



Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

Strategic Plan
2016-2020

Preface: The Nature and Purpose of this Plan

The following pages present the strategic priorities of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine for the five years from 2011 through 2015, and the main tactical milestones to be achieved along the way. This plan should be understood as a list of *new challenges* to be met and *new activity* or initiatives that will be needed to meet them. It is not, and should not be read as, a list of all the most important aspects of the Academy or the most important work of its Board, Committees, and members. Many ABM activities — such as producing and publishing *Breastfeeding Medicine*, holding an annual International Conference, maintaining a useful website, offering the course “What Every Physician Needs to Know About Breastfeeding,” and simply maintaining a fiscally sound, well managed, and accountable organization — are already cornerstones of the Academy’s work. They retain the high priority that has long been assigned to them. Because this plan contemplates no fundamental change in these activities, it does not elaborate on them, but incorporates them into the overarching goal with which the plan begins, and into several of the priorities and milestones. Accordingly, this document describes the next set of accomplishments to which ABM aspires, not a departure from the many achievements it has already made and is committed to preserving.

The planning process began in July 2015 and was guided throughout by the Strategic Planning Committee. The results are based, first of all, on responses to an online survey of a broad cross-section of Academy members and leaders, whom the Committee selected to reflect a diversity of training and background, professional practice, length of membership, leadership experience in the Academy, nationality, and other demographics. Next came a companion series of one-on-one interviews, conducted in July and August. Questions for the survey and interviews were also drawn up by the Committee, based partly on a thorough review of Board and committee documents from recent years and on the Board’s annual reviews of the prior strategic plan (2011-15). A preliminary outline of the new plan, based on these sources, was presented to the full Board at its annual meeting on October 15, 2015. The contents were then expanded and refined based on the Board’s comments and suggestions. The Board approved this final version on December 17, 2015.

The document begins with the Academy’s Mission Statement and an overarching goal that describes the strategic purpose toward which the rest of the plan is intended to lead. The plan itself is then divided into two parts. The first contains four strategic priorities whose aims involve concrete deliverables, such as annual increases in the size and diversity of membership, the production and revision of protocols, and creation and improvement of communication tools, including a newsletter and the website. The second part contains three priorities that call for more general improvements in the Academy’s methods and circumstances of operation, such as deepening its global identity and strengthening its finances, governance, and management. The two parts are presented separately only because they describe different types of activity; they are equally important and are meant to be pursued with equal vigor.

Strategic Plan 2015-2020



MISSION STATEMENT

The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine is a worldwide organization of physicians dedicated to the promotion, protection, and support of breastfeeding and human lactation. Our mission is to unite members of the various medical specialties with this common purpose.

Overarching Goal, 2016–2020

To ensure that the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine is the premier global organization for education of all physicians on breastfeeding and human lactation and a trusted source of authoritative clinical and scientific information to guide professional and societal practices.

All of the priorities listed below pursue the Academy's Mission by contributing to this fundamental goal. Among many other things, the overarching goal calls for expanded marketing and public relations on behalf of ABM and its mission. It will require further effort at branding the Academy as the leading authority in its field and at elevating its voice in advocating for greater physician education, better professional and societal practice, and more supportive public policy to advance breastfeeding worldwide.



Part I: ACHIEVEMENTS 2016-2020

This section deals with goals that involve discrete, tangible accomplishments or deliverables — including things that can be measured or observed during the planning period.

Priority 1

Increase the size, diversity, and engagement of ABM membership.

Tactical Milestones:

Launch a new, more complete and versatile database of ABM members in 2016.

Inaugurate, by 2017, an annual analysis of members, including professional specialty, age, nationality, occupation (e.g., clinical practice, research, education), involvement in other relevant organizations, and other factors that would inform membership recruitment, retention, engagement, and leadership development.

- Present the analysis to the Board for comment and suggestions for improvement; then, with improvements incorporated, circulate to full membership via the website and quarterly newsletter (see Priority No. 3, later in this section).
- Use the analysis to determine whether changes are needed in the information collected via the membership application and in the member database.

Beginning in 2017, drawing on information from the database and membership analysis, establish targets for improved diversity of membership, by specific categories. These should include:

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| ▪ medical specialty | ▪ gender |
| ▪ region of the world | ▪ level of training and experience
(including medical students, interns,
and young physicians) |
| ▪ occupation (e.g., clinical practice,
clinical education, research) | |
| ▪ ethnicity | |

... with goals that begin no later than 2018.



Target a 10 percent annual increase in total membership.

Set a goal for each member of the Board to recruit at least three new members of the Academy each year.

Experiment with member surveys beginning in 2016 to gather additional information not in the database that may shed light on members' experience, needs, interests, role in the general field of breastfeeding medicine, and interest in leadership roles within ABM.

Beginning in 2017, target a 50 percent reduction in net annual non-renewals of membership, to be achieved by 2020.

Using information from the member database and surveys, determine common reasons for member attrition.

Develop responses designed to retain members who would otherwise not have renewed.

Undertake at least one new approach to member recruitment each year, and assess the results to determine if they are worth continuing.

Clarify and promote, among ABM members, articulated pathways toward greater involvement in the work of the Academy, including ways of pursuing roles on committees, in regional activities, as committee chairs, and ultimately to Board membership. Use member surveys to determine the best way to articulate and disseminate this information.

As part of this development of leadership pathways, incorporate offers of greater involvement into each major point of personal interaction with members: e.g., in the membership application process, at the annual meeting, and in the fellowship application process.

Using personal initiatives and contacts by Board members, as well as the website, listserv, quarterly newsletter (see Priority No. 3 later in this section), and other means, seek increased member involvement and leadership in Academy activities, particularly in these areas:

- education;
- regional conferences and other events;
- solicitation of new members and individual member donations;
- participation in the listserv and online networks;
- contribution of technical or professional expertise, such as legal, financial-management, IT, marketing, or communications.



Priority 2

Streamline the Production, Translation, and Maintenance of Protocols, While Preserving Quality.

Tactical Milestones:

Target, by 2017, zero loss of protocols due to expiration, and meanwhile set continued revision and maintenance of current protocols as the Protocol Committee's top priority.

Beginning no later than 2017, maintain ongoing publication of at least one new protocol per year.

To meet these targets, revise and refine the protocol production process, incorporating:

- a deliberate expansion in the number of researchers and writers;
- outreach to newer members with research and academic expertise;
- professional leadership of the process, equipped with sufficient time and resources;
- professional management support for production, whether through a research assistant, administrative assistant, or some combination of the two; and
- a simplification of the editing and approval stages of the process.

To make the process clearer for all participants, and to identify constraints and roadblocks in the production chain, develop a flow chart in 2016 showing the major steps from initiation to publication and the amount of time available at each stage.

Explore the possibility of attaching a fundraising appeal to the publication and online dissemination of protocols.

Using information from the membership analysis and surveys (see Priority No. 1 above), develop improved means of promoting and marketing the protocols to expand their use.

- Complete a system for tracking protocol use, including those accessed or downloaded from the website and requests to reprint or publicize protocols, as well as related donations.
- Identify resources for expanded data collection on protocol use.
- Develop a survey or other means to solicit information from known users of the protocols, to determine user satisfaction, interests, and concerns.



Priority 3

Develop enriched, state-of-the-art tools for internal and external communication.

Tactical Milestones:

In 2016 begin producing and promoting an online quarterly membership newsletter.

Re-design the ABM website in 2016, to be launched in 2017, to provide for greater user appeal, ease of navigation, diversity of features, and timeliness of content.

Expand the online availability and use of “What Every Physician Needs to Know About Breastfeeding.” In particular, increase opportunities for non-U.S. physicians to participate.

By 2017, in at least one member survey (see Priority No. 1 above), gather information on members’ knowledge and interest in online technology and social media. Use this information to reach out to more members with technical skills to develop and work on projects with the Communications Committee.

Incorporating these and other objectives, develop a comprehensive plan for online communications and interaction with members by 2017.



Priority 4

Pursue a means of certifying physicians as Breastfeeding Medicine specialists.

Tactical Milestones:

Clarify, for Board and members, the strategic rationale for this goal — that is, why a Board certification in breastfeeding medicine is essential for pursuing the Academy’s mission (e.g., to establish standards for medical expertise in this field, to recognize those who meet those standards, and to ensure the continuing knowledge of practitioners). Take into account the perspectives of physicians outside the United States in formulating this rationale.

In 2016, prepare an analysis of why progress has stalled, identify obstacles, and spotlight those that could reasonably be overcome by 2020.

Based on that analysis, outline for Board consideration a proposed way forward, with estimated costs and timelines.



Part II: CONDITIONS & METHODS of OPERATING

This section describes goals that underlie many (sometimes all) aspects of the Academy's work — they entail changes in circumstances or ways of functioning that may not boil down to one or two discrete accomplishments, but that instead broadly contribute to ABM's effectiveness.

Priority 1

Deepen and broaden the global identity of the Academy.

Tactical Milestones:

Explore formal means of ensuring representation of each region of the world on the ABM Board.

Host, sponsor, or partner with at least one new conference every two years outside the United States.

Hold at least one ABM Annual Conference outside the United States.

- Evaluate this Conference based on the size and nature of attendance, financial success, prestige of program, and development of new membership.
- Based on the results of the evaluation, determine an appropriate frequency for non-U.S. International Conferences thereafter.

Seek out ways of engaging physicians outside the United States in the Academy's mission, even if they are not yet prepared to become members.

Expand and deepen connections with global organizations interested in breastfeeding and in broadly related issues such as maternal and child health and nutrition.

- Cultivate relationships that can increase ABM's international profile and influence in discussions of medical practice and policy.



- Develop and maintain ABM's professional relationships with physician organizations, particularly international organizations.
- Place a priority on global relationships and partnerships that can lead to international fundraising opportunities and draw new membership and visibility to the Academy.
- Maintain ABM's ongoing relationships with selected international non-physician breastfeeding organizations, such as La Leche League International and the International Lactation Consultant Association, and strengthen its role as a core partner of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action.

Develop ways of offering greater support and guidance to regional coordinators.

Explore the use of webinars, distance learning, or other online communication to facilitate interaction with physicians and their organizations around the world.

Priority 2

Continue Building the Financial Strength of the Academy

Tactical Milestones:

Target an 8 to 10 percent increase in revenue from memberships each year, while holding steady or reducing the cost of membership and conference registration.

Present more information on income and expenses that is easy for Board and members to understand.

- Offer, in quarterly newsletter or other widely available form, periodic financial updates with answers to frequently asked questions.
- Provide budget and finance workshop for the Board at least every two years, including an explanation of expenditures, income, needs, and fundraising opportunities.
- Include in these workshops an assessment of the recent performance in fundraising, as well as any changes in roles, resources, or responsibilities that may be required to meet upcoming development objectives.

Maintain priority focus on fundraising that includes, as a portion of each grant, support for the Academy's general operating needs.



Explore ways of generating individual contributions to ABM (see, for example, Section I, Priority No. 2).

Priority 3

Ensure more effective governance and management.

Tactical Milestones:

Review and update written understandings of what is expected from Board and staff members, including:

- the duties and responsibilities of officers, Board members, and committee chairs and members;
- the roles and responsibilities of staff members, including the time and resources available to discharge their responsibilities;
- the proper division of responsibilities between Board and staff.

Conduct periodic training sessions on Board-management roles and responsibilities, including information on:

- the ABM bylaws,
- the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the Board,
- the elements of responsible and effective stewardship by Board members,
- the activities and responsibilities of ABM committees and committee chairs, and
- the division of responsibilities between Board and staff.

Develop principles and expectations for better communication between Board and staff, including expectations about priorities, roles, and response times.

Explore, among other things, the use of customer-service software or other means to measure and monitor the timeliness and quality of communication.

Promote proactive Board leadership in member recruitment, committee recruitment, and in strengthening the leadership pipeline.



Use the nominations process, as well as various communication tools, to draw further expertise into ABM leadership positions, to ensure that the most qualified, most distinguished members are nominated for Board and Committee service and that members with specific forms of expertise — including experience on other boards, financial management, IT, marketing, communications, and law — are recruited to appropriate positions of leadership.

Strike a deliberate balance between the need for expanded participation in Academy activities (including among newer and younger members) and the need for experienced and qualified candidates for leadership posts. This balance should rely on the improved pathways to involvement and leadership described in Section I, Priority No. 1, above.

Review these priorities in leadership development at least annually. The review should include the diversity of ABM's leadership by race, gender, nationality, and specialty (see Section I, Priority No. 1, and Section II, Priority No. 1).

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine



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