

In this section you will find information on:

- Communication Vehicles
- Faculty Advisor and Regional Student Email Lists
- Regional Conference Calls
- Regional Calendars
- Social Media

Communicating

Communicating with students is key to having a successful FMIG. One FMIG saw its membership grow just by advertising events two weeks in advance and having its events at the same place and same time each month. Another FMIG sent text messages to members to remind them about upcoming meetings and events. FMIG websites and Facebook groups are also becoming an ever more popular way to keep students updated with FMIG information.

Here are a couple of ideas for communicating:

- If your school's email system allows class-wide or school-wide emails, use those to promote your programming and meetings.
- Use school bulletin boards for posters and postcards. You can request free postcards and posters from the AAFP—email Ashley Bentley at abentley@aafp.org for more information.
- Set up a website, blog, Facebook group or other online medium to communicate with members and potential members — many platforms are free.
- Advertise your meetings and events in student newsletters. Some schools have regular email newsletters that are sent to all students.

AAFP/FMIG Email Lists

In addition to communicating with students through conferences, mailings and handouts, the AAFP also has five regional email lists specifically for FMIG members and student leaders, as well as an FMIG Faculty Advisor email list for Faculty Advisors and other campus staff who work with FMIGs.

Information About the FMIG Faculty Advisor Email List (Listserv)

The AAFP has established an FMIG Faculty Advisors email list for the purpose of allowing faculty and staff to share best practices and information with others in the hopes of developing a community of shared ideas and networking.

Interested advisors, faculty and administrative staff may subscribe to collect best practices and garner insight from the listserv postings of other FMIGs and share about your FMIG leadership, faculty advisor and membership.

To sign up, simply email Ashley Bentley at abentley@aafp.org about joining the Listserv. You will receive a confirmation email once you have been added to the list.

Guidelines

Some important points to remember:

- Always check the “to” field to make sure you’re sending the message to the right email list or individual.
- Don’t use all caps.
- Make sure your message is appropriate for the audience. Does the message apply to all faculty advisors or students in a region?

What you might post:

Looking for programming ideas, such as a procedures workshop
Seeking regional residency fairs
sponsored by FMIGs
Pitfalls, best practices, great resources
Reminders about AAFP or regional conferences, events, etc.

What NOT to post:

Invitations from Residency Programs (i.e. for recruitment purposes)
Non-AAFP marketing solicitations or products
Dating advice
Things you’d normally put on craigslist
Junk forwards or spam

Writing to a List:

- To the FMIG Faculty Advisor email list: fmigfacadvisors@lyris.aafp.org
- To an FMIG regional email list: region#@lyris.aafp.org

***If you have questions or experience technical difficulties, e-mail abentley@aafp.org.*

Information About Regional Listservs

The FMIG Network has established a region-based listserv for the purpose of allowing FMIGs to share best practices with others in the region and helping FMIG leaders connect with other leaders.

Interested students may subscribe to collect best practices and garner insight from the listserv postings of other FMIGs and share about your FMIG leadership, faculty advisor and membership.

To sign up, simply go to <http://lyris.aafp.org/subscribe/fmig>. Select your region, enter the requested information and click "Subscribe."

Students and faculty in your region also have the option to "self-subscribe" to the Listservs using this option. It is much easier than having them send you their contact information.

Region 1 – AR, AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, LA, MT, NM, NV, OK, OR, TX, UT, WA, WY
facilitated by Catherine Louw, MS2, University of Washington

Region 2 – IA, IL, IN, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD, WI
facilitated by Lauren Kendall, M3, University of Illinois at Chicago

Region 3 – DC, MD, MI, OH, PA, Uniformed Services, VA, WV
facilitated by Diana Tucci, MS3, University of Pittsburgh

Region 4 – AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN
facilitated by Tate Hinkle, MS2, University of Alabama

Region 5 – CT, DE, Guam, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PR, RI, VT, VI
facilitated by Nikki Henry, MS3, Duke University

Regional Coordinators and National Coordinator

Your regional coordinator is a great resource for students and even for you, and can provide information about the AAFP and FMIG Network. Don't hesitate to contact any regional coordinator about programming ideas, FMIG events or other questions you may have about your FMIG. Contact information is included in the Contacts and Resources section at the back of this handbook.

Regional Conference Calls

Each fall and each spring the FMIG Network Regional Coordinators host a conference call for FMIG leaders from their respective regions. The one-hour calls provide the opportunity for FMIG leaders to connect with each other and share ideas, pose questions to the group and have access to AAFP representation to answer questions about resources and opportunities. As the calls are scheduled, notices will be posted on Virtual FMIG and disseminated through the regional and faculty advisor email lists.

Regional Calendars

You can share your FMIG's events as well as see events happening in your region on the FMIG regional activity calendars at fmignet.aafp.org/calendar. The calendars provide a functional resource for students from areas where medical schools are densely populated because they can see what's happening around them and attend and event at another school or maybe that's happening in their state or region. The calendars also provide a source of information and inspiration when developing your own FMIG events, as you can see what other groups around the country are trying at their schools. Contact your FMIG Network Regional Coordinator (fmignet.aafp.org/connect) to add events to the calendars.

Communicating with other FMIGs

The AAFP can provide you contact information for FMIG student leaders and faculty advisors at many medical schools. If you'd like to collaborate with another FMIG, contact AAFP student interest staff or your regional coordinator. If you'd like to plan a regional event, the FMIG regional email lists or Faculty Advisor lists are a great way to communicate your event and find other interested FMIGs.

Social Media

Social media is becoming an ever more popular way for people to communicate, and as so can be an important way for your FMIG to reach your members or potential members. As of January 2012, more than 20 FMIGs used a Facebook page to promote their activities, connect with students and increase awareness of their groups. The Facebook fan page platform can be used to house meeting schedules and manage RSVPs, post photos, share links to FMIG-related content and more.

Twitter has also seen an increasing number of FMIG groups as members, using the platform to “tweet” about current events involving medical school, family medicine or primary care.

Whether and how to engage in social media for FMIG use should be determined after considering your school’s policy on social media use, as well as determining whether you have the leadership structure and time commitment from you and your student leaders to keep it up. In general, an outdated social media presence is worse than no social media presence at all.

Further, many schools have policies on social media use and may regulate the social media presence of its campus groups.

If you decide to use social media, it should be a collaborative process with the Faculty Advisor and the student leaders. At one FMIG, to keep its Facebook and Twitter presences new and fresh, delegated topic areas of interest to its student leaders and asked those leaders to post on their topics a certain number of times per month. This gave the students a sense of responsibility, but gave them a manageable task.

It is also recommended that you address professionalism with student leaders engaging in social media on behalf of the FMIG and set expectations for the way they carry themselves online both personally and professionally, as the lines are ever blurred in this digital environment.

FMIG Network on Social Media

The National FMIG Network has a Facebook page that can be used to communicate with others interested in family medicine and the FMIG Network. This page is open to anyone to “like.” The AAFP and AAFP’s National Conference for Family Medicine Residents and Students are also on Facebook.

You can also follow the National FMIG Network on Twitter @AAFP_FMIG. The FMIG Network Regional Coordinators tweet from @fammedstudents.

During the 2010-11 academic year, the FMIG Network also started using short videos published on YouTube called “State of the FMIG” to distribute information about family medicine in the news, FMIG updates, opportunities, deadlines and more to students across the country. These updates are timed around the need to spread information, and a new video is posted about every other month. Find these on YouTube at youtube.com/fammedstudents.

Some AAFP state chapters are also asking student leaders in their state to participate in social media on behalf of the chapter. The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians, for example, hosts a Twitter account specifically for its student leaders @PAFPStudents and charges its appointed student leaders to “tweet” from the account.