Canadian Black Scientist Network Ontario Node (CBSN-Ontario)

Proposed Activities & Initiatives and Organization Structure

18th March, 2023

1 Overview

The Ontario Node of the Canadian Black Scientist Network (CBSN-Ontario CBSNO)) comprises members of CBSN who are located in the Province of Ontario. CBSN-Ontario spearheads initiatives and conducts activities at the provincial level to further the mission of the CBSN to Elevate, Make Visible, Celebrate, and Connect Black Canadians in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine (STEMM) across sectors.

A small informal committee of CBSN members was formed to help with the node formation by identifying potential initiatives and activities of the node as well as an organizational structure that would help support that work. This document outlines the outcomes of the work of the committee and the proposed activities and initiatives and the organizational structure of the node. We first start by providing an overview of the proposal and provide further details on suggestions on potential directions.

1.1 Summary of Proposed Activities & Initiatives

The committee identified the following potential activities and initiatives. These headings are intentionally broad to allow the node to take these activities in directions that they see fit.

1. <u>Mentorship of students, new faculty and postdoctoral fellows.</u>
   The node will create a mentorship framework in which members will be connected with interested new faculty and postdoctoral fellows to provide guidance, support, and career opportunities.
2. <u>Outreach to K-12, post-secondary, and post-graduate</u>.
   The node will work with its members and various partners to engage in outreach activities that support transitions to various levels (secondary to post-secondary, post-secondary to graduate school or industry, graduate school to post-doctoral studies, faculty, or industry, post-doctoral studies to faculty or industry)
3. <u>Support for micro-communities for faculty, postdocs, graduate and undergraduate students.</u>
   The node will coordinate with members across Ontario universities to create and support micro-communities at either the Departmental, Faculty, or institution level, according to the needs of each institution.
4. <u>Hosting of events.</u>

The node will host a number of events that connect members to help support the previous three activities.

1.2 Summary of Organizational Structure

CBSN-Ontario compromises the following structure:
- <u>Members</u> who participate in the activities and from whom leaders are elected
- <u>Steering Committee</u> that provides overall leadership for the node.
- <u>Activities Committee</u> and associated <u>Working Groups</u> that lead initiatives and coordinate and support activities of the node and its members
- <u>Administrative Staff</u> who support the leadership in their service to the members.
- <u>Special Committees</u> as appropriate to address time-limited issues.

1.3 Node Formation Committee Members (reverse alphabetical by last name)

Wasiu Raji	Department of Earth Sciences Carleton University
Betty Ombuki-Berman	Department of Computer Science Brock University
Jude Kong	Department of Mathematics and Statistics York University Regional Node Liaison, CBSN Steering Committee
Dylan Jones	Department of Physics University of Toronto
Mamadou Diop	Department of Medical Biophysics and School of Biomedical Engineering University of Western Ontario
Lucy Campbell	School of Mathematics and Statistics Carleton University
Philip Asare	Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering University of Toronto

Contents

2. Proposed Activities and Initiatives

In this section we provide some ideas and suggestions for consideration under the various overarching activities and initiatives identified by the committee.

2.1 Mentorship

2.1.1 Internal Mentorship Program

Organizes internal mentorship program, including related meetings, events, resources, professional development, and promotion of the program. Maintains mentorship records, agreements, other information, documentation, evaluation tools for the program, mechanism/timeline for reviews and modifications to the program.

Mentorship could include support for graduate students, postdocs, and faculty members to enhance their online presence (website and social media) to increase their visibility and visibility of the node.

2.1.2 Mentorship Training

The node can provide mentorship training to those who provide mentorship to our members. This includes training for members as well as training for non-Black-identifying professionals who are in mentorship positions supporting Black students or professionals.

2.2 Outreach

The Ontario Regional Node hosts a variety of Outreach Activities to promote STEMM among the general public in general and within the Black population in particular. We suggest a strategy of partnering with already existing programs and initiatives where possible.

These might include:
1. Meet a Black Canadian Scientist engagements. For example:
    a. In-person school visits
    b. Virtual visits or viewings
    c. Pre-recorded talks
    d. Website with profiles of members as role models
2. Conferences, workshops, and mini-symposia
3. Regular webinar series, seminars, panels, and science cafes
4. Podcasts. For example:
    a. Node-organized
    b. Facilitating appearance on existing podcasts
    c. Spotlighting podcasts that members have already been invited to participate in
5. Various programs around specific topics/areas. For example:

        a. Topic-specific chapters.
        b. STEMM challenges/competitions.
6. Connections to community leaders (e.g.,religious/community leaders) and organizations to reachout to black students in the community

2.3 Micro-communities

2.3.1 Faculty Caucuses

The mission of the Black Science Faculty caucus would be to promote the well-being of Black faculty, and students across Universities in Ontario; to assertively push for the recruitment of Black faculty, staff, and students; to assist in the recruitment and retention of Black undergraduate and graduate students in Universities across Ontario; to encourage equitable utilization of Black faculty, staff, and students throughout the university community; to be a liaison between the Black faculty, staff, and students and the university administration; and to organize and maintain a support network for Black faculty, staff, and students in Universities across Ontario. Representatives from each caucus could meet to share ideas across contexts and specific situations.

2.3.2 Student Communities

This program uses a 'community-oriented approach' to support students and prevent them from dropping out of the STEM programs. The aim is to create a judgment-free environment for the students where they can meet students that look like them and feel safe to share experiences in navigating life as a Black student in STEM, inspire students to think about STEM in the right way, help succeed in their course work, address STEM anxiety, and fill the gaps in Knowledge.

The student micro-communities program could be based on 5 pillars and these are constantly reviewed. These pillars provide guidance to the students to help them be successful.

PILLAR #1: Weekly learning, check-in, and experience-sharing hours
PILLAR #2: Mentorship ecosystem
PILLAR #3: Scholarships and Undergraduate Research
PILLAR #4: Career Exploration
PILLAR #5: Skill-Focused Workshops
PILLAR #5: Collaboration and Partnerships

Communities could exist at individual institutions or could be formed across multiple institutions depending on local situations.

2.4 Events

2.4.1 Workshops

The node will bring together faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate and undergraduate students to give talks and to connect with Black scientists. High school students will also be invited to attend.

2.4.2 Seminars

The node will invite faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students to give public talks on their research to showcase the range of STEMM work being done by Black scientists.

3 Organizational Structure

Below we describe the roles and responsibilities of each person in the organizational structure.

3.1 Members

All members of the CBSN who are affiliated with institutions and organizations in the Province of Ontario are considered members of the Ontario node. Members support the work of the node by participating in node events, volunteering their time to work on activities and initiatives, or serving in leadership positions. There is currently no membership fee because CBSN at the national level does not charge a membership fee. The membership fee could change in the future as the CBSN and the node evolve.

3.2 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall be elected by members of the node to manage the affairs of CBSN Ontario (CBSN-Ontario), with delegated authority to represent the node as outlined in the roles and responsibilities below. The Steering Committee shall be made up of the following:

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary & Communications
4. Treasurer
5. Partnerships Lead(s) (could be more than one person) focused on these areas
   a. University
   b. Pre-University
   c. Government
   d. Industry

3.2.1 President

The President provides overall leadership for the node, working with the Steering Committee to execute the goals and priorities of the CBSN-Ontario, and ensures that progress towards goals are being made. Responsibilities include:

1. Overseeing activities of the Steering Committee to ensure coordination, effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity of the node's objectives
2. Serving as the primary representative/spokesperson for the node at both and delegates this duty to Vice President as appropriate
3. Convenes, chairs, and sets agendas for meetings of the Steering Committee
4. Works with the Steering Committee to convene, set the agendas for, and chairs node meetings
5. Update Steering Committee and broader node on progress and activities

3.2.2 Vice-President

The Vice President assists the president with their duties and acts as the main liaison between the Steering Committee and the Activities Communities. In the absence of the President, the Vice President will assume the roles of the President.

3.2.3 Secretary & Communications

The secretary is responsible for

1. Recording the activities of the Steering Committee and node meetings (including capturing and sending meeting minutes).
2. Managing the communications of the node to its members and the general public.
3. Organizing and overseeing elections.

The secretary works closely with the Administrative Staff to execute these details.

3.2.4 Treasurer

The treasurer oversees the financial management of the node's operations and activities to ensure that it has the financial resources necessary to pursue its objectives. This includes:

1. Ensures that the node follows proper financial protocols and maintains appropriate financial compliance related to proper auditing, tax compliance, and any other legal and regulatory requirements and protocols.
2. Consult and work with other committee members in carrying out these responsibilities while maintaining primary responsibility and accountability for the financial health of the node.
3. Support other committee members with relevant financial picture, protocols, and advice in the execution of their responsibilities.
4. Maintains up-to-date financial records and protocols for the node, in line with good practice and legal requirements
5. Works with experts as appropriate on

        a. Annual tax filings
        b. Monthly accounts reconciliation
        c. Periodic disbursements
        d. Any other compliance activities
6. Present to the Steering Committee and the larger node regular updates on financial standing and financial plans (at least at the annual meeting of the node).
7. Assists in the development of funding strategies and coordinates fundraising initiatives, in partnership with other members of the Steering Committee.

The Treasurer will be assisted by the Administrator in executing these duties.

3.2.5 Partnerships Lead(s)

There will be at least one partnership lead, but the actual number will be decided by the Steering Committee based on workload. The partnership leads are responsible for building relationships with relevant institutions in University, Pre-University, Government, and Industry to explore ways in which these institutions can support the work of the node through financial and other resources. They work closely with the Treasurer on fundraising initiatives.

3.3 Activities Committee and Working Groups

In addition to the steering committee there will be an activities committee that coordinates and oversees the four activities and initiatives of the node through working groups dedicated to each activity. Each working group will have a chair and vice chair. The activities committee is defined as the chairs and vice chairs of the working groups so that the activities committee can work on cross-cutting activities.

3.4 Administrative Staff

The node will have the following staff:
1. Administrator who handles finances, logistics of event planning, and any relevant communication with partners with whom the node is collaborating on various initiatives.
2. Communications Coordinator who handles the node's website, social media, email communication with members and overall node digital and print presence.

3.5 Special Committees

Special Committees are proposed by the general assembly, and are struck by the Steering Committee with a specific, time-limited mandate. Membership, structure, and timelines will depend on the specific requirements of the task. Special Committees fulfill an acute need to support the node's activities, for example, to create a new program. They may also be struck to supplement the work of a standing committee when additional expertise or operational assistance is needed. Special Committees engage in a defined research or consultation task (for example, in response to a call for input from an external partner).

Special Committees Chairs/ Co-Chairs are appointed when the group/committee is struck.

4 Governance

The Annual General Meeting of CBSN-Ontario will constitute the highest decision-making body of the node.

4.1 Steering Committee and Activities Committee

Members of the Steering committees shall be elected by members of the node to initially take up the role of Steering Committee Member-Elect (see Section 4.3 Steering Committee Members Elect). Once members of the Steering Committee, they shall have delegated authority to represent the node as outlined in the roles and responsibilities above.

Members of the Activities Committee shall be elected by members of the node, and have delegated authority to represent the node as outlined in the roles and responsibilities above.

Each committee member shall serve a term of 2 years, renewable only once for a maximum of 2 terms of service.

4.2 Advisory Committee

There shall be an Advisory Committee made up of immediate past members of the Steering Committees and Chairs of Working Groups from the Activities Committee, who shall serve for one year, following completion of their terms on their respective committees. The role of the Advisory Committee is to offer guidance to the Steering Committee and Activities Committee and to provide institutional memory for their benefit. Members of the Advisory Committee may be invited to participate in the deliberations of the Steering Committee or Activities Committee.

4.3 Steering Committee Members Elect

In the penultimate year of a Steering Committee member's tenure, the node shall elect a successor, who shall be an observer at meetings of the Steering Committee and shall shadow the incumbent to facilitate learning, knowledge transfer, and a smooth transition. A committee-member-elect does not have authority to act on behalf of the node and assumes the committee member role once the incumbent's term is over.