



Five years of CFPC governance

Lessons learned

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Dear Colleagues,

Five years ago, following 3 years of consultation and planning, the CFPC transitioned from a board of 40 to a board of 11. When Dr Paul Sawchuk ends his term as Past President next month, we will have fully transitioned to a board made up of directors who are elected by the membership at large. Four factors guided our actions: evolution toward a primary, skills-based attribute matrix, with representation still considered important as part of a secondary attribute matrix; a desire to enhance member influence on governance by introducing contested elections; intent for greater engagement of the board in debating issues and making the best decisions for the organization; and greater transparency regarding board decisions and actions.

All along, we have sought the engagement of the CFPC's constituencies. Touchpoints before and after each board meeting are organized for Chapters, section leaders, the academic community, and committee chairs. Meetings with Chapters are held 3 times a year. Strategic discussions and leaders' development with the above constituents took place at CFPC's Annual Forum until this year (postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The same groups have been included in an ongoing evaluation of board function.

So, how have we fared? Overall, the evaluation findings have been positive. We are determined to address opportunities for improvement where and when possible. These areas include implementing consultation sooner in the context of some initiatives and communicating decisions and their implications in a more proactive manner.

I am sharing 4 personal observations, which I continue to think about in the CFPC's journey to stronger governance.

The current board of 12 has considerable power and it is using this power in its deliberations, decisions, and interactions with one another, members, and staff.

We have a very engaged board; we have gender, demographic, and ethnic diversity. We are also aware that board directors are contacted directly, by e-mail and on social media. These engagement measures are relatively new for us; we hope that members can bear with us as we adjust to this dynamic environment.

The organizational cultures of provincial health systems and CFPC Chapters influence and affect the CFPC's organizational culture in ways not previously appreciated. An example of this has been the effect of measures

taken by the Alberta government on the working conditions of health care providers—FPs in particular—and the potential effect of these proposed measures on the provision of high-quality care.

With appropriate boundaries, the CFPC has been able to manage its standard-setting role and its professional and member support role within the same organization; I sincerely hope that we can continue to do so appropriately and deliberately. The goals of robust standards of certification are to best serve Canadians and to support our members in validating and affirming their contribution to community-based care.

We are preoccupied with the best way to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion in our organization. The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,¹ and the recent violence in the United States and resulting societal implications south of the border and in Canada have fueled our reflection. It is with this in mind that the board appointed Dr Sarah Funnell as a 12th board director in August. We hope that you will confirm this 3-year appointment at the Annual Meeting of Members on November 5, 2020. You can read Dr Funnell's resume on the CFPC website.²

Elections for 1 available Board of Directors position are currently open until October 28. Four candidates are on the ballot and are recommended by the Nominating Committee and by the CFPC board, following a thorough recommendation process and keeping in mind the considerations indicated above. You can read their curricula vitae and review their introductory videos and statements on the CFPC website.³

We live in extraordinary times; this pandemic is a momentous societal disruption that will affect the work of FPs. Your Board of Directors is aware of what you are currently living, thanks you for the care you are providing to your patients, and looks forward to advancing family medicine and articulating the value of FPs to the health care system on your behalf. I thank CFPC's Board of Directors for their engagement, their thoughtful reflections and decisions, and for supporting our journey to stronger governance. 🍁

Acknowledgment

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References

1. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Calls to action*. Winnipeg, MB: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; 2015. Available from: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf. Accessed 2020 Sep 11.
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