



# White Coat, Warm Heart: *Integrating Science and Humanism*

May 1-5, 2010

St. John's, Newfoundland

# Welcome



The College of  
Family Physicians  
of Canada

Le Collège des  
médecins de famille  
du Canada

Medical Council  
of Canada



Le Conseil médical  
du Canada



**COLLÈGE ROYAL**  
DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA  
**ROYAL COLLEGE**  
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA



# Engaging with the Hidden Curriculum in Your Medical School

Carol P. Herbert

Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Canadian Conference on Medical Education

May 4, 2010

*I have no affiliations,  
sponsorships, honoraria, monetary  
support or conflict of interest from  
any commercial source.*

## Responding to the 10 elements of hidden curriculum reported in 2010

- Need to know if each exists in your setting
- If true, need to take action to change
- If false, need to communicate facts
- Some things cannot be changed, even though they are true but can be discussed

# How can you find the hidden curriculum in your school?

- A) Surveys
- B) Focus Groups
- C) Key informants
- D) Paid snitches



## Other ubiquitous issues

- Devaluing of certain specialties, eg., may be told that Family Medicine is for those who cannot do anything else

T or F in your school?

# Devaluing Family Medicine

- What we did at Western
  - students identified the issue
  - Task Force on FM in UGME
  - FMIG
  - more FP teachers
  - changed cases (“FP screws up”)
  - department centrally positioned

## Other ubiquitous issues

- Students in community-based sites may hear ‘forget what you learned in the ivory tower, this is what really happens’

T or F in your school?

# What can you do?

- Set expectations: what's ok and what's not
- Establish formal codes of conduct and disseminate widely and repeatedly
- Ask residents and students regularly about the hidden curriculum
- Include issues in faculty development programs

## What can you do?

- Explicitly identify to residents impact of messages they are sending
- Ensure that academic/decanal leaders know and counter hidden curriculum
- Include professionalism in formal curriculum

## Perverse Consequences of Surfacing the Hidden Curriculum

- There will always be hidden curriculum
- Raising an issue may lead to denial
- Including hidden or informal curriculum in the formal curriculum may backfire, e.g., changing electives to requirements in rural practice or global health electives may lead to devaluing of the experience