

AFMR President's Statement

Career development in academic medicine has become increasingly challenging, in part because there are fewer dollars to support research, along with increased demand on clinicians to see patients and generate revenue. We all are looking for that leg up – that “secret sauce” - to move us forward in our academic pursuits.

The secret sauce for my career has been the [American Federation for Medical Research](#) (AFMR). You may think I am just saying this because, as its President, I must. But I would not have achieved this position without the advice, support, and collaborations with the many wonderful members within the AFMR. They say it's all in the story, so here is mine:

Back in 2006 I was a new Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Cincinnati. Shortly after beginning my research, my mentor encouraged me to attend the 2007 Combined Annual Meeting of the Central Society for Clinical Research (now CSCTR) and the [Midwestern Section of the American Federation for Medical Research](#) (MWAFFMR). I prepared my abstract for the meeting in Chicago, thinking no more of it. My abstract was accepted and the people at the meeting seemed very interested in my career progress. I was extremely appreciative for their advice and support. Abraham Thomas, MD, then the Chair of the MWAFFMR, talked with me about my work and my goals. He suggested that I join the AFMR. I still attend the combined meeting in Chicago because it is a great way to meet other investigators in the local region, gain presenting skills, learn from successful leaders in translational and academic medicine, and network.

In 2011 the [AFMR leadership](#) asked me to participate in the [Midwestern Section Council](#) and help with meeting development. I learned about and networked with successful investigators from other universities, learned how to select and invite people to give presentations, considered content for career development symposia, and gained experience presenting awards. I began to develop an understanding of what it took to create a successful academic meeting. I ultimately became Chair of the MWAFFMR in 2015. My responsibilities involved everything I had learned previously, in addition to being the face of AFMR's Midwestern region.

As Chair of the Midwestern Section of the AFMR, I was also a member of the National Council, AFMR's executive governing body. Therefore, I had the privilege of attending bi-annual business meetings where I learned about membership, budgets, [AFMR's 4 Regional Meetings](#), awards, and the importance of journals to academic organizations, amongst other things. In addition, the Editor-in-Chief of the [Journal of Investigative Medicine](#) invited me to become part of the [Editorial Board](#). I was quite nervous with my new responsibilities, but had a lot of support from previous AFMR leaders.

As you would imagine, I was quite thrilled and surprised to be asked to run for President-Elect of AFMR's [National Council](#) for the following year. I agreed, serving as President-Elect in 2016, prior to moving into the position of President this year.

As I learned new skills and was asked to do more within the organization, I found that these elements were essential to my professional advancement back home. My academic Appointment,

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure package wanted me to show that I performed acts of service, including reviewing manuscripts for journals, meeting development, and creating a national presence. The AFMR not only gave me this platform for professional growth, the wonderful people I met along the way guided me along, taught me how, provided examples, as well as providing me with collegiality and friendship. My AFMR colleagues also listened to my research ideas, asked great questions, and suggested avenues of thought that contributed to my success. I am not an aberration – all my colleagues have grown within their careers because of the leadership roles they have successfully taken on within the AFMR, and it has been delightful to observe, and hopefully, contribute in some way.

The AFMR mission statement, to “develop and mentor tomorrow’s leaders in medical research”, is more than just words, and I am proof. [Join AFMR](#) in your professional journey – we are here to help you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Florence Rothenberg, MS, MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Florence Rothenberg, MS, MD
AFMR President