Message from the Head

Welcome to the May edition of the newsletter - I hope you are all coping with the continued quarantine. As I previously noted, immense thanks go to Quentin for standing in as an interim Head and for Chloe for helping to ensure the smooth running of the Department. Equally, as noted by Quentin in the last newsletter, we are living in extraordinary times. While many terrible things are happening around the world, with considerable loss of life, suffering and economic hardship, there is little doubt that we fall into an extremely lucky, and privileged group. At present, our jobs are secure and to a large extent, we continue to work. Equally, it is salient to remember that, to a very large extent, we are paid by Canadian taxpayers, to whom we owe a service, a service that is primarily paid by research and teaching. In the current climate, the COVID-19 pandemic shines a spotlight on the value of science and research. We need to ensure that we play our roles to the fullest extent possible. As the COVID crisis unfolded in Canada, I believe that all our staff involved in education may hold their heads high. I don’t think that there was even a pause in the delivery of our teaching. Our undergraduates will all be completing their degrees, essentially without hitch. Likewise, disruption to post-graduate teaching, while possibly more affected due to need for laboratory access is still continuing and, I believe, should not unduly impact on the ability of students to graduate largely on time. These are major successes that are in no small part due to many members of this department. This speaks to the dedication of those individuals. These often untold successes depended on the input of very many departmental members who just got on with their roles. They know who they are, they deserve our thanks.

Research: While the labs remain ostensibly shut, many of you are now involved in COVID-related research projects. We saw a large number of applications going into CIHR and many other sources of COVID funding are also available. These applications are to be encouraged. Related to this, many labs are now conducting COVID-related research. If you believe that you have a relevant research project, please visit the CSM webpages to complete a Critical Research Designation. Ensure that you provide a clear rationale and ensure that staffing is kept to a minimum and that safety is paramount. Lab-based projects that meet the applicable criteria are currently being allowed to progress. While, this could change, I feel that there is some hope that we could see some loosening of restrictions in the coming weeks/months. Various countries, provinces and states are starting the process of returning to work.

Hardship: Notwithstanding comments above, some labs may have particular circumstances that require special attention. Examples may include research and study leave that was interrupted, or about to commence, funding that has not been extended, or otherwise falls through the cracks. Please ensure that you let me know. I’m not promising anything, but will certainly try to help.

Faculty Association Department Representative: I would like to remind you all that we are currently seeking nominations for our Faculty Association Department Representative. We cannot stress enough the importance of this role. They provide the Association with valuable input and feedback on a wide range of issues important to academic staff and provide two-way communication essential in fulfilling the Association’s bargaining function. If you are willing, please reach out.

Summer students: May heralds the influx of summer students to our labs, and I welcome all the new trainees who have joined us. This year brings with it the challenge of onboarding when many have limited or no access to their labs. Dry projects and education seem to be
Trainee Corner

COVID19 Volunteer Opportunities
https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/volunteer

Funding
ACHRI: Graduate and PDF funding deadline extended to May 15th

For further information, visit:
https://researchkids.ucalgary.ca/trainees/current-trainees/funding

ACHRI Trainee Small Research Grants
Eligibility: Open to trainees of ACHRI members
Award Amount: Up to $3,000
Deadline: May 15, 2020, 5 PM
HBI:
HBI Graduate Recruitment Scholarship in Neuroscience
Deadline: May 15
Open to MSc and PhD trainees under the supervision of a full member of the HBI.

BRAIN CREATE Graduate Scholarship
Deadline: May 15
Open to MSc and PhD trainees under the supervision of a full member of the HBI.
Research project must involve the development of neurotechnologies and have a potential commercial spinoff.

Donald Burns and Louise Berlin Graduate Awards in Dementia Research
Deadline: May 15
Open to MSc and PhD trainees in dementia research.

HBI International Graduate Recruitment Scholarship
Deadline: May 15
Open to international PhD trainees under the supervision of a full member of the HBI.

Harley N. Hotchkiss Doctoral Scholarship in Neuroscience
Deadline: May 15
Open to PhD trainees under the supervision of a full member of the HBI.

Libin:
PDF and graduate scholarships deadline May 15th
For further information, visit:
https://libin.ucalgary.ca/education/prizes-scholarships

UPCOMING EVENTS

Conducting health research during COVID-19: Challenges and solutions for leadership and productivity.
Join CIHR on Wednesday May 13 at 11am ET for a Spark:Live panel moderated by Dr. Christine Chambers. Panelists include early career investigators Dr. Peter Gill, and Dr. Kristin

PHYSPHARM ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to Dr. Gerald Zamponi who received the 2020 CSM Alumni of Distinction Award. While the ceremony was cancelled due to the pandemic, we would still like to celebrate him for his contributions to research, education and service to the community.

Congrats to Dr. John Wallace who was named among the Top 10 Innovators you Need to Know by MaRS Magazine.

Congrats to Renata L. Krüger from the Poulin lab, who was awarded a CIHR Postdoctoral Fellowship.

Congratulations to Erik Bernardes et al. from the Arrieta lab for the publication of his paper in Nature Communications.

Congrats to Emily Mercer from the Arrieta lab, who received a CIHR Canada graduate scholarship.

Congrats to Shirin Moossavi, from the Arrieta lab, who received a CIHR postdoctoral fellowship.

Congrats to Larissa Perico from the MacNaughton lab. Larissa was awarded a CIHR-CAG fellowship.

Congratulations to Marcus Tso from the Phillips lab for receiving the CIHR CGS.

Congrats to Ciaran Murphy-Royal from the Bains and Gordon lab for the publication of his paper in Nature Communications.