

Application for the EC position of Elected President

April 30th, 2021

Dear SESAM members,

My name is Carla Sá-Couto, and through this letter, I am formally applying to SESAM Executive Committee position of Elected President.

I have been passionate about simulation-based training, since my first contact with it in 2000. In the following year, I have participated in my first SESAM conference, in Stirling, Scotland. In that idyllic setting, fostered by well-known simulation enthusiasts (some of them wearing a kilt), I have decided that biomedical simulation was the path I would follow. In my early career, I was privileged to be integrated in a rich research environment aiming the development of simulation technology and simulation-based educational programs. In 2003, our team inaugurated the first simulation center in Portugal. In 2010, I shift my interest from technology to education, and started a full-time position as coordinator of the Porto Biomedical Simulation Center. Nowadays, I feel fortunate to have become a clinical simulation educator and researcher, being currently the director of the oldest and largest simulation center in Portugal, serving over than a thousand students and healthcare professionals per year, at all levels of education and various specialities. This includes faculty development, and to fully disclosure my activities, I am the Portuguese representative of EUSIM group and coordinator of the Portuguese EUSIM simulation instructor course.



As a long-term SESAM member, I feel honoured to be part of this growing and inclusive community and motivated to retribute to its sustained growth with my knowledge, skills and experience. Throughout the years, my support to SESAM was expressed in various ways. While the society had a non-professionalized management, I volunteered to manage the website (2003-08). In SESAM 2006 (Porto) and SESAM 2016 (Lisbon) congresses, I was a member of the local organizing committee. In 2015, I integrated SESAM Scientific Committee and, in 2017, I was appointed chair, being responsible for re-structuring the committee, establish standards for abstract reviewing process, and develop and overseeing the scientific programs of the annual congresses, including the latest, our first virtual meeting.

Serving as a Chair of the Scientific Committee in the past 4 years, gave me the opportunity to work closely with several SESAM Executive Committees and deepened my understanding of SESAM's structure, processes and operations. SESAM leadership has been working hard to achieve organizational maturation. A strategic plan was developed and partially implemented. I am committed to take SESAM to the next level: the organizational level expected for a society with 26 years.

My vision for SESAM is an interdisciplinary network of simulation professionals, with training, research and learning opportunities, fostered by our diverse and innovative community.

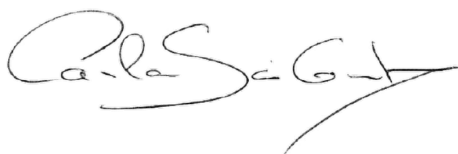
I believe I can bring a fresh and dynamic view to SESAM EC, strengthening the existent initiatives and nurture new ones, with the close involvement of SESAM members. As elected president, and with close collaboration and support of all EC members, I am determined to:

- Revisit the strategic plan and society by-laws, updating them to the current needs of a modern scientific society; to guarantee transparency throughout the process, public consultations would be included;
- Decentralization of SESAM's governance, by fostering opportunities for members' involvement in the society's work;
- Use the pandemic's drive to reinforce the digital transformation of our society, by building opportunities to distance learning and communication to support more inclusive activities and initiatives; This includes the development of a central hub for network initiatives, allowing members to announce job opportunities, research projects, visiting centres, among others;
- Expand our society to attract and engage other healthcare simulation professions, reinforcing our diverse and inclusive community;
- Meet the needs of junior/novice members through the creation of a mentoring program; this will provide an integrative network where they can feel supported, allowing them to grow and to become future mentors;
- Develop a sustainable funding strategy to promote incentives to simulation-based research supporting and promoting the research activities within the society and for the global simulation community.
- In a broader spectrum, promote SESAM visibility as a relevant player in the quality of care and patient safety arena. Allied with other societies, targeted campaigns would be developed, reaching relevant stakeholders, community leaders and decision-makers;

Having a biomedical engineering background, allied with my experience in medical education and simulation based-training, provides me an integrated and inclusive vision. My professional stability and the support of my institutional leaders, allied with the encouragement of my family, sets the perfect conditions to assure my full commitment and availability to serve your needs.

If my words find echo in your vision for SESAM consider supporting my application for the position of Elected President.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carla S. G. T.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

My background

I am a clinical simulation educator and researcher with a background in Biomedical Engineering. I am currently the Director of the first simulation center created in Portugal, the Biomedical Simulation Center of the Faculty of Medicine of Porto (CSB-FMUP), and have contributed to its development and opening in 2003. In my early professional years, I applied my skills to the development of simulation technology, being one of the co-inventors of a commercially available obstetric simulator. I have always been involved in simulation-based research, being currently a senior researcher at the Center for Health Technology and Services Research (CINTESIS). Since 2010, I have been coordinating the integration of simulation in medical curriculum in my institution, being responsible for several simulation-based pre- and post-graduation courses. I am also the Portuguese representative of the EUSIM Group and coordinator of the Portuguese EUSIM simulation instructor course.

Being a simulation advocate, I contributed to the conception and development of SPSim - Portuguese Society for Simulation Applied to Health Sciences, being one of the founding members and former executive secretary (2011-17). I am actively involved in strengthening national and international cooperation between centers. With the support of my institution, I have lead simulation-based projects with the Portuguese Armed Forces, Portuguese Speaking Countries (Brasil, Angola, Cabo Verde), and I am involved in several ongoing projects with international partners.

My current research interests are the development of methodologies and educational tools for biomedical simulation, faculty development strategies, and explore the impact of non-technical skills training on healthcare provider's attitudes/behaviours.

On top of my professional hats, comes the most important ones: I am a daughter, a wife, and a mother of two adorable adolescent girls. My family is my pillar and my guidance.