Director at Large—External Relations

This is my first report as your new Director for External Relations at CANO/ACIO. I took over as the official DAL—External Relations after the Annual General Meeting in Quebec City in October 2014. I want to take a moment to send a special thank you to Christine Zywine, previous DAL—External Relations, for making the handover process for this portfolio a positive experience. I also want to acknowledge the ongoing support and guidance I am receiving from the entire CANO/ACIO Board and CANO/ACIO Head Office. Every week I begin to understand more about the importance of examining, addressing, and supporting the needs of oncology nurses across Canada.

The role of the DAL-External continues to focus on strengthening collaborative relationships with organizations across Canada. I continue the work of past DAL-Externals to bridge and strengthen connections with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and the Canadian Nursing Students’ Association (CNSA).

In January 2015, I attended the CNSA Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan. What an eye-opening and energizing experience! More than 500 student nurses from across Canada attended this annual conference while they continued to complete course work for their nursing education. I was impressed with all aspects of this conference and kept reflecting back to when I was a nursing student, how I missed an opportunity to take part in this association. It was refreshing and energizing to see and converse with a cross-section of future Canadian nurse leaders. CNSA is guided by the following underlying principles and objectives: to be the primary resource for nursing students; to influence and advance innovation in nursing curriculum and research; and to strengthen linkages and create new partnerships. The conference includes dedicated time to complete formal national and regional business meetings. Various keynote speakers inspired future nurses to find their passion in the profession. In addition, students have opportunities to deliver podium or poster presentations on projects in which they are participating in collaboration with their school of nursing or volunteer organizations with whom they are linked.

The highlight of the conference for me was the annual debate. A student from each region of CNSA is challenged to put forth an evidence-based argument for or against an ethical issue in nursing practice chosen by the organizing committee. The position each student has to debate is randomly selected. The 2015 debate topic was to discuss the pros and cons of providing assisted dying in Canada. For those of you who attended the 2014 CANO conference in Quebec City, you will recall that a joint panel discussion on assisted dying between CANO, the Oncology Nursing Society, and the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care was a highlight of the conference. This issue is obviously important to both student and registered nurses and I suspect there will be several more discussions about the topic at both conferences in the future.

CANO/ACIO’s partnership with the CNA continues. At the 2014 CNA Annual General Meeting (AGM) a special class of membership was developed for specialty groups such as our national association. One aspect of this specialty CNA membership, which CANO/ACIO now holds, allows our organization to apply to attend and be a voting member at the CNA Annual General Meeting. This is a new process established by CNA. I will be attending the CNA AGM in June 2015 on behalf of CANO/ACIO, and will report back to you about the meeting and voting process and topics.

In closing, I am looking forward to the opportunities for my own growth and development as a member of the CANO/ACIO Board. The 2013–2016 CANO/ACIO Strategic Plan is unfolding and the coinciding deliverables are progressing well. Part of the DAL—External role will include supporting and promoting certification in oncology nursing; examining and strengthening CANO/ACIO’s alignment to nursing students with regards to education, practice and leadership; and creating a strategy to examine and support the needs of nurse generalists who care for patients, families, and communities dealing with cancer.

National Nursing Week unfolded May 11–17 this year, echoing a strong message: “Nurses: With you every step of the way”. Take time to celebrate what you have done in your nursing career. Reflect on the past but, most importantly, plan for your future. Take the passion you have for our nursing profession and continue to strive for excellence in oncology nursing.

Respectfully submitted,
Shari Moura
CANO/ACIO DAL-External Relations