

My First AMA Experience

Having no hesitation to willfully put yourself in potentially embarrassing situations definitely has its pros and cons! Our first welcoming meeting to the AMA conference was with the Resident and Fellow Section leaders and all those who were first time attendees. They shared with us to not worry if we have a hard time following some of the procedural jargon and feel free to participate and ask questions.

After their comforting welcome and mock resolution deliberation the night before we followed their advice by registering ourselves the next morning so that we could participate in the section's voting on resolutions. Personally, I was not even a member of the AMA up to this point and was to be directed later in the day to become a member of the AMA. In the meantime, I went forward with the morning's first meetings and understood I was essentially considered as a pending member.

The mornings meetings began and eventually candidates for next year's chair positions were introduced. I learned we would later vote for the positions with contending candidates. Eventually, they arrived at a section to vote for a Member-at-Large... I began to panic, knowing that I must be this Member at Large given I'm really not even a member at this time and it would make sense for the body to vote and agree if I should be allowed to participate given my current member status. Therefore, I rose my hand to be a Member-at-Large and shared by desire to become such.

It was only afterwards that an ambassador approached me, Dr. Anna Yap, who I learned that it is her job to help people like me. After a period of both of us realizing we were not understanding one another we eventually discerned that I did not realize that the Member at Large is a leadership position that performs many duties involved in helping the membership of the body grow. Realizing this, I shared that I just really wanted to participate this week in the meetings as a regular member if possible and was not yet interested in becoming a leader in the Resident and Fellow Section within the first 30 minutes of attending my first ever AMA meeting. Luckily, I believe Anna and the speaker made eye contact and non-verbally communicated what had happened and ensured that I was able to participate this week as I had hoped!

Throwing myself with enthusiasm and wanting to participate in this first AMA conference I believe helped me come with a mindset ready to learn. It was very interesting to see how influential the AMA is and how the AMA determines what issues and policies will be pushed over the coming years.

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