

Dear OMSA Award Committee:

Sasha's work to increase medical education on the health impacts of climate change over the past three years is outstanding and highly relevant in light of recent global events, such as the devastating fires that have impacted both Australia and the Amazon rainforests. Sasha's confident and sustained leadership in effecting change within Canadian medical schools inspires her peers and defines her as a "Hidden Hero."

Sasha's passion for environmental advocacy is evident in the impact she has made on both the Queen's community and Canadian medical schools' curricula. Sasha proved herself to be a pioneer of the global planetary health movement, in her first year, when she started the Queen's Environmental Advocacy in Medicine interest group after successfully appealing its initial rejection. In her second year, Sasha complimented her work at Queen's by joining the CFMS Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task force (HEART), a national organization of Canadian medical students advocating for action against climate change. In third year, Sasha was chosen to be HEART's co-chair, in recognition of her leadership in spreading awareness of HEART's work nationally through the development of its social media presence.

Given Sasha's dedication to HEART, it is unsurprising that her term as co-chair began with the publication of the first national report on climate health teaching highlighting opportunities for improvement at all 17 Canadian medical schools. Among Sasha's many contributions to this multi-year project, likely her most important one was ensuring the report was written in a way that would be well-received by Canadian medical students, faculty and deans. Her goal was not only to provide an assessment of current planetary health teaching, but also to inspire Canadian health educators to work collaboratively with HEART to transform a well-established curriculum. The release of the report in January 2020 provided a catalyst for both faculty- and student-driven climate curriculum initiatives at nearly all Canadian medical schools. Acknowledging the impact of HEART's report, the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) Objective Committee invited Sasha and other members of HEART to be the first medical student group to develop an MCC learning objective. Given the current pandemic, their objective on natural disaster preparedness is urgently needed and will make a lasting impact on the education of future Canadian physicians.

Some consider the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic as a preview of the health consequences Canadians will face as a result of climate change. Thus, while hoping to volunteer with Public Health to help healthcare workers locally, Sasha's focus remains on the big picture: ensuring future generations of physicians are prepared to address the inevitable health-related challenges of climate change.

Whether or not she is awarded the honour of this recognition, Sasha's climate health advocacy work will leave a legacy not only locally at Queen's but also at a national level, impacting current and future generations of medical students. Despite any adversity or resistance she has encountered, Sasha has remained steadfast in her pursuit of what she believes in.

Thank you for your consideration,

--