

# TRAINEE NEWS from the Desjardins Centre for Advanced Training of the RI-MUHC

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2016

events, announcements and news for graduate students and postdocs at the RI-MUHC



## NEWS



### The RI-MUHC's first ever Career Half-Day for trainees was held on Friday, September 9, 2016 (9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.)

Approximately 90 trainees attended a workshop in the morning offered by Dr. Colin White of White Consulting. The interactive workshop helped trainees think about the ways that they **network** and make **professional connections**, and helped them **perfect their professional statements** for their CV or resume. **Ninety-six percent** of trainees who completed an evaluation agreed that they would be able to **put what they learned to immediate use**, and **eighty-eight percent** would attend **similar workshops** in the future.

In the afternoon, trainees took to the atrium along with twenty representatives from business, industry, academia, and government for a **two-hour networking lunch**. Trainees participated to roundtable discussions with professionals about their work and about career development. Representatives who attended had **very positive feedback about their conversations with trainees and the potential of trainees to transition to non-academic work**. Being that some trainees felt they weren't able to speak with all the professionals that they would have liked to, it's likely that we will adjust this format and make the networking part of the day even more integral next year.

Thank you to all the trainees who participated and took advantage of this wonderful opportunity; your active participation made this event a huge success!

Hope to see you at next year's Career Half-Day!



## EVENTS

### Cooperathon: Collaborative solutions for today's most pressing health challenges

[Hacking Health Montreal](#) would like to invite you to participate in their largest event yet, the Cooperathon, organized in partnership with Desjardins. Together, interdisciplinary teams of developers, designers, healthcare professionals, academics and business people will create solutions to today's most pressing health challenges. The format is designed to reward team spirit and alliances with the community just as much as it does innovative ideas.

It is an ideal activity for research trainees who wish to expand their skillsets, as it is the perfect introduction to entrepreneurship and a great way to develop business and networking skills in a collaborative and friendly environment.

There are so many ways that you can participate – launch a project idea, float a problem or solution in healthcare, join a team, or collaborate. The cost of participation is as little as 15\$ for participation to all the events.

Get inspired by visiting this [website](#) to see some of the previous projects undertaken at Hacking Health events.

To register: <http://www.cooperathon.com/>

**EVENTS****CAREER EXPLORATION FOR HEALTH SCIENTISTS: A TO Z  
Peer Career Groups (PCG)**

**If you missed the information session on Peer Career Groups but you still want to register, do so by October 4th, 2016!**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/peercareergroups>

The Peer Career Groups (PCG) program provides an opportunity to explore self and career from A to Z. Similar group coaching programs offered by private career counselors cost almost \$1000. Our program, offered by CaPS and D-CAT, is FREE for McGill students and fellows. Over the 6 months in the program you will:

- Actively engage in self-reflection through structured exercises to reveal individual strengths, values and interests
- Engage in individual activities and discuss your progress in peer triads (we will match you with peers who are similar in terms of training and goals).
- Participate in 5 workshops designed to introduce the next stage of work you will do on your own and with your triads.
- Work with a small group of peers to foster a supportive network for discussing individual strengths, values, and interests to gain additional insights and perspectives.
- Obtain information about a variety of career paths both through independent research and networking with PCG participants.

**Only those participants who are committed to the program should register, you will be required to attend all workshops with some exceptions.**

**TRAINEE KUDOS****Barbara Rivera, PhD  
Postdoctoral fellow**

Supervisor: [Dr. William Foulkes](#); [Cancer Research Program](#)

Dr. Barbara Rivera characterized the previously mysterious entity, dysembryoplastic neuroepithelial tumour (DNET), in collaboration with Dr. Nada Jabado's laboratory. Her tireless pursuit of fundamental tumorigenic mechanisms resulted this year in a first-author publication in the top pathology journal, *Acta Neuropathologica*. In 2015 she was first author on a research letter in the journal *NEJM* and fourth on a paper reporting the discovery of RECQL as a new breast cancer susceptibility gene in *Nature Genetics*. She contributed to an original article on mosaic DICER1 mutations (*JMG*).

**George Kefalas  
Master of Science student**

Supervisor: [Dr. Louise Larose](#) ; [Experimental Therapeutics and Metabolism Program](#)

George Kefalas has been awarded scholarships from Diabète Québec, the FRQS and CIHR to study the interaction between the adaptor protein Nck1 and protein kinase PERK in the pancreatic beta cell. His project aims to test the hypothesis that preventing the Nck1/PERK interaction will improve pancreatic beta cell function and resilience to diabetes-related stress. Novel findings from this project may guide clinical care, decrease the need of multiple donors for efficient transplantation and inspire effective pharmacological strategies to prevent pancreatic beta cell failure in diabetes.

## MCGILL EVENTS TO HIGHLIGHT

### **Advance your library research skills**

**MyResearch** is a series of workshops tailored to graduate and postdoctoral students. It consists of four modules.

\* *MyResearch* is offered by the McGill Library in collaboration with Skillsets; Pre-registration is required

#### [MyResearch - Module 1: EndNote Essentials](#)

**Tuesday, October 18, 2016, 10 a.m.**

McLennan e-classroom (main floor), McLennan Library Building

#### [MyResearch - Module 2: Graduate Research Tool Kit](#)

**Thursday, October 20, 2016, 10 a.m.**

McLennan e-classroom (main floor), McLennan Library Building

#### [MyResearch - Module 3: Search Strategies & Techniques](#)

**Tuesday, October 25, 2016, 10 a.m.**

McLennan e-classroom (main floor), McLennan Library Building

#### [MyResearch - Module 4: Getting Your Research Out](#)

**Thursday, October 27, 2016, 10 a.m.**

McLennan e-classroom (main floor), McLennan Library Building

### **Intellectual Property - Introduction and Case Study**

**Friday, October 14, 2016, 12:30 p.m.**

Concordia University, John Molson Building, S2.285 (1450 Guy Street)

[REGISTER HERE>>](#) *10 spots available - first-come, first-served basis (for all of McGill)*

This workshop is offered by the Canadian Intellectual Property Office, and is delivered by an experienced Patent Agent and Lawyer. The workshop offers an overview of intellectual property and patent rights, and includes the following case study discussion.

#### *Case Study : John Thomson - How to market an invention*

John Thomson is a young entrepreneur and community college graduate. He owns and operates a glass recycling business. He designed a machine — the SuperSorter — that sorts glass by colour before it is crushed and recycled. John's invention will make the glass-sorting process cheaper and increase the profits for his business. John believes the SuperSorter has world-wide market potential and would like to commercialize it. He is seeking advice from the Office of Applied Research of his former college on how best to protect and commercialize the invention.

## FURTHER READING

[Your personal marketing plan \(Science Careers\)](#)

[Advice for aspiring academics \(Inside Higher Ed\)](#)

**TRAINEE KUDOS****Sarah Konefal**  
**Doctoral student**Supervisor: [Dr. David Stellwagen](#); [Brain Repair and Integrative Neuroscience Program](#)

Sarah Konefal has been investigating how an inflammatory signal from microglia minimizes the synaptic and behavioural changes induced by cocaine in a mouse model of addiction. Her findings demonstrate a novel adaptive function for microglia in the brain and provide an avenue for developing therapeutics for drug addiction. This work was published in the journal *Neuron*, and she has presented her work at international conferences in Chicago, USA, and Bilbao, Spain, as well as within the McGill community.

**Vikram Mehraj, PhD**  
**Postdoctoral fellow**Supervisor: [Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy](#); [Infectious Diseases and Immunity in Global Health Program](#)

Focusing on immune activation in HIV infection, Dr. Vikram Mehraj has been highly productive during his two-year fellowship at the RI-MUHC. His research under Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy has led to four first-author and several co-author publications in high-impact journals. Recent accolades include: FRQS Postdoctoral Award; Young Investigator Award at the prestigious Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (Boston, USA); and Best Poster Award at the International Symposium on HIV and Emerging Infectious Diseases (Marseille, France). He is keen to continue his work towards an HIV cure.

**Esterina D'Asti, Ph.D.**  
**Postdoctoral fellow**Supervisor: [Dr. Janusz Rak](#); [Child Health and Human Development Program](#)

Dr. Esterina D'Asti deserves recognition for her productivity, independence, scientific maturity and exceptional abilities. In 2015 she obtained her doctorate after five years in Dr. Janusz Rak's laboratory and produced four publications. Since 2010 she has published 13 papers and one chapter currently in press. On eight manuscripts she was first author. She has singlehandedly initiated a research stream focusing on the role of microRNA in the formation of the vascular microenvironment in brain tumours and has developed the required assays, model systems and concepts.

**Priyanka Sehgal, PhD**  
**Postdoctoral fellow**Supervisor: [Dr. Anie Philip](#); [Injury Repair Recovery Program](#)

Dr. Priyanka Sehgal's supervisor ranks her among the top five per cent of McGill postdoctoral fellows for intellectual ability, analytical and technical skills, and superior talent in presenting at scientific meetings. In 2015 she won first prizes for oral presentations at the Experimental Surgery Research Day and Departmental Fraser Gurd Day (McGill University) and second prize at the Canadian Skin Research Group Meeting (University of Laval). She has co-authored several recent and pending publications, now focusing on the role of CD109 in breast and skin cancer.

**For more information contact:**

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