



# Why do RDs volunteer to work on the College Council and Committees?

Since the College was incorporated 20 years ago, 43 RDs have governed as Councillors on Council. Eleven of the 14 College Presidents have been Registered Dietitians. Many more dietitians have volunteered to work on committees and projects over that time. The College would not be able to function without the dedicated expertise of these members. Why did all these dietitians volunteer their time and expertise to work for the College on Council and on College committees?

We asked this question to two RDs who recently completed their terms on the College Council, Jill Pikul, RD, and Lesia Kicak, RD. Both have served for many years on Council, on committees and as President of the College. We thank them for taking the time to reflect on their experiences at the College and to share them. Here is what they had to say about their experience.

## **JILL PIKUL, RD**

Jill was a member of the Transitional Council in 1993 and served on Council (1994-1998). She was President of the College from 1994 to 1996. More recently, as a committee appointee, she served at the College as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Registration Committee (2010-2013).

### **Jill, what did you enjoy or value about your experience on Council and on Committees?**

I really enjoyed being involved in work that was more encompassing and broader in scope with respect to our profession. It is so easy to get totally focused on our own area of practice, so being able to contribute to the foundations of the profession through registration requirements, regulations of the profession was incredibly rewarding.

### **Did you feel you were able to make a contributions?**

Absolutely – I always found the environment to be open and respectful. Idea sharing and brainstorming were always encouraged and everyone was encouraged to express themselves. One of the striking differences when I returned as a committee member after being a Council member during the formation of the College was the staff support available, which really enabled the Council and Committees to focus and realize their goals.

### **What did you learn about the College that is of value to you as an RD, if anything?**

While the College's mandate is public protection and not promotion of the profession, we are both working for the same goal – safe, ethical and competent nutritional care for all Ontarians, which benefits everyone.

### **What is your most memorable take-away from this experience?**

The high degree of teamwork, professionalism of the Committee and Council members and the staff exhibited; there were many, many tough issues to get through during my years at the College and many, many tough discussions to come to a resolution, but it was always done with honest, open respectful communication and such a sense of working together that allowed the work to be accomplished. I find that a rare thing to sustain particularly with controversial issues and turnover of members, but it was accomplished at the College.

### **What would you want to say to anyone that might be interested in being on Council or to work on committees?**

It is a very worthwhile experience that gives you a unique opportunity to contribute to the profession as a whole and

work with very committed staff and fellow Council and Committee members. The knowledge and experience gained about the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care processes, priorities, funding, and governmental `workings` cannot be found anywhere else. Whatever area of practice you are in, the experience is invaluable. Starting as an appointed committee member is a good way to `get your feet wet` in that you are exposed to the Council meetings and College processes with a smaller time commitment.

### LESIA KICAK, RD

Lesia served on Council from 2008-2014 and was President of the College from June 2010 to June 2012.

#### Why did you choose to serve on Council?

I chose to serve on Council because I wanted to take part in the governance of my profession. I wanted to have the opportunity to provide my “2 cents” on how RDs serve the public, and what they need in order to be safe and competent in the care they provide. I thought that serving on Council would allow me to both have an effect on how the public is served, but also it would help me to support the infrastructure that is needed to allow RDs to provide that service.

#### What did you gain from your experience on Council?

I gained wonderful friendships, an opportunity to chair the Council meetings, an opportunity to influence the work that was done by CDO when I was the President and when I was on Council, and an opportunity to learn in detail about how self-regulation is carried out.

#### Why do you think self-regulation is important?

I believe self-regulation is important because it allows a profession to enforce standards which they feel are important

because they know their own profession (with the view of public council members as an “extra check”).

#### Would you encourage other RDs to serve and why?

Yes I would encourage other RDs to serve for the reasons stated above. They will learn new skills, develop new relationships, and have an opportunity to influence how their profession is governed and what is needed to maintain their profession to be safe and competent.

For more information about what you can expect when you volunteer as a Councillor or a committee member at the College, consider talking to other RDs who have served or are currently serving on Council or on committees.

### COLLEGE ELECTIONS FOR COUNCILLOR

Elections of Registered Dietitians to Council take place every year in different districts. This year the elections will be in districts 5, 6, and 7. Registered Dietitians who are in good standing with the College can be nominated and can vote in these elections. The information for elections will be sent out in December 2014. If you wish to be elected as a Councillor, look for the emails.

### APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

RDs can apply for appointment to committees when the call for appointment is made by the College, usually once a year in April or May. RDs who apply for appointment must be members in good standing.

Whether they are elected Councillors or appointed committee members, RDs who serve at the College are committed to protecting the public interest.

