby Day February 2014

The annual CFMS Lobby Day took place from February 1 - 3, 2014. Approximately 70 student delegates from each of the CFMS member schools and FMEQ representatives met in Ottawa to receive advocacy training. Their skills were then implemented in over 65 meetings with Members of Parliament and Senators where medical students advocated for social housing support and federal student loan deferral during residency. This represented the first Lobby Day where both the GAAC and Global Health Advocates worked to create the proposals and advocate together.

The VP Communications and Media Engagement Committee helped to promote the Lobby Day efforts and arrange interviews. An advertisement was placed in a special health policy edition of the Hill Times that was published on Lobby Day.

In order to follow through on past recommendations to create a strong, continued relationship with policy-makers beyond Lobby Day, delegates sent letters and templates to their MPs, which was tracked on a master document. Letters were also sent to the offices of the relevant ministers. A letter was also published in the online media outlet, Healthy Debate, in order to ensure continued media attention towards our loan deferral ask.

Lobby Day November 2014

Due to the adoption of a resolution to change the timing of the annual CFMS Lobby Day to a month that better coincides with the earlier stages of the Parliamentary budget cycle, a second Lobby Day will be held in November 2014. Similarly, future Lobby Day events will be scheduled in the fall. A stipulation of this resolution stated that an additional staff member would be hired to aid with the administration and planning during this busy time in the CFMS calendar.

Name Changes

In accordance with the recent change of title from Vice-President Advocacy to Vice-President Government Affairs, it was decided at the Vancouver 2013 AGM to change the name of the former Political Advocacy Committee to the Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC). This group consists of medical student representatives from each of the CFMS member schools and meets at least monthly to organize national and regional advocacy initiatives.

Participation in Political Events

In order to gain firsthand insight into the creation of federal policy and impact its development, the GAAC has followed the example of the CMA PAC and has sent representatives to federal political rallies. It is hoped that through participating in discussions and asking questions, the CFMS can ensure health care is on the agenda for all political parties. The GAAC will review the results of this practice. In order to maintain our status as a non-partisan organization, attempts have been made to send delegates to rallies of all major federal political parties.

Social Determinants of Health

The growing partnership between the GAAC and Global Health has allowed for the creation of a Lobby Day proposal very much focused on the social determinants of health (social housing). This prompted discussion about the priorities of the CFMS advocacy efforts and the organization's dual responsibility to both medical students and the patients we entered the profession to serve. Discussions during the February 2014 Lobby Day derived the sense that both of these important and often complementary priorities should direct CFMS advocacy efforts.

III. FOLLOW-UP GOALS

Advocacy Toolkit

The CFMS has proposed a partnership wherein the CMA can help edit and endorse the curriculum that has been created in the Advocacy Toolkit.

Committee on Health Policy

The COHP will continue to review and update policy papers in consultation with all relevant CFMS members. While a small number of documents will be prepared for the SGM 2014, it is hoped that a larger number will be ready to present for approval at the AGM 2014.

Lobby Day November 2014

The GAAC and Global Health Advocates will once again work together to develop the Lobby Day Ask. A Hiring Committee will be organized by the VP Government Affairs to select an additional administrator to assist with the logistics of planning the upcoming Lobby Day.

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Committee on Health Policy

The COHP has identified the importance of connecting with the relevant Vice-Presidents, National Officers, and original authors of policy papers during their review. Efforts have been made to establish early and frequent communication with the relevant parties.

In accordance with recommendations from the NOHP, the CFMS will investigate the potential creation of evidence-based flagship reports that policy-makers can use to inform their policy development. It was noted that several other successful organizations (Canadian Federation of Municipalities, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance) produce reports in this extensive format and have achieved lobbying success.

While the creation of new position statements has slowed this year as the COHP has focused on updating and refining current policy papers, the future will surely see the development of new documents. It will be imperative that the COHP connects with the newly-established Media Engagement Committee to share these statements with relevant media outlets and stakeholders. The two groups have not functioned together yet this year.

Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee Engagement

Funding for GAAC attendance at CFMS General Meetings is inconsistent between schools, hindering the ability of the GAAC to have in-depth discussions about the group's priorities and future directions. The GAAC-specific travel awards provided for the AGM 2013 enabled more detailed discussions about the roles of the committee, leading to the change in name and a great deal of positive change within the portfolio. Similar opportunities for GAAC members to attend CFMS General Meetings can ensure the advocacy branch of the CFMS remains responsive to current political issues, vibrant, and productive.

Lobby Day November 2014

Pursuant to discussions at the February 2014 Lobby Day, the GAAC and Global Health Advocates will now work synergistically rather than in parallel in order to produce cogent and coherent Lobby Day Ask(s). This will be accomplished through connecting earlier and establishing a joint Research Committee.