

Council of Deans (COD) Phone-A-Friend Resource

Background:

At the 2022 COD Spring Meeting, the Administrative Board presented six ideas to strengthen dean effectiveness and increase support for dean tenure. With the COD's review and feedback, the Administrative Board divided into subgroups, each tasked with drafting a project charter to develop and implement one of the ideas. The subgroup tasked with developing a peer counseling network of deans to support COD members in their roles met from April-June 2022. The subgroup drafted a two-phased plan to improve decision-making support and reduce professional isolation for deans, approved by the Administrative Board in July 2022. The second phase of this plan is the establishment of a COD Phone-A-Friend Resource, a network of deans with experience in key functional areas who have volunteered to be available for outreach from fellow COD members. The following information outlines the purpose of the COD Phone-A-Friend Resource and expectations of participation.

Purpose:

The COD Phone-A-Friend Resource is intended to provide confidential peer support for challenges or inquiries that require discussion beyond that of a COD Colleague-to-Colleague Inquiry. This resource is **not** a hotline, and COD members should not expect immediate or after-hours responses to time-sensitive or urgent inquiries. Instead, the resource provides COD members with a network of deans who have self-reported recent or in-depth experience in key functional areas and have volunteered to be available for questions and discussion with requesting deans.

COD members should feel comfortable contacting the AAMC and/or COD program team for assistance with functional areas or issues not listed in the resource and for support with time-sensitive or urgent requests.

Composition and Maintenance:

The COD Administrative Board will distribute a survey to current COD members requesting volunteers to participate in the network. Volunteers will be asked to identify their areas of experience from a list of key functional issues—e.g., accreditation, university/board relations, finances, research funding, etc. Volunteers will also be able to add additional areas of experience not listed in the questionnaire that they are willing to speak about with fellow COD members.

The survey will be redistributed on an annual basis to capture new COD members and/or new areas of experience for network volunteers.

The compiled resource will be hosted on the AAMC's [Medical School Profile System](#). Access to the resource will be restricted to COD members only and will require logging in with the COD member's AAMC username and password.

Charge:

COD members who volunteer to serve as part of the network are expected to:

- Identify areas of experience they are willing to discuss with fellow COD members who have related questions or challenges
- Allow their institutional email address and office phone number to be included in the resource alongside identified areas of experience

- Provide support beyond that of a simple COD Colleague-to-Colleague Inquiry—this may include setting up one or more phone discussions or connecting requesting deans with other members of your team
- Respond to inquiries from requesting deans within **one week** of receipt, whenever possible
- Maintain confidentiality about all inquiries from and discussions with requesting deans

COD members requesting assistance from the network are expected to:

- Understand and acknowledge the expectations for volunteers (i.e., volunteer deans are not subject-matter experts in the areas identified and are not available for immediate or after-hours inquiries regarding time-sensitive or urgent issues unless otherwise indicated)
- Use the subject line “COD Phone-A-Friend Inquiry” to assist volunteers in prioritizing the communication
- Maintain confidentiality about all discussions with network volunteers