President’s Page

Dr Michelle Graham, President

Equipping the Next Generation for Success

As I begin my term as President of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS), I think of the personal impact this organization has had on my career. For more than 20 years, the CCS has provided me with opportunities and opened doors. It has connected me with amazing people. It has made me a better cardiologist. It has made me a better professor and mentor. It has been my professional home.

Carolyn Pullen, the Society’s CEO, jokes that CCS is “in my blood” due to my passion for the organization, the people, our shared vision, values, and mission. And, indeed, the CCS has been central since I began my cardiology career in Edmonton in 2001.

From my early work as a member of the Access to Care group, to Chair of the CCS Guidelines Committee, to Scientific Program Chair, and finally to my recent service as Vice-President, I have seen the good things that come from collaboration. I have felt the satisfaction of working together to achieve our shared goals.

Credit for the Society’s success goes to the CCS Council and staff for their unwavering commitment, and to our member teams. I look forward to continuing to work alongside them. I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of my predecessors in this role, most recently Dr Marc Ruel, who focused on enriching and expanding our membership, enhancing programs, and broadening outreach and advocacy.

My new role coincided with the return of an in-person Canadian Cardiovascular Congress in Ottawa this fall. It was energizing to again gather face to face, to share practice-changing research, promote education, review new guidelines, and discuss some of the most pressing issues of the day. These included the impact of climate change on cardiovascular health and the fallout from the worst global pandemic in a century.

Like everyone in the cardiovascular community, I have lived through what can only be described as a really tough two-and-a-half years. As the pandemic unfolded in early 2020, I have been energizing to again gather face to face, to share practice-changing research, promote education, review new guidelines, and discuss some of the most pressing issues of the day.

Donner à la prochaine génération les moyens de réussir

Alors que j’entame mon mandat de présidente de la Société cardiovasculaire du Canada (SCC), je pense à l’impact personnel que cette organisation a eu sur ma carrière. Depuis plus de 20 ans, la SCC m’a offert des possibilités et m’a ouvert des portes. Elle m’a permis de rencontrer des gens formidables. Cela a fait de moi une meilleure cardiologue, professeure et mentore. C’est mon chez-moi professionnel.

Carolyn Pullen, directrice générale de la société, plaisante en disant que « la SCC est dans mon sang » en raison de ma passion pour l’organisation, des gens, ainsi que de notre vision, de nos valeurs et de notre mission commune. En effet, la SCC a joué un rôle central depuis que j’ai commencé ma carrière de cardiologue à Edmonton en 2001.

Depuis mes premiers travaux en tant que membre du groupe sur l’accès aux soins, jusqu’à la présidence du comité des lignes directrices de la SCC, en passant par la présidence du programme scientifique, et enfin jusqu’à mon recent service en tant que vice-présidente, j’ai vu les bons côtés qui découlent de la collaboration. J’ai ressenti la satisfaction de travailler en équipe pour atteindre nos objectifs communs.

Le mérite de la réussite de la société revient au conseil et au personnel de la SCC, pour leur engagement indéfectible, ainsi qu’aux équipes de nos membres. Je me rejouis de continuer à travailler à leurs côtés. C’est un honneur pour moi de suivre les traces de mes prédécesseurs à ce poste, le dernier en liste étant le Dr Marc Ruel, qui s’est concentré sur l’enrichissement et la diversification de nos membres, l’amélioration des programmes et l’élargissement de notre rayonnement et de la défense de nos intérêts.

Mon nouveau rôle a coïncidé avec le retour d’un Congrès canadien sur la santé cardiovasculaire en personne à Ottawa cet automne. Il était très stimulant de se retrouver à nouveau face à face afin d’échanger sur des recherches susceptibles de transformer la pratique, de promouvoir l’éducation, d’examiner les nouvelles directives et de discuter de certaines des
we were already dealing with resource challenges. Clinicians were stretched to the limit. Even the strongest among us felt the strain of these conditions and, understandably, some retreated into themselves.

Within this context, my first goal as President of the CCS is to reinvigorate the cardiovascular community with a culture of teamwork. I want to embrace and champion efforts to promote collaboration and strengthen the model of the One Heart Team. My plan includes strong support for the efforts of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, which is committed to ensuring that people from every community, including racialized and marginalized ones, are part of the CCS family. This is important work. The EDI Committee’s action plan will reduce systemic barriers to equal opportunity.

One area of personal concern is the low representation of women in cardiovascular sciences. More than 50% of medical school graduates are women, but they make up fewer than 15% of cardiovascular specialists. We need to do more to attract the best and brightest to our field. Diversity among specialists improves patient satisfaction and quality of care, which are important to this organization and to all of us as individuals.

So, this first goal is to champion and strengthen our efforts to work together, to embrace new people and ideas, to promote a culture of respect, and to ensure that the CCS becomes an even more welcoming professional home. The outcome will be better care for our patients. Important work by members of our Governance Committee, led by Past President, Dr Andrew Krahn, underpins this goal by broadening our organization by bringing more voices, skills, and experience to the table.

My second goal is to invigorate mentorship and support for our trainees. From my earliest days as a cardiologist, I have gained so much from my involvement in the CCS. I want others to experience those same benefits. While the CCS offers excellent training and networking opportunities, these benefits extend career-long, so we want to create the conditions where trainees transition to regular members and benefit from all CCS has to offer.

I was recently inspired this fall when I helped interview 53 candidates for the Adult Cardiology Residency program at the University of Alberta. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, I met so many trainees who were burning with enthusiasm, extolling the wonders of cardiovascular medicine, and delighted to be embarking on future caring for patients with cardiovascular disease. It filled me with hope. Trainees are our future. Enhancing their professional journeys will be on my mind every day as I take on my new position.

A poem by Canadian poet, Rupi Kaur, given to me by a former trainee, and framed in my office, says it best. I’ll paraphrase it here: “Our work should equip the next generation… to outdo us in every field. This is the legacy we’ll leave behind.”

We are stronger together. Thoughtful, respectful, patient-centred care will allow all of us to achieve the CCS Mission. I look forward to working with the CCS Board of Directors, Council, the CEO and the management team to bring people together, to build strong teams and, ultimately, to advance heart health for all.
Please feel free to reach out to me with your insights and ideas.

Dr Michelle Graham  
President, Canadian Cardiovascular Society

soins futurs aux patients atteints de maladies cardiovasculaires. Cela m’a rempli d’espoir. Les stagiaires sont notre avenir. Je penserai tous les jours à améliorer leur parcours professionnel dans le cadre de mes nouvelles fonctions.

Un poème de la poétesse canadienne Rupi Kaur, offert par une ancienne stagiaire et encadrée dans mon bureau, en dit long. Je vais le paraphraser ici : « Notre travail devrait équiper la prochaine génération... pour qu’elle nous surpasse dans tous les domaines. C’est l’héritage que nous laisserons derrière nous. »

Nous sommes plus forts ensemble. Des soins réfléchis, respectueux et centrés sur le patient nous permettront à tous de réaliser la mission de la SCC. Je suis impatiente de travailler avec le conseil d’administration de la SCC, le conseil, le PDG et l’équipe de direction pour rassembler les gens, constituer des équipes solides et, en fin de compte, faire progresser la santé cardiaque pour tous.

N’hésitez pas à me faire part de vos réflexions et de vos idées.

Drs Michelle Graham  
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