

# EXECUTIVE REPORT

*Emily Macphail, Western Regional Representative  
2016 Annual General Meeting  
September 22-25, 2016, Edmonton, Alberta*



## I. DESCRIPTION OF POSITION

The role of the CFMS Western Regional Representatives is to act as a liaison between the Western Region medical schools (University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, and University of Saskatchewan) and the CFMS executive team, to represent the interests of the Western Region schools, as well as to foster communications between the five Western schools themselves.

Along with representing our respective regions, all CFMS regional representatives act as members of the CFMS executive team and assist in carrying out tasks related to the CFMS Strategic Plan and annual operations. This year I have taken on the responsibility of coordinating the Student Initiatives Grants program.

## II. ACTIVITIES

Meetings attended:

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION
Sept. 27, 2016	Western Regional Representatives Transition Meeting	Teleconference
October 4, 2016	Western Deans' Meeting School Pre-Meeting: University of Calgary	Teleconference
October 5, 2016	Western Deans' Meeting School Pre-Meeting: University of Manitoba	Teleconference
October 5, 2016	Western Deans' Meeting School Pre-Meeting: University of Saskatchewan	Teleconference
October 6, 2016	Western Deans' Meeting School Pre-Meeting: University of British Columbia	Teleconference
Oct. 15, 2015	Western Deans' Meeting Preparation Meeting	Vancouver, British Columbia
Oct. 16, 2015	Western Deans' Meeting	Vancouver, British Columbia
Oct. 16-18, 2015	CFMS Fall Executive Meeting	Ottawa, Ontario
Nov. 22, 2015	CFMS Executive November Teleconference	Teleconference
Nov. 24, 2015	Western Region November Teleconference	Teleconference
Jan. 8-10, 2016	CFMS Winter Executive Meeting	Toronto, Ontario
Jan. 24, 2016	Western Region January Teleconference	Teleconference
Mar. 6, 2016	CFMS Executive March Teleconference	Teleconference
Mar. 16, 2016	Western Region March Teleconference	Teleconference
Apr. 14, 2016	CFMS-FMEQ Joint Executive Meeting	Montreal, Quebec
Apr. 14-16, 2016	CFMS Spring General Meeting	Montreal, Quebec
Apr. 17-18, 2016	Canadian Conference on Medical Education	Montreal, Quebec

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May 27, 2016	CFMS Summer Exec Meeting Logistics/Planning Meeting	Calgary, Alberta
Jun. 3-5, 2016	CFMS Summer Executive Meeting	Calgary, Alberta
Aug. 13, 2016	CFMS Executive August Teleconference	Teleconference
Aug. 16-17, 2016	Protecting Children from Non-Communicable Diseases: Leadership Advocacy Workshop (at the International Congress of Pediatrics)	Vancouver, British Columbia
Aug. 29, 2016	Western Region August Teleconference	Teleconference
Sept. 22-25, 2016	CFMS Annual General Meeting	Edmonton, Alberta

### III. PRIORITIES AND PROJECT AREAS

#### WESTERN REGION-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES, ISSUES, and ACTIVITIES

##### *A) Western Medical School's Annual Meeting*

The Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting is yearly gathering of deans and undergraduate medical education program staff from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan medical schools. The CFMS Western Regional Representatives, along with the presidents from each of the school's respective medical societies, have been lucky in the past few years to be invited to present to the attendees on issues that are seen to be of particular concern or importance to medical students at their schools.

In October 2015, Fatemeh Ramazani (the other CFMS Western Regional Representative) and I, along with the presidents from each of the Western schools' respective medical societies, presented to the Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting 2015 attendees, focusing on the topics of 1) Ice Bowl, 2) Career Advising, and 3) Learner Mistreatment.

We have received notice that the 2016 Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting will be held from October 13-15, 2016 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and have again arranged with meeting organizers to present to attendees on October 14<sup>th</sup> regarding issues of primary importance to students. In preparation for this, Fatemeh and I have communicated out to the Western schools regarding the meeting logistics that we are aware of and have been facilitating early discussions on how the meeting runs and what potential topics the Western schools feel should be brought to the table. We are also continuing to liaise with the meeting coordinators regarding student attendance and logistics.

##### *B) Western Region Meetings*

Teleconferences have been hosted on a regular basis over the course of the 2015-2016 year with representatives from the Western Region schools. This year we have engaged not only the presidents from each Medical Student Association, but also the respective CFMS representatives/vice-president externals. We feel that this has led to high levels of engagement and discussion, and has allowed the teleconferences to have a broad range of perspectives, as

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well as ensuring all schools are represented, even if one representative from a school cannot be present. When no representatives from a particular school have been able to make a teleconference meeting, we have followed up with them and included their feedback in minutes or shared it as necessary.

The two face-to-face Western region meetings that occurred this year included the Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting pre-meeting, as well as an informal gathering at the CFMS Spring General Meeting. It had been hoped that a more in-depth meeting could be held at SGM; however, this ended up not being possible due to the agenda and time constraints of the meeting.

## *C) Ice Bowl*

Although not a CFMS-driven initiative, Ice Bowl is an annual hockey tournament held and attended by the Western region medical schools (though medical students from any region are welcome to attend). A concern that has arisen with Ice Bowl is that it often has much lower attendance from the University of British Columbia than other participating medical schools, which resulted in a focused discussion at the beginning of our term around potential reasons and remedies for this. This discussion has been revisited at teleconference throughout our term, with sharing of information around how the various institutions handle student excusals for Ice Bowl, where travel funding comes from, et cetera. There are discrepancies between schools, and CFMS assistance (e.g. letters of support around attendance, etc.) have been offered, with school representatives aware of their ability to access these resources if they wish.

Ice Bowl 2016 was hosted at the University of Calgary from September 16-18, 2016. As with all past Ice Bowls, a debrief around any issues, concerns, successes, and areas of potential follow up will occur between the CFMS Western Regional Representatives and this year's Ice Bowl committee.

Additionally, the University of Saskatchewan (2015 hosts) and University of Calgary Ice Bowl teams have been working this year on the creation of a transition and planning document for Ice Bowl in order to ensure optimal support for future organizing committees.

## *D) Committee of Western Medical Schools Proposal*

In the 2014-2015 year, the idea of creating a formal association with membership from the Western Region medical schools was raised. This included the creation by the 2014-2015 CFMS Western Regional Representatives of a proposed Terms of Reference for a Committee of Western Medical Societies (similar to the Ontario Medical Students' Association). At the start of our term, we undertook a discussion with the Western medical society presidents and CFMS representatives in regards to the purpose of such a group and the feasibility, benefits, and potential concerns with creating a formal association. The outcome of this was the decision that, at this time, the formal creation of a Western medical student association would not be pursued as it was thought that it would create increased bureaucracy and organizational resource demand without improving Western communication abilities, heightening school lobbying leverage, or adding benefits beyond what could emerge from the informal collaboration of

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Western schools. If circumstances or opinions change in future years however, the option is still available and can be revisited.

## *E) Transition Document*

As CFMS regional representative portfolios are somewhat more flexible than CFMS vice president portfolios, given the nature of representing a particular region rather than working in specifically-designated areas, it can be a challenge to know exactly what the areas of need over time and the representative history has been. For this reason, the CFMS Western Regional Representatives have worked this to create a stronger and more detailed transition document (beyond the standard one page) for the Western Regional Representative position, including a history of issues dealt with, et cetera. We hope to see this be a living document that gathers the positions' institutional history in years to come.

## *F) Other Western Region Involvement*

I was able this year to attend and participate in the Provincial Lobby Day organized jointly by the University of Alberta and University of Calgary Government Advocacy and Affairs Committees. I also attended and assisted in the organization of the annual Alberta Medical Students' Conference and Retreat (AMSCAR).

## GENERAL CFMS INITIATIVES and ACTIVITIES

### *A) Student Initiative Grants Program*

As the coordinator of the Student Initiative Grants (SIGs) program for 2015-2016, I was responsible for receiving all 2015-2016 SIG applications, coordinating the review process, and notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants, as well as maintaining ongoing follow-up communication with the successful project recipients for the 2015-2016 cycle and with any previously successful applicants whose projects are still active.

The 2015-2016 application cycle saw over 40 applications for funding for creative initiatives from across the country. The CFMS SIGs program was able to fund thirteen of these projects, either partially or fully; however, the decisions were certainly difficult given the high caliber of proposals received. Western Regional Representative Fatemeh Ramazani, as well as Ontario Regional Representative Yousif Atwan, assisted with SIGs by being the two other reviewers and scorers for the SIGs application adjudication process.

While going through the SIGs adjudication process this year, it was felt that there were improvements that could be made to both the process itself and to the application documents that would allow applicants to understand the aims of the program better (hence tailoring their applications in a way that increased their chance of being successful), while also standardizing the adjudication process to a greater extent and giving more guidelines to reviewers.

The review of the application process and the scoring criteria was done to ensure that they are optimally clear, effective for differentiating between projects, and aligned with the CFMS mission

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and Strategic Plan. The overall CFMS Executive team (particularly Fatemeh and Yousif) were engaged at the Summer Executive Meeting around suggested changes. A new documentation package and timeline is in place, and it will be the task of the 2016-2017 SIGs coordinator to assess effectiveness and make changes as necessary. Additionally, I have created a more detailed SIGs-specific transition document to be passed along to the new coordinator.

## *B) NCD Child Collaboration*

NCD (Non-Communicable Diseases) Child is an international coalition of stakeholders that emerged from the Child-Focused Working Group (CFWG) of the NCD Alliance and was launched in 2012 following the dissolution of the CFWG in September 2011 at the United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs. NCD Child exists under the secretariat for the American Academy of Pediatrics, and its focus is to champion the rights and needs of children and adolescents around the world who are living with, or at risk of developing, non-communicable diseases.

In August 2015, NCD Child held the “Protecting Children from NCDs: Leadership Advocacy Workshop” at the International Congress of Pediatrics in Vancouver, British Columbia. I attended as a representative of CFMS via the Global Health portfolio through the International Federation of Medical Student Associations. This workshop focused on bringing together member countries who were considered “developed nations”, in order to work on tangible plans of action to improve child and adolescent health within those countries. Representatives from Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and several other countries convened at this meeting, sharing topics of primary concern for youth in their respective regions, as well as ideas for addressing them. NCD Child is also offering grants to attendee country groups in order to get their initiatives off the ground, and these applications are due at the end of September.

The Canadian group had representation from IFMSA-Quebec, the Childhood Obesity Foundation, the AstraZeneca Young Health Program, the Young Canadians Roundtable on Health, as well as the Government of Canada. Our primary discussions focused on initiatives already under development by the Childhood Obesity Foundation, such as the Stop Marketing to Kids campaign, government advocacy to implement taxes on sugary beverages, and an app that is in development to encourage health for youth and the planet.

Follow-up on the August meeting has recently occurred, and I am currently working with the other Canadian attendees on the development of a grant application in order to fund a youth-driven campaign with the aim of enhancing youth engagement in the advocacy work around implementation of regulations to reduce the marketing of “unhealthy” food to youth. Due to the fact that there may be medical students across the country interested in getting involved in this campaign, either actively or as distributors of campaign information to groups of youth, I will continue to keep CFMS aware of the progress and requests for collaboration, which will be disseminated as appropriate.

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## *C) Nominations Committee*

I participated in the Nominations Committee by acting as a reviewer and scorer for the majority of calls this year, including for CFMS representative positions, AGM/SGM travel awards, and IFMSA meeting participants.

## **IV. FOLLOW-UP, VISION, GOALS, and RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS POSITION**

### WESTERN REGION-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES, ISSUES, and ACTIVITIES

#### *A) Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting*

As per the longer description above, the 2016 Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting student presentation is confirmed and planning is underway. School representatives will be coordinating their travel shortly, and the 2016-2017 CFMS Western Regional Representatives should work with them via email and teleconference interactions to assess the most pertinent and cross-region topics to focus on.

Ideally the presentation will be developed by the CFMS Western Regional Representatives pre-meeting, informed by school representative feedback. A meeting of student presenters is tentatively planned for the night prior to the presentation, and this is seen as a time to finalize the presentation, discuss specifics, and gather relevant illustrations from the various schools.

As it has been coordinated this year that the first in-person CFMS Executive meeting and the Western Medical Schools' Annual Meeting are not on the same weekend as they have been in the past two years (meaning that the Western Regional Representatives will not need to leave immediately following the meeting), it is strongly suggested that the CFMS Western Regional Representatives take this opportunity to have a more detailed and in-depth meeting with the regional school representatives in order to facilitate better understanding and connections off of which to base the year's activities.

#### *B) Western Region Connections and Engagement*

The Western Region of CFMS is somewhat unique compared to the other regions, given that it represents a number of schools spread across a significant geographical area and four different provinces. Due to this diversity and distance, maintaining school engagement across the region can be a challenge, and it is emphasized that the 2016-2017 CFMS Western Regional Representatives should continue to look for ways to enhance the connections between schools and find commonalities to build off of.

In-person student interactions between member schools should continue to be a topic that the Western Regional Representatives are cognizant of, and this includes keeping abreast of Ice Bowl engagement and whether or not this is a concern for the medical student associations, with support offered as necessary and appropriate.



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It is also suggested that there is a potential exploration of some method of connecting between schools for Western Region students who do not hold formal MSA or CFMS positions. The appetite for this remains to be explored further.

## GENERAL CFMS INITIATIVES and ACTIVITIES

### *A) Student Initiative Grants Program*

While not a Western Regional Representative role specifically, the Student Initiative Grants (SIGs) coordinator is traditionally one of CFMS Regional Representatives. The new SIGs coordinator will be responsible for receiving the 2016-2017 cycle applications, as well as guiding the adjudication process and distribution of awards. As mentioned above, a new transition document and overall set of documents and procedures have been developed, and it will be important for the 2016-2017 coordinator to evaluate how effective these processes and documents are and to propose additional modifications based on feedback and experience.

I have also had discussions this year with our IT officer around creating a SIGs-specific page on the CFMS website, not only to centralize documents for applicants, but also to track and showcase funded projects over time. It is recommended that the new coordinator pursue this with the appropriate IT officer.

## OVERALL

It was found over the course of the year that the position of a CFMS Regional Representative is a quite fluid role, with both region-specific and national responsibilities. While this presents many opportunities, it can also be somewhat challenging to determine where one can be most effective and where one's efforts should be focused. It is recommended that the CFMS Western Regional Representatives work very closely with the rest of the executive team to find areas where they can simultaneously support their region and the overall CFMS team and membership.

I am happy to provide additional information or engage around any of the included topics as requested. It has been an honour to serve as one of CFMS's Western Regional Representatives for 2015-2016, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted by:

Emily Macphail  
CFMS Western Regional Representative  
[western@cfms.org](mailto:western@cfms.org)