

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A SABBATICAL YEAR FOR ORGANIZATIONAL REJUVENATION

Giselle Corbie-Smith, MD, MSC, President, SGIM, and Eric B. Bass, MD, MPH, CEO, SGIM

We are thinking of the current year as a "sabbatical year" for SGIM during which we will clarify our vision, refocus our mission, better understand our organization's capacity, and capitalize on our collective strengths to rejuvenate the organization and increase its value to you, the members.



We are all familiar with the concept of taking a sabbatical from work, whatever that work may be. Some of us have been fortunate enough to have taken a sabbatical and understand how rejuvenating such an experience can be, both personally and professionally.

Just as an individual can be rejuvenated by a well planned sabbatical, so can an organization. SGIM has been adding initiatives, programs, and activities since its first annual meeting in 1978. All too often we have not let go of existing efforts, or ensured that new or proposed efforts fit with the current focus, needs, and priorities of our members and the organization. While we have done many things well, Council and Staff agree that we have significant opportunities for improvement in the ways we conduct business and how we serve you, our members. We are therefore thinking of the current year as a "sabbatical year" for SGIM, a time during which we will clarify our vision, refocus our mission, better understand our organization's capacity, and capitalize on our collective strengths to rejuvenate the organization and increase its value to you, the members. I hope that members at all levels will understand why we are doing this and will join in the effort.

One of our first actions toward rejuvenation was to have Pyramid Communications conduct an audit of the effectiveness of our communications and make strategic recommendations. You may recall, I reported on the results of that audit in my second *Forum* article. The Pyramid Report noted several areas of strength of SGIM and several areas of concern that revolved around the need for an organizational strategic plan to guide decision-making and drive our communications strategy. One specific recommendation was to "revise and refresh" SGIM's mission

and vision. To that end, we dedicated time at the Annual Planning Retreat in June to review and revise our vision, mission, and values statement, then worked diligently on aligning proposed activities, programs, and initiatives with priorities deemed most important to our mission and vision.

Beginning this spring, Eric Bass, our CEO, guided Council members and staff through a comprehensive and iterative process that allowed us to collectively review and revise our mission, vision, and values statement. The process involved drafts developed by a group of Council members, followed by several rounds of review by the full Council. The Council made its last set of changes after receiving constructive comments from SGIM committee and commission chairs who reviewed a preliminary version. Our goal was to make changes so the statement would be a more effective tool for communicating about the essence of why all of us are SGIM members—our commitment to our patients and communities. Although we wanted a crisp memorable statement of our mission followed by an equally crisp statement of our vision, it was not possible to capture the full complexity of our aspirations in two short sentences. We therefore decided to include a listing of our core values along with a brief description of who we are and what we do as an organization, to provide important context. The results of our efforts appear as follows.

What Is Our Mission?

- To be the professional home for innovators and scholars in academic general internal medicine leading the way to better health for everyone.

What Is Our Vision?

- A just system of care in which all people can achieve optimal health.

continued on page 2



PRESIDENT’S COLUMN (continued from page 2)

What Do We Value?

- High-value, evidence-based, person-centered, and community-oriented health care
- Attention to population health outcomes and their social determinants
- Excellence, innovation, and leadership in education, research, and clinical practice
- Interdisciplinary collaboration and team-based care
- Collegiality, mentorship, and career development
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Who Are We?

- SGIM is a diverse community of talented people in academic general internal medicine who are passionately committed to improving health through research, education, and advocacy.

What Do We Do?

- We provide a forum and resources for our members to learn, teach, share ideas, disseminate work, and develop successful careers. We support and grow innovators and scholars who

advance clinical practice, education, and research across all settings, including primary care and hospital medicine, with the common goals of eliminating health disparities and achieving the healthiest lives for all people.

We believe this statement of identity and purpose will help us focus on the important work needed to be done to achieve our vision of a just health system in the context of the current volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment.

In addition, during the June retreat we revisited the six strategic priorities first articulated several years ago with the goal of refining and consolidating them to three or four, adding more specificity and clarity, and creating an alignment with our revised mission, vision, and values.

Four major organizational goals emerged from this process:

1. Foster the development of future leaders in academic general internal medicine;

2. Promote high-value, evidence-based, person-centered, population-oriented approaches to improving health;
3. Advocate for our vision of a just health system that brings optimal health for all people; and
4. Ensure SGIM financial health and employee wellness.

Over the coming months, we will develop a series of tactics and metrics for activities related to these four goals, so we can chart our path as an organization. Additionally, we will engage in an ongoing strategic planning process to ensure the long-term health and influence of SGIM so it is better able to serve our members and pursue opportunities that keep us at the cutting edge of issues facing general internal medicine.

In subsequent *Forum* columns and electronic communications, we will be sharing more with you about the work Council and Staff are undertaking during SGIM’s sabbatical year.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback as we work collectively to rejuvenate SGIM!