



Building bonds, strengthening leadership: The CUA corporate office retreat

In the summer of 2016, then incoming CUA president, Dr. Curtis Nickel, had a notion that new board members and corporate office staff should come together at the beginning of a new presidency to get to know each other better and efficiently plan for the year ahead. The intent was to create a cohesive unit that would foster more open lines of communication and improve collaboration. Reflecting on that inaugural event, Dr. Nickel shared, “CUA presidents come and go on an annual basis, but the staff at our corporate office are the real backbone of our organization, so I organized an unofficial corporate office retreat at my cottage. While I believed it was imperative to get to know the people who would help me have a successful presidency, it was just as important to the corporate office staff that they get to know me, not just as the incoming president, but as a person.”

The tradition became cemented that summer in Kingston, and every president since has hosted a corporate office retreat. While the term ‘retreat’ might evoke images of quiet reflection and leisure in spas and yoga studios, this annual event has evolved into a highly focused and productive strategy session. It brings together officers of the board, committee chairs, and corporate office staff to review strategic objectives, discuss priorities, and map out actionable plans for the upcoming year. With the exception of the very first event in Kingston and last year’s in Halifax, every retreat has been held in Montreal, home of the CUA corporate office.

The agenda each year reflects the president’s vision while aligning with the organization’s five-year strategic plan. This year’s discussions included an overview of the CUA advocacy efforts, reports from the Community Urology Committee and the EDIA Committee, as well as insights from the Office of Education on new initiatives to support members’ professional development and preparations from the 2026 Scientific Program Planning Committee for next year’s annual meeting in Saskatoon. In addition, each committee chair was invited to share their priorities, requests, and “wish lists,” ensuring the CUA remains responsive to the evolving needs of its members.

Beyond the formal agenda, these retreats have always emphasized something equally important: building trust, relationships, and a sense of camaraderie among the people who make the CUA thrive. Team-building activities, ranging from informal dinners to this year’s scavenger hunt through the streets of Montreal, have become a hallmark of the experience. These moments of connection create a shared sense of purpose that extends well beyond the retreat itself.

The CUA’s ability to advance urologic care, education, and advocacy across Canada is rooted in the cohesion of its leadership. Nearly a decade after launching the first retreat, I believe the importance of interpersonal connections between the people running an organization such as ours cannot be overstated. I am confident that investing in these connections not only enhances our organizational success but also fosters lifelong friendships and a vibrant professional community.

Wassim Kassouf
CUA President

Cite as: Kassouf W.
Building bonds,
strengthening leader-
ship: The CUA
corporate office retreat.
Can Urol Assoc J
2025;19(10):299. [http://
dx.doi.org/10.5489/
cuaj.9450](http://dx.doi.org/10.5489/cuaj.9450)

Pour la version
française, voir cuaj.ca

The CUA exists to
promote the highest
standard of urologic
care for Canadians and
to advance the art and
science of urology.