

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

The 2020 Fall Term is nearly over, and I know it has been a unique experience, to say the very least, for all students, staff and faculty alike, but likely even more so for our first-year graduate students and our 4th year research project undergrads, as they start their journey as future leaders in Immunology. One thing is certain, we will all emerge with stronger resilience and increased capacity to succeed under any circumstance; plus, as a bonus, we have all become experts on how to use Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate on Quercus.

We have heard good news coming from the vaccine front, which further highlights the importance of research in immunology. Together with the efforts of our own immunology community in Toronto, I am encouraged about the upcoming new year. Having gained a 20/20 vision of the past year, there is clear-eyed optimism that 2021 will be a better one.

I am sure that we are all looking forward to our upcoming Immunology Holiday Party, and a safe and restful break in late December. With this in mind, I want to remind all to send in your nominations for the Miller and Cinader awards.

It is important that we continue to recognize and celebrate the excellence and achievements attained by our students. I encourage all our faculty to remind their trainees how wonderful it is to work with them and share the joy of discoveries in immunology.

My best wishes to all for the upcoming holiday season.

UPCOMING EVENTS

IMMUNOLOGY DEPARTMENT HOLIDAY PARTY

Thursday, December 10, 2020 6pm – 9pm

EASTON SEMINARS – Zoom Webinar – 11:00-noon

December 7, 2020

"How the microbiome shapes the intestinal immune response"

Timothy Hand, PhD

Host: Jennifer Gommerman, PhD

December 14, 2020

"Transposon molecular domestication and the evolution of the RAG recombinase"

David Schatz, PhD

Host: Alberto Martin, PhD

STUDENT SEMINARS – Quercus - 10:00-11:00

December 7, 2020

The role of autocrine type I interferon in Chronic lymphocytic leukemia

Yu Xuan Luo (Spaner Lab)

Hypoxic and Aryl Hydrocarbon Receptor Signalling in Pancreatic Cancer

Luke Neufeld (McGaha Lab)

December 14, 2020

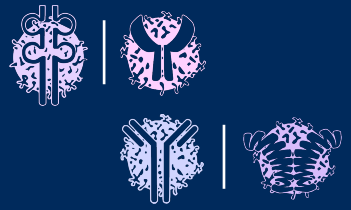
Macrophage-Epithelial Barrier Crosstalk through BMP2 production

Louis Ngai (Mortha Lab)

title TBD

Kyle Reid (Crome Lab)





GRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATES

Committee Meetings

2nd year PhD students are reminded to complete their second committee meeting by December 31, 2020. [Committee Meeting form](#) and [Qualifying Exam Planning form](#) should be submitted to Kate as soon as possible after the meeting.

Graduate Admissions

Applications to our graduate programs are now being accepted. Deadlines are as follows:

PhD in Fundamental Immunology & MSc in Applied Immunology (Standard Entry) – September 2021 Start

Application Fee: January 1, 2021

Application Documents: January 15, 2021

MSc in Applied Immunology (Advanced Standing) - May 2021 Start

Application Fee: February 15, 2021

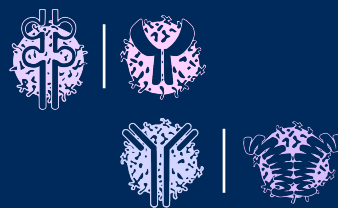
Application Documents: March 1, 2021

FEATURED CAMPUS RESOURCE

New Student Mental Health Portal <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>

UofT has many programs and services available but students don't always know where to find them. This website has a robust search and filter function that allows students to match their needs with the many types of supports available through the University and its community partners.





IGSA

Dear Immunologists,

The last stretch of 2020 has certainly been a challenging time for all as we continue to adapt to the changing weather, shorter daylight hours and growing concerns for the COVID-19 pandemic. With the holiday season approaching us, we understand that being unable to engage in festivities and gather with family and friends is an unexpected and disheartening reality to accept. Despite these circumstances, we can still find joy in the little things in our daily lives and faith in reminding ourselves of the strength and determination that we've shown over the past year.

The IGSA team has been working hard to ensure that 'tis will still be the season to be jolly by providing various events throughout November and December that are both festive and supportive of student concerns and needs, including:

- A second virtual advice panel hosted by our student mentors, where we tackled important questions about transitioning to graduate life such as balancing coursework with research, feelings of imposter syndrome and more.
- A virtual Wine and Games night in lieu of our traditional Wine and Cheese night party, where we played several rounds of Among Us.
- Our upcoming Gingerbread House making event on December 4th, where students will have the opportunity to build their own gingerbread house (virtually). Proceeds from the event will be going toward a charity chosen by the participants.
- Our Holiday Movie Night on December 17th.

Separately, programming for various outreach and wellness initiatives has been taking place (virtually!) to enrich our student community and the next generation of Immunologists:

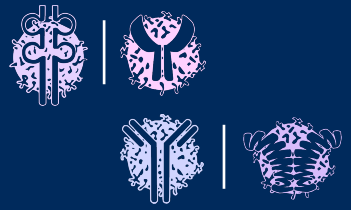
- The Graduate Peer Support Network (GPSN), a health and wellness program funded by the GLSE, hosted an Identify, Assist and Refer+ Mental Health webinar to equip students on how to effectively support peers experiencing challenges with mental health and wellness.
- Graduate students from both of IGSA's affiliated outreach programs, IMMspire and Immunology Day, delivered Immunology-themed content to high school science classes across the GTA on vaccines, antibiotics, and more!

For the month of December, our student leaders will be delivering a host of events to truly spread warmth, love and holiday spirit. This is a vital time of the year for all of us to vigilantly support our peers that need a little bit more support and friendship. For many, the implementation of stringent lockdown measures will once again bring upon feelings of distress, and loneliness; however, IGSA is dedicated towards ensuring that our students can find solace in the community we continue to foster.

We hope to see you all (virtually) at our annual Holiday Party on December 10th, 2020!
As always, please take care to stay safe, healthy, and resilient.

Anthony Wong and Rashi Gupta
IGSA Co-Presidents 2020-21





IMMSA

Hello everyone!

Thank you to all the students that came to our games night and our AI and Machine Learning in Biological Research seminar with Dr. Benjamin DiFrancesco from Cyclica! We hope that you learned a lot about how new technology can aid in the development of drug research, as well as a new career pathway after obtaining a PhD.

We have started to personally deliver apparel orders and we are trying our best to adhere to social distancing protocols as we do so. We hope to eventually be able to contact all available students in Toronto to pick up their order from us in the coming weeks if they would like to.

As the semester comes to a close, we would like to gather feedback from students about how they feel that the IMM courses were run online in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand that this has been a difficult transition to being online, and would like to provide an opportunity to express your thoughts more freely, in comparison to the typical course evaluation. We hope to use this information and discuss with the faculty about how courses can be improved as a whole for the winter semester. You can fill out this survey here: <https://forms.gle/Jrsm1pEPN6CqKZSJ7>.

Thank you to all who came to our events and participated in our raffles this semester. The winner of the one-on-one virtual coffee chat with an immunology professor will be contacted by email. We are glad to see so much interest in getting to know the professors! We are looking forward to seeing you in our events next year.

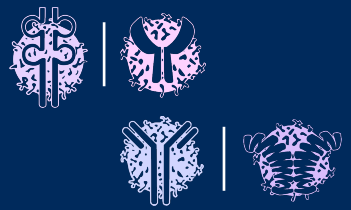
Good luck on your exams and happy holidays!

Anita Tia and Phoebe Liu

IMMSA 2020-2021 Co-presidents

<http://immsauoft.com> | [@immstauoft](https://www.instagram.com/immstauoft) | [http://facebook.com/IMMSA.UofT](https://www.facebook.com/IMMSA.UofT)





PUBLICATIONS

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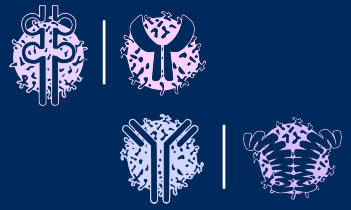
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