

Professor O. James Garden
James IV Association of Surgeons

May 4th, 2011.

James IV Traveling Fellowship, September 19 -October 31, 2010.

Dear Professor Garden

I sincerely thank you and the association for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a Traveling Fellow. I proudly waved the flag of the Association, and of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Monash University and the Alfred Hospital over 6 weeks in North America that has had, and will have, enormous impact on my collaborative research programs, clinical leadership abilities, and relationships with like-minded colleagues, and in implementing new activities in Australia. For all of these things, and for the privilege of association with the James IV Association itself, my family and I are truly grateful.

Below is a summary of the fellowship program that I undertook.

Stop 1: Boston (Host Dr Michael Zinner, Brigham & Women's Hospital),

Having studied there before, Boston is one of my favourite cities, and always provides something new. Dr Zinner and his team at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Centre for Surgery and Public Health welcomed me and hosted a day of meetings, seminars and touring hospital and research facilities, and one of the most enjoyable dinners ever with faculty at The Prudential tower.

I then had the opportunity to visit colleagues at Harvard School of Public Health, and attend the American Association of Surgery in Trauma meeting at which I was inducted as a member. I particularly spent time with the ACS COT members involved in the National Trauma Data Bank, in particular Avery Nathens who is helping to guide our development of an Australian National Trauma Registry and national quality improvement program.

To cap off a brilliant few days, Dr Zinner provided me tickets to seats next to the dug out at Fenway Park to see the Red Sox, and then, in curious twist in a Back Bay sports bar filled with Australians, the Australian Football League Grand Final that ended in a tie (a rare occurrence, requiring a replay of the game the following week).

Stop 2: College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka

It's not a short trip, but I had a previously arranged WHO engagement teaching on the first Trauma Quality Improvement Course in Sri Lanka. I joined my colleagues from WHO and various countries: Charles Mock, Manjul Joshipura, Ranjith Ellawala and Witaya Chadbunchachai for an intense 3 days of training, and then visited Galle in southern Sri Lanka where my own hospital, The Alfred, and our Victorian state Government have been helping rebuild a trauma centre after the previous hospital was damaged by the Tsunami.



TheAlfred

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Stop 3: Washington DC

I attended the American College of Surgeons' Clinical Congress – as always a veritable feast of news and reviews. Of particular interest was my first exposure to the 3-dimensional laparoscopic gear which is set to revolutionise laparoscopy.

Stop 4: Foothills Medical Center, Calgary, Alberta, Canada (Host: Dr John Kortbeek, Dr Andy Kirkpatrick)

Colleagues at Foothills had invited me to be their international guest for their Snyder Critical Care Research Day. I had a terrific two days, both at their meeting, and in their incredible centre, and with their residents in informal discussion and tuition. John Kortbeek, Andy Kirkpatrick, and Tom Stelfox were wonderful hosts, and Tom and I used the opportunity to plan some joint projects in trauma quality improvement.

Stop 5: New Hampshire (Host Dr William Johnson)

My old friend, urologist Bill Johnson and his wife Reiko and their 2 girls hosted a weekend retreat for us at their house in New Hampshire. The leaves were nearing their prime fall colours, and New Hampshire was at its magnificent best.

Stop 6: Maine (Host, Dr David Clark, Maine Medical Center)

My colleague, trauma Surgeon and injury researcher, David Clark, and his wife Sue have also been long-term friends since my 2002 Boston fellowship. We enjoyed a few days of catching up, discussing various projects, and sailing on Lake Sabago at the end of the summer before the lake would freeze over for another winter.

Stop 7: Denver & Keystone, Colorado, for the Cochrane Colloquium and a Neurotrauma Knowledge Translation Workshop

My senior research fellows from Australia joined me and we hosted a high-level 2-day workshop to scope out knowledge translation projects in traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury. Attendees came from the Brain Trauma Foundation, The Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, CDC, The Rick Hansen Foundation, and various neurotrauma research groups. I then joined the annual Colloquium of the Cochrane Collaboration, of which I am a review group editor.

Stop 8: Las Vegas (Host Dr John Fildes, Las Vegas Medical Center)

John Fildes, one of the founders of the US National Trauma Data Bank, and chairman at LVMC, hosted me in their incredible trauma centre, where there is almost an entire hospital, with ER, ORs, and ICUs colocated in a building devoted to trauma that is separate to the main hospital. Clearly they were ready for the President's visit to LV the very next day.

Stop 9: Zion National Park and Bryce Canyon National Park.

Ever since my motor-cycling days, I have always wanted to go to Zion and Bryce Canyon. They are a truly amazing alternative to the Grand Canyon. My family and I enjoyed 5 thrilling days in both National Parks, exploring, climbing, cycling and photographing in what must be some of the earth's most unique and spectacular places.

Stop 10: Seattle (Host Dr Ronald Maier, Harborview Medical Center)

We finished off the trip with 3 days at Harborview, where I did my trauma and surgical critical care fellowship in 2005-6. We rekindled old friendships with many of the attendings at HMC and the University of Washington, caught up on activities and progress, and developed some new collaborative activities. I was able to observe the once in 5 years Trauma Verification process, which was invaluable for planning how we will do such activities in Australia. My family used the opportunity to share good times with our old friends, including Halloween parties galore!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russell Gruen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Russell Gruen.