



Governing Board Elected Member Candidate Statement

The Candidate Statement, your photograph and names of your nominators will be published on the Cochrane websites during the elections process, and the Candidate Statement and photograph will remain on the websites against the names of new members for the duration of their terms on the Board. For this reason, this Candidate Statement document template must be used; and full addresses, email addresses and/or unencrypted e-signatures excluded.

Please submit this Elected Member Candidate Statement in Word format by the stated deadline. It should be shared beforehand with your two nominators.

Family name (surname):	Persad
First name(s):	Emma
Today's date:	24.10.2021
Are you a current member of the Governing Board standing for re-election?	No
Will you be 30 years old or younger on 29 November 2021?	Yes

Questions 1-4: General experience and motivation

1. How and when did you first become involved in Cochrane and what has been your subsequent contribution to Cochrane's work (maximum 200 words)?

I first got involved with Cochrane in 2017. I was fortunate enough to have Cochrane Austria based at my university campus and have been working for Cochrane Austria alongside my medical studies for the last four years. After developing my knowledge and experience in evidence-based medicine, epidemiology, and systematic reviews and meta-analyses, I led an update of a Cochrane review for my bachelor's thesis (published 2021). I have since been a lead author and co-author on eight published and unpublished Cochrane reviews in the fields of COVID-19, occupational health, neonatology, methods, and gynaecology and fertility, one of which is a part of my master's thesis. I have been recognized as one of Cochrane's Top 30 Under 30.

I have also taken part in the Cochrane International Mobility Programme working with Cochrane Sweden. Although this turned into a virtual mobility programme due to the pandemic, this experience highlighted the vast network within Cochrane and the possibilities that collaboration can offer. As a Canadian currently based in Europe with academic and professional experiences across North America, Europe, and Africa, I am currently completing Cochrane reviews with authors from around the world and intend to do so for the rest of my career.

2. What experience do you have serving as a member of a governing board, board of directors, management group or similar? This might be within a

non-for-profit or charitable organization, or a hospital or university. Please include the roles you played and other relevant information (maximum 200 words).

Most recently, I founded the Local Committee of the Austrian Medical Students' Association (AMSA), the national organization of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) at my university in 2017 and served as Local President for two years. During this period, I built up the local public health and exchange programs, oversaw the board, and worked to engage the approximately 250 medical students at my university. I then served as the National Officer on Research Exchange and from 2019-2021 and was later elected the Vice President of Exchanges (VPX) from 2020-2021. During this period, I was responsible for all incoming and outgoing exchange students in Austria, the national and local teams, and was an active member of the executive board of AMSA alongside six other members overseeing the organization in its entirety of 500 active members. These positions involved weekly meetings, bi-annual progress reports, workshop organization, and also led me to represent AMSA internationally at both in-person and virtual general assemblies.

Previously, I have also founded and served on the Rotex International Board (2016-2018) affiliated with Rotary International, the Students' Union of Karl Landsteiner University (2017-2018), and the World University Service of Canada chapter at Thompson Rivers University (2014-2016).

3. Acting as a Board member requires a collaborative approach to decision-making, setting aside personal opinions and group affiliations and acting in the best interests of the organization as a whole. Please describe how you would fulfil this obligation, using examples from previous committee or other work (maximum 200 words).

Board members are elected to drive the continuous development of the organization and overcome any challenges that arise. These functions cannot be performed without a collaborative mindset. The diversity in backgrounds and areas of expertise can be both an incredible asset but also naturally result in problematic differences in opinion. Despite this, all members must acknowledge the principles by which the organization operates and be willing to put aside conflicting affiliations and personal beliefs to put forth a unified front for Cochrane. I am committed to adhering to all decision-making procedures and not speak out privately or publicly in such a way that reflects poorly on Cochrane.

Despite being VPX and having my own opinion on the status of exchanges throughout the pandemic, all exchange-related decisions were presented to the board for a vote. Among others, this method has decided on complete exchange cancellation in 2020 and the continuation of European-only exchanges in 2021. This practice alongside others, such as needing to have quorum to vote or involving a mediator for group conflict, are essential to the smooth functioning and collaborate efforts of boards and I am committed to following those in place and helping develop new ones.

4. What do you think would make you an effective member of the Cochrane Governing Board (maximum 200 words)?

Cochrane aims to be at the heart of health decision-making, and I am driven to push this mandate as a board member. I have extensive professional experience across three continents and exposure working in diverse

teams, which will help bridge cultural gaps. Further, I understand official procedures and operating practices and have respect for the neutrality and image-oriented approach required for such a public position. As a representative for the younger generation of Cochrane researchers, contributors, and consumers, I will offer a new perspective on current practices to better harness the diversity of the Cochrane community and guide the organization forward in a sustainable manner. Further, I have the time to dedicate to this position, as I will hold it during my PhD without any clinical or external commitments.

I am committed to furthering Cochrane's *Strategy for Change* in this evolving research environment in collaboration with fellow board members whilst upholding Cochrane standards of scientific rigor, accessibility and transparency of evidence, and equal representation and inclusivity of those involved. Cochrane's longevity relies on members who not only support Cochrane's mandate but further it with new ideas and perspectives, and I hope to be given the opportunity to do so.

Questions 5-11: Specific Skills

The Governing Board needs a range of experiences, knowledge and expertise amongst its membership. We do not expect any single Governing Board member to have all the necessary skills and experience; we are looking for diversity.

We do not expect you to answer “yes” to more than one or two of the questions below.

If you do answer “yes”, please provide at least one example which best demonstrates your skills or experience.

Desired skills and experience for this election:	Which means to you can:	Do you have skills and experience in this area? [YES/NO]	If YES, please provide an example:
5. Publishing and Open Access	Guide others through the complexities and opportunities for organizations in achieving Open Access to content and data	Yes	I have been involved in IFMSA’s Open Access campaigns (namely Open Access Week) in 2020 and 2021 aimed at promoting awareness and equity medical students, healthcare professionals, and patients.
6. Fundraising and business development	Develop and implement opportunities for income generation, build organizational relationships and connections, access donor and partner networks	Yes	Most recently, I have worked in grant applications, donor relations, and fundraising for the Nyamirambo Women’s Centre in Kigali, Rwanda, where I help secure external funding.
7. Digital product development	Guide user-centred design, development and delivery of new digital products, understand informatics and structured data	No	I do not have experience in this field yet.
8. Financial management	Oversee an organization’s fiduciary, risk and audit duties, lead financial and investment planning	Yes	I have experience in budgeting and financial planning with the Nyamirambo Women’s Centre, however no experience in risks, auditing, or investments.
9. Advocacy	Act as an ambassador for an organization, influence and strengthen the commitment of public leaders or decision-makers to a cause, secure community support	Yes	I have been a founder and ambassador for AMSA at my university and within my national exchange program. I have also secured community support for a wide array of local and international projects, most recently in Rwanda with the establishment of a library in the paediatrics ward.

10. Science communications or public relations	Build organizational brand and profile online and in person, lead crisis management, design effective external and internal communications processes; OR Educate and raise awareness of science-related topics, design strategies for effectively communicating complex ideas to different audiences, or lead the transfer of knowledge into action	Yes	I completed an internship at the World Health Organization for the Health Evidence Network and was tasked with overseeing knowledge transfer and coming up with new ideas for dissemination of our work. I have experience with social media, graphic design and copy editing in a scientific setting.
11. Making organizations more diverse and equitable	Guide equity, diversity and inclusion assessments and target-setting or provide lived experience of addressing issues of inequality	Yes	My previous positions have not specifically called on me to make organizations more diverse and equitable, however this is a topic that I am very passionate about. After having lived in Rwanda, I have looked into methods to involve and support young researchers and medical students in accessing resources available to those from higher income settings and also attended sessions during the Africa Evidence Week in 2021. I am also signed up to attend the Cochrane South Africa symposium and am particularly excited about the session on South African evidence-based health care projects.

12. Anything else you'd like to say in support of your nomination (maximum 200 words)?

Since its inception, the Cochrane Governing Board has been comprised of elected and appointed members who have represented a largely homogenous population. Despite the notable differences in my age and life experience, I represent a predominantly under-represented, yet up-and-coming new generation within the Cochrane community. An ever-evolving research culture begs the question: how can we best ensure the longevity of an organization so essential to the scientific community whilst remaining relevant and ensuring quality, integrity, and inclusivity in our work? As expectations for contributions from young professionals are continuously increasing, Cochrane needs to be actively present to provide guidance and promote sound research practices in the field of evidence-based medicine. Further, Cochrane's work speaks for itself, but how do we continue to grow the organization's offer and harness new opportunities for outreach? Perfect examples of recent developments that have addressed these challenges and have been instrumental in engaging the entirety of the community are Cochrane TaskExchange, Cochrane Crowd, and the Cochrane International Mobility programme. I am inspired by the continued expansion of these innovative offers and hope to build on these whilst contributing to new ideas to further advance the collaborative efforts within Cochrane on a global scale.

Declarations:

To be eligible to stand for election, candidates must confirm the following by putting a 'tick' (✓) or their initials in the boxes below:

I hereby confirm that I:

1. Have accepted the Terms and Conditions of Cochrane Membership and have been a Cochrane Member for at least 30 days prior to the close of voting in this election	EP
2. Have read the following guidance produced by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in the UK: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a charity• What is a charity trustee?• What trustees must do• How trustees look after the charity	EP
3. Accept the Governing Board Charter	EP
4. Accept and will adhere to the Code of Conduct for Trustees	EP
5. Have completed the Cochrane 'Declaration of Interest' Statement (Annex 1 of this document)	EP
6. Have completed the 'Trustee Eligibility Declaration' required by the UK Charity Commission for all Trustees (Annex 2 of this document)	EP
NAME: Emma Persad	
DATE: 24.10.2021	

Annex 1: Cochrane Declaration of Interest Statement

Candidates must make a declaration of conflict of interest, including financial or non-financial relationships with other organizations, professional relationships to other members of the Board, and other Boards she/he may sit on. In writing this statement, candidates should refer to Cochrane's [conflict of interest policy](#) (for Cochrane Groups) and the [declarations of existing members of the Board](#).

Please answer the following questions:

1. Financial interests	YES/NO (If YES, please provide details)
In the last three years, have you:	
a) Received funding: any grant, contract or gift, commissioned research, or fellowship from Cochrane or a related organization (i.e., any organization related to health care or medical research) to conduct research?	No
b) Had paid consultancies: any paid work, consulting fees (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	No
c) Received honoraria: one-time payments (in cash or kind) from a related organization?	No
d) Served as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or held a position of management with a related organization?	No
e) Possessed shareholdings, stock, stock options, equity with a related organization (excludes mutual funds or similar arrangements where the individual has no control over the selection of the shares)?	No
f) Received personal gifts from a related organization?	No
g) Had an outstanding loan with a related organization?	No
h) Received royalty payments from a related organization?	No
2. Do you have any other competing interests that could pose a conflict of interest that would reasonably appear to be related to the primary interest?	No

Annex 2: Trustee Eligibility Declaration

As required by the [UK Charity Commission](#)

Please tick or initial in the boxes below to confirm the following:

I declare that I:

Am willing to act as a trustee of The Cochrane Collaboration	EP
Understand Cochrane's purposes (objects) and rules set out in its Articles of Association	EP
<p>Am not prevented from acting as a trustee because I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences listed here • Have an Individual Voluntary Arrangement, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order • Have been removed as a trustee in England, Scotland or Wales (by the Charity Commission or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) • Have been removed from being in the management or control of any organization in Scotland (under relevant legislation) • Have been disqualified by the Charity Commission • Am a disqualified company director • Am a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation • Am on the sex offenders register or equivalent in any country • Have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement • Have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission 	EP
Will provide true, complete and correct information to the Charity Commission if elected as a Board member	EP
Understand that it's an offence under section 60(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 (United Kingdom) to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information	EP
Comply with my responsibilities as a trustee that are set out in the Charity Commission guidance 'The essential trustee (CC3)'	EP