



**WCCS**

World Congress of Chiropractic Students

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# Preparing for the worst, hoping for the best and bracing for impact:

A narrative on parallels between chiropractic education and the WCCS pandemic response.

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## Introduction

**T**he World Congress of Chiropractic Students (WCCS) is a student and youth led organisation. It consists of around 30 chapters based within chiropractic education institutions all around the world. For the past year, I have served the organisation as Director of Secretariat. Prior to being elected to this role, I was involved in the organisation as Legislative Secretary and as the president of my own school's WCCS chapter. My progression through the organisation would not have been possible without the support of my fellow WCCS members, including the current and previous team of officials. Currently, I am nearing the end of my term as Secretary and am about to start my final year of chiropractic education at London South Bank University. As I have progressed both as a chiropractic student and as a WCCS director I have found myself reflecting on my experiences and in doing so have recognised the value of the many transferrable skills each role has helped me to develop.



Over the past year as an organisation, we have found ourselves on edge, bracing for the continued unknowns of the pandemic. During these challenging times, our members have each had their own peaks of heightened disruption. The way in which these disruptions to daily life, education and wellbeing were offset resulted in the organisation being massively impacted throughout the year. Yet, I applaud the resilience of our members who have shown an endured commitment to their education and provision of quality care in the face of adversity.

Whilst it was not without its challenges, my time as secretary for the WCCS has been an incredible experience. The support and direction the organisation has provided me with has helped shape me and will continue to shape my practice in future. Despite the sadness associated with having to host our AGM online once again, this has provided an incredible opportunity for

growth and expansion of the organisation, and we've learned plenty from each of our online events - learnings that will continue to advance the organisation.

To draw a parallel between my experiences this year as part of the team leading an organisation through a pandemic and as a chiropractic student; in both roles I've put into practice the idea that one must prepare for the worst, whilst hoping and working to achieve the best.

Throughout my chiropractic education thus far, much emphasis has been placed on '*worst case scenarios*' and rightly so. As chiropractors we must protect our patients' health, and so knowing the signs and symptoms of potentially life-threatening conditions - commonly termed 'red flags' - is paramount. Yet, as I have become increasingly more familiar with the day-to-day practice of many chiropractors, it seems that these are unlikely scenarios. In fact, statistically we know that the presentation of many life-threatening conditions in a chiropractic clinic is very rare when contrasted with the most common musculoskeletal presentations.

Within the Board of Directors, our '*worst case scenarios*' have been the possibility of cancelling events and a sharp decline in member engagement. At the start of my term, I was optimistic that we would be able to return to business as usual and host events in person. Of course, at that time the future was still uncertain and although all WCCS events for this term have been online, through the commitment of our event conveners and the board, we have fortunately been able to proceed with most of our events and avoid cancellations. This perseverance and preparation began long before we were able to make the decisions as to if we would be able to host events in person. The convening teams remained vigilant, preparing for alternatives and their hard work has paid off.

Much as a student must transition their practice to accommodate the most common conditions whilst not forgetting their essential education with regards to red flags; I hope that our organisation can progress towards being able to focus on a return to normal business, whilst not forgetting the lessons learned through the pandemic. This results in a 'new normal', one where we've learned the value of technology not only for its convenience, but for its accessibility - especially considering the global nature of WCCS. Furthermore, member engagement during these times has been challenging and through this experience the board has increased its awareness of what is most important to members and how this can most easily be provided. As always, the safety and satisfaction of our members remains a top priority.

Whilst an arguably trivial narrative considering the great burdens faced by many during these times, drawing from reflection has been a powerful learning experience for me. To further the President's message, I too see such great potential in the WCCS and its members. The opportunities provided by the WCCS continue to expand the horizons for chiropractic students and those early in their careers. I look forward with anticipation for what lies ahead.

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