

The Leadership Forum

PERSPECTIVES IN LEADERSHIP

Authoring Success: An Exercise in Art and Leadership

Anand Natwarlal Bosmia (B.A. in Philosophy) is a third-year medical student at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham, AL (anandb@uab.edu).



Anand Natwarlal
Bosmia

Leadership, like writing, is an art. The experiences we, as medical students, shared as members of the Narrative Medicine Interest Group (NMIG) reflect this principle. NMIG is a student-led organization encouraging medical students to read literature and write about their clinical experiences. We set to publish a literary journal for our medical school. I was lucky to be asked by the NMIG group to lead the Literary Journal Subcommittee; I accepted the position with alacrity. Such a publication would provide an avenue for medical students to reflect on their fledgling careers, and we planned to publish the journal in January 2012.

Leadership, like writing, is an art.

By January 2012, we were ready to send the journal to the printing press. The hard copies would be available in a

matter of weeks; however, we were hesitant to print the journal without consulting the deans of the school. The central issue was protecting the confidentiality of patients and doctors referenced in the journal in order to observe privacy guidelines. Some students opposed this motion because it would delay the journal's publication. We were very close to meeting our objective, and our peers were eager to see the finished product.

At this juncture, a key principle of leadership became apparent to us. Leadership entails not only effectively executing a project, but also observing the professional standards of the institution supporting that project. By printing the journal without consulting our school's administration, we would have failed at the latter. We met with one of the deans, who directed us to the Office of Compliance. The Compliance Officer began to review the journal to insure it did not violate any confidentiality guidelines. The subse-

quent correspondence between NMIG and the Office of Compliance took place over five months. We made additional edits and even had to remove two entries. The initial draft of the journal was far from complying with privacy guidelines.

Voices in Words, the first literary journal for our medical school

In June 2012, the Office of Compliance approved the journal for publication. Copies of the inaugural edition of *Voices in Words, the first literary journal for our medical school*, have been distributed to both students and faculty. As I begin my second year leading the Literary Journal Subcommittee, I aim to promote the medical humanities and uphold professional standards. Like editing the rough draft of a short story, I have refined my understanding of leadership.