



Group on Student Affairs Western Region Annual Report

The Western Group on Student Affairs (WGSA) held its annual spring meeting at the Asilomar Conference Center on April 29 – May 2, 2007. The University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center hosted this joint WGSA/WAAHP meeting. The theme was “The Right Person for the Right Place at the Right Time”. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Maureen J. Garrity, University of Colorado School of Medicine, working with a planning committee including Dr. Charles Ferguson from the WAAHP and Dr. Henry Sondheimer, both from the University of Colorado. The first plenary speaker was Dr. M Roy Wilson, Chancellor of the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center who talked about medical education and the public trust. A second plenary session was focused on moving away from intolerance to welcoming related to LGBT issues in medical schools and guest speakers included Dr. Michele Eliason from the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, Dr. Georgette Dent, National Chair-elect and Sarah Milliken from the OSR. The final plenary session was presented by Dr. Robert M. Pearl, Executive Director and CEO of The Permanente Medical group. Dr. Pearl gave an inspiring talk about the future of medicine from the view of the employer.

At the fall AAMC conference, the WGSA complete a review of previously proposed modifications to the bylaws. A key change was to align the regional leadership structure with institutional responsibility for the regional meeting. The group also voted to move the financial accounts to a custodial account managed by the AAMC. This change will remove the need to transfer funds from state to state as the leadership and responsibility for the regional meeting changes. The University of Colorado School of Medicine reports that this change was very effective as they managed the 2007 meeting.

At the fall meeting the WGSA focused on issues related to the impact of expanding medical school enrollments, problems with the San Francisco Match and the implementation of criminal background checks. The group also supported the Western MAS motion: “Whereas the diversity of medical applicants remains low relative to the overall demographic profile of the United States, the evidence of health and health care disparities is well documented and the need for culturally competent health professionals is of great importance to the health care of our nation’s population. Therefore the Western MAS-GSA requests that an initiative be established throughout the appropriate AAMC constituent groups that promote the value of a second language applicable in health care, scholarly work relative to health care needs of a diverse patient populations and significant experiences with diverse populations as an integral part of an applicant’s preparation for medical school. “

Plans for future regional conferences include 2008 at Asilomar, hosted by UCLA and chaired by Dr. Neal Parker. This conference will be held jointly with the WGEA. In 2009, the conference

will be hosted in Albuquerque by the University of New Mexico and will be held jointly with both the WGEA and the WAAHP.

Respectfully submitted

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Chair, Western Region GSA