

President's Message: Be Heard, Be Fearless

Save to myBoK

By Valerie Watzlaf, PhD, MPH, RHIA, FAHIMA

As AHIMA transitions into our strategy reset, it is more important than ever to keep our passion for the HIM profession strong, as well as align our passions with what is best for our profession and association. So, how do we find our voice in HIM?

Forming Relationships

Sometimes we find our voice by **forming relationships** with others to create a collective network. Let's think of what we, as HIM professionals and members of AHIMA, can achieve together. Let each of our voices be heard, positively supporting our HIM profession. Be fearless. Raise your voice often, so that together we can make AHIMA and our HIM profession the best it can be.

Undertaking Research

Sometimes we find our voice through **research**. It is so important for all of us to embrace research, both as learners and as conductors, in areas such as coding productivity and quality, computer-assisted coding, information integrity, leadership roles, privacy and security, and more. Research provides the knowledge to form the foundation of our profession.

Community Service

Community service is another route to discovering your passion and cultivating your voice. One of our community service projects at the University of Pittsburgh includes working closely with the Focus Pittsburgh Free Health Center and with our HIM students to create new technologies, such as a mobile app called imHealthy that collects wellness assessment data from the community and a web portal that displays the wellness data results in a user-friendly format for physicians and patients to use. As different interventions are used to treat the patients, the system learns through algorithms built by our students and faculty which interventions are best and provides that information to the healthcare providers so that they can adjust their treatments. Performing community service like this can help new graduates find jobs. One of our former students on this project and a recent graduate of our master's program said that during the interview process prospective employers were impressed with his work on the project. He now works for IBM.

Helping Others Find Their Voice

We may also find our voice and passion by **helping others find theirs**. One of our HIM students came to me when he was just about ready to graduate and told me that the letter we sent to him about the HIM profession, when he was undecided about his major, changed his life. He said he had no idea what he wanted to major in and was contemplating leaving college. After he received our letter, his whole life changed, and he is working in the HIM field as a systems analyst and truly enjoys what he does. So, continue to reach out, pay it forward, and tell others about our profession. Guide others, because it may change a life and give someone the voice they need to be successful. Remember: *Be heard and be fearless*.

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