

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Engagement: Defining an immeasurable ideal

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ACOFP President

One year ago, my first Letter from the President's Desk was published in *OFFP*, and just like many things during my presidency, it would not be the norm for you to read more than six articles from me, yet here we are. Of all the duties and responsibilities I have serving ACOFP, writing these articles has been the most challenging—not because of the time, but because of my obligation to make sure that what I write is relevant, informative and engaging. Information is everywhere and relevance varies, but engagement can be elusive and often an immeasurable ideal that writers, speakers, educators and even membership organizations try to define. So, what is membership engagement?

First, it runs deeper than just member satisfaction. Satisfaction can be transactional, like giving a Google review for a service or “liking” something on social media, which only reflects an attitude at that moment in time. Engagement, on the other hand, is a combination of attitudes and behaviors that form a relationship and allow someone to identify with a particular group, valuing that exchange.

For an organization, the goal of engagement is to demonstrate the value of membership as the culmination of personal benefits, as well as the feeling of pride that comes from supporting a worthy cause.

For me, ACOFP has provided that value by giving me the opportunity to hone my leadership skills and advocate for the excellence of osteopathic family medicine, while experiencing an authentic emotional connection with my peers. My hope is that our current efforts in advancing our diversity, equity and inclusion work, developing future leaders in our profession and educating in a virtual environment is translating to that same level of value and engagement for you.

I have been personally inspired by the stories highlighted in our weekly newsletter and blog posts. The openness of members to share their struggles, their successes and their lives as medical students, residents and practicing physicians has given unique insight into the diversity of our organization. What better way to experience and appreciate our similarities and differences than by reading first-hand accounts from our own members? I strongly encourage you to do the same.

We want to hear from voices that represent the new, the experienced, the academic, the rural, the urban, the under-represented and everything in between. Connect with your ACOFP family by submitting your story to our blog. If you are in need of inspiration, you can view all of the posts from your colleagues at www.acofp.net.

Take that connection with your colleagues to the next level by volunteering for one of our ACOFP committees. Every fall, a call for committee volunteers is placed on behalf of the president-elect to find members willing to serve the organization in one of our 50+ committees or work groups. The best way for our organization to thrive and remain relevant is to find passionate members who want to contribute. Whether you are looking to start your leadership path or want to make a short-term commitment to something that interests you, we hope you choose to lend your time and talent to advance the work of ACOFP.

The human connection certainly has been more difficult in our pandemic environment, and we have learned to use new tools to expand our virtual learning, committee work and socialization. None of these tools can replace in-person interactions, but they have allowed us to connect with members and non-members who have not traditionally participated. As we progress in this environment, I look forward to ACOFP's participation at OMED in a hybrid format, including the return of our Future Leaders Conference in Phoenix. We remain committed to providing the best our organization has to offer in a way that you find valuable and to finding new ways to engage you—our membership.

Osteopathically,

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