

Submission to:  
**AOM Board of Directors**

<b>Meeting date:</b> February 17, 2021	<b>Agenda item:</b> 6.2	<b>Lead:</b> F. Aseffa	<b>For:</b> Decision
<b>Subject:</b> Racial Equity Committee Terms of Reference Revision			

### **Amendment to the Terms of Reference**

The Racial Equity Committee (REC) proposed several revisions to the Terms of Reference (ToR) to provide clarity on various element of the structure and processes of the Committee. After now having had three meetings since the last ToR amendment, the Committee identified a few areas in the ToR that could use further revisions (see Appendix 1).

The main areas that required revision include, 1) clarity on how the Committee can provide guidance and support to the Board and AOM staff while maintaining a protective space for Committee members to engage in often sensitive and difficult conversations, and 2) addition of a Co-Chair to build capacity, improve representation of diverse perspectives and support REC members to take on leadership by creating mechanism to divide responsibilities and share leadership as Co-Chairs. Note, the ToR may be reviewed and amendments proposed relatively frequently as the Committee works through and discusses some of the levers and barriers this Committee identifies during the early stages of its formation.

Proposed revisions to highlight to the Board include:

- Inclusion of intersectionality i.e., 2SLGBTQI, disability, international midwifery training etc. in the diversity of experiences the Committee seeks to represent in its composition. Including, holding at minimum, one seat each for members who identify as Black and 2SLGBTQI.
- Clarification regarding the AOM President's attendance at Committee meetings.
- Addition of a Co-Chair to build capacity and promote shared leadership.
- Clarification regarding process of consulting with REC when AOM staff or Board members request attendance at a REC meeting.
- Process for dissolving the Committee.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends approving the Committee's proposed ToR amendment as it provides greater clarity on process for consulting the Committee when the Board or staff seek to attend REC meetings and creates mechanism to support REC members to step into leadership roles through Co-Chairing. The proposed revisions also identify the need to hold space for members with intersectional identities and experiences which is critical to advance the AOM's equity strategy.

## Appendix 1: Proposed Terms of Reference

# Racial Equity Committee Terms of Reference

<b>Policy Type:</b>	Board	<b>Approval Date:</b>	June 2020
<b>Sub-Category:</b>	Governance	<b>Amended:</b>	June 2020
<b>Last Review Date:</b>		<b>Next Review Date:</b>	

### Purpose, Responsibilities and Delegated Powers of the Committee

The Racial Equity Committee provides guidance, recommendations and support to the Board on the AOM's ongoing work to improve racial equity in midwifery. The Committee will aim to act as a voice for racialized midwives through diverse representation on the Committee and through ongoing engagement with racialized midwives of diverse experiences. The Committee will work to explore historic and contemporary, systemic and interpersonal racial discrimination, inequity and oppression that racialized midwives face within the midwifery profession and beyond. However, the Committee does not have sole responsibility to address the issues that it identifies. The AOM Board, staff and membership recognize the broader ownership that it must take in resolving racial inequities.

This Racial Equity Committee is intended to give voice to the perspectives and experiences of racialized midwives. In recognizing that Indigenous communities experience multigenerational trauma and ongoing systematic racism rooted in Canada's colonial history and present day policies, the AOM's Indigenous Midwifery Advisory Circle (IMAC) gives voice to the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous midwives. As such, the unique experiences of racism and colonization as experienced by Indigenous midwives is appropriately outside the scope of this Committee. This committee also recognizes the intersectionality of both Indigenous and racialized individuals, and leaves it up to such individuals to centre themselves in the work they most closely align with participate in either one or both groups as appropriate.

The responsibilities of the Racial Equity Committee are to:

- Explore the ways in which racial discrimination and inequities experienced by racialized midwives manifest within the midwifery profession, how they present challenges and barriers for midwives, and how they can be addressed;

- Critically analyze the current state of the profession from a racial equity lens to identify existing gaps that need to be filled, barriers that must be addressed, and strengths that can be built upon;
- Advise the Board on interventions to help develop their perspectives on racial equity and advance Ontario midwifery into a more racially equitable profession for midwives, and consequently racialized midwifery clients as well;
- Assist the Board and committees in incorporating racial equity into the AOM's strategic goals, objectives, priorities, policies and practices;
- Maintain a global, equitable and inclusive view of racial diversity in the midwifery profession;
- Monitor and work to improve the recruitment and retention, professional growth, and career satisfaction of racialized midwives;
- Review Board and AOM processes, composition and governance, such as recruitment, election, and meeting processes, for inclusion and equity; and
- Keep abreast of broad trends and best practices related to anti-discrimination work and for combatting systemic oppression.

## Composition

Members of the Racial Equity Committee will:

- Self-identify as [Black and/or](#) racialized;
- Represent diversity of lived experience as a [Black and](#) racialized person, [with regards to](#) ~~of~~ years in practice, ~~and a variety of~~ practice contexts (e.g. urban, rural, large and small practices) [and intersectionality \(e.g. 2SLGBTQI, disability, international midwifery training, etc.\)](#);
- Have knowledge or previous experience in racial equity and ~~or~~ anti-discrimination work [\(i.e., activism, community initiatives etc.\)](#) [and](#) a strong commitment to learn and contribute to this work;
- Have an interest [in and commitment to](#) ~~in~~ racial equity work and its application to midwifery;
- Recognize the impacts of systemic, intersectional and interpersonal racism on racialized populations;
- Be willing to engage in thoughtful constructive discussion and reflection about midwifery practice in Ontario and how racial equity practices best apply.

The Racial Equity Committee will be comprised of the following voting members:

- A maximum of 8 midwife members, [of which at least 1 identifies as Black and 1 who identifies as 2SLGBTQI\\*](#)

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[\\* In recognition of the sensitivity in disclosing certain identities including sexual and gender identity, the Committee will endeavor to have representation from 2SLGBT+ individuals but will not require people to disclose their sexual and gender identity.](#)

- 2 student members
- 1 racialized faculty representative from the Midwifery Education Program (MEP) Consortium
- 1 Board member

AOM staff will attend meetings to provide resource to the Committee. Unless an appropriate racialized staff is not available, staff supporting the Committee will identify as racialized.

Anyone else may attend Committee meetings as a guest upon invitation ~~by~~ of the Committee. This may include the Executive Director and President, based on the Committee's discretion~~regardless of their racial identity~~. In recognizing that there are different and complex power dynamics in midwifery that may put some individuals in vulnerable situations, the Committee is committed to fostering an environment that enables members to freely, safely and respectfully engage in meaningful discussions. If a Committee member identifies that an individual's attendance during a specific discussion contributes to the vulnerability of a member, the individual may be requested to recuse themselves of the discussion as appropriate.

### **Selection and Term of Office of Committee Members**

A call for members will be circulated to all AOM members. Interested members will be asked to submit a statement of interest. The Board will select Committee members who are best able to give voice for racialized midwives and help the Committee to fulfill its purpose and responsibilities. Once the inaugural committee is formed, the Board will solicit advice from the Committee regarding new members who apply to join.

Committee members will serve two-year terms renewable three times. Student members serve a two-year term, or a term that ends once the member is no longer a student, whichever is shorter. Terms will be completed as of the Annual General Meeting each year. For those serving on the Committee from its initiation, the term will be deemed to start as of May 2020.

The Committee members may recommend ~~a~~ members of the Committee to the Board to serve as Committee Co-Chairs. To foster Board accountability, it will make best efforts to select a sitting member of the Board as Co-Chair, unless the Board determines that appointing a different Co-Chair would best serve the purpose of the Committee. If only one member is available to Chair the Committee, the Committee may proceed with a Chair until a Co-Chair that the Committee recommends is available. The term of office of the Chair or Co-Chair is 2 years, renewable once. The term can be renewed a second time if there are no other eligible candidates.

A vice-chair may be chosen as the Committee determines appropriate, and will be appointed by the Committee. The term of office of the Vice-Chair is 2 years, renewable once. The term can be renewable a second time if there are no other eligible candidates.

## Rules for Meetings

In recognizing the vulnerabilities of racialized people in discussing race and racism in the presence of people in positions of power, the Committee will strive to create a protective space for members to speak candidly and have conversations that will lead to transformative change. When developing and approving meeting agendas, the Co-Chairs and/or Committee members will identify which portion of the meetings may be attended by the Executive Director and/or President as guests to meet the Committee's needs, if they are racialized. If an AOM staff or Board member wishes to meet with the Committee, a request will be made to either one of the Co-Chairs who will consult the Committee prior to accepting their attendance. If it is not possible to consult with the Committee (i.e., due to time constraints), either one of the Co-Chairs will use their discretion to facilitate the request on behalf of the Committee, then open the meeting by first inquiring if the Committee approves the staff or Board member's request to attend the meeting.

The Committee will meet as required, at the request of the Co-Chairs, and will meet a minimum of two times per year, including one full-day, in-person strategic planning meeting where members will strive to be off call. to be in-person with members off call. Members may be required to provide input between meetings via telephone or e-mail. Minutes for each meeting will be recorded and circulated.

Decision-making will be done by consensus where possible. Where this is not possible and a decision needs to be made, varying viewpoints will be considered, with a priority placed on ~~the experiences and/or perspectives of the most marginalized or least empowered members in an effort to center these voices and reach an equitable decision.~~ principles of equity and centering the voices of people who are marginalized. Upon considering these viewpoints, a decision will be reached by majority vote. Quorum will be a majority of voting Committee members.

Members who either miss more than two meetings in a row (except due to attending births or other extraordinary circumstances) or miss two meetings in a row without notifying the Co-Chairs, ~~may~~will have their membership on the Committee revoked.

## Commitment to Anti-oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The AOM recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and is committed to creating an environment that is safe, accessible, inclusive and respectful of members, Board members, staff,

and the Ontario public. The AOM recognizes that inequity is maintained by oppression, discrimination against, and systemic marginalization of people based on the protected grounds identified by the Ontario Human Rights Code.[1] All members of this committee (as with all AOM Committees) are expected to foster equity and inclusion, in accordance with the expectations set out in the AOM's *Policy on Anti-Oppression\*, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* (November, 2016). The AOM will work to ensure a safe space in which members of all committees will work. Training to support anti-oppression, diversity, equity and inclusion will be made available to members of all committees, work groups and task forces as required.

Members of any AOM Committee [may report to the Executive Director if there are members who fail to comply with who are unwilling to meet](#) the expectations of the *Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* policy may. [Members of any Committee who are unwilling to meet this policy may](#), at the sole discretion of the Executive Director have their membership on this committee revoked.

## Reporting and Accountability Requirements

The Committee is a Committee of the AOM Board and accountable to the Board. In accordance with the AOM Constitution article 6, the committee is advisory in nature. It is established by the Board to carry out its mandate and to carry out the directions given to it from time to time by the Board. Committee members are responsible for implementing Board decisions with regard to the Committee's mandate.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of information that will form part of the Committee's work, prior to joining the Committee, members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. A signed confidentiality agreement, one that covers the term of their membership on the Committee, is a requirement to serve on this Committee.

The Committee [Co-Chairs](#) will provide a written report to the Board of Directors at least once per year about the key issues affecting the program and the deliverables being achieved. Any staff/consultants hired to undertake specific work related to the Committee's work will be hired by and report to the Executive Director.

The Board of Directors is committed to racial equity as an ongoing and central part of the work of the AOM. However, as with all of its Committees, the Board of Directors has the authority to dissolve this Committee. The Committee may be dissolved if, upon consultation with [Black and racialized midwives and the Racial Equity Committee](#), the Board determines that there is no

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\* For a definition of anti-oppression, see AOM's policy on Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

longer a need for it, or if there has been sufficient evidence to suggest that the Committee is no longer productive.