

RESOURCE GUIDE:

Engaging Medical Students at the Chapter Level

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American College of Physicians Council of Student Members (CSM) Resource Guide

Table of Contents

I.	Council of Student Members	3
	1. National Council of Student Members Composition and Charge	3
	2. Responsibilities of National Council Representatives	3
II.	Creating a Local Council of Medical Student Members	5
	1. Getting Organized	5
	2. Purpose and Goals	6
	3. Local and National Support and Resources	7
III.	Involving Medical Students	8
	1. Ways to Attract and Involve Students in Your Chapter	8
	2. Suggestions for Including Students in Your Chapter Governance Structure	9
	3. Supporting Internal Medicine Interest Groups (IMIGs)	9
	4. Engagement Ideas for Medical Students	10
	5. Best Practices from ACP Chapters (John Tooker Evergreen Award Program)	11
IV.	Summary	12
V.	2025-2026 Council of Student Members	13

I. Council of Student Members

National Council of Student Members Composition and Charge

Reports to

Board of Regents

Charge

Respond to requests from the Board of Regents, committees, and staff to review programs, products, and services. Advise the Board of Regents and Board of Governors on:

- Promoting internal medicine as a career
- Increasing the value of ACP membership to Medical Students
- Strengthening chapter and medical school-level activities
- Aligning council activities with the College's Strategic Plan

Composition (12)

Chair, who must be a member of the Council at the time of selection and who serves ex-officio on the BOR; Vice Chair, who must be a member of the Council at the time of selection and who serves as ex-officio on the BOG; 10 at-large members to be selected with consideration given to the College's Diversity Policy, as well as the student's year in medical school and type of academic program. Up to two at-large positions may be filled by student members from international chapters outside the US may fill up to two at-large positions. All members must be Medical Student members of ACP at the time of selection for the Council. The CSM will automatically appoint an open at-large member position to a CSM Vice Chair who does not move into the Chair position and remains eligible to serve on the CSM and an open at-large member position to a CSM Chair who remains eligible to serve on the CSM.

The President and Chair of the Board of Regents are invited to attend in-person meetings as guests.

Terms

Chair & Vice Chair shall serve one-year terms; all terms end upon graduation from medical school, at most three years as an at-large member. A CSM member may serve up to five years on the Council if the 4th or 5th year is served as Vice Chair and/or Chair. Chairs and Vice Chairs must be current Medical Students in good standing.

Responsibilities of National Council Representatives

Council representatives advise ACP regarding the policy, programs, products, and services the College for Student Members provides. They also serve as a resource for chapter CSMs and as a mechanism for bringing issues from ACP chapters to the national CSM, the BOG, and/or the BOR.

Each Council member is charged with:

- Providing a voice at the national level for Resident and Fellow Members

- Helping establish and providing support for chapter-level CSMs
- Promoting the development of Medical Student programs
- Promoting participation in chapter meetings and the annual Internal Medicine Meeting
- Encouraging professional and leadership development

Elections for seats on the Council are held every year that a seat falls vacant. Terms are for three years. Elections are staggered to ensure continuity on the Council. Medical Student Members interested in serving on the Council, or a member who wishes to nominate a Medical Student Member for the Council, should visit the [CSM website](#) for more information or contact staff via e-mail at acpgovernance@acponline.org. Elections are typically held in the fall of each year.

Creating a Local Council of Medical Student Members

Approximately 53 chapters have established chapter CSMs to foster Medical Student participation at the chapter level. To find out what is being done in your chapter, contact your chapter Governor via the [chapter website section](#) of ACP Online. The following information will help an interested early career internist initiate the development of a chapter CSM. No uniform structure has been mandated, which allows each chapter to create a council structure to meet local needs.

Getting Organized

The first step in getting organized should be to meet with the Governor of your ACP chapter to inquire about the interest and availability of resources to develop and support a chapter CSM and its activities.

Second, you can request assistance from the chapter executive director to obtain a list of current medical student members from the chapter portal. Using these contact lists, the chapter Executive Director can send bulk e-mails to Medical Student chapter members announcing planning meetings, news, and activities in which you would like these members to become involved. You could also reach out via personal e-mail or telephone to invite members to the planning meeting.

Third, a planning meeting with several interested members is paramount. At this meeting, the members should agree upon the purpose for establishing a chapter CSM and identify some guidelines and a timeline with specific goals to be achieved during the first year. The established goals must be realistic and attainable. For this purpose, you can use the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, reproducible, time-oriented) goals mnemonic. Setting unrealistic goals may prompt later discouragement of all involved.

If a council is being formed de novo, the Governor and Governor's Council must be aware of the members and approve its creation and membership, as appropriate. This facilitates communication between the Governor and the chapter CSM.

Next, you will want to establish some parameters for your chapter CSM, such as structure (officers, key members), terms of service, election of new members, and number of meetings per year. The Addendum contains sample council operating rules that can be modified according to your group's and your chapter's specific needs. The following are some proposed structure models that can be adjusted to suit your needs.

Model 1: **Medical Student** members are invited by the chapter Governor/Chapter council as potential initial council members; the Governor participates as moderator at an initial planning meeting.

Model 2: **Two** representatives from each major region within the chapter are identified; 2-year (staggered) appointments are implemented; the Governor may initially appoint the Chair and subsequently be elected from among council members.

Special Note: Several established chapter CSMs have found it beneficial for their Chair to attend the Governor's council meeting as either a voting or nonvoting member, depending on the structure. One CSM chapter indicated that all members are invited to participate in the twice-yearly Governor's Council meetings as observers to meet the chapter leaders and learn about the chapter structure. Chapters are encouraged to consider these relationships when developing chapter CSMs.

Purpose and Goals

Purpose

One of the first steps in forming a chapter Council of Student Members is creating a statement of your purpose and goals. This provides you with an overall vision for the council. Working with your chapter Governor, you can adopt or modify the purpose to meet your chapter's needs. It should be realistic, measurable, and attainable. Whatever purpose you select should be reexamined periodically and updated as necessary. Governors should inform the chapter Council of Student Members about funding available for local events.

Goals

Having established the direction you want your council to take, you want to define goals to fulfill your mission. Each should contain a strategy for meeting that goal. Your council's goals may include any or all of the following:

Foster Interest in ACP

Encourage Medical Student membership and a lifelong interest in ACP. Encourage representation on local and [national ACP committees](#).

Foster Educational Opportunities

Encourage participation in local and national ACP activities. Work with the Governor to create chapter meeting programming of interest to Medical Students, including leadership development, maintenance of certification courses, and workshops on other topics of interest to Medical Students, such as well-being, coding and billing, and advocacy. Publicize local and national educational opportunities. Work with medical organizations to promote continuing medical education.

Support Public Policy Concerns

Monitor local and national health policy and how it relates to internal medicine and physician and patient welfare. Discuss issues at the chapter level and develop resolutions to be submitted for consideration at BOG meetings. Get involved with ACP's [Advocates for Internal Medicine Network](#).

Encourage an Interest in Community Service

Encourage participation in community service projects to further discuss volunteer service and promote ACP. A variety of resources are available at ACP Online in the [Volunteering](#) section.

Local and National Support and Resources

Your ACP chapter Governor is a valuable resource for information about ACP, current issues at the leadership level, and past and present local and national projects. Please refer to the [chapter website page](#) at ACP Online for your Governor's contact information. The Governor, chapter staff, and Chapter CSM should work together to coordinate Medical Student activities at chapter meetings. Keeping in close contact with your chapter Governor is crucial to running an effective chapter council.

The Chair-elect of the national CSM serves as your connection to the advisory body of the College's governance, the Board of Governors (BOG), in submitting resolutions and representing issues. However, the Chair is the liaison between the national CSM and the College's decision-making body, the Board of Regents (BOR). Establishing a regular communication link with [national CSM representatives](#) will serve as an efficient mode of communication. They can update you on Medical Student activities in other chapters or at the national level, help you with questions and issues within your chapter council, and help you publicize good ideas and successful projects to the rest of the membership.

Medical Student Membership Benefits

Information about [national benefits for Medical Student members](#) is available at ACP Online.

John Tooker Evergreen Awards Program

The College recognizes that the organization's strength is grounded in its local chapters. Because of this, a program was created to recognize outstanding chapter efforts. The [John Tooker Evergreen Awards Program](#) provides visibility and recognition to chapters that have successfully implemented programs to increase membership, improve communication, bolster member involvement and diversity activities, and foster careers in internal medicine.

Involving Medical Students

Ways to Attract and Involve Students in Your Chapter

ACP chapters should engage Medical Students early and often to prepare them for a potential career in internal medicine. Furthermore, ACP Chapters are uniquely positioned to prepare future leaders in internal medicine by exposing students to organized medicine, health policy, and health delivery systems throughout their medical training. Chapter leaders can open the door for Medical Students to make connections and explore opportunities in internal medicine. ACP chapters can benefit from increased Medical Student awareness of their chapters in terms of enrollment figures and increased attendance at chapter events.

This guide contains general tips, and event and activity ideas gathered from ACP chapters and Medical Students who have collaborated successfully.

Maximize Personal Interaction and Mentoring

Physicians and students report the greatest satisfaction from one-on-one conversations. Consider recruiting your chapter leaders to provide mentorship to students. Advanced career physicians are particularly well suited for this role, as well as early career physicians who were not long-ago Medical Students themselves. Event and activity ideas for connecting mentors and mentees can be found on page 3 of this guide.

Involve Students in Chapter Business

Many students seek real-world experience to improve their health care. Invite students to participate in your Council, Board, or Committee meetings and advocacy activities. They can also help you plan meaningful events to attract students to your chapter meetings and other programs, particularly in the online arena. More detailed suggestions regarding including Medical Students in your chapter governance structure can be found on page 4 of this guide.

Visit Local Medical Schools

Almost every medical school in the United States has an Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG). Consider taking your chapter leadership to visit the IMIG at each medical school in your chapter. If you need contact information for your local IMIG leaders, the CSM can provide it to you. You can ensure a good student turnout by hosting your event at the medical school and by providing food during the event. And if it is not possible to visit in person, consider hosting a Zoom webinar or meet-and-greet with IMIG members.

Provide Financial Support

Students are always on a tight budget, which may prevent them from participating in conferences and leadership experiences that could otherwise be life changing. Consider sponsoring travel and accommodation costs to enable dedicated students to attend chapter meetings, ACP Internal Medicine meetings, state advocacy events, or ACP Leadership Day. At the very least, students can participate in local chapter meetings and events for free.

Pitch the Value of ACP Membership

Student experiences with ACP will influence their decisions to continue membership after they graduate medical school. Be sure to communicate the benefits of ACP membership, which are free for Medical Students. For details, see <http://www.acponline.org/membership/benefits/students/>.

Engage in Social Media and Networking

Medical Students will likely use platforms like X, Facebook, and Instagram to get news from organizations they “Like” or “Follow.” National ACP has a strong social media presence, and sharing their posts on your chapter’s page is a great and easy way to build your chapter’s visibility. Consider creating a Facebook or X page for your chapter and encouraging all members, including students, to “Like” or “Follow” your page. You can update the page periodically with chapter updates and photos or, as mentioned earlier, share posts from national ACP. If anything, medical students are often the most familiar with social media trends and are often the best-suited members to be the “webmasters” of your social media presence.

Suggestions for Including Students in Your Chapter Governance Structure

The CSM encourages chapters to include student representation in their governance structure. Because all chapters are different in size, finances, location of medical schools about the chapter, and number of Medical Students, we realize a one-size-fits-all approach only works when including Medical Students in chapter governance. The key is to get students involved, let them advise you on possible activities for students at the chapter level, and then enlist their help in organizing and promoting those activities to other Medical Students. Below are some ideas on how to involve Medical Students in your Chapter Governance:

- Designate a seat for a student on your Governor’s Advisory Council.
- Include more than one student representing different years of graduation.
- Include a representative from each IMIG in your chapter. If a medical school in your chapter does not yet have an IMIG, work with the school’s administrators to identify students interested in creating an IMIG at their school.
- Develop a stand-alone Medical Student Committee or a chapter-based Council of Student Members that reports back to the Governor’s Advisory Council.
- Include students in your Chapter Meeting, Membership, or Health and Public Policy Chapter Committees.
- Recruit Medical Students to serve as webmasters for your Chapter’s social media presence.

No matter how you decide to incorporate Medical Student leaders, contact your Chapter Liaison so the student leaders can be added to the Chapter Leader Network. This will ensure they can access online resources to assist with Medical Student activities. Moreover, they will receive regular e-mail updates about new activities, ideas, and deadlines specific to Medical Students.

Supporting Internal Medicine Interest Groups (IMIGs)

The Council of Student Members (CSM) seeks to connect ACP chapters with motivated students who can help organize student activities in your chapter. The CSM would also like to introduce Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG) leaders to chapter leaders to strengthen the ties between these groups.

Throughout this guide, we have mentioned the importance of building relationships with the Internal Medicine Interest Groups (IMIGs) in your chapter. Be sure to contact the IMIGs in your chapter and ask students active in the IMIGs to get involved in chapter leadership positions. Create opportunities for IMIG members to participate in your chapter meetings, even if it starts as observation. Ask your chapter's leadership to visit IMIG meetings to tell those students about careers in internal medicine and the benefits of ACP membership and provide mentoring opportunities to IMIG members.

Your chapter may also provide additional funding to the IMIGs. Through the IMIG Sponsorship Program at ACP national headquarters, IMIGs in the United States receive \$200 in initial funding and an additional incentive based on their ACP student membership numbers. They get \$1 for every student member at their medical school, with the funding doubling to \$2 per student member once 30% of the student body is enrolled! Any additional funding the chapter can provide to IMIGs helps to build strong IMIGs. More information about IMIGs can be found at www.acponline.org/imig.

Engagement Ideas for Medical Students

Shadowing

Recruit ACP members in your chapter to accept students for short-term shadowing experiences. Some chapters offer stipends to first-year students who spend four weeks shadowing an internist. This can be an early way to introduce Medical Students to chapter members.

Mentorship

Promote long-term mentoring relationships by encouraging physicians and residents to become mentors to Medical Students in your chapter. Mentorship can include career advice, life coaching, residency preparedness, research opportunities, and more.

Mentoring Dinner

Hold a dinner for the physician-mentors and their student-mentees. This is a great way to honor those physicians who volunteer as mentors. Host a dinner series with different theme topics, like primary care, hospital medicine, and subspecialty care.

Resident-Student Collaborations

Medical Students often need more opportunities to network with residents in nonclinical settings and look to residents for mentorship regarding specialty choices and career planning. Similarly, many of the medical residents in your chapter may be interested in opportunities to become involved with Medical Student education. Many chapters host successful events involving Medical Students and internal medicine residents, ranging from wine and cheese social events to resident-led physical exam workshops.

Abstract or Poster Competition

Host a student abstract or poster competition at your chapter meeting. Many chapters forward their top winners to the ACP Internal Medicine meeting to compete in the national poster competitions. For more information about hosting an abstract competition in your chapter, see “Hosting a Resident/Fellow Members’ and Medical Students’ Abstract Competition” in the Chapter Meeting Resource Guide (<https://leadership.acponline.org/resources/chapter-resources/planning-your-chapter-meeting>).

Some chapters also offer educational webinars to students regarding how to write an abstract or make a poster. ACP has guidelines to get started:

<https://www.acponline.org/membership/residents/competitions-awards/acp-national-abstract-competitions/guide-to-preparing-for-the-abstract-competition/preparing-a-poster-presentation>

Residency Fair

Third- and fourth-year students love to meet residency program directors. Host an internal medicine residency fair in your chapter and invite Medical Students to attend. Tell them about why internal medicine residency might be a good fit for them, what they should expect when they apply, and how to maximize their chances for success when preparing an application.

State Advocacy Day

Organize a local lobbying day at your chapter’s state capital. Invite students to participate so they can learn about political issues affecting their state. Students also make a great addition to Chapter representation at National ACP Leadership Day!

Stump the Professor

Students seek interaction with physicians. Host a Stump the Professor event where students can submit complex cases, which are then discussed by a physician educator in a group lecture setting.

Chapter Newsletters

Ask chapter student leaders to write student-specific articles for your chapter newsletter. You can also point them to ACP IMPact, the ACP national Medical Student newsletter. Submissions are encouraged!

More Ideas

More event and activity ideas can be found in the Chapter Meeting Resource Guide in the “Attracting and Involving Younger Members and Diverse Groups” section at

(<https://leadership.acponline.org/resources/chapter-resources/plan-your-chapter-meeting/attracting-and-involving-younger-members-and>).

Best Practices from ACP Chapters (John Tooker Evergreen Award Program)

Use experiences from other ACP chapters’ best practices to engage Medical Students. Refer to the Medical Students theme on the John Tooker Evergreen Award Program vignettes [here](#).

Summary

We hope this reference has been helpful. Starting a chapter CSM may be challenging; however, the result is a body within your chapter that provides a forum for discussing Medical Student issues, develops programs for Medical Students, and increases opportunities for their participation in the chapter governance structure. We urge you to get involved. We hope your chapter CSM will bring forward issues you would like to have addressed at the national level. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

For more information, contact ACP staff via e-mail at acpgovernance@acponline.org.

2025-2026 Council of Student Members

A comprehensive 2025-2026 ACP National Council of Student Members roster can be found [here](#).