

**MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CHAIR****Dr. Jen Gommerman**

Dear colleagues:

Happy March – I hope this newsletter finds you all well. This is a busy month for the Department due to admissions and the wrapping up of the undergraduate year. With respect to admissions, we received a large stack of outstanding applications. This is great news for the quality of our program which benefits from the excellence and enthusiasm of incoming cohorts. Thanks to Kate Sedore and Korosh Kianizad for guiding the process and to the grad committee (Michele Anderson, Goetz Ehrhardt, Naoto Hirano, Jean-Philippe Julien, Sonya MacParland, Mike Ratcliffe and Bebhinn Treanor) for reviewing all these dossiers under the leadership of our Grad Coordinator Thierry Mallevaey.

For the Imm undergrad program, all courses that were slated as in-person are officially back on campus as of the first week of March! Our only fully online undergraduate course is IMM250 as of right now due to its size and the need to continue physical distancing. I know our undergrads are extremely happy to be back in the classroom after a very isolating winter term.

I would also like to extend my heartiest congratulations to Rupert Kaul, Alberto Martin, Tak Mak, Adam Gehring, Joan Wither, Matt Buechler and Goetz Ehrhardt for succeeding in securing CIHR funding in the fall 2021 CIHR operating grant competition. We all know how low the cut-off is for these competitions – UofT Immunology continues excel. Well done!

Lastly, please do not forget to [RSVP](#) for the Spring faculty meeting. **This meeting will be in person**, at the Faculty Club. A light lunch will be provided, and proof of vaccination (2 doses) and ID will be needed to enter the building. The safety protocols are found [here](#). Very much looking forward to seeing all of you in 3-dimensions.

Jen

Professor Department of Immunology
Canada Research Chair in Tissue-specific Immunity



UPCOMING EVENTS

CHARLES GOULD EASTON SEMINARS

Mondays, 11:05 – 12:00 via Zoom

March 7th, 2022 at 11:05 am

David G. DeNardo, PhD

[Professor, Department of Medicine,](#)
[Oncology Division,](#)
[Department of Pathology & Immunology](#)
[Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis](#)

"New immunotherapy strategies for fibrotic cancers"

Host: Tracy McGaha, PhD

March 21st, 2022 at 11:05 am

Jacob Kohlmeier, PhD

[Associate Professor, Microbiology and Immunology](#)
[Emory University School of Medicine](#)

"Durability and protective efficacy of memory CD8 T cell subsets in the lung"

Host: Tania Watts, PhD

*No Easton Seminars on March 14 and March 28, 2022

PHD Research Seminar via Zoom

March 24, 2022 at 9:00 am - 10:00 am

"Development of Class II-Agnostic CAR T Cell Therapy Targeting WT1 Peptide Presented by Diverse HLA Class II Molecules"

Chung-His Brett Wang

Supervisor: Dr. Naoto Hirano

Department of Immunology Faculty Meeting

Monday, March 28, 2022 at 11 am

Location: The Faculty Club

STUDENT SEMINARS

Mondays, 10:00-11:00 via ZOOM

March 7, 2022 at 10 am

Altering T cell metabolism to improve cell therapy of cancer

Meghan Kates (Ohashi Lab)

Characterizing T Helper Cells Associated with SARD Etiopathogenesis

Carol Nassar (Wither Lab)

March 14, 2022 at 10 am

In vitro generation of human CD4 T lineage cells from stem cells

Julius Landas (Zuniga-Pflucker Lab)

Thymus homing and function of in vitro-generated progenitor T cells

Ruth Li (Zuniga-Pflucker Lab)

March 21, 2022 at 10 am

Investigating the role of CSF-1 in the maintenance and function of hematopoietic stem and progenitor cells

Aniqa Khan (Robbins Lab)

Defining the contribution of tissue resident immune cells to ischemia reperfusion injury in kidney transplantation

Martin Mak (Crome Lab)

March 28, 2022 at 10 am

Title TBD

Nasana Vaidya (Dunn Lab)

Investigating anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibody responses in the saliva following COVID-19 vaccination

Salma Sheikh-Mohamed (Gommerman Lab)



Wellness, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity

Introducing Immunology's **WIDE Committee. Wellness, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity** – these issues are critically important, and Immunology's WIDE Committee aims to ensure that our Department:

- Embraces wellness and EDI in our goal to sustain excellence in teaching, research and service
- Supports a healthy learning and work environment for all members of our Department
- Provides EDI training opportunities for all members of our community to address issues of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and implementation of EDI into practice
- Incorporates the principles of EDI in our recruitment and career advancement practices with regards to faculty, staff and students
- Ensures the makeup of our committees and decision-making bodies is inclusive and reflects the diversity of our Department
- Engages widely within the University of Toronto and broader communities to promote education and employment opportunities within our department, such as Immunology outreach programs for youth from diverse communities

WIDE Committee Members

Matt Buechler

Pailin Chiaranunt

Baweleta Isho

Jenny Jongstra-Bilen

Saad Khan

Nana Lee

Kitty Liu

Priya Makhijani

Nayanan Nathan

Dana Philpott

Kate Sedore

Salma Sheikh-Mohamed

Jasty Singh

Nasana Vaidya

Rysa Zaman

Our WIDE Committee comprises three subcommittees to accomplish our goals:

- **Allyship, Wellness And Representation (AWARE) Subcommittee**
- **Outreach Subcommittee**
- **Faculty/Graduate Students Subcommittee**

Each month we'll share updates in the Imm Newsletter about what we're up to, and how you can help raise WIDE awareness!

For one of our first projects, we will be translating the [information pamphlets](#) produced by our grad students into several other languages to increase the accessibility of this important info. For this project **we need your help! If you are fluent in any other (written) language and want to help out with translating**, please email us at uoft.imm.wide@gmail.com!

We also want to let you all know that the **sleep and meditation app *Balance*** is currently offering a **free one-year trial!** Details at www.balanceapp.com

Be well!





IGSA

Hello Immunologists!

We hope that everyone has been keeping safe and healthy! We've had a flurry of social & wellness events this past February that we're excited to recount with all of you.

In collaboration with the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication, we started off this month with an Academic Presentation Workshop delivered by Dr. Jane Freeman and hosted by Salma, our IGSA Career Development Representative. With student seminars, IMMTonight and lab meetings, we find ourselves preparing academic presentations rather frequently, and Dr. Freeman facilitated a workshop that emphasized the development of strong oral communication skills and a concise narrative within a presentation.

Given the difficulty of isolation during this past lockdown, our IGSA members Baweleta, Salma, and Ammarah teamed up to bring Valentine's Day cheer to the department! Our departmental candygram fundraiser featured gourmet sweets and immunology-themed cards that were available for purchase and delivery to faculty, staff and students across institutions. Each purchase included a raffle entry for a self-care gift basket. With your support, we've raised \$480 in candygram sales, and the raffle winner, Tiffany Kong, selected the proceeds to be donated to Sanctuary Toronto, a multi-service community centre and health clinic that centres people who are poor or precariously housed. You can learn more about Sanctuary Toronto here: <https://www.sanctuarytoronto.org/>. Thank you again for your support! We hope we were able to give everyone a chance to show care for their labmates and peers.

While we waited for the return of indoor intramurals, IGSA brought about ways to stay active! Our wellness representative, Baweleta, hosted a virtual yoga session to release your post-lab stress from the comfort of your own home. For those more outdoorsy, our sports representative, Natalia, collaborated with our social representatives Kameel, Meggie and Robyn for an evening of skating and friends along Harbourfront.

We are excited to announce that intramural is finally coming back for the month of March! Let's cheer on the Immunodominators as they compete in ultimate frisbee, volleyball, and dodgeball together. Don't forget to reach out to our sports representative, Natalia, for more details!

We've got plenty more coming your way! Feel free to reach out to us via email (utgsu.immunology@gmail.com) if you have anything that you'd like to see now that Spring is right around the corner. Keep an eye on your social media feed, your inboxes, and our website (igsaimm.com) for future updates. We hope to see you all soon!

Cheers,
Tiff & Kitt
IGSA Co-Presidents 2021-2022
Website: igsaimm.com
Instagram: [@igsuoft](https://www.instagram.com/igsuoft)



IMMSA

Hi Immunologists!

Congrats on making it to March, we know February was a tough month. With midterms and extracurriculars and the transition to in-person classes, it's totally understandable if you felt like you couldn't do everything you wanted to do. We want you to know that you're not alone in feeling that way, and that it's completely okay to feel that too. Only 2 more months left in the semester, so hang in there! Whether this is your first year at UofT or your last, we know you can finish the semester on a high.

Our "Call for Abstracts" for OQUIC 2022 has been extended to **Sunday, March 6th at 11:59pm!!** If you've completed any Immunology research, this is an amazing opportunity to improve your presentation skills, put a conference on your CV, and win \$100s in cash prizes - submit your abstract now at:

<https://forms.gle/suZaNgLF7SSzLcP2g>

In the month of February, IMMSA invited Dr. Tae Joon Yi to host a unique research seminar where he shared his experience with Poppy, a start-up that has designed a system to monitor the air and surfaces around us for thousands of different pathogens. It was a pleasure to see how Immunology can be applied to commercial uses rather than only in the academic settings we are normally exposed to. We also collaborated with the Neuroscience Association for Undergraduate Students (NAUS) on their 12th annual Canadian Undergraduate Life Sciences Competition (CULSC), where students from various universities competed in a Jeopardy-style game that tested their life science knowledge. Congrats to the winners and everyone that participated, and our thanks to NAUS for putting the whole event together!

We're excited to let you know about our plans for March! First off, we will be holding our 2nd Mentorship Meetup for all mentors and mentees in IMMSA's Mentorship Program. This Meetup will be focused on helping students understand how to find and secure research positions, so be sure to check it out! We will also be continuing our work on developing Immunology merch in collaboration with the Immunology Graduate Students' Association (IGSA) - keep your eyes peeled for emails asking you to submit a design and eventually vote for the winning design. Finally, we will continue to host academic research seminars - this month, we're considering a seminar on neuroimmunology, immunology techniques, or clinical immunology so be sure to stay tuned for that!

We hope everyone had a chance to relax, recover, and reset over Reading Week, and we look forward to seeing you at our events! If you want to contact us, you can email us at immsa.immunology@gmail.com or DM us on Instagram (@immsta) and Facebook (@immsa.uoft).

Best,
Kunal K. & Shaivy T.
2021/22 IMMSA Co-Presidents



Scienista STEM Conference – March 19th, 2022

On March 19th, 2022, Scienista is having annual conference virtually through the [gather town](#) platform. This free conference will include a series of STEM workshops, panels, keynote speeches, and Q & A sections. There are guest speakers from a variety of backgrounds, including multiple U of T professors. Please visit the link below for more details.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NpouSUwUL1Z8NhOyG81UQZBfa1gEEeXJfBdEo55cz4s/edit>

PUBLICATIONS

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