



IFMSA General Assembly August 2018

CFMS Delegation Report

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

President and Standing Committee Sessions

ABBREVIATIONS

MEETING REFLECTIONS

PRESIDENT'S SESSIONS REPORT

Agenda Highlights

Selected Topics in Depth

HIGHLIGHTS FROM:

- SCOPH SESSIONS
- SCORA SESSIONS
- SCOME SESSIONS
- SCORP SESSIONS
- SCOPE/SCORE SESSIONS

AUGUST 2018 POST-GA TRIP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summer, the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) sent 14 delegates to the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) General Meeting held in Montreal, Canada from August 2nd to 8th, also known as the IFMSA August Meeting 2018 (AM2018).

The IFMSA represents and engages with over 1.3 million medical students from 119 countries. The CFMS is one of the 127 national member organizations that make up the IFMSA. The IFMSA general assemblies are held twice a year in March and August. These meetings hope to inspire the next generation of future physicians to become leaders and advocates through exchange of ideas, networking and learning from the various programming sessions, such as:

President and Standing Committee Sessions

The standing committee and president sessions ran in parallel every morning, each attended by one to two of our CFMS delegates. During these sessions, the current issues of the IFMSA were discussed and proposals for changes (such as policy statements and memoranda of understanding with external organizations) were made. The CFMS delegates for the sessions were as follows:

- Presidents Sessions: Asha Behdinan & Henry Annan
- Standing Committee on Public Health (SCOPH): Vivian Tan, George Kitching, Orianna Mak, Adrina Zhong, Marissa Ley
- Standing Committee on Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS (SCORA): Jelisa Bradley,
- Standing Committee on Medical Education (SCOME): Loran Morrison, Archie Zhang
- Standing Committee on Rights & Peace (SCORP): Farnaz Javadian, Mergim Binakaj
- Standing Committee on Professional Exchanges (SCOPE): Hillary Pearson
- Standing Committee on Research Exchanges (SCORE): Hillary Pearson, Sally Song

Regional Meetings

During the regional meetings, all delegates from the national member organizations (NMO) of the region met to discuss pertinent issues for the region. The CFMS belongs to Americas Region, which includes NMOs from both North and South America. The current Americas Regional Director can be contacted at rdamericas@ifmsa.org.

Training Sessions

The training sessions provided delegates with skills and knowledge to bring back to their NMOs. In addition, they were platforms for sharing skills and knowledge with delegates from other countries. Some of the sessions attended by the CFMS delegates are highlighted throughout this report.

Plenary Sessions

The plenary is the highest decision making body in the IFMSA. During these sessions, all proposals related to membership, governance, by-laws, finances, reports, operations, and policies are debated and voted upon. Some of the various debates and outcomes of the plenary sessions are highlighted throughout this report.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the work done by the CFMS delegates at the IFMSA AM2018. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the CFMS global health program at globalhealth@cfms.org.

ABBREVIATIONS

CFMS – Canadian Federation of Medical Students

IFMSA – International Federation of Medical Students' Associations

GHP – Global Health Program within the CFMS

VP-GH – Vice President Global Health

NO – National Officer (seven across Canada)

GHL – Global Health Liaison (at each CFMS medical school)

NOGHE – National Officer of Global Health Education

LOGHE – Local Officer of Global Health Education

NORSH – National Officer of Reproductive and Sexual Health

LORSH – Local Officer of Reproductive and Sexual Health

NORP – National Officer of Human Rights and Peace

GHA – Global Health Advocate

GHAP – Global Health Advocacy Program

AFMC – Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada

NEO – National Exchange Officer

LEO – Local Exchange Officer

CUGH – Consortium of Universities for Global Health

QUEBEC AUGUST MEETING 2018 REFLECTIONS

“It was an incredible experience to have had the chance to meet medical students from all over the world in an environment in which we freely discussed issues pertaining to and concerning medical students. It was tremendously interesting to hear about other students’ experiences in their home countries and their contributions to discussions.”

“I enjoyed the social events at the August meeting overall. I had a fun time with my delegation and with people from other countries, and I danced in front of a group of people on stage for the first time.”

“I will hold onto the meaningful conversations I had and the perspectives I gained. It is rare to be able to have the opportunity to work with individuals pursuing the same passions as you from multi-faceted backgrounds, and I am grateful to have had this experience through the IFMSA August Meeting. I enjoyed meeting new people from within Canada and internationally and learning more about the similarities and differences in medical education in various countries.”

“There was a sense of connectedness and reassurance in knowing that there is an international community providing support for each other in taking on initiatives to improve the health and well-being of all individuals. I look forward to keeping in touch with the amazing individuals I have met from across Canada and the globe, and to implementing what I have learned from this experience in the remainder of my studies and in my future medical career.”

“One of the highlights of the SCOPH sessions was the SCOPH fair, where we had an opportunity to learn about public health activities different medical student associations were organizing around the world. These ranged from anti-microbial resistance awareness to teddy bear hospitals. I was inspired by all the project ideas that could be brought back home.”

“The overwhelming feeling of the International Federation of Medical Student Associations August Meeting in Montreal was one of optimism. It seemed to infuse the air, perhaps from the moment Celine Dion gave a video address to delegates on opening night. Optimism and excitement for the learning to come during the five days of the meeting, but also for what we could accomplish as medical students representing medical student associations from around the world.”

“The energy and momentum we’ve captured has been phenomenal. I am constantly inspired by how passionate IFMSA students are and how lively the energy is when we work together. It is truly a relationship I’ve never experienced before, and I’d be ecstatic to enter the IFMSA world again someday.”

“I think the best part was hearing their about their politics and how their countries ran and the different issues affecting their countries. You really start to realize how limited your own media is, as most of all of our news simply only revolved around Canada and States.”

PRESIDENT'S SESSIONS REPORT

Asha Behdinan, CFMS National Officer of Human Rights & Peace
norp@cfms.org

During these sessions all representatives from NMOs (referred to as NMO Presidents) come together to discuss the documents that will be tabled during the plenary session; the plenary is the highest decision making body in IFMSA. Many different types of documents are tabled including policy statements, program proposals, committee reports, financial reports, bylaw changes, and candidatures. Additionally, the management of the organization is discussed at these meetings (eg. strategic directions, financial sustainability, urgent issues).

Agenda Highlights

Day 1

- Summary of the NMO reports
- Update of the IFMSA March Meeting 2018 in Egypt
- Reviewed strategy report, programs report, and plenary procedures

Day 2

- Discussion of bylaw change proposals
- Food and Drinks Fair

Day 3

- IFMSA Mandates given to the Executive Board
- Discussion of plenary reports
- Discussion of the role of IFMSA non-medical student members

Day 4

- Financial discussions
- Small working groups of global priorities

Day 5

- Re-discussion of issues that were brought up earlier in the meeting
- Financial committee report
- Gender watch report
- Final CCC report and plenary procedure discussion

Selected Topics in Depth

Food and Drinks Fair

The food and drink evening on the 2nd night of the meeting saw over 100 delegations bringing traditional foods to share with delegates. This was a great opportunity to form relationships with the other delegations in attendance, and so we did! This year, CFMS brought food and drinks from all across the country and had an impressive display of national pride.

Non-medical students as IFMSA Executive Board Representatives

An issue that was very pressing during this General Assembly was the role of non-medical students in the IFMSA Board. While CFMS did not endorse a particular side for this issue, in partnership with IFMSA-Quebec and ASMA-Australia, CFMS put forth, seconded, and drafted statements imploring proper consultation and discussion of this issue. The outcome was a new focus group created to look

into the role of non-medical students in NMOs and the attitude towards their involvement. We are excited to see the outcome of this task force at the next General Assembly in Slovenia 2019.

Policy Papers

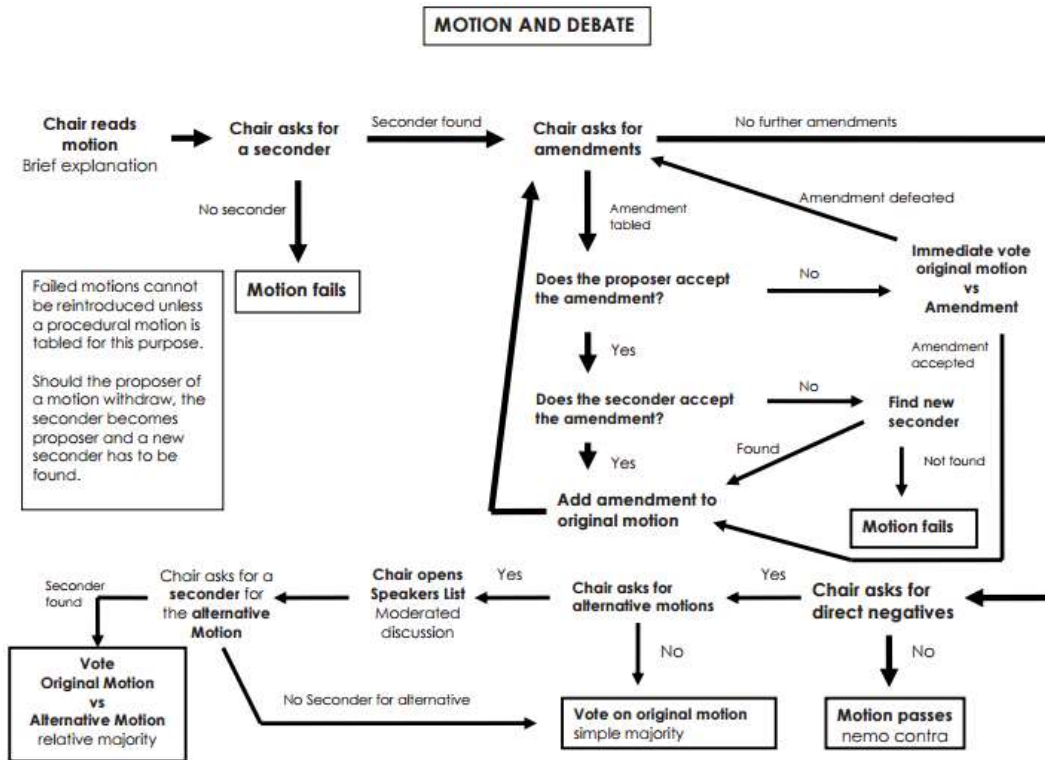
CFMS put forth ample input towards the policy paper discussion at this General Assembly. Upon working with AMSA-Australia, CFMS put forth and seconded amendments to several position papers, such as the inclusion of an “Americas” section in the Sustainable Development Goals paper, and a change in language from “victim” to “survivor” in the FGM paper.

Plenary sessions

The plenary sessions run in a similar manner to other worldwide decision making bodies such as the World Health Organization. It is also an opportunity for countries to make formal, documented statements on issues pertinent to them.

At this meeting, general delegates were invited to take part in the plenary sessions by acting as the main representative for CFMS. It was very inspiring to see the support behind this endeavour, and how the rest of the team supported these individuals in researching the contentious issues being put forth and helping the representatives in reaching a decision that would most accurately reflect the collective opinion of our membership.

For those interested, please see the diagram below explaining the voting process for motions tabled in the IFMSA plenary sessions:



The next IFMSA General Assembly will be hosted in Slovenia in early March 2019. Applications to be a part of the CFMS delegation will be available in November 2018. Please contact Michelle Quaye at globalhealth@cfms.org if you have any further questions.

SCOPH SESSIONS REPORT

Adrina Zhong, Marissa Ley, Vivian Tan, George Kitching, Orianna Mak

One of the main highlights at this meeting was the focus on climate change and health. I was very inspired by Dr. Courtney Howard, a Canadian physician and advocate for the health perspective in climate change. It was honour to hear her speak, and then even more of an honour to assist her in filming a short campaign video regarding the importance of teaching climate change in medical school. This issue is incredibly important for my friend and classmate, George. We had an idea for a research project, where we try to interview as many medical students as we can and ask about how climate change is currently taught at their medical school. We gathered some other Canadian medical students' help and started interviewing our new friends. Now that we've all gone our separate ways, we are exploring ways to complete these interviews over email. Our goal is share the results at the next IFMSA meeting.

These sessions, while informative, were quite basic in terms of public health information. This view may be due to the fact that I have a background in public health, and our medical schools in Canada do a good job of introducing public health to us from the start of medical school. Understanding that it is important for everyone to be on the same page for these sessions, a basic overview the first day would have been understandable. However, I, along with my other SCOPH delegates from Canada, felt that the complexity of the sessions didn't develop to meet our expectations over the course of the week. The content was fine, but more opportunities to discuss public health topics among SCOPH delegates would have been appreciated.

One of the highlights of the SCOPH sessions was the SCOPH fair, where we had an opportunity to learn about public health activities different medical student associations were organizing around the world. These ranged from anti-microbial resistance awareness to teddy bear hospitals. I was inspired by all the project ideas that could be brought back home.

The public health priority for the Americas region is mental health, both among the general population and among medical students. At some point the conversation turned to our experiences as medical students. Invariably, students spoke of difficult power dynamics with teachers, long hours in clinical training and feelings of difficulty coping. A quick anonymous poll of the 19 participants found 16/19 had felt overwhelmed in the past month. Historically the CFMS has not been significantly involved with IFMSA (partially, I think, due to structural issues associated with the 3 and 4 year programmes in Canada), however this is an area of strength. As a national federation we have worked hard to identify issues with mental health of medical students here in Canada and to coordinate efforts to address this. While we sometimes frame this as an individualistic issue through a focus on burnout and resilience, we have worked towards advocacy for structural change. We should share our experiences with our regional partners across the Americas. The IFMSA would benefit from this involvement and Canadian students would benefit from increased awareness of the field of medicine as it applies in different countries. There are also lessons in advocacy for good student mental health for us to learn as well.

SCORA SESSIONS REPORT

Jelisa Bradley, Dalhousie University

SCORA's goals include raising awareness on topics related to HIV/AIDS, reducing stigma and discrimination against those living with HIV/AIDS, promoting positive and healthy sexuality, promoting inclusive and informative sexual education, and supporting policies and actions concerning sexual, reproductive, and public health, and human rights. The main focus of the AM18 SCORA sessions concerned comprehensive sexual education, maternal health and access to safe abortion, sexuality and gender identity, gender based violence, and HIV and other STIs.

Sessions began with an introduction to the existing objectives and policies adopted by SCORA on these topics. We were then divided into small working groups to complete activities to develop our advocacy skills, identify our stakeholders, and discuss projects that our members have been working on. National Member Organizations (NMOs) who had experience and success with projects on particular topics (eg. Gender Based Violence) were paired with NMOs who did not have ongoing projects in these topics and who's communities could benefit by learning from successful NMOs. NMOs worked together to identify community needs and design events or campaigns that could be implemented to address these needs. For example, IFMSA-Quebec presented a social event they hosted where volunteers circulated and dropped ping-pong balls into beverages to educate students and raise awareness about the use of "date rape drugs" on university campuses. Other NMOs who recognized this as an issue on their own campuses expressed interest in hosting similar events in their communities.

A major policy adopted by the IFMSA during the AM18 addressed a topic that was heavily discussed during SCORA sessions: female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Committee members were educated about the practice of FGM/C, including its various types and the reasons it is practiced. Small groups discussed the physical, psychological, and social implications of FGM/C on the girls and women who have received the procedure. The influence of cultural and social norms was considered, and the trend toward the "medicalization" of the procedure was heavily discussed. During plenary the IFMSA adopted a policy condemning the practice of FGM/C as a violation of human rights, stating that there are no valid medical reasons for the practice. This policy also calls for an increase in the education of medical students and the medical community on this practice and its consequences, and criticizes the involvement of medical professionals in the practice.

Other SCORA sessions included an activity fair, joint sessions with other standing committees (SCORA-SCORP: Sex Worker's Rights, SCORA-SCOPE-SCORE: Culture Shock & Sexuality/Gender Identity), and presentations on other topics of sexual and reproductive health (paternal post-partum depression, obstetrical violence, stigma surrounding menstruation). We also had regional sessions, where CFMS and IFMSA-Quebec collaborated with other NMOs from the Americas to tackle regional and local issues. These sessions were particularly enlightening, as the issues facing North, Central, and South America vary widely and we can learn a lot about the challenges faced in each region. Overall, although CFMS is not heavily involved in SCORA activities throughout the year, sexual and reproductive health and rights remains a topic of importance to medical students across the country, and there is room for CFMS to become more involved in future SCORA initiatives.

SCOME SESSIONS REPORT

Loran Morrison, Archie Zhang

First of all, being a part of SCOME was so addictive and amazing. I met so many awesome people there that had amazing ideas and thoughts. They were all also so diverse and came from so many different systems of medical education. I think the kind of programs and research they were doing really inspired me. I am so curious now as to read the kind of programs and initiatives they are doing world wide. Especially because advocacy is such a large part medical education. I am definitely joining their SCOME server and going to see where else we can go in it.

SCORP SESSIONS REPORT

Farnaz Javadian, Mergim Binakaj

From the plenaries to the National Food and Drink Party to the Cultural Show, attending the IFMSA 2018 August Meeting in Montréal was truly an unforgettable experience. I remember attending my first plenary and seeing the lecture hall fill with a sea of delegates from across the world. There was a sense of camaraderie and belonging in the room, knowing that although we all come from different backgrounds and cultures and speak different languages, we have all taken the same path of pursuing a career in medicine. We all carry the same goal of advocating for the well-being of our future patients and being a voice for medical students, both within our own country and internationally. It was incredible hearing each country's name being called out and seeing the respective delegation standing and cheering for their country with pride. I also felt privileged to be able to experience how policy and bylaw amendments or proposals are brought forth and voted upon to ensure they are presented at a calibre expected of a large-scale international organization.

I attended as a CFMS delegate for SCORP (Standing Committee on Human Rights and Peace). Each session provided an opportunity to learn more about and speak about our own stance on the stigma and barriers faced by vulnerable populations in our countries, and how we as medical student representatives can advocate for protecting the human rights of all individuals. It was eye-opening to learn more from fellow delegates about the barriers preventing equal access to human rights in their own country and what strategies are in place to surpass these barriers. From speaking about the first declaration of human rights created by Cyrus the Great in Ancient Persia, to analyzing real case studies about the health impact of human rights violations on the country affected and the global population, it was an incredible opportunity to collaborate with and share perspectives with like-minded medical students from across the world.

I will hold onto the meaningful conversations I had and the perspectives I gained. It is rare to be able to have the opportunity to work with individuals pursuing the same passions as you from multi-faceted backgrounds, and I am grateful to have had this experience through the IFMSA August Meeting. I enjoyed meeting new people from within Canada and internationally and learning more about the similarities and differences in medical education in various countries. There was a sense of connectedness and reassurance in knowing that there is an international community providing support for each other in taking on initiatives to improve the health and well-being of all individuals. I look forward to keeping in touch with the amazing individuals I have met from across Canada and the globe, and to implementing what I have learned from this experience in the remainder of my studies and in my future medical career.

SCOPE/SCORE SESSIONS REPORT

Hillary Pearson, University of British Columbia

Sally Song, University of Alberta

Agenda Highlights

SCOPE & SCORE are the two exchange committees within the IFMSA with Professional and Research exchanges. Within the committees we work to create exchange opportunities, problem solve and strengthen capacity and academic quality. Most of all, it is about building partnerships with other National Exchange Officers (NEOs) to learn, teach and work towards our common goal of fantastic exchange experiences for medical students worldwide. In our sessions, we talked about solutions for common challenges and we revised regulations. Having had the privilege to attend previous meetings, it was wonderful seeing old faces and new ones. It is truly inspiring to see others who work so hard on the same issues and gave new energy to the CFMS exchange program. Specifically, we took home ideas regarding pre-departure training and strategies for expanding our SCORE program that will drive us through the next year.

The August Meeting is where all the exchange contracts are officially signed for the next season. July is a flurry of emails and introductions with each country showing off its' program and working out contracts. These preparations culminate in 3 hours of intense negotiations and pen to paper commitments known as the Contracts Fair.

On the most humid afternoon there ever was, delegates from each NMO brought their swag, intensity, love and contracts to a small church that - although beautiful - was built prior to the advent of windows that open or air conditioning. In our sauna we sweat over negotiations drew up contracts with 33 countries for clinical exchanges and 15 countries for research exchanges. In the end, there will be opportunities for 139 Canadian medical students to attend exchanges overseas over the next season. None of this would have been possible without the ground team who worked so hard to stay cool and write contracts, Sally, Adrina & Orianna, as well as all the behind-the-scenes work from the past and current NEO outgoings, Montana & Charly. What an amazing team and what amazing adventures to come for next season's exchange students!

Of the IFMSA meetings I attended so far, this time I was blown away by Canada's delegation. The open-mindedness, the enthusiasm, the positivity and their sheer talent when getting down to J. Biebs & Drake. I will take your compassion and wisdom with me in clerkship. The team has strengthened the relationship between the CFMS and IFMSA and I look forward to see it grow.

AUGUST MEETING 2018 POST-GA TRIP

After the IFMSA-Montreal GA, CFMS and IFMSA-Quebec jointly set up various Post-GA trips for participants to explore Canada. One of such trips is the Toronto-Niagara-Ottawa trip, led by CFMS in collaboration with Student Tour Company VTE. In an all-inclusive three-day trip of food and tours, over 100 IFMSA-Montreal participants explored the sights and sounds of the three beautiful Canadian cities. Participants got a breath-taking view Toronto from the CN Tower and got splashed with water on the Hornblower Niagara Falls boat tour. They also experienced our Canadian culture, as they visited the Ottawa Canadian Parliament Tours and Canadian Museum of History. They ate at classic diners such as the Old Spaghetti Factory in Toronto and Vieux Duluth in Ottawa. And for those more adventurous, the accommodations were located in downtown hearts of Toronto and Ottawa, so participants were able to experience Canada, after-dark. After an exhausting but fun-filled trip, participants were brought back to their hotel in Montreal or at the Montreal Trudeau Airport for those flying home directly. From CFMS, IFMSA-Quebec and all those involved in the Toronto-Niagara-Ottawa Post-GA trip, we hope participants are going back home with memories of Canada to cherish and adore.

Feedback:

Common themes

- Too much driving. Participants wanted locations to be closer together and to do more at each location. Specifically, they would have liked more free time to themselves.
- Coordination issues. Participants would often be late, leading to the rest of the group waiting on busses (sometimes > 30 min). Also, we should have better organization when it comes to counting heads in groups.

Aims and Recommendations

- Perhaps having the participants gather at a place where they can both wait and take pictures at the same time. So that they aren't waiting on busses.
- Perhaps assign each chaperone to a small group to count and do attendance. That way more personal and more small-group based with participants.