

# Terms of reference for the Advisory Council (AC)

Last Updated: October 2023

## 1.0 *Role and Responsibilities*

1.1 The CAN Advisory Council (AC) shall provide advice and recommendations to the Governing Council (GC) on behalf of partner organizations with a focus on:

- a) ensuring that the GC and the Communities of Practice (CoPs) benefit from the lived experiences of persons with disabilities and their support teams;
- b) offering a cross-sectoral, cross-disciplinary and cross-country sounding board for the GC and CoPs; and
- c) informing the efforts of the CoPs by having some of its members participate in one or more of these communities as appropriate and feasible.

The AC shall also provide a forum for partner organizations to come together to learn from one another, engage in collaborative initiatives and network.

1.2 In providing advice and recommendations to the GC, members of the AC shall seek to:

- a) be effective conduits of communication about CAN related activities, research and initiatives between their respective partner organizations and the Network;
- b) share their insights and expertise regarding the relevance, suitability and feasibility of the education, research, training, employment, policy and knowledge mobilization programs and services offered by or envisaged by the Network;
- d) identify and help pursue funding for educational, research, training, employment, policy and knowledge mobilization initiatives and collaborative partnerships to heighten the impact and reach of the Network;
- e) be champions of the Network in their organizations and help to promote the Network nationally and internationally; and
- f) bring to the attention of the GC, as warranted, other issues relating to the management, financial sustainability and standards of conduct for the Network.

1.3 The Accessibility Institute, on behalf of Carleton University, shall fulfil the role of the CAN National Office, and will provide operational staff, resources and supports to establish the Network.

## **2.0 Membership and procedures**

- 2.1 The AC shall consist of one representative appointed by each of the partner organizations that has become a CAN Collaborator with Carleton University as the host institution for the Network.
- 2.2 The CAN National Office Director, Assistant Director and the CAN Program Manager (as the Corporate Secretary), by virtue of their offices, shall be standing, non-voting members of the AC.
- 2.3 The Chair of the GC and the CoP (Co-)Leads shall be granted observer status at all meetings of the AC. Other members of the GC and/or funders may be granted observer status as warranted from time to time.
- 2.4 Should there be circumstances that prevent the participation of an AC member from a given partner organization, another representative may be chosen by the partner organization in question to attend in their stead, provided that the CAN National Office has been notified. The alternate representative shall be granted the voting privileges of the absent AC member.
- 2.5 While recommendations that the AC wishes to make to the GC shall be carried by the majority of votes, the AC shall seek, where feasible, to promote collegiality and consensus-building in determining these recommendations.
- 2.6 The Chair of the AC, or in their absence, the Vice-Chair of the AC presiding at any meeting of the AC, shall have the deciding vote in the case of deadlock.
- 2.7 AC recommendations shall be communicated to the GC by the Chair of the AC, who also serves as the Vice-Chair of the GC, to inform the GC's deliberations and decision-making processes.
- 2.8 AC members shall endeavor to attend all AC meetings to ensure continuity of the group.
- 2.9 Upon the review and approval of the CAN National Office, members can apply to be reimbursed for expenses to support their ability to participate in virtual meetings, or for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend in-person meetings. These reimbursements will be pursuant to the reimbursement policies of their own partner organizations and that of the Network, and subject to the availability of Network funds to defray some or all of the costs of AC members' participation. In the absence of Network funds to defray these expenses, each partner organization will assume these costs for their representative.

### **3.0 Chair, Vice-Chair and CAN Program Manager**

#### **3.1 Chair**

- 3.1.1 The Vice-Chair of the Governing Council, by virtue of their office, will serve as the inaugural Chair of the AC. Thereafter, the AC shall be chaired by one of the voting members who sits on the AC as nominated and elected by their peers.
- 3.1.2 The voting members may nominate more than one candidate for the position. If more than one candidate is nominated, AC members shall select the Chair through a secret ballot administered by the CAN National Office. In the absence of candidates for the Chair of the AC, the Governing Council shall appoint the Vice-Chair of the GC as Chair of the AC.
- 3.1.3 The Chair of the AC shall be appointed for an initial two-year term and may be reappointed by the GC, for one consecutive two-year term.
- 3.1.4 The Chair of the AC will preside over the affairs of the AC, provide leadership to the AC and serve as the Vice-Chair of the GC.

#### **3.2 Vice-Chair**

- 3.2.1 The Vice-Chair of the AC shall be elected by the voting members of the AC.
- 3.2.2 The voting members may nominate more than one candidate for the position. If more than one candidate is nominated, AC members shall select the Vice-Chair through a secret ballot administered by the CAN National Office.
- 3.2.3 The Vice-Chair of the AC shall be appointed for an initial two-year term, and may be reappointed by the AC, for one consecutive two-year term.
- 3.2.4 The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair as may be necessary and, in the absence of the Chair or the inability of the Chair to act, shall exercise the powers and duties of the Chair.
- 3.2.5 If the Chair of the AC is not present at a meeting of the AC, the Vice-Chair shall chair the meeting. If neither of the former is present, the AC shall choose a Chair from among the voting members who are present at the meeting.

#### **3.3 CAN Program Manager**

- 3.3.1 CAN's National Office shall designate a host university representative or an external resource to serve as the CAN Program Manager ("Manager") to the AC. The Manager shall be accountable for the business of the AC and shall support the Chair of the AC with regard

to services provided to assist AC members in performing their duties.

3.3.2 The person designated to act as Manager to the AC shall work in collaboration with the Director of the CAN National Office and be responsible for the following duties:

- organize and record the activities of the AC and related committee meetings;
- ensure that the AC complies with any requirements of the GC to which it reports;
- keep and maintain all organizational and historical records;
- facilitate the orientation and ongoing education of AC members; and
- act as a channel of communication and information for AC members.

#### **4.0 Meetings, attendance and minutes**

4.1 The time and place of meetings of the AC and the procedures at such meetings shall be determined from time to time by the Chair in consultation with the AC, the GC and the CAN National Office, provided that:

- the AC holds a minimum of one meeting per year, either in person or virtually
- notice of face-to-face meetings be sent electronically to each AC member not less than 21 days before the meeting is to take place, provided, however, that an AC member may in any manner waive a notice of a meeting;
- notice of virtual meetings be sent electronically to each AC member not less than 7 days before the meeting is to take place, provided, however, that an AC member may in any manner waive a notice of a meeting;
- an agenda and related materials respecting each meeting be given by electronic means to each AC member at least 72 hours prior to the time fixed for such meeting;
- a quorum for meetings be a majority of the AC voting members then holding office, present in person or virtually. In the event that the AC voting member is unable to attend a meeting, they may notify the CAN National Office of their approved alternate representative, who will be granted voting privileges on behalf of the AC member; and
- at all meetings of the AC or its committees, every question be decided by a majority of the votes cast on the question. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair, shall have the deciding vote. An AC member shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting by proxy.

4.2 The CAN Program Manager shall ensure that all recommendations of the AC are recorded in the minutes of the meetings of the AC. Such minutes shall be circulated to all AC members prior to the next AC meeting and shared with the GC, as warranted, to inform its deliberations and decision-making.

## **5.0 Communication of AC recommendations and advice to the GC and other stakeholders**

- 5.1 The Chair of the AC, who also serves as the Vice-Chair of the GC, shall ensure that the AC's key discussions, advice and recommendations are adequately disclosed to the GC, the CAN National Office and key stakeholders.
- 5.2 The CAN Program Manager shall ensure public disclosure of the Network's governance practices, including the terms of reference for the AC.

## **6.0 Accessibility**

- 6.1 In the execution of their duties, the AC and its committees will seek to ensure that their in-person and virtual meeting venues are accessible spaces and that their deliberations, outputs and activities are made available in accessible formats.

## **7.0 History**

- 7.1 These draft terms of reference were developed in February 2020 by CAN Special Advisor, Michelle Gauthier, in consultation with the Director of the CAN National Office, Boris Vukovic and Associate Director, Julie Caldwell, and the incoming Governing Council Chair, Suzanne Blanchard. They were reviewed and approved by the Governing Council in September 2020 and will be presented for ratification by the Advisory Council in October 2020. Should the AC propose any changes to these terms of reference, these recommendations will be brought to the Governing Council for consideration at one of its upcoming meetings. These terms of reference were revised in June and October 2023.