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RE: Candidacy for the AKRI Board of Directors

Dear Colleagues,

I write to invite your support for my candidacy for an internal Director position on the AKRI board.

I am Xumei Wang, M.D., Ph.D. I am Professor and Director of the Department of Psychiatry, Shengjing Hospital, China Medical University. In these roles, I am a mentor for Ph.D students in psychiatry, clinical psychology, and junior psychiatrists. I have been a psychiatrist for 31 years; for 17 years a psychodynamic psychotherapist, and for 6 years I have been a music therapist. I am the Chairperson of the Liaoning Medical Society and a member of the Board of Directors of the China Mental Health Association. I am a mother and parent. I worked on the frontline in Sichuan earthquake 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic in Hubei 2020.

My first experience of GRC was in Beijing 2016 as a member. This was the second national GRC in mainland China. Subsequently I participated in small study group training program in Beijing 2017, twice online training 2020 and large study group training in Shanghai in 2019, online 2021 and Director's training online 2021. I worked on staff as a co-consultant during the five-day residential Beijing GRC 2018. Most recently, I served as an AKRI Training and Certification consultant candidate at the 2019 Changsha Group Relations Conference, Taiwan and San Diego eGRC 2021, ADA in eGRC China 2020. I am currently the Associate Director of Wuhan Group Relations Conference which will be in December 2021.

Because of the profound learning from these GRC and training experiences and their influence on my personal growth and professional development, I am passionate about group relations and the opportunities it offers others for deep personal and professional learning. As a result, I encourage my colleagues and students to participate in GRCs to foster their personal growth and professional development and to understand and interpret chaos and irrationality in systems. As a mentor to 10 graduate students, I actively apply my group relations conference learning to understand the psychodynamics in our personal, professional, and organizational lives. This application includes my researching group relations conferences. My colleagues and graduate students conducted research at the Changsha GRC in October 2019 and eGRC China 2020.

It has been through the power of experiential learning in group relations conferences that I have found and expanded my voice. I especially found my voice during the 2018 Beijing residential conference. For a long time, I remained silent before finally taking the risk to express my anger with the Director. I felt self-authorized. I further strengthened my voice and my presence in teaching roles at three online group relations seminars sponsored by the China-America Society for the Study of Groups and Organizations (CASSGO). Finding my voice reminded me of this quote from LuYou in Song Dynasty China:

纸上得来终觉浅，绝知此事要躬行。I came to know it on paper, and I knew I had to do it.

My commitment to and passion for group relations extended to recent presentations with Chinese and American colleagues at the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations, the AKRI Dialogues, and the Chengdu China Mental Health Association Conference. I am the organizer of International Cohort in AKRI since 2020.

With the above as background to my group relations experience and passion for “the work”, I believe I can bring important perspectives to the AKRI Board of Directors:

1. I bring an international perspective. I am passionate about seeking to better understand group and organizational life and international relations through application of group relations theory and practice. I can add to the diversity of the AKRI Board by bringing my experience with different organizational authority structures in China.
2. I bring an important cultural and linguistic perspective to understanding diversity in groups and organization. I bring inspiration and energy about building trust through collaboration by working across the boundaries of language, culture, gender, nationality, politics, social class, race and ethnicity, age, sexuality, and ability/disability. My experience can be valuable to AKRI as more GRCs become international in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am familiar with the challenges of designing conferences that use more than one language.
3. I bring a passion for application of Group Relations learning to personal, professional, community, and organizational life. The application of group relations theory and practice to organizational realities is important for effectively taking up roles and tasks in often complex circumstances. An example for me was using a group relations lens to help me to understand and navigate the complex and complicated hierarchy in the Hubei COVID-19 frontline as the Chinese government and national situation intersected covertly and overtly with the mental health team I was leading.

4. I bring a commitment to intergenerational collaboration, succession, and mentoring. Integrating young, talented men and women for future leadership positions is essential for AKRI. Nurturing leadership and role succession is a critical mentoring responsibility.
5. I bring a commitment to advancing intercultural collaboration in the world as a whole. This includes perspectives on intergenerational and intercultural trauma. During and after COVID-19 pandemic we will be dealing with these phenomena on a global scale. The only way we save ourselves and survive in this world is through collaboration across generational and intercultural boundaries.
6. I bring the voice of feminine authority and leadership. The voice of feminine authority and leadership is important because of the relationship of gender, power and the hierarchies of authority, and the challenges faced by women across the globe. I am experienced in leadership and working with Boards in China. I would bring my feminine voice to the AKRI Board as a woman with considerable experience in leadership and organizational Board work.
7. I bring commitment to research. Group relations conferences are fantastic, exciting, and challenging learning experiences. They have the capacity to attract more and more people, as we are seeing now in China. But we do not have enough research to give people data regarding how GRCs help people in its application for our personal and professional growth, community life and organizational life. I have done group relations research and I am interested in bringing my expertise to the AKRI Board, particularly in cross-cultural group relations research.

The power of learning from experience transformed my thinking about groups and organizations, reminding me of the words of Xunculs, who said:

百闻不如一见，百见不如一试 Seeing once is better than hearing hundred times , doing once is better than seeing hundred times.

Sincerely,

王旭梅 Xumei Wang MD PhD
AKRI Member
Professor and Director of Department of Psychiatry
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