

## The Long and the Short of It

*Emily Musing*

It was a cold, wet February day in Toronto. I was attending the 2004 PPC and stopped by the CSHP booth to chat with Mike Gaucher, CSHP Past President. Before I knew it, Mike was extolling the wonders of running for the CSHP Executive. My mind started racing . . .

Hundreds of pharmacists must want to be CSHP President Elect! If I really wanted to be considered a serious contender for this much-sought-after position, I would need a campaign that distinguished me from the many other candidates sure to be vying for this title. I had to think! What issues were important to hospital pharmacists in Canada, and how could I contribute to resolving them? The ideas started coming fast and furious.

One of my first thoughts was the problem our profession has always had with lack of recognition. Nurses have their nursing caps, doctors their lab coats and stethoscopes, but we pharmacists continue to have difficulty ensuring that patients and peers actually know who we are. How many times have I heard a nurse calling to a pharmacist using the phrase, “Hey, Pharmacy”? (Do we ever say “Hey, Medicine”?) Our patients also have a hard time distinguishing pharmacists from the myriad other health care professionals on the wards and in the clinics. So I decided to offer free tattooing of the word “pharmacist” to all who voted for me. Of course it would be up to the individual to decide where to place the tattoo.

Gee—developing a campaign strategy was not as hard as I had feared. But would people consider my ideas too frivolous? I had to centre my platform on a really critical issue—something that would speak directly to the needs of hospital pharmacists. Then it hit me: every hospital is currently struggling to cope with a pharmacist shortage. I had identified the source of all our problems! At a mere 5 feet, 1/4 inch in height (153 cm for those who grew up after the metric system came to

Canada), I myself have been struggling with this very issue for as long as I can remember. How can we make a “big” impact when we can’t even reach the drugs on the highest shelves? How can we develop as national speakers when our audience can’t see us

from behind the podium? How can we increase the stature of pharmacists when we exist in a climate of downsizing? With these thoughts, a campaign slogan practically suggested itself: Don’t be shortsighted — vote for me and I’ll demonstrate that height doesn’t matter (and if it does, I can always hand out growth hormone)!

I had sized up the competition and was ready with a giant campaign to become your President Elect. So imagine my surprise when I found out I had been “elected” without having a chance to put these strategies into practice. I guess I’ll have to save my tattoos and drug samples and dispense them as the need arises throughout my 3 years in office. Yet I’m sure that this article has given hospital pharmacists some insights into the capabilities of their new presidential officer. They’ll know to expect me to give it my all. They’ll know that I’ll provide a fresh perspective on current issues. And they’ll know, if nothing else, that I’ll definitely be a-Musing!




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