

## Section VIII Personal Statement

### **Background**

This promotion application process has allowed me to reflect on my career path, my achievements, and to envision my future career paths. In this personal and professional reflection, I will share my stories about who I am, what I did, and what this all means to me.

I was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea. Since my early age, I wanted to be an educator because I loved the nurturing nature of teaching and believed in the emancipatory power of education for individuals and community. My mother has tremendously influenced on my emancipatory value of education as she did not have an opportunity for higher education as her father strongly believed that women do not need higher education because marriage is their job. In her marriage, she made every effort to make sure her three daughters were educated so that they would be empowered and would not have the same path as hers.

I started my first career after undergraduate at a small venture company focused on publishing educational multimedia content in CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory). I fell in love with the company's educational vision in which learning should be open, situated, pragmatic, inquiry-based, and fun for everyone. Recognizing the limited capacity of CD-ROM, however, my colleagues and I initiated a project team to investigate the potential of high-speed Internet. After two years of research and trial testing, we succeeded in providing high-speed Internet service for the first time in the history of Korea in 1997. We witnessed an unprecedented new potential for people's lives with this new high-speed Internet environment. People would be empowered by learning and working anytime anywhere. I saw this fundamental technological environmental change as a vehicle in which knowledge would be decentralized and democratized to the public. Envisioning the innovative future of education, I returned to graduate school to be better equipped with the depth and breadth of knowledge in the field of education. After earning a Master's degree in Educational Technology, I moved to the U.S. to earn my Ph.D. degree in Human Resource Education. Throughout my doctoral program, I have expanded my understanding about human learning and development in a more systemic way at a structural level as well as an individual level.

I was fortunate to be exposed to medical education as I navigated my career path to be a postdoctoral fellow after earning my Ph.D. degree. I was attracted to medical education because it directly impacts the human potential and well-being that I had kept as my core value from my early career. After 13 years of experience in academic medicine, I can proudly say that I am a non-physician medical educator and researcher with the interdisciplinary background in social studies, educational technology, and human resource development. Emigrating myself from South Korea to the United States, I also see myself as 'a career immigrant.' My liminal space as a Korean American, a nonphysician medical educator, and a lifelong learner across multiple disciplines has provided fruitful perspectives to fulfilling the work as a medical educator and researcher in academic medicine for the last 13 years. Below are highlight of my philosophy and achievements in three areas: Teaching, research, and service.

### **Teaching**

My teaching philosophy has been evolving throughout my personal and professional journey. In my early career, I focused on my own career success, and my view on teaching and the practice of teaching was around the self-focused goal. When I became tenured and promoted as Associate Professor in 2019, I was grateful to be successful and achieve this significant career milestone.

However, admittedly, I felt rather incomplete. As a medical educator for almost 13 years and experiencing personal health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have reflected on my career and the meaning of my work, and this reflective moment allowed me to clarify my passion in education, *empowering others*.

Since my last promotion, my teaching practice has been consistently guided by my teaching philosophy: ***Empowerment of learners and teachers through individual, structural, and organizational changes, especially for those who might not have opportunities to grow and succeed.*** The more I practice in medical education, the more I see those in need for their academic and professional growth. To empower learners and faculty, I have initiated and been involved several programs: (1) Students and faculty dashboards, (2) Medical Education Research Fellowship (MERF) program, (3) RISE WIMS program, (4) GEA (Group on Educational Affairs) reviewer development, (5) Postdoc program, (6) advising/mentoring students and faculty, and (7) medical education program development in Madagascar.

#### (1) Dashboard Programs

With a vision of student and faculty empowerment through more accessible data analytics, I initiated the student and faculty educational dashboard programs. The project entailed structural changes in data capturing, data storing, analysis, reports, and the overall data governance through the Educational Informatics Committee. The student dashboard program has successfully facilitated the school's transformation to programmatic assessments for the last three years. Students are more informed about their educational progress through the dashboard so that they can proactively seek help in advance. I envision the faculty dashboard will be instrumental in their career mentoring for education and successful promotion processes.

#### (2) Medical Education Research Fellowship (MERF) program

I initiated a Medical Education Research Fellowship Program in 2022 to develop and equip interested clinical and basic science faculty with a basic understanding of medical education research and innovation to design and conduct projects. I directed twelve instructional sessions covering educational research design essentials for the last year, and four fellows will successfully complete the program this month, in August, 2023. The new cohort of 2023-2024 will start in September 2023. Six fellows will have an orientation in mid-August, 2023.

#### (3) RISE WIMS program

Recognizing structural issues in women physicians' career success in academic medicine, especially for underrepresented minorities in medicine, I proposed the idea of a sponsorship program for women physician faculty research to the AWIMS leadership group at SIUSOM. With the Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women from the American Medical Association in 2021, we created the RISE WIMS program to sponsor 17 women physicians for the last three years. I have been the co-chair to run the program since 2021.

#### (4) GEA National Grant reviewer development program

Serving on the AAMC GEA National Grant Review Committee, I created a Grant Reviewer Development Program for CGEA (Central Group on Educational Affairs) members. I created this grant reviewer development program to be open to any volunteers because grant reviewing opportunities are not easily visible and available especially early career faculty and trainees. In this program, the participating reviewers can learn about the process and nuances of how grant proposals are reviewed and evaluated. Twenty-seven reviewers and 22 trainee reviewers have participated in the program since 2022.

#### (5) Postdoc program

As a person who earned a Ph.D. degree in human resource education and migrated into

medical education, I see myself as ‘a career immigrant.’ I found the field of medical education fascinating as there are great opportunities for interdisciplinary research and innovations. However, career entry and career paths in medical education are invisible to Ph.D. graduates in other fields. To enter and succeed is challenging. To address this challenge for future medical educators, I created a postdoctoral program facilitating their socialization in medicine and participation in the medical education research community. The first postdoctoral fellow, Andrew Lee, Ph.D., successfully completed the program in 2023 and will start his career as an assistant professor at SIUSOM.

#### (6) Advising/Coaching

Individual advising and coaching has a special meaning to me. One day, one of my advisees asked, “Dr. Han, I know you are very busy working on many projects. Then, how do you always meet with medical students whenever they request?” I said, “I have never been too busy to meet students and those needing some help.” I always prioritize meeting with medical students, residents, and early career faculty members to help more than established or powerful people for my own career success.

#### (7) Medical Education Program Development in Madagascar

Since 2021, I have been working with an non-governmental organization (NGO) team to develop a District Healthcare Physician Development Program in Madagascar. As one of the world’s poorest countries, Madagascar is in significant need for healthcare, especially healthcare workforce development. Medical education programs exist, yet developing competent doctors especially for rural areas remains as a gap. After my site visit and several consultation meetings and workshops, the program was implemented in June, 2023. It has received positive responses from participating physicians, instructors, and the Malagasy government as they saw the power of quality medical education in addressing their healthcare issues. The team will present their journey and future vision in a Live Symposium at AMEE in late August 2023.

### **Research/Scholarship**

My research agenda and interests have evolved as I have become a medical educator. Being a medical educator requires a diverse understanding and knowledge in teaching and learning in medicine, rather than exclusively focusing on a certain topic for a life time. In this sense, my research topics are diverse because I function as a generalist to serve the goal of the medical school rather than a specialist detached from daily practices in medical education. While various areas of interest, my heart always moves toward uncovering and debunking authentic practices and challenging a status quo to move forward. Below are some of the highlights depicting my research interests and outcomes.

#### (1) Faculty Career Advancement in Academic Medicine, Especially Underrepresented Minority

Faculty career advancement has been a critical topic in academic medicine, especially for underrepresented in medicine (URiM) faculty. Recognizing that the nature of their struggles socially situated and shaped by structural bias, I conducted several empirical studies to develop a deeper understanding of the issue in the field. My published article titled *Looking into the labyrinth of gender inequality: women physicians in academic medicine* highlighted the women physicians’ struggles in academic medicine, which led me further empirical studies to understand a broader structural background where the gendered bias is situated. I conducted further qualitative research on the topic to investigate faculty career success in academic medicine using the analytical lens of Bourdieu’s theory of fields, capitals, and habitus. The findings indicated several structural issues regarding the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) policy. Clinical faculty,

especially women, could not get promoted to Professors from Associate Professors. The AWIMS leadership presented the findings to the school's leadership, including the faculty council and chairs, which sparked the P&T working group to implement a pilot with a revised P&T policy. Since the policy change, all faculty have had a positive trajectory and six women faculty members were promoted to Professor for 2023. I am so proud of my work that addressed and changed structural barriers that created real issues in practice.

#### (2) Authentic Workplace Learning and Assessment

Workplace learning and practice are always fascinating to me as a researcher. Given the complexity connotated in clinical sites, I have been interested in how real-place learning and assessment occur. My clerkship paper published with the title of *Learning in the real place: medical students' learning and socialization in clerkships at one medical school* published in Academic Medicine indicated that clerkship students' learning was superficial as their learning relationships are limited. The research interest in authentic teaching and learning practice led me to investigate doctor-patient communication and attending-resident communication practices. One of the published papers is *Attendings' Perceptions of Authentic Evaluation Criteria for Effective Surgical Consults* published at Journal of Surgical Education. In the study, we found a resident's deductive communication structure in their consult with an attending is critical to ensure the attending's attention to relevant patient information. Moreover, the established trust between an attending and a resident determines the level of details to be communicated. These findings circled back to the surgical education group at the school to help junior residents with their learning and practice of surgical consults.

#### (3) Pushing the Boundaries in Research Practice

Serving as the CGEA MESRE (Medical Education Scholarship Research and Evaluation) Chair, I often question the differences between Innovation and Research in medical education literature as there is no clear distinction in practice-oriented research in medical education. When I posed this question to the AAMC GEA MESRE group, one of the colleagues took the idea for a research project and published the paper, *What is an Innovation Article? A Systematic Overview of Innovation in Health Professions Education Journals*, at Academic Medicine. I continued challenging the MESRE group about our research practices in terms of epistemologies and led a project to grasp the landscape of research methodologies in health professions education (HPE). The paper was published with the title, *Research Methodologies in Health Professions Education Publications: Breadth and Rigor*, at Academic Medicine. In the paper, I challenged that our research practices and knowledge productions have been shaped within the limited breadth and rigors of research methodologies. This message was powerful to the research community and the journal invited me to talk more about the message in a podcast. This research project led me to another project to better understand existing ontologies, i.e., the nature of reality, which shape the nature of knowing, i.e., epistemologies. I am currently leading a research team to investigate this topic and plan to submit a paper at the end of 2023.

#### (4) Bridging the Fields

I have been working on several editorial papers to facilitate the HPE and Human Resource Development (HRD) research communities. Currently, I am working as the guest editor of European Journal of Training and Development on the special issue of *HRD and Health Professions Education (HPE): Context, Research, and Practice*. It is planned to be published in early 2024. Given the complex nature of HPE, I strongly advocate the interdisciplinary collaboration among different fields. HRD is one of the workplace-oriented research fields that could contribute to advances of HPE research and practice.

## (5) Future

The experience of medical education program development in Madagascar has provided me a critical opportunity to reflect on contemporary medical education research and practices that are heavily dominated by the Western assumptions on teaching and learning. As for my future research, I am interested to help elevate the voices that have not yet been heard. I have two focus areas: non-traditional faculty, i.e., community faculty, in academic medicine and medical education practice in least-developed countries. To achieve this project, I will explore methodological pluralism and an alternative epistemology for this study, i.e., action research, critical realism, and auto ethnography. I expect this to be my transformative learning experience as a scholar.

## **Service**

While my service appointment is only 10%, I have learned that service is central for educators and scholars. My service has grown to expand school, regional, national, and international levels.

Locally, I have been actively serving for Y2 and Y3 curriculum advisory committees and Research Policy Council committee at the school. I have been active in serving on Annual Symposium Committee, EPC as an Educational Informatics Committee Chair, and AWIMS Executive Committee, and

Nationally, when I served as a MESRE Chair of the CGEA of AAMC, I initiated a program named 'Team Up! For Scholarship Collaboration' to facilitate multi-institutional collaboration among faculty at member schools. This program has been successful and it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year to continue the program. In 2023, I expanded the program to the national level, GEA, where all GEA members can participate in the Team Up! Program. Additionally, I am serving on the AAMC GEA National Grant Review Committee, where I represent the CGEA.

Internationally, I have two service focus areas: AHRD (Academy of Human Resource Development) and HPE, including AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) and AMEE (Association for Medical Education in Europe). I served as the Director of Board for the AHRD, where I have created and been chairing a special interest group of Health Professions Education (HPE) since 2022. I also served as an education specialist on the Council of Education for the AVMA for six years until 2021, where I actively involved in the accreditation processes, including reviews of the standards, self-study reviews, and site visits, for all veterinary schools in the USA and Canada, and foreign veterinary schools that applied for AVMA accreditation. Lastly, I am the Chair-Elect of AMEE Aspire Academy and will start the Chair role on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at AMEE. My role is to lead the 51 institutional members from around the world who received the Aspire Award to promote excellence in medical education and push the boundaries of medical education for educational innovation and better healthcare. I have already reorganized the group into eight subgroups to facilitate their service to achieve the goal.

## **Closing**

Reflecting on my career journey over the last 13 years, especially since my last promotion, I am proud to be a medical educator and researcher who continuously empowers others individually and organizationally. I believe that we can rise by lifting others, which resonates with who I am – my personal and professional identity. For my future, I will constantly reevaluate medical education practices and challenge the status quo for better medical education and healthcare for all. I look forward to my future endeavors filled with my creativity, courage, capacity, and persistence to make that happen.