

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, DR. JUAN CARLOS ZUNIGA-PFLUCKER

About every five to six years, typically timed to a chair's end of term, our Department and its academic programs undergo a full program review as part of the University's Quality Assurance Process (UQAP), which ensures that the University of Toronto operates in conformity with the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for the Province of Ontario. Accreditation wheels must keep turning.

I recently shared with you our cyclical Self-Study report, and I hope that you had a chance to read all >300 pages and see how and what we have done over the last 5 years. This was all in preparation of our external review taking place next week, March 8-9. I look forward to the reviewers' assessment and recommendations for the future.

Speaking of things to come, I hope you will all be able to attend to the upcoming Immunology Town Hall events, during which we will hear from the two short-listed candidates vying to become the next of Chair of Immunology at UofT. I encourage you participate and provide your feedback to the moderators and/or search committee members. Details are listed below.

My best wishes go to all our 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD graduate students, as they put together their qualifying exam proposals. Also, my thanks go to all our faculty members for giving so much of their time to participate in the review and examination process.

I also wanted to update you on our search for a new Business Officer for the Department, we have shortlisted a few candidates for interviews. I hope to have someone to introduce to the Department in the next Newsletter, and before our next Faculty meeting on April 3.

Lastly, best wishes to all writing CIHR grants.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### CHARLES GOULD EASTON SEMINARS (Mondays at 11:05 am, MSB 2170)

**Monday, March 6, 2023**

[Dr. Francisco Javier Quintana](#)

[Professor of Neurology,](#)  
[Centre for Neurologic Diseases](#)  
[Brigham and Women's Hospital](#)  
[Harvard Medical School](#)

**"Novel insights on the regulation of CNS inflammation"**

Host: Jen Gommerman, PhD

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**Monday, March 20, 2023**

[Dr. Greg M. Delgoffe](#)

[Associate Professor, Department of Immunology](#)  
[Director, Tumor Microenvironment Center](#)  
[University of Pittsburgh](#)

**"Metabolic control of T cell differentiation"**

Host: Tracy McGaha, PhD

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**Monday, March 27, 2023**

[Dr. Paul G. Thomas](#)

[Immunology Department](#)  
[Comprehensive Cancer Center](#)  
[St. Jude Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences](#)

**"Deconstructing the form and function of T cell responses"**

Host: Tania Watts, PhD



## IMMUNOLOGY SPECIAL SEMINAR

Tuesday, March 7, 2023  
9:00 -10:00 via Zoom

Dr. Annette Kuehn

Principal Investigator  
Team 'Molecular & Translational Allergology'  
Department of Infection and Immunity  
Luxembourg Institute of Health, Luxembourg

"Allergy update – IgE signatures in epidemiology and immune signatures in acute events"

Host: Thomas Eiwegger, PhD

## PhD RESEARCH SEMINAR

Tuesday, March 7, 2023  
11:00-12:00 via Zoom

Lisa Hung

PhD Candidate

**Development of a Human Precision Cut Intestinal Slice Model of Acute IgE-Mediated Food Allergy**

Supervisor: Thomas Eiwegger, PhD

## MARCH STUDENT SEMINARS

(Mondays, 10:00 a.m. at MSB 2172)

March 6, 2023	
Michelle Cheung (Watts Lab)	Miki Gams (Guidos Lab)
March 13, 2023	
Ksenia Meteleva (Ohashi Lab)	Manjula Kamath (Mallevaey/ Zúñiga-Pflücker Labs)
March 27, 2023	
Melissa Liu (Brooks Lab)	Zhewei Liu (Mallevaey Lab)

## Townhalls – Chair Search for the Department of Immunology MSB 3153 and Zoom

March 15, 2023 8:30-10:00 a.m.	March 16, 2023 9:30-11:00 a.m.
<p><b>Prof. Jennifer Gommerman</b> Department of Immunology, University of Toronto</p> <p><b>"Investigating mucosal B cells in infection and CNS autoimmunity"</b></p>	<p><b>Prof. Boris Reizis</b> Department of Pathology, Samuel A. Brown Professor of Medicine, New York University</p> <p><b>"Dendritic cells in immunity and autoimmunity"</b></p>



## Event Reminder

- Department Review – March 8 & 9, 2023
- No Easton seminar on March 13.
- DOI Faculty meeting -April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 2:00 pm, In-Person at Faculty Club.

## UPDATE FROM THE W.I.D.E. COMMITTEE

Happy March, everyone! We're not sure which groundhog we should believe (RIP, Fred La Marmotte!) but it's been lovely to see the days getting longer, and we hope everyone is doing well.

This month we would like to recognize and commemorate several days of importance.

- On **March 8th** we wish the DoI a **Happy International Women's Day!** On this day we celebrate the social, political, cultural, economic and scientific achievements of cis and trans-women. Did you know the Department of Immunology has 31 female faculty members?
- We wish everyone a **Happy Iranian New Year on March 20th!** We celebrate this special day – Nowruz – with over 300,000 million others all other the World. Enjoy some sabzi polo, fesenjan and senjed at some of Toronto's amazing Persian restaurants:  
[https://www.blogto.com/toronto/the\\_best\\_persian\\_restaurants\\_in\\_toronto/](https://www.blogto.com/toronto/the_best_persian_restaurants_in_toronto/)
- On **March 21st** we will observe the **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.** This day we remember the 69 people who lost their lives to South African police forces while peacefully protesting apartheid Pass laws in Sharpeville, South Africa. Pass laws required black South Africans over the age of 16 to carry an internal passport, designed to limit the movement of black citizens and segregate the population. To learn more about the history of this day visit:  
<https://humanrights.ca/story/sharpeville-massacre>
- **Ramadan Mubarek** to all of IMM-WIDE's Muslim friends on **March 22nd!** We wish everyone a fulfilling month of fasting, and hope you all enjoy wonderful iftars with your loved ones. Learn about all the prayer spaces on the University of Toronto campus here: <http://www.uoftmsa.com/community-resources.html>
- On **March 25th** we will remember the victims of slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. IMM-WIDE honours those who suffered and lost their lives, and the more than 15 million victims. Slave trades are not a relic of the past – learn more about modern slaves & how we can impact change here:  
<https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>
- **March 31st is the International Trans Day of Visibility!** IMM-WIDE celebrates with all of our trans friends. On this day we will remember Ben Barres, the first openly transgender member of the National Academy of Sciences. Whether you are LGBTQAI2S or an ally, it is never a bad time to stay informed about gender identities & terminologies! Have a look at this gender terminology guide:  
<https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20Terminology%20Guide.pdf>

We'd also like to remind the DoI's graduate students, faculty, and staff that we have arranged for full paid memberships to the **Headspace app** – click these links to sign up, and please email Kate at [graduate.immunology@utoronto.ca](mailto:graduate.immunology@utoronto.ca) if you have any questions: [Grad students](#) / [Faculty&Staff](#)

Wishing you all a peaceful, productive, and pleasant month!

-Your WIDE Committee



## UPDATES FROM IGSA

Hello fellow Immunologists!

March is considered to be the official start of spring, but the weather seems just as gloomy as ever. Luckily, you'll be able to keep warm (and fashionable!) with some brand-new pieces from our very own department swag collection! Thank you to all those who submitted entries for our IMM Design Competition, and please look forward to seeing them featured in a department-wide poll. Remember to mark your calendars! Voting for your favorite design will begin in the first half of March, while apparel orders will follow closer to the end of the month.

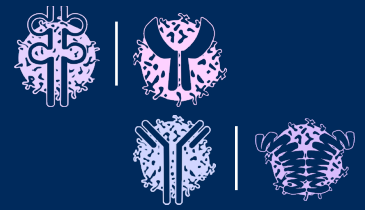
In addition to the apparel sales, we are also looking forward to hosting another mentor-mentee coffee chat on Thursday, March 2nd at the MSB! There will be free food and good vibes along with a mini-advice panel to help you with any questions related to transitioning to grad school, qualifying exams, personal health and wellness, project management etc. This will be a great opportunity for first-year students to meet with their own mentors as well as other upper year students. Even if you only come for the food, we definitely recommend everyone to attend!

Late March will also mark the end of our winter intramural sports season, so we'll end off with a pub night to congratulate our fellow athletes for their hard work over these past few months! More information on the event will follow closer to the date, but definitely look forward to an unforgettable night out with fellow teammates and sports lovers as you bond over shared memories of a season well played. And last but not least, the moment you've all been waiting for: THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PUB NIGHT! As one of our largest annual departmental events, there's nothing better than drinking all your worries away as part of this classic and well-celebrated tradition. Wear a green shirt or a shamrock hat to demonstrate your Irish spirit at the only event of the year where literally nothing is expected of you except for you to drink until you can drink no more. We've got a pot of gold saved up at the end of the rainbow to make sure this event is a lively one - but remember, everyone is responsible for their own ride home.

This will be a busy month as preparations for PhD qualifying exams and MSc final presentations truly get underway. We hope that, even amidst the chaos of everyday life, you can all take a moment to come out and have fun with us together.

Kind regards,

Bobby and Meggie  
IGSA Co-Presidents 2022-2023



## UPDATE FROM IMMSA

Hi Immunologists,

We hope everyone had a great reading week and got a chance to relax and recover with family and friends.

Thank you to those who came to our February events despite the cold! We hope you guys got to chill and relax at our movie night with pizzas. We also hope the speakers at our program selection seminar were helpful in providing suggestions on program selection, post-grad career, research, and more. Feel free to message us if you have more academic-related questions!

Other than our monthly events, we also appreciate those who submitted logos for our new apparel. We would like everyone to vote on your favorite logo design (deadline is Saturday, March. 11th) and we are excited to see what our final apparel looks like! In addition, we would like to promote OQUIC 2023 again. If you have done or are currently doing immunology-related research, please submit your abstracts here: <https://forms.gle/EPuj7f5QjVagrgQJ6> ! You will get to present your research in front of students and researchers across Canada. This is a great chance for you to practice your presentation skills, interact with judges, and win cash prizes! This event will be held in-person on St George campus from May 6th to 7th, with more details coming soon. We look forward to your submissions!

This month, we will be holding another research seminar, where professors and researchers will share their stories and experiences. They are open to answer any questions you have, so don't be shy to ask. They are NOT monsters! Besides that, we will also hold an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion seminar, where LGBTQOUT, Canada's oldest LGBTQ2S+ student group, will be invited to provide information on the history of LGBTQ2S+. Even though this is not closely related to immunology, we believe this event is important in addressing a topic that deserves more attention. Students will learn to embrace different identities and cultivate well-being. We look forward to seeing everyone at our events!

Cheers,

Vicky Xie and Momo Lin

IMMSA Co-presidents 2022-2023 Immunology Students' Association (IMMSA) Co-Presidents 2022/23

Website: <http://immsauoft.com> | Instagram: @immsta



## Publications

(for January 2023, as indexed by webofscience.com on February 27, 2023)

Aker A, Serghides L, Cotnam J, Jackson R, Robinson M, Gauvin H, Mushquash C, Gesink D, Amirault M, Benoit AC. The impact of a stress management intervention including cultural components on stress biomarker levels and mental health indicators among indigenous women. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. Online ahead of print.

Tilstra G, Couture-Senecal J, Lau YMA, Manning AM, Wong DSM, Janaeska WW, Wuraola TA, Pang JNC, Khan OF. Iterative Design of Ionizable Lipids for Intramuscular mRNA Delivery. *Journal of the American Chemical Society*. Online ahead of print.

Shvartsman E, Perciani CT, Richmond MEI, Russell JNH, Tough RH, Vancuren SJ, Hill JE, Jaoko W, McKinnon LR, Sandstrom PA, MacDonald KS. 2023. Gardnerella subgroup dominant microbiomes are associated with divergent cervicovaginal immune responses in a longitudinal cohort of Kenyan women. *Frontiers in Immunology*. **13**.

Massimo M, Barelli C, Moreno C, Collesi C, Holloway RK, Crespo B, Zentilin L, Williams A, Miron VE, Giacca M, Long KR. Haemorrhage of human foetal cortex associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection. *Brain*. Online ahead of print.

Liu RC, Armstrong E, Constable S, Buchanan LB, Mohammadi A, Galiwango RM, Huibner S, Perry MC, Prodger JL, Coburn B, Kaul R. 2023. Soluble E-cadherin: A marker of genital epithelial disruption. *American Journal of Reproductive Immunology*. **89(3)**.

Steele EJ, Gorczynski RM, Lindley RA, Wickramasinghe NC. Natural Antibodies and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2-Specific Antibodies in Healthy Asymptomatic Individuals. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. Online ahead of print.

Shiau S, Jacobson DL, Huo YL, Kacanek D, Yee LM, Williams DB, Haddad LB, Serghides L, Powis K, Sperling RS, Williams PL, Jao J. Unique Profile of Inflammation and Immune Activation in Pregnant People with HIV in the United States. *Journal of Infectious Diseases*. Online ahead of print.

Liu YL, Chen JJ, Raj K, Baerg L, Nathan N, Philpott DJ, Mahadevan R. A Universal Strategy to Promote Secretion of G plus JG- Bacterial Extracellular Vesicles and Its Application in Host Innate Immune Responses. *ACS Synthetic Biology*. Online ahead of print.

Golzari-Sorkheh M, Weaver DF, Reed MA. 2023. COVID-19 as a Risk Factor for Alzheimer's Disease. *Journal of Alzheimers Disease*. **91(1):1-23**.

Fang KKL, Lee JB, Zhang L. 2023. Adoptive Cell Therapy for T-Cell Malignancies. *Cancers*. **15(1)**.



Al Olabi R, Hendy AE, Alkassab MB, Alnajm K, Elias M, Ibrahim M, Carlyle JR, Makrigiannis AP, Rahim MMA. 2023. The inhibitory NKR-P1B receptor regulates NK cell-mediated mammary tumor immunosurveillance in mice. *Oncoimmunology*. **12(1)**.