

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

## Council Wrestles with the Budget and Future Challenges Facing SGIM

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**F**irst, a confession: I am a chocolate fanatic. When I was in elementary school, twice a day I walked slowly past an old neighborhood candy store with the sweet smell of chocolate wafting from trays and trays of candy. The door was always open, and only my very limited budget kept me from trying every one of those chocolates! For many of us, SGIM is our career candy store: lots of academic choices, scores of opportunities, many colleagues with whom to work, and countless meetings and presentations to attend. We are limited only by our budget of time and money.

SGIM Council leads a healthy organization, with many choices but a limited budget, and not unlike that kid walking by the candy store, Council needs to make difficult decisions at the summer retreat to keep SGIM healthy and our field moving forward.

The summer retreat offers Council a focused opportunity to better support members in their careers. We began this year's gathering by reviewing the mission, vision, and values of SGIM and how our decisions advance the careers of SGIM members and the field as a whole. Despite being a relatively small organization with limited resources, SGIM supports extensive member services, including the annual meeting, *JGIM*, *Forum*, and communications resources such as GIM Connect. Clearly the most important resource is the SGIM staff: Fourteen people do all the behind-the-scenes work and manage staff operations while supporting a myriad of commit-

tees and task forces. Almost every SGIM activity requires staff time, so Council began with careful assessment of the impact on staff of any decision to expand SGIM.

Next, SGIM staffer Donte Shannon presented the results of the volunteer member survey, which showed that members are pleased with their experience working on committees, task forces, and interest groups but that SGIM has opportunities to improve member support and operations. One priority identified was maintenance of certification (MOC), and SGIM has been working with the American College of Physicians and other organizations to recommend that the American Board of Internal Medicine make significant improvements in the MOC process and help organizations such as SGIM sponsor MOC modules that more closely align with SGIM member needs and priorities. Council later voted to fund the continued development of SGIM MOC modules by the MOC Task Force chaired by Eric Green.

Another priority identified was the recruitment of more associate members, students, residents, and fellows, and several SGIM groups are working toward that goal. The ad hoc communications group, chaired by Ann Nattinger, continues to develop a strategy targeting first- and second-year medical students to make them aware of the diverse opportunities in pursuing a career in general internal medicine. The Board of Regional Leaders, chaired by Dan Tobin, has been very focused on minimizing financial barriers to asso-

ciate attendance at regional meetings, and Council fully supports their efforts. Council enthusiastically urged the continuation of the highly successful fellows' symposium at the annual meeting.

Council reviewed the member survey results of SGIM mentoring resources conducted by the Membership Committee and SGIM staffer Jillian Gann. The survey identified incredible strengths in mentoring in the Disparities, Geriatrics, and Women's Health task forces, to name a few. Programs such as one-on-one mentoring are highly valued by members. One opportunity identified was the need for a tool to identify mentoring resources by career stage (e.g. student, resident, fellow, junior faculty), career track (e.g. clinician-educator, researcher, leadership, clinician), content area (e.g. Disparities, Women's Health), and type of mentoring (e.g. one-on-one, longitudinal). Council applauded highly successful career development opportunities such as TEACH, the Academic Hospitalist Academy, the Association of Chiefs and Leaders in General Internal Medicine's LEAD and UNLTD programs, and the Hospital Medicine Scholars.

SGIM has a large commitment to advocacy because we represent a unique perspective within health care: We are the faculty responsible for training the future academicians and practitioners in internal medicine. The Accountable Care Act has challenged us to innovate and develop new systems of care and training, and SGIM has consistently influ-

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enced the direction of health care reform. Council approved the health policy agenda (<http://www.sgim.org/communities/advocacy>) submitted by Health Policy Committee (HPC) Chair Mark Schwartz and voted to continue our relationship with our outstanding government affairs consultants Cavarocchi-Ruscio-Dennis (CRD) Associates. Council strongly supported the continued efforts by the HPC and CRD, including Hill Day, a new "virtual" Hill Day, and advocacy on the Hill and at the American Medical Association RUC meetings. (This will be discussed in a future *Forum* article.) Council also endorsed (but could not fund) the concept of developing a

cadre of teachers of health policy within SGIM.

So how does SGIM and Council pay for all this wonderful career candy? Although we work to augment the SGIM budget in many ways, SGIM has three major revenue sources: membership dues, the annual meeting, and *JGIM*, which has had a rising impact factor under the leadership of editors Rich Kravitz and Mitch Feldman. We are very proud that we take no Pharma funding, and less than 10% of our budget comes from external sources. Programs funded by Council at the retreat predominantly used surplus revenue from the past fiscal year, which was

about \$80,000. But there are some very specific funding needs within SGIM, and Council supported a new internal funding pilot to be rolled out in the next year. When you renew your membership, you will have the voluntary opportunity to direct additional contributions to fund specific programs such as the Disparities, Women's Health, and Geriatrics task forces. You may also contribute to support your region's agenda in efforts to attract new associate members. There is more information to come on the voluntary pilot, but it is one of many ways SGIM tries to support member needs as efficiently as possible. Enjoy the chocolate! *SGIM*