

President's Letter

By Cory Baillie, MD, FRCPC

The CRA council has just completed its annual retreat which took place in Winnipeg between April 25-27, 2014. The weekend was focused on two themes: Governance and Strategic Direction for the CRA. To help achieve progress on these themes, we invited an expert on non-profit board governance, Catherine Raso, MBA, to act as our facilitator.

We began the weekend educating ourselves on a number of issues, including a review of the results of member feedback from the recent CRA focus groups and telephone interviews, along with results from the questions asked online during the membership renewal process. We then reviewed the value members receive from CRA membership; this value assessment includes skills development, information and knowledge, networking and fellowship, improved public policy, and increased public awareness. Building on these themes, we established goals for the next two years under the strategic directions of Care, Learning, Research and Representation.

We also spent significant time reviewing non-profit board governance and changes that the CRA should

implement to operate more effectively. Several CRA council members, including myself, have offered to continue to work with Catherine Raso to restructure the CRA governance model. We hope to be able to present a new model for approval at the face-to-face board meeting in November during the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) conference in Boston.

Finally, the board gave direction to the chair of each existing CRA committee, about work that their respective committee should focus their efforts on.

I would like to thank the CRA council members along with Christine Charnock and Sharon Brinkos for their participation at the retreat. I am excited about my upcoming two years as President of the CRA and I am confident that the organization will continue to succeed at its mission of representing Canadian rheumatologists and promoting the pursuit of excellence in arthritis care, education, and research.

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We asked, and you told us the CRA does this well:



All participants surveyed expressed support for the CRA and applauded the organization's efforts to gather member input. Participants in focus groups and one-on-one interviews said that CRA is truly a national organization, not central to any particular region. It is a strong organization with great leadership—"people feel like CRA does good things!" It is an intimate, collegial, and welcoming group. The work done by busy clinicians on the board and on committees is of great value to the rheumatology profession.