**ACNM BOD/Staff Response #2 to 2015 Student Report**

Thank you for your considerate and thoughtful Student Report. We honor your opinions and are excited about working with you in making the College a place where students feel included and supported. We will respond to the five sections in your report below. We appreciate your suggestions for optimizing midwifery education, promoting diversification, and supporting students and new graduates.

The ACNM Board of Directors (BOD) reviewed the Student Report in detail at their July 1, 2015 meeting and asked many ACNM leaders to respond by the November 2015 BOD meeting. This letter and attachments include those responses.

**Inconsistent Student Training**

The Directors of Midwifery Education (DOME) discussed the Student Report at length during their November meeting and we are including their response as an attachment to this letter. The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) also discussed the issues raised in the 2015 Student Report at their Fall Board of Commissioners meeting and their response is also attached to this letter.

**Diversification and Inclusion**

The Diversification and Inclusion Task Force has reviewed this section of the 2015 Student Report at their meeting on July 7th, 2015, and has continued the discussion regarding these suggestions at future meetings. The D & I Task Force and the BOD are committed to developing a detailed strategy to increase diversity and inclusion within the ACNM. There are clear recommendations made in their report, “Shifting the Frame”, found at

<http://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/ccLibraryFiles/Filename/000000005329/Shifting-the-Frame-June-2015.pdf>.

**Student Membership**

The ACNM Foundation reviewed the students’ suggestions regarding the advertisement of scholarship opportunities and has done the following:

* Posted notice of upcoming award deadlines in QuickeNews on a weekly basis through January and February and until the deadline in March.
* Posted a notice in Quickening.
* Retained the same deadline for the past three years so that it is easier for continuing students to remember this.
* Sent notices to students through the education program directors’ listserv and through SANMS liaisons and the student eMidwife listserv.
* Reorganized the scholarships and awards webpage so that all basic student awards can be found in the same place.
* Notified the Midwives of Color Committee, which sent notices to all students on its list about the Watson Scholarship for student midwives of color.
* Posted a photo of 2015 scholarship recipients in the Summer issue of Quickening.

The student representative to the BOD, in collaboration with the leaders of SANMS, will continue to develop and offer webinars for students with the aim of educating students on the structure of ACNM, the benefits of membership, and encouraging students to get involved in ACNM.

The Membership Committee responded to student’s request to examine student membership and conference fees. Below is their response:

Recently, the ACNM’s dues structure for students and newly certified CNMs and CMs was reevaluated. Factors such as a student’s ability to afford ACNM dues when faced with student debt, finding employment and possible relocation were all considered. As a result, as of January 2015, the time between graduation and full dues was extended to be slowly increased over 4 years rather than 1. Currently, students pay dues that are discounted by 61%, then 41% for 2 years after certification and then 21% for 2 years after that. By the time a 2-year student member pays full ACNM dues, their accumulated savings after 6 years is just over 41%. This is intentional to give students and new grads the opportunity for maximum exposure and support at a very low cost to them.

The recently restructured dues also created more opportunities for savings for students and new midwives. For instance, the Membership and Marketing Committee also took a look at the discounts already in place for students to attend the Annual Meeting because the opportunity to attend as a student is truly invaluable. The 2015 Annual Meeting offered students discounts anywhere from 43% at the early-bird rate to 49% for onsite registration. New midwives were offered anywhere from a 33%-42% discount depending on their membership type and when they registered. We will continue to review the rates, however, they are as low as is fiscally feasible. We also remind students to do what many students are already doing to cut costs – share rooms, apply for scholarships and apply to volunteer at the annual meeting.

Student and new midwives are the valuable future of ACNM. Intentional steps have been taken to provide membership, support and opportunities for engagement at a very low cost.

The Membership Committee will continue to monitor these areas for students and new midwives for future opportunities to lower costs for them.

**Preceptors**

The BOD asked the Division of Education (DOE) to continue the ongoing discussion of recruiting more preceptors at their next meeting. The DOE Governing Board discussed the specific requests from the Student Report and offers this response:

• The development of an electronic database at the regional level of members willing to precept midwifery students.

Between 2011-2013, the DOE, the Preceptors Development Section and ACNM national office worked on an electronic database for preceptors that could be used by all programs and program directors to facilitate clinical placements for students. Several barriers prohibited this from being a viable solution for the programs and their students. As we look to the future, the DOE is discussing more viable options for the preceptor issue nationwide. One solution that is being discussed is the idea of a midwifery match program. This match would work similarly to the match between medical students and residency programs. Students would enter the match and be placed with appropriate preceptors within a defined geographical range. We are in the very beginning stages of exploring such an option, and we believe we must develop an option that respects the desires of preceptors who do not want to be contacted by multiple students. We hope that through a match option, we will also then be able to recruit and retain more qualified preceptors that could have a standard process and a standard incentive/benefit for precepting.

• We request that the board of the ACNM continue to encourage their members to precept new students

ACNM and the DOE have always worked to recruit and retain qualified preceptors. ACNM members who precept have the opportunity to attend free precepting workshops at the Annual Meeting. In addition, the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) awards continuing education units to CNMs/CMs who precept midwifery students for up to 10 contact hours. The DOE has worked for the last several years to recruit new preceptors through incentives at the ACNM Annual Meeting. We will continue to work hard on expanding the pool of preceptors available to students.

• We suggest that all preceptors are ACNM members. This could be encouraged by offering CEUs, in the form of webinars or podcasts, or access to Up-To-Date through the student’s university library.

Preceptor development is also a concern of ACNM and the DOE. Many education programs offer library access to their preceptors. ACNM currently offers many valuable resources to preceptors through the Preceptor Resource webpages, provided by the DOE Preceptor Section on the ACNM website. The DOE and the Preceptor Section will be working this year to revise and update these electronic resources for preceptors and will continue to encourage preceptors to be members.

Regional representatives have also been asked to discuss these topics at the regional level.

**Employment Opportunities**

The board has asked Salvador Chairez, Director of Membership for ACNM, to review the topic of charging for job postings on the ACNM website. Below is his response:

I appreciate the recommendation from the students to take a fresh look at MidwifeJobs.com. I took a look at the industry standard for professional associations’ job boards, and the standard is to charge employers to post for jobs. Employers budget annually for posting to job boards – especially those that are tailored to the market that they are trying to recruit – in this case, midwives. This does not appear to be a barrier for employers to post on MidwifeJobs.com. ACNM has remained an economical alternative to employers and has not raised rates in over 3 years, although we may have to evaluate this soon. In the past two years, around 435 employers posted nearly 480 jobs for CNMs and CMs. Upon presenting for review with the Membership and Marketing committee, we understand the concern raised, however, the recommendation is that we continue to charge a fee to post jobs. It is also strongly recommended that members consider not posting jobs to their affiliate “@midwives.com” discussion groups. This limits and narrows both the opportunities and candidate pool to only that state’s ACNM members when qualified midwives and graduating students may be willing to relocate. These opportunities for midwives should posted on MidwifeJobs.com.

The ACNM Council of Fellows will be addressing the issue of mentorship during their meeting at the 2016 Annual Meeting with hopes for the beginning of a mentoring program in the following year. The Fellows leadership would also be glad to discuss this idea with the students to see what they are looking for in a mentor.

Once again, thank you for your thoughtful report. We have addressed the majority of your concerns as best as we can and look forward to continuing to work with you and for the future of midwifery.

Best,

The ACNM Board of Directors and Staff

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