



Governance 3.0

Francine Lemire MD CM CCFP FCFP CAE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Colleagues,

Why should you be interested in the work of the CFPC's Governance Advisory Committee (GAC) and the proposed changes to the composition of our board? Because you, the members, will make the ultimate decision as to whether the proposed changes are good for your organization. The GAC was created in 2010. There was a sense that a professional organization like ours needed to have a group of dedicated elected leaders who could regularly examine various elements of governance, take into account the organization's strategic direction, and make recommendations, when appropriate, regarding the structures that support the function of the College. Dr Sarah Kredentser, Chair of the GAC, believes that an important stimulus for this work is that the organization has grown and evolved while our governance structure has remained essentially the same. Given our growth, our governance must be able to respond nimbly and effectively. The GAC shared the results of a literature review and deliberated extensively on the strengths and weaknesses of our current structure, and options for future structures, with the board in November 2013. Further work took place, with development of a proposal that was shared with board members, followed by telephone consultation and further discussion in May 2014.

Smaller skills-based board

Findings of an environmental scan (including literature review, examination of governance practices in sister organizations and the not-for-profit and private sectors, and feedback from the Canadian Society of Association Executives) support a smaller skills-based board. The current 40-member board is not dysfunctional; it gets things done, but it does so, in part, because of an Executive Committee of 6 members, with whom we are in touch weekly, if not daily. However, devolution of authority to the full board is consistent with best practice. So the board must be small enough to enable robust, in-depth discussion, and big enough to ensure that the affairs of the College are managed effectively. I am pleased the current board supports this direction and has agreed to put a hold on the election of new board directors in November 2014 to enable us to begin to implement this recommendation.

So what happens in terms of representation in a country as big as ours? It was noted at the most recent board meeting that directors take their responsibilities very seriously and clearly think of the needs of all members in making decisions. A consensus evolved reiterating the importance of a skills-based board, but also that it reflect

the regional fabric of our country and take into account teaching, research, learners, and our diverse membership.

Value of Chapters and committees

In addition to 2 Chapter symposia per year (attended by Chapter and national College presidents, presidents elect, and senior staff), planned and led by Chapters, it is proposed that 1 or more forums be introduced to allow elected leaders and representatives of our more than 60 committees, working groups, and sections to connect, be apprised of the larger College picture, and provide feedback on strategic questions. A board consensus suggested that, at least once a year, such a forum should really be a "large tent"—a live, energetic laboratory of ideas and reflective, collective feedback. It is important to avoid the forums becoming additional governance "layers." The GAC is looking forward to the opportunity to develop these concepts further and report to the board in November 2014.


Role of the Nominations Committee

It goes without saying that this committee will continue to be important. But it is also important to encourage nominations from the membership at large and from the Chapters. The board also discussed the possibility of members of the public filling vacancies in specific areas (eg, legal, financial) if appropriate. We also are very aware of the role of the public as engaged contributors to the work of the College; we will give this further thought and will come up with recommendations in the next few months.

Next steps

We will continue based on the direction provided by the current board. The GAC will be making further recommendations to be considered by the board at its November 2014 meeting. There will be some resolutions to be voted on by you, our members, at the 2014 and 2015 annual meetings of members. If approved, the new governance structure will come into effect after the November 2015 meeting. Effective communication with members and elected leaders will be essential. Consultation and feedback must be an integral part of this dynamic conversation.

Your role

Ultimately, you are responsible for approving recommendations about the governance of your association. I encourage you to contact the GAC (sscott@cfpc.ca), your Chapter elected leaders (www.cfpc.ca/Chapter_Offices), and me (executive@cfpc.ca). 

Acknowledgment

I thank Dr Sarah Kredentser and Sarah Scott for reviewing this article.

Cet article se trouve aussi en français à la page 683.