



**WCCS**

World Congress of Chiropractic Students

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@wccschiro

# Turn up, be present, and give: Leadership in the making

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**Narrative abstract:** The World Congress of Chiropractic Students is the global representative body of chiropractic students and recent graduates. Participation is through a local chapter based in a chiropractic educational institution.

All students in all colleges are invited to join this dynamic and growing body which presently has 20 chapters around the world.

The three key elements for successful participation are the same as those for establishing a successful practice: turn up, be present, and give.

**Indexing terms:** Chiropractic; World Congress of Chiropractic Students, WCCS, Leadership.

## Exposition

**A**t the heart of the *World Congress of Chiropractic Students* (WCCS) is its passion and desire to unite the profession in its diversity and to increase the health and well-being of our local communities. It is a student led organisation, comprising over 20 Chapters from around the world, including new member Chapters in the process of joining this year. Each Chapter consists of student and graduate members from a different chiropractic college or university from around the world. The WCCS provides an apolitical platform to develop leadership skills and provide a safe place to gain insight into the wide range of values and opinions of the profession worldwide.

But how can and perhaps why should students experience this?

## Turn up

When I started on my journey to becoming a chiropractor I was working for a wildlife charity in the UK and later in local government; two vastly different

... The WCCS is the long established global representative body of the world's chiropractic students. All students are warmly invited to reach out and participate ...'



vocations to where I am now. During those years I saw the amazing health benefits people realised from receiving chiropractic care and getting checked. This inspired me to enrol with the McTimoney College of Chiropractic back in 2017 to start on their 5-year Full Time Extended MChiro programme in 2018. It was in that first year I heard about the WCCS and wanted to know more. With the McTimoney Chapter hosting the European Regional Event that same year, it was the perfect opportunity to get involved and experience what the WCCS was about. And so, I turned up to a WCCS Chapter meeting to express my interest and everything followed on from that first step.

The active membership of our Chapter grew over those initial two years and then shrank when the Covid-19 pandemic hit. There were times when the pressures of life and studies were immense and attending the WCCS events in person and then online were sometimes a challenge. However, engaging with fellow chiropractic students from other chapters and hearing and engaging with inspiring speakers were just what was needed during those difficult times, to then be able to keep moving forward.

Although turning up is the first and most important thing to do, being present in the occasion is equally as important.

### Be present

Being part of the WCCS allows students to develop and grow their existing skills and provides opportunities to acquire new ones, not just in leadership but also in respect and care for others. Going to the WCCS Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and local Regional Events not only expands our understanding of the profession at the global and regional scale, but it also helps us to understand our strengths and lays bare our weaknesses. Being present (beyond just turning up) is not about being the same as everyone else, it is not about trying to become an extrovert if one is an introvert or being outgoing if quiet. It is instead about stepping out from our comfort zone (whichever zone that is), embracing the challenge and exploring where that takes us. Engaging with others from where we are at is all that is needed to start that experience and journey.

After all, the patients we see in clinic and practice will not all be the same, and being able to meet them where they are at is a vital communication skill to learn.

Turning up and being present will invariably and naturally lead us into the far-reaching act of giving.

### Give

As chiropractors, and as chiropractic students we have something unique to offer to the world on so many levels. First, we provide (and will provide) chiropractic care for the health and well-being of our local communities. Then there is the generosity of chiropractors, the professional associations and other chiropractic organisations, and perhaps most importantly, the universities and colleges who provide the foundational education and training. Every one of these gives to the profession whether it be financially or of their time or indeed both.

Equally every WCCS student member can also give to the profession through their involvement in their Chapters and at the annual and regional events. Putting oneself forward to be on a committee or leadership team, being part of a supporting team at events, supporting others to enable them to be present at events, even taking a step back to allow others to step up are all forms of giving, and it is something we all do on a regular basis.

It was said in our first year of the McTimoney program that many challenges and experiences will happen over the coming five years. We would see marriages, divorce, births, and death as well as high levels of stress that will rock the very foundations we stand on, among our family and friends. Some would see and experience these personally.

This was all very true. But by coming together and supporting each other in those times, as well as being part of the WCCS and the global chiropractic family is what made it possible to get through the challenges, to grow and mature into the chiropractors and people we now are. Although it may not always be obvious at the time, every level of support is a form of giving, whether that is of time, in friendship, or financially.

We can simply never know how much of our turning up, being present and selflessly giving will both inspire and encourage others both now and, in the future, to do the same.

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## Note

All contributions from the WCCS are gathered at [apcj.net/WCCS](https://apcj.net/WCCS)