

June 30, 2021

Lunan Zhao, Director of Global Health

Hi fellow learners,

I understand the role of the director as being facilitator of discussions; to listen, to learn and to unlearn, before taking action. My priority this year will thus be to widely consult our national community, in order to learn about all of your stories, particularly the stories of Indigenous students, Black students and students from equity-seeking groups. Within medicine and within our organization, the stories, work, and calls for change from Indigenous student leaders have been ignored, undervalued and excluded.

I therefore recognize our shared responsibility to change the structures that welcome these stories, as outlined in the [Calls to Action](#), and as called for by medical students across these lands. My dream is for us to rally as a national community of medical learners, and critically rethink and reimagine the narratives of global health through an anti-colonial framework.

As the storyteller Ben Okri writes “we live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted - knowingly or unknowingly - in ourselves.”

In reflecting on the stories surrounding global health and on examining our role within them, each of us may ask: “what are the global narratives of these lands that settlers know as Canada?” What stories do we live in?, which ones do we discuss?, and which ones do we silence? As a recent [literary research study](#) articulates: “an examination of press content in Canada since the sale of Rupert’s land in 1869 through to 2009 illustrates that, with respect to Aboriginal people, the colonial imaginary has thrived, even dominated, and continues to do so in mainstream English-language newspapers (3).” I understand equity as creating spaces for previously silenced and uncomfortable narratives to be discussed, and in working to restructure the spaces that hold stories with transparency and accountability. Our portfolio will center discussions on the following:

- [Canada’s genocide against Indigenous communities](#), [medical colonialism](#), and [ongoing colonization of unceded lands](#)
- Canada’s [legacy of slavery](#) and ongoing perpetuation of health inequities among Black communities
- Canada’s reality of anti-immigration practices and current racial divides in our healthcare structures
- Additional topics and discussions that are brought forward by students

The stories I have heard inform me that more inclusive social changes do not occur top-down, nor are they solely shaped by individuals in hierarchical positions. I believe a more equitable and inclusive medical culture shift advances one (often uncomfortable) discussion at a time within our communities. Lasting, meaningful change is often driven from grassroots efforts. **Thus, my intention is to shift away from the current application-based selection of student leaders (Nominations Committee) and**

towards a non-hierarchical, project-driven space that would represent a safe and accountable community for student collaboration.

[The draft proposal for the Global Health Portfolio budget](#) (which includes anticipated funding for the new Directors of Indigenous Health and Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity) informs the global health portfolio's intention to work on all five recommendations of the Calls to Action throughout the upcoming year. My aim is to prioritize Indigenous student representation, to create a space for meaningful consultation, and to empower and centre Indigenous voices to the best of my ability.

I intend for our decisions to be informed by our community of medical learners. I thus invite learners committed to building a just and equitable global health network to join our community consultation (run jointly with the Education portfolio) on the evening of Sunday July 11th, [which is explained further in this call-out](#) (and which also includes [the sign-up form](#)).

I hope you all will join Neha, our Director of Education, and myself, to discuss, listen and share your dreams for the new Global Health portfolio - so we can build this community together. If you are unable to attend, the minutes will be available. Please reach out with any questions or concerns, and know that we will be hosting additional community consultations soon.

Yours warmly,
Lunan

Alex Lee, Director of Student Affairs

Hello everyone, I am excited to work with medical students across Canada and represent the CFMS Student Affairs. Over the next year, I plan to share, not impose, the following values with everyone that I work with: integrity, respect, and productivity

Integrity - I would like all of us to be truthful in our actions and words to ensure that we can create a credible and strong organization. Our goal is to build relationships with the students and to help them succeed.

Respect - I would like all of us to collaborate, work, and study in environments where we respect individuals' human rights and privacy. This means that no one should face discrimination based on their religious beliefs, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and/or physical disabilities.

Productivity - I would like us to be productive in an innovative way. I would like to work with all our collaborators to come up with innovative solutions to support students across Canada.

This year, the Student Affairs Portfolio will focus on recruiting only the high priority roles to ensure that the essential services are still available to the students. The rest of the portfolio work will focus on addressing the calls to action in order to ensure that the organization is a safe place for students to learn, collaborate, and succeed.

I hope that you can be part of the monumental work that we vision for the CFMS and still participate in building a healthier community for the medical learners. Please reach out to Alex Lee, Director of Student Affairs, at studentaffairs@cfms.org if you have any questions.

Montana Hackett, Director of Government Affairs

Bonjour and hello!

As your Director of Government Affairs, this year will be about building our capacity for political advocacy while reforming the portfolio from the ground up.

In order to achieve this vision, all executive leadership positions for the portfolio and a small number of committee members will be recruited as part of Spring NomCom to jump start the process. This will allow me to provide strategic direction while working with the board to reimagine our organization from the ground up, integrating a foundation of EDI, Anti-Racism, and Decolonization that will make medical students proud to be part of the CFMS.

I hope you decide you want to be part of this vision for the CFMS and the future of its political advocacy. Please don't hesitate to reach me at govtaffairs@cfms.org

Your friend and ally,
Montana Hackett

Neha Malhotra, Director of Education

Over the past two months of consultations, we've received a variety of feedback on how the newly-elected Board can remain accountable to our membership and re-build trust. One of the most notable points we have heard has been the desire to see the Board pause Nominations Committee (ie. recruitment of new leaders and membership) and prioritize making the organization safer for historically underrepresented medical students, most notably Indigenous and Black medical students. I understand that in order to join an organization there must be trust, and there must also be systems for accountability that led to losing the trust of Indigenous medical students. I am also hearing the desire for our organizational reform to work towards actually *transforming* the organization, for which we need a community of support. Holding these two truths together, I am seeing that we cannot do this work without the support of our membership. Our [recent call for recruitment through the Nominations Committee](#) is to ensure the organization has the support needed to stay afloat and each Portfolio has been asked to only recruit positions that are *necessary to deliver only essential services* to our membership - all of you.

Within the Education Portfolio, I am recruiting for new file leads that I had created with the intention of integrating equity into the Portfolio's work. I understand that new initiatives can only be created on solid ground, which will require more time and commitment this year. In the recruitment of these positions, I will strive to ensure the hiring practice is equitable and inclusive, [as I have attempted in the written expression of interest](#). I will transparently post the criteria and interview process once applications close. If an individual's values align with the vision of the Portfolio and they are committed to continuing to learn and unlearn, then there will be a place for them to work with the Education Portfolio regardless of their 'selection' for these positions. Alongside the external partner and file lead positions, I am recruiting [2 National Officers](#) to support the following essential roles:

1. Managing the [Academic Roundtable](#), composed of the VP Educations across all medical schools,
2. Managing the [Education Committee](#), composed of various file (ie. project) leads, including [Matchbook](#) leads, and representatives to external stakeholders
3. Providing interim-support to the [Research Committee](#)

The recruitment of at least 2 new National Officers of Education will allow the Portfolio to create new positions, terms of reference, equitable and inclusive recruitment pathways, and ways of engaging with priority issues amongst the membership in time for the Fall Annual General Meeting. This will also allow me, as the Director of Education, to sustainably lead the Education Portfolio and ensure I have the capacity to redirect my attention and efforts to support the strategic changes needed within the CFMS at a broader level. If you would like to be involved in restructuring the Education Portfolio outside the role of the National Officer, then we encourage you to fill out [this Google Form](#) so we can include you in future communications, and attend the joint consultation session being held by the Global Health and Education Portfolios on July 11. As part of the current budget undergoing review, I have submitted a [draft proposal](#) (subject to approval) for the Education Portfolio in which I strived to integrate equitable and anti-capitalist principles to re-imagine new ways of compensating labour and increasing support for member-led grassroots initiatives.

Edgar Akuffo-Addo, VP Finance

As Joe Biden rightfully said, "Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value". My goal is to guide the CFMS to develop a budget that reflects our values of championing advocacy, diversity, and inclusion.

Below I list a few of the many values I operate by:

[Transparency](#): One of my primary goals for the year is to make the finances of the CFMS public to drive more student input and engagement.

Inclusion: I am committed to channeling financial resources to members of the CFMS to create safe spaces and associations that celebrate the rich diversity of Canadian medical students.

Innovation: I am always open to hearing from students on how to traverse through uncharted territories and do things differently.