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Letters to the Editor

In support of institutional self-reflection on social accountability

En appui à la réflexion institutionnelle sur la responsabilité sociale

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Dear Editor,

We commend Cumyn et al.[1] for their rigorous and inspiring portrayal of how one Canadian medical school has examined and evolved its commitment to social accountability over time using Boelen's CPU framework.[2] Their work represents a much-needed bridge between aspirational mission statements and meaningful, measurable action.

As medical students, we are often encouraged to consider our roles in advancing health equity, but this article makes clear that institutional accountability is equally critical. The authors model how a faculty can push beyond symbolic gestures to embed social accountability across governance, curriculum design, admissions, and community partnerships.[3] The use of iterative document analysis, key informant interviews, and focus groups reflects a commitment to inclusive and context-aware inquiry, consistent with the values they aim to assess in students.

Particularly noteworthy was the attention paid to usability in these approaches. Ensuring that actions are not only implemented, but evaluated for their real-world impact on community health is critical, as often the social mission of medical schools is conceptualized but not operationalized. This study offers both a framework and an invitation to reflect, act, and sustain a culture of accountability.

Other faculties across Canada could benefit greatly from replicating this thoughtful, transparent approach. It is a clear demonstration that real social accountability takes more than good intentions—it takes humility, follow-through, and a willingness to do the hard work of institutional change.

Edited by: Marcel D'Eon (editor-in-chief)

References

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