



Meet the CMSA Exec!

The Calgary Medical Students' Association (CMSA) is the student government representing medical students at the University of Calgary. It's made up of 12 executive members, each of whom leads a portfolio supported by a team of non-executive members who handle more hands-on responsibilities. In total, there are over 50 non-executive roles, offering plenty of ways for students to get involved in student governance at UCalgary! Elections for both executive and non-executive positions for the Baby Animals class will take place sometime in the fall. Until then, the current Potoo executive team will be here to support your class:

President – Carolyn Horwood



Hello and welcome to all of you incoming Baby Animals! A huge congratulations to all of you for your efforts and achievement in being accepted to the University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine - getting into medical school is no small feat. My name is Carolyn (she/her) and I am the current President of the Calgary Medical Students' Association (CMSA), our student-led medical student society. My role is multifaceted and continually shifting, and I work closely with the other CMSA executives to ensure active and ongoing advocacy for student needs at our medical school. Some of my responsibilities include regularly meeting with the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education and the Executive Leadership Team of the Cumming School of Medicine, meeting with the Presidents of other medical student associations across Canada and the President of the CFMS, attending national CFMS meetings and the Western Deans' Conference, sitting on several committees and task forces, running class merchandise sales, consulting directly with students, and keeping up with a never-empty email inbox! I am

lucky to work with a phenomenal Executive team that I continually work to support in their own projects and initiatives. The Presidency role is a very rewarding and engaging position that allows an immense amount of direct involvement in student advocacy. If you are curious about the role, the CMSA, or just want to talk, please feel free to reach out via email to carolyn.horwood@ucalgary.ca. I look forward to meeting you all in July!



VP Student Advocacy and Wellness – Yekta Sharafaddin-zadeh



Congratulations, Class of 2028 — you made it! 🎉 Welcome to med school — the chaos, the caffeine, and the incredible community. I'm so excited to meet you all! My name is Yekta Sharafaddin-zadeh (she/her), and I'm the VP Student Advocacy and Wellness (SAW). That means I get to work with the SAW Hub to help make sure your mental health and well-being aren't just buzzwords — they're built into how we support each other during this wild ride. I also have the joy of working with an amazing team of student reps under the SAWH portfolio, and together we bring you events like the Forum on Failure (yes, failure — it's a thing and it's okay!), monthly birthday parties, Mental Health Awareness Week in May, and other cozy, wholesome, and sometimes chaotic wellness moments to keep us all afloat. I genuinely love this role and feel lucky to serve in it — and I really hope you'll take full advantage of everything the SAW Hub has to offer when you start.

Once again, a huge congrats — I'm already proud of you. If you ever need anything (vent, advice, memes, snacks), I'm just a message away. My number is 780-807-8181 and you can email me at yekta.sharafaddin@ucalgary.ca.

VP Community & Global Health – Sanam Sekandary



Congratulations Class of 2028 — welcome to medical school! I hope you had the opportunity to celebrate this huge accomplishment with family and friends! As your VP Community and Global Health, one of my main goals is to advocate for health equity in both a local and global context! I help facilitate and share initiatives that focus on immigrant and refugee health, women's health, sustainability, community wellness, and much more! More specifically, I work alongside members of the Global Health Portfolio to lead events such as the Annual Global Health Town Hall and Global Health Week. I also liaise with the Indigenous, Local and Global Health Office here at our medical school to oversee and support the many global health-related interest groups we have. On a more national level, I regularly attend the Canadian Federation of Medical Students' (CFMS) global health meetings to learn more about the various on-going global health projects and collaborate with different medical schools across Canada. I am

super grateful to have the opportunity to serve as one of your VPs! Please feel free to email me (sanam.sekandary@ucalgary.ca) if you ever have any questions or simply want to chat. I cannot wait to see you all on campus!



Co-VP Academics – Marissa Hsu



Congratulations and welcome Class of 2028! Or otherwise known as the Baby Animals until you too get your own class animal. :) I have the privilege of being a co-VP Academic alongside Adibba, where we work to address the academic concerns of students and advocate for change at every level, whether it be with assessments, course content, career planning, and everything in between. We also attend meetings with the UME on behalf of the class, with membership in a range of committees, including but not limited to: RIME Preclerkship Committee (RPCC), Clerkship Committee (CC), Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UMEC), Student Evaluations Committee (SEC), and several other meetings to act as representatives for the class. In these meetings, we advocate for the class and bring to the attention of our administration how students are responding to new initiatives. We are proud to say that the RIME curriculum is innovative and transformative, challenging students to approach medicine in a

way that better prepares you to handle medically complex patients in a holistic manner. You are all a part of a new generation of learners at the Cumming School of Medicine and we are so glad you're here. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time through social media or email marissa.hsu@ucalgary.ca. I look forward to meeting all of you very soon and welcome to the Menagerie!

Co-VP Academics – Adibba Adel



BABY ANIMALS! Congratulations and welcome to the Cumming School of Medicine! This is a monumental achievement and we can't wait to get to know your class! I am one of the co-VP Academics for the Class of 2027 alongside Marissa. As VP academics, it's our privilege to advocate for your academic interests and concerns. As mentioned by Marissa, our role includes addressing concerns related to curriculum, assessments, and teaching methods in both the per-clerkship and clerkship years of medical school. We also attend national roundtables with other VP Academics from across the country to learn about opportunities available at other schools and exchange ideas on how to create a robust learning environment. This is in addition to roundtables and stakeholder meetings with schools that have satellite campuses as we prepare for our Lethbridge campus to open in 2026! We are so honored to have this role within the era of our new curriculum. Additionally, as a LiM student, I am also able to advocate and

answer academic concerns for our combined degree students! Medical school can be



overwhelming and we are here to help. Congratulations again and please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions- adibba.adel1@ucalgary.ca. See you soon! <3

VP Communications – Ryan Dion



Hello Baby Animals ... you did it!!! You made it past the applications ... past the MMI and past the agony of waiting for this moment that you worked so hard for. You should be incredibly proud of yourself :) My name is Ryan, and I am the VP Communications for the CMSA Class of 2027, which means you are going to be sick of seeing my name in your inbox. My role is about informing you guys about important information, deadlines, and events so you can make the most of your medical experience. If you have any questions or want to learn more about CMSA or my role, feel free to reach out to me at ryan.dion@ucalgary.ca. Can't wait to meet all of you! 🥳

VP Finances and Operations – Jonah Feng



Congratulations Class of 2028 and welcome to the Menagerie! This is such an exciting time for you all, and I can't wait to meet you this summer. My name is Jonah and I have the pleasure of being your VP Finance and Operations. This role consists of putting together and managing the CMSA budget and finances, including tracking revenues and expenses. I work closely with each CMSA VP to fund various events and activities for all of the students. I also seek out new ways to bring in revenue for the organization, which can go to things like graduation. Funding allocation and distribution to student clubs and to students for attending conferences is also managed through this role. Putting money back into medical students pockets is definitely the best part of the role (and everyone loves getting money back)! If you love organization and Excel spreadsheets this role is definitely for you! If you want to learn more about the position (or chat about how awesome Excel is) or just med school in general - feel free to send me an email

xuanhao.feng@ucalgary.ca. Congratulations again, and see you soon!



Co-VP Events – Michelle Makila



Hey Baby Animals! Welcome to the menagerie and a huge congrats on getting into med school! My name is Michelle and you may have met me during the MMI - if not, I'm one of the VP Events along with my best buddy Oliver. In a 3 year curriculum we definitely work hard, but as VP Events our job is to make sure you don't forget to play hard, too! We will be behind some of the most memorable moments in your early med school days like Orientation Week, Stethoscope Ceremony, Med Gala and other fun events through the year. Starting med school can be overwhelming; it's going to be filled with new names, faces and some jitters, but please know you're not alone! Our goal is to get you settled in and give you plenty of opportunities to meet your new classmates. Please don't be shy - shoot me an email at michelle.makila@ucalgary.ca or text me at 587-988-4571 if you want to say hello, ask any questions or pitch an

events idea. Can't wait to meet you all!

Co-VP Events – Oliver Little



Howdy Baby Animals! Massive congrats and welcome to med school — you made it 😊
I'm Oliver, and I'm so pumped to be one of your co-VP Events this year (alongside my bestie-boo Michelle). Our job? To make sure your time here isn't just about lectures and late-night Cards sessions (that reference will hit soon enough), but also packed with fun, community, and good vibes. From Orientation Week and the legendary Stethoscope Ceremony, to Med Gala, hiking trips, post-exam parties, and more — we've got you covered. Starting med school is no small feat, and we're here to help you settle in, make friends, and feel like you belong (because you absolutely do). If you have any questions, ideas, or just wanna say hi, feel free to shoot me an email at Oliver.Little1@ucalgary.ca. Can't wait to meet you all soon — let's make these next 3 years an unreal experience!



VP External National – Michael Zarychta



Hello, Class of 2028! A huge congratulations on your acceptance to medical school— you all should be very proud of this amazing accomplishment. My name is Michael, and I'm proud to serve as your Vice President External, National (VPX-N). My primary role involves advocating on behalf of UCalgary medical students at the national level through the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS). I do this through regular meetings with my VPX-N colleagues across other Canadian medical schools as well as at two major conferences throughout the year. Additionally, I'll connect you with CFMS resources, such as national and international conferences, advocacy/policy projects, and various awards that recognize your achievements as medical leaders. Locally, I sit on the CMSA Conference Funding Committee, where we advocate for and distribute funding to help you share your wonderful research and attend impactful conferences. Cumulatively, this role allows me to promote the incredible initiatives led by UCalgary students, providing a platform for national recognition and collaboration. If you'd like to get involved, learn more about CFMS and CMSA initiatives, or just chat over a nice coffee, feel free to reach out at michael.zarychta@ucalgary.ca. Looking forward to meeting you all in July!

VP External Provincial – Jake Thorsteinson



Class of 2027!!! I am so excited for you to begin your med adventure and can't wait to meet you all this summer! My name is Jake, and I have the pleasure of being your VP External: Provincial. From drugs to diseases, medical school will throw half a billion acronyms at you. My job is to sprinkle on a few more outside of the classroom: the Alberta Medical Association (AMA), College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). These organizations will be with you for the rest of your career, and the mainstay of my role is liaising and helping you get to know one another (think scholarships, sitting on committees, student initiative funding, and advocacy for students on the provincial level). There are lots of ways to get involved if advocacy and governance is up your alley. Be sure to check out our student advocacy initiatives on Instagram @amamedicalstudents! Otherwise, I am always down for a good yap over coffee, a walk, or on a chairlift in the Rockies. I am only an email or text away at jake.thorsteinson@ucalgary.ca or (780) 913-4146 if you have any questions or want to take me up on that offer. Welcome to the Menagerie!

VP Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity, and Accessibility – Debbie Okusanya



A huge round of applause to all of you for making it to medical school! It's going to be a long but an incredibly rewarding journey, and I'm excited to see all of you grow into incredible doctors over the next few years. As your VP EDIIA, my job is to help the CMSA and the medical school incorporate and promote social justice in medicine. This includes ensuring our medical education is inclusive, supporting clubs and organizations centered around equity-deserving communities, advancing anti-racism and anti-oppression initiatives, and collaborating with admissions to create a more equitable selection process. A lot of work is being done by the school and CMSA to make sure everyone feels supported, and we're excited to see several exciting new initiatives take shape over the next year. I'm sure many of you have experience, whether lived or learned, around EDIIA, and I would love to hear your feedback and ideas over the coming months on how we can all work together to advance social justice at the

Cumming School of Medicine. Please feel free to reach out if you have any suggestions at deborah.okusanya@ucalgary.ca, or if you just want to chat. I'm more than happy to answer any questions you have. Best of luck, and I can't wait to meet all of you!

<https://www.calgarymsa.com/>



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