

September 21, 2022

A message from The Counselling Foundation of Canada and CERIC

Leadership transitions at

The Counselling Foundation of Canada and CERIC

After nearly 15 years in the role, Bruce Lawson intends to step down as President & CEO of The Counselling Foundation of Canada (“Foundation”) and as Executive Officer of CERIC in Spring 2023.

Bruce and I have worked very closely for over a decade promoting Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. He has done so much to establish the Foundation as a leading voice for the philanthropic and career development sectors,” says Victoria Grant, Chair of the Foundation Board.

The Foundation Board is pleased to announce that Riz Ibrahim, currently Executive Director of CERIC, will succeed Bruce as CEO. “Riz was the natural choice to step into the role held by Bruce. As an organization focused on career development, Riz has worked closely with Bruce and understands the scope and focus of the work of the Foundation in supporting and enhancing all aspects of career development and the role of career development practitioners,” says Victoria. “The Board is very happy to see Riz take another step forward in his career progression.”

Concurrent with these announcements Candy Ho, Chair of the CERIC Board, announced that there will be a national search for a new Executive Director (ED) to replace Riz, who has been the ED of CERIC since its inception in 2003.

“While we are sad to lose Riz as ED, given the close relationship between the Foundation and CERIC he won’t be far away,” says Candy. “Riz has played a pivotal role in the development of CERIC as the leading Canadian organization advancing education and research in career counselling and career development. A new ED will have a strong foundation to build upon.”

Bruce and Riz will support the staff and Boards of both organizations, as well as their many partner organizations, to ensure a smooth transition takes place over the coming months. Bruce will continue in a part-time advisory role with the Foundation and CERIC, as well as taking on other projects. Riz is expected to formally assume the CEO role in the Spring of 2023 following the appointment of a new CERIC ED.

During his time as CEO, Bruce has transformed the work of the Foundation, connecting it to the greater charitable and nonprofit sector through projects and collaborations. Primary among these was the establishment of Foundation House, a collaborative workspace for the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. In addition, Bruce was part of the steering committee that authored the Philanthropic Community’s Declaration of Action in support of Truth and Reconciliation. In Spring 2020, he helped create the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund,

which was designed to support Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations with immediate needs in the face of the pandemic. Bruce is also a Past Chair of Philanthropic Foundations Canada.

Riz started working at the Foundation in 1996, became the founding Executive Director at Contact Point in 2007 and then moved over to lead the creation of CERIC as it emerged in the early 2000s. As CERIC Executive Director, Riz expanded the reach and scope of CERIC's work by actively engaging stakeholders from a broad range of sectors within the career development ecosystem. Partnership, collaboration and inclusion have been at the core of CERIC's growth and development.

Notably, Riz created research and learning vehicles that would make CERIC a credible and non-partisan voice in career development in Canada, advocating for Career Development for Public Good and building the competencies of career development professionals. This included the Canadian Journal of Career Development, Careering Magazine, CareerWise/OrientAction and the Graduate Student Engagement Program. Most significantly, Riz was instrumental in initiating and expanding Cannexus, Canada's Career Development Conference, now in its 17th year, as the premiere learning and networking event for career development professionals in Canada.

In the coming weeks, CERIC will launch its national search to recruit a new Executive Director.