

EXECUTIVE REPORT

*Alex Lee, CFMS Director of Student Affairs
2021 Annual General Meeting
October 23-24th, 2021*



I. DESCRIPTION AND INTRODUCTION:

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) is the representative voice of Canadian medical students to the national medical organizations, federal government, public, and external bodies. The CFMS represents over 8,000 medical students at 15 Canadian medical schools from coast to coast. It is the mission of the CFMS to represent, support, and connect its members. We communicate within and from the membership to the world. As an ever-expanding organization, we continually strive to meet Canadian medical students' constant and changing needs.

Brief Description

The Director of Student Affairs is responsible for overseeing initiatives relating to student wellness and leadership development and coordinating membership benefits and services. This position requires collaboration with the National Officer of Wellness, Wellness Representatives, National Officer of Services, various internal working groups, task forces and file leads, and external partners to promote wellness and support medical students. The Director of Student Affairs advocates for and supports members by developing initiatives, including the National Wellness Challenge, CFMS Connects, Culture Changers Campaign, Leadership Development Task Force, and STRIVE Resiliency course to promote the wellness of medical students across the country.

II. PRIORITIES AND PROJECT AREAS:

2021-2023 Student Affairs Strategic Plan ([Link](#))

At the 2020 AGM, the General Assembly approved a new strategic plan for the Student Affairs portfolio that defined a new vision, values, and strategic directions. This document guides and influences everything we now do within the portfolio.

- 1) **Strategic Direction #1: Develop health-promoting communities**
 - a) **CFMS Connects ([Link](#)):** This Facebook page was developed in the Summer of 2020 to connect students during the CoVID-19 pandemic and be a hub for Student Affairs initiatives, contests, and events moving forward. Dilpreet (Awareness File Lead) oversees this page and has been collaborating with the Ontario Medical Student Association to host a series of contests over the past few months.
 - b) **Longitudinal Wellness Initiative ([Link](#)):** Led by Shakiba, the LWI team works diligently to produce practical resources to aid students in their medical school journey through both the CFMS website and CFMS Connects. This year, the LWI team focused on creating more engaging content and finding ways to connect with students through social media.
 - c) **National Wellness Challenge ([Link](#)):** Running from Jan 18th to Feb 14th, this annual challenge is meant to raise awareness, encourage students to try new activities, and connect and support student wellness across Canada. This year Elizabeth (EB), our National

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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Wellness Challenge File Lead, will be planning and has expand collaborations with other national organizations.

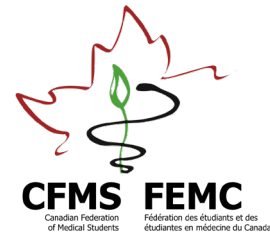
- d) SafeSpaces ([Link](#)):** In its 2nd year, SafeSpaces has expanded significantly with a shift to monthly sessions hosted in partnership with the CMA. Sessions have attracted participants from across Canada and been very well received. Katia (Sr File Lead) and Alisha (Sr File Lead) lead this initiative. The next November 17th session will focus on “Living with Imposter Syndrome.”

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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October 23-24th, 2021



- 2) **Strategic Direction #2:** Promote a positive culture in medical education that prioritizes learner well-being
- a) **CMA Physician Wellness+ Initiative Funding ([Link](#)):** The CFMS will be receiving a very substantial sum of money spread equally over the next four years to support medical students' ongoing health and wellness needs. We conducted a comprehensive consultation process as we developed a set of broad proposals outlining how we will spend the money, which we are in the process of finalizing for the CMA. We hope to use this funding to empower our members, support big-picture initiatives, and address the root causes of what makes medical students unwell. The biggest project involves a partnership with the AFMC and many of the leading thought leaders in this space from across the country to develop a “campaign” to target the culture of medicine.
 - b) **Culture Changers Campaign ([Link](#)):** This campaign had a remarkably successful 1st year in 2020 with over 170 nominations. The new team, led by Terra and Parmet of the Mistreatment Task Force, recently completed the 2020 pins and certificates distribution. The 2021 nomination period has unofficially ended and the campaign will run once again in June.
 - c) **Leadership Development Task Force:** This is a new Task Force developed to further the [Leadership: A Valuable Component of Canadian Medical Education](#) paper recommendations from AGM 2020, promote leadership development in the CFMS community, and create educational resources for our members. Ayushi and Prasiddha, the 2021-2022 Leadership Development Co-File Leads, lead this team. Their primary focus is on developing a series of educational leadership modules with funding from the [Strategic Innovation Fund](#).
 - d) **National Wellness Committee:** Led by Alex Bohm (National Officer of Wellness), the committee has seen many changes this year, including membership, task force involvement, and a collective project for committee members. The committee now brings together the various Task Force and File Leads to work towards individual and collective goals. The collective focus is collating and summarizing past position papers into a master recommendations document to present to the membership for approval at AGM 2021. The committee includes Sarah & Victoria (Advocacy Leads), Dmitry (STRIVE/Resiliency), Dilpreet (Awareness), Elizabeth (NWC), and Sloane (Perspectives in Medicine).
 - e) **Wellness Curriculum Task Force:** Recently, the task force has split into two separate groups to focus on different project aspects. The Writing Team has written and submitted a commentary for publication that calls for action in this area. The Dissemination Team has collaborated with various stakeholders to improve the framework, which will be published on the [CFMS website](#) prior to SGM 2022. Moving forward, they will work to pilot the framework and integrate it into medical curricula across Canada. This task force has been led to great success by Tina Chen and Josh Garofalo.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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2021 Annual General Meeting
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- 3) **Strategic Direction #3:** Increase collaboration within the medical community
- a) **CMA:** We have a standing quarterly meeting with the CMA wellness team to discuss areas of collaboration. Since the beginning of my term, we have collaborated on work relating to the Wellness Curriculum Task Force, SafeSpaces, their new podcast, [Wellness Connection](#), [Physician Wellness Hub](#), [Wellness Support Line](#), and more.
 - b) **FMEQ:** Going forward, I'm planning to engage more with (VP Bien-être/Wellness) to look for areas of collaboration. The purpose of this collaboration is to increase connection with our collaborators and share our resources.
 - c) **OMSA:** Going forward, CFMS Student Affairs will be identifying ways to collaborate with the OMSA Student Affairs and work in partnership.
 - d) **Canadian Blood Services:** Sarah Almas, incoming Blood Drive Chair, will be developing stronger relationship with the Canadian Blood Services to promote awareness among students about blood drive and how they can play a vital role in helping the blood donation shortage.
 - e) **Other National Student Organizations:** I have reached out to and connected with several other national student organizations but was unable to solidify any major partnerships.
 - f) **Student Affairs Town Hall:** At the end of November, I will be hosting the Annual Town hall to discuss the CMA Physician Wellness+ Initiative funding, provide a portfolio update and open forum for students to interact with CFMS leadership. These sessions will provide us an opportunity to connect with more students and hear directly from the membership.
 - g) **Student Affairs Portfolio Restructuring:** One of my goals this year was to reorganize the portfolio to ensure it is clear what each position was responsible for, reduce redundancies, and increase collaboration opportunities. I believe we have been successful, particularly within the National Wellness Committee, which now brings together representatives from across the portfolio to work on collective projects and have higher level strategic discussions. I hope to see the structure further refined with changes made with the leadership changes in the 2021-2022 year.
 - h) **Wellness Roundtable:** I aimed to be more strategic and decided to keep the Roundtable work more as a communication method. The Roundtable Members are updated on important activities that is happening and are always welcome to participate in the Student Affairs portfolio work.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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4) Strategic Direction #4: Optimize student resources

- a) **Discounts ([Link](#)):** Our Corporate Sponsorships, led by Zack (National Officer of Services), has had a remarkably successful term as they have worked to renew popular discounts, such as UWorld, and secured several new discounts, including SketchyMedical, MedMastery, CanadaQBank, Hyundai and more. We will be transitioning the corporate sponsorship portion of the work with the CFMS General Manager, Victoria Radburn to strengthen corporate memory.
- b) **National Discount Booklet:** This is a new work that will be further developed over the next few months in 2021 and 2022. We are publishing QR code coupons that students can use in Canada. This booklet is meant for incoming first year students to learn about what discount services are available to them. Our goal is to have this disseminated with the CMA sponsored backpacks so that students can take the time to review discounts, services, and resources that they can access.

5) Other Areas of Work:

- a) **Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity:** We aimed to integrate EDI principles into our portfolio's work, particularly regarding wellness. A few areas where we explicitly worked to do this were within the Board of Directors, where we worked to ensure we developed fair and equitable hiring and selection process. This work will continue going forward to keep myself and Student Affairs members accountable.
- b) **AFMC Culture of Academic Medicine Initiative:** The AFMC and CFMS will be working together to foster healthier culture in medicine. This will build on the Cultural Changer Campaign and the work of the Student Mistreatment Taskforce. As well, we hope to create more resources for students to be well throughout their training.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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III. REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This year, CFMS has undergone a lot of changes. It's been exciting to have new team dynamic and it has also been sad to see some of our old colleagues leave. Regardless, I'm grateful for everyone in the Student Affairs Team and CFMS staff and Board members who have welcomed and supported me throughout my role. I'm grateful for my predecessor Lucas King who has helped me transition into my role and has mentored me throughout the transition. Since my work started, it has been exciting to meet over 60 members who dedicate and volunteer their time to make important change in the lives of other students. The Student Affairs portfolio is massive and this work can only be done by amazing team members who support each other and keep each other accountable. I have only been amazed by every single team member and I hope to learn lots going forward from existing and new team members.

Sincerely,

Alex Lee, B.H.Sc. (Honours)

MD/Ph.D. Candidate | University of Ottawa

Director of Student Affairs | Directeur des affaires étudiantes

Canadian Federation of Medical Students | Fédération des étudiants et des étudiantes en médecine du Canada

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