

The new face of academic family medicine



The journey of The South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care for the past twenty five years may be divided into two phases. The first part was a solo journey for the Academy when its main focus was provision of continuous professional development for family doctors.

The second phase began with the formation of Family Medicine Education Consortium (FaMEC), a forum representing a network of the Family Medicine departments of the eight medical schools in South Africa. The Academy and FaMEC have since formed a double act in the development of the discipline of Family Medicine. A close relationship between the two organizations has seen us undertake several projects together: The South African Family Practice Journal (SAFP); Rural Health Initiative (RHI); The Interuniversity Centre for Family Medicine (ICHO)- FaMEC Training Project; Family Practice Congresses; The South African Family Practice Manual. Together, we have evolved from an organization providing CPD to an organization that truly is at the forefront in under- and post- graduate training of doctors in Family Medicine, development of the discipline of Family Medicine and Accreditation of CPD activities in General/Family Practice.

The considerable overlap in membership and leadership of the Academy and FaMEC means that any strategic plans for the future of the Academy must start with a critical review of the relationship with FaMEC. At its meeting of the 27th of January 2006, FaMEC discussed this relationship and resolved that the Academy and FaMEC should amalgamate. Subsequent meetings of the Academy and FaMEC Exco members

led to endorsement of the recommendation by Academic National Council and FaMEC members.

The vision is that of one organization representing the discipline of Family Medicine and governed by a Board of Directors. Sub committees would be formed to undertake core functions such as Training, Research, CPD, Accreditation, Quality Improvement and Rural Health. A Special Academy meeting that took place on the 19th of September 2006 in Cape Town led to the necessary changes in the Academy's Articles of Association to enable elections for a Board of Directors to take place at the November 2006 Annual General meeting.

We believe the New Academy will provide an administrative structure to enable us to better advance the discipline of Family Medicine. A discipline to truly integrate the practice of modern medicine by collapsing the lopsided perceptions of private and public, rural and urban, primary and tertiary, western and traditional, conventional and alternative.

New academy website

The Academy has just launched its new website at www.saaafp.org. Apart from the usual information about the Academy, the new website has new interactive features such as a calendar (featuring all upcoming Academy meetings), discussion forums and a newsletter function. Over the next few weeks all Academy members with internet and email access will be registered on the website. Please contact Charmalin at Tel: 021 531 8205 or Fax: 021 531 2982, or Email: wacad@iafrica.com to get registered on the site if you are a member. This new website is part of the Academy's continuing commitment to improve its communication with its members.

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