

My name is Merry Ghebretatios. I am a second-year medical student with immense passion for Global Health. The day I decided I wanted to be a physician; I was reading an article about the work of Doctors Without Borders. Deeply saddened by the experiences of many vulnerable people facing disaster and injustice, I found hope in the ability of organizations to unite teams with the goal of saving lives, alleviating suffering, and restoring dignity.

I have a personal connection to global issues as my father fought in the Eritrean War of Independence that devastated many lives. Life seemed simple for me as an 8-year-old, but for my parents it involved indefinite conscription, censorship, forced labor, and suppression of many universal human rights including the freedom of expression and religious belief. We were lucky to have escaped the oppressive regime, arriving in Canada as refugees in 2008, however many Eritreans die every year in this process. Coming from this, I want to unite the CFMS Global Health Portfolio towards fighting for those facing injustice both in Canada and globally.

Through my role as a delegate in the Provincial Day of Action, I had the opportunity to speak with a politician about the opioid crisis and push for policies that reflect the needs of our most vulnerable populations. As the current President of the Black Medical Students Association (BMSA), I have also learned many skills in leadership, advocacy, and communication. As Director of Global Health, I would serve in the following ways:

Develop the Global Health Portfolio (GHP) towards impactful advocacy

- Identify the unique talents, passions, and experiences of our ~300 leaders.
- Generate annual themes of advocacy through a nomination and voting process.
- Ensure that all progress made towards a theme is targeted, measurable, and sustainable (Ex: Creating social media accounts for each theme of advocacy that stays active).
- Culminate all advocacy efforts in the form of a national event/campaign week deemed to have the greatest potential for impact.
- Maintain the freedom of National Officer portfolios to take on advocacy projects beyond the chosen theme.
- Ensure the national advocacy theme addresses both domestic global health issues and international ones.
- Work with groups to reduce barriers for medical students entering underrepresented fields of medicine.

Advocate for changes to CFMS elections and structure

- Determine areas of disadvantage for certain schools and individuals running for CFMS.
- Propose ways to address areas of weakness and ensure fair representation.
- Advocate for the option to add more individuals to each CFMS role, particularly Directors.
- Advocate for EDI to be embedded in the CFMS governance structure, not just in Global Health.

Follow through the work of the previous Global Health Director

- Speak with each NOs and Liaisons under my portfolio to determine their needs and priorities and address them together.
- Promote a culture of humility, anti-oppression, and anti-racism within the CFMS.
- Endorse statements that reflect EDI values and speak on human rights issues (Ex. In the past the Afghanistan Medical Students Association was faced with a ban on female education).
- Ensure success of the first International Exchanges Program as there has not been one since the pandemic.

Thank you for taking the time to read.

Sincerely,

Merry Ghebretatios