



MOGEN NEWS

FALL 2023 | ISSUE 19

Welcome to the 19th edition of MoGenNews!

We are excited to welcome a total of 120 students into our department this year. This includes 75 MSc/PhD graduate students, 23 MHS Sc Medical Genomics students, 6 MSc Genetic Counselling students, and 16 third-year undergraduate genetics specialists.

To get things started for the new academic year, we have several activities planned. They include the departmental retreat in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Barbara Vivash Award recipient talks on September 21, and a series of enriching MoGen Seminars.

Over the Summer, we held the 8th Annual Career Development Symposium and launched our newest partnership initiative, *MoGen Grad Talk Sessions*. Read about the key moments from these events below and see how they contributed to our department's growth by creating new networking and mentorship opportunities.

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURED ARTICLE

KYLE TURNER: MOGEN'S NEW LEARNING STRATEGIST

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- CRACKING EBV'S DEFENSE
- UNCOVERING COVID-19 ANTIBODY INSIGHTS
- CREATING A 'GOOGLE MAP' OF THE HUMAN BODY

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

CAPSTONE PRACTICUM SUCCESS WITH ALEX M.

SUMMER RECAP

- 2023 MOGEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM
- MOGEN GRAD TALK SESSIONS
- (GSA) GRAD STUDENT ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHTS

UPCOMING EVENTS AND UPDATES

In this issue, we are also excited to present a collection of stories that showcase the accomplishments of our Department of Molecular Genetics. Our research covers various topics, from studying viral defence mechanisms to analyzing COVID-19 antibody rates in Canada. We also feature Alex Margaritescu in our Student Spotlight, highlighting her transformative experience gained through the Capstone practicum. Furthermore, we interviewed our Learning Strategist, Kyle Turner, about how he plans to guide our graduate students toward success.

We wanted to take a moment to thank the contributors to this issue: Megan Fleming, Anika Hazra, Teresa Brooke-Lynn Coe, Alyssa Choi, Zoe Clarke, Martina Steiner, and Marcia Iglesias.

Stay connected with the latest in Molecular Genetics. Contact mogen.news@utoronto.ca to submit stories about events, awards, and research updates.

Warm regards,

The Editorial Team

Featured Article

Five Questions with Kyle Turner: MoGen's New Learning Strategist

As part of our efforts to improve the academic journey of our graduate students, we are excited to introduce Kyle Turner as our new Learning Strategist.



We asked him about his role and vision for enhancing the graduate student experience within the Department. Below are some key quotes:

What is a Learning Strategist?

"A Learning Strategist helps students develop and use academic skills. In a graduate context, these skills might involve time management, organization, goal setting, and proficiency in reading, writing, and presentation."

Who should come to talk to you? What can you help with?

"I'm here for all graduate students in our department, whether you've just

started or you're nearing graduation. I'm here to support students who feel like they're having trouble overcoming challenges or students who simply want to try some new strategies."

What are you hoping to achieve at MoGen?

"My overarching goal is to ensure that students always feel like there's someone they can reach out to. We have a great ecosystem of support here, and I want students to feel empowered to tap into what they need to be successful and happy during their time here."

What is your background?

"My background is originally in biology, though with a slightly different flavour: my undergrad and MSc were in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. I worked for several years as a tech and lab manager at U of T and Harvard, and I found that what I enjoyed most about those roles were the opportunities to work with grad students and support them through the inevitable ups and downs of their degrees. So I was thrilled when Molecular Genetics created this role."

What else do you want us to know?

"I'm not here to judge. I'm also not here to tell students what their goals should be or to steer them towards a particular career path. Working with me is a collaboration: We identify what you want to achieve and figure out what you could do to get there."

We are excited to have Kyle on our team. His dedication to supporting students and his collaborative approach make him an asset to the Department of Molecular Genetics. If you ever find yourself in need of guidance or simply want to chat, don't hesitate to reach out to Kyle at mogen.learning@utoronto.ca [Read the full answers here](#),

Research Highlights



Cracking EBV's Defence

Dr. Lori Frappier's Lab Reveals How Epstein-Barr virus evades cellular defences. [Their study](#), in PLOS Pathogens, uncovers EBV's strategy and insights into infection, which is vital

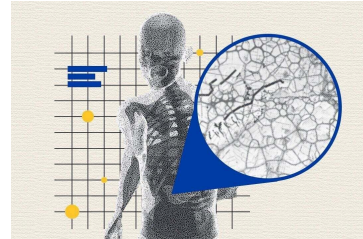
for combating EBV-related diseases.

U of T Molecular Genetics Researchers Uncover COVID-19 Antibody Insights

Kimberly Skead and Dr. Philip Awadalla, have revealed key findings about COVID-19 antibody rates in Canada. Based on CanPath data, their study emphasizes ongoing monitoring and adaptable strategies to navigate the evolving pandemic landscape. [Read more.](#)

Creating a 'Google Map' of the Human Body

U of T researchers, including Dr. Gary Bader from the Department of Molecular Genetics, are part of a [global initiative to create a "Google Map" of the human body](#), specifically as co-coordinators for the liver map.



Student Spotlight

From Capstone Practicum to Thriving Career: Alex Margaritescu's Success Story

Alex Margaritescu, a recent graduate of the M.H.Sc. in Medical Genomics program, highlights the transformative impact of a Capstone practicum. With her H.B.Sc. in



Biology from the University of Toronto, Alex discovered the Medical Genomics program's potential for real-world application. Interested in variant interpretation, she completed a practicum with Geneseeq Technology Incorporated, sharpening her skills and collaborating globally with other researchers. Her journey highlights the program's ability to shape careers and drive professional growth. [Learn how Alex's story highlights the Medical Genomics program's impact and her bright future at Geneseeq.](#)

Summer Recap: Events

MoGen Career Development Symposium 2023

The MoGen Career Development Symposium at Hart House was a huge hit, with 132 attendees participating in mentorship, networking, discussions, and 57 roundtable sessions. Dr. Erin Styles and Dr. Helen Sarantis gave keynote speeches and a diverse expert panel. [Read more.](#)



Recap: MoGen Grad Talk Sessions

The MoGen Grad Talk Info Sessions at the Medical Science Building and Donnelly Centre was led by various MoGen graduates, including Sina Fatehi, Ryan Marks, Sophie Karolczak, Yin Chen

Wan, Francis Lefebvre, and Chen Chen. These mentors shared their experiences and insights on different topics related to the Department of Molecular Genetics. The sessions called Summer Mentorship Program and STEAM-D are initiatives organized by Temerty Medicine's Office of Access and Outreach to promote health sciences among underrepresented communities.



Upcoming Events

18-Sep: MoGen Retreat 2023 - Queen's Landing in Niagara-on-the-Lake

21-Sep: Barbara Vivash Award - Recipient Talks

22-Sep: Guest Seminar - Dr. Brad Jones, Cornell University

25-Sep: MoGen Seminar Series - Tallullah Andrews, Univ. of Western Ontario

02-Oct: MoGen Seminar Series - Benjamin Tu, UT Southwestern

16-Oct: Faculty Workshop, CGMS, UofT MoGen PSME committee

23-Oct: MoGen Seminar Series - Eric Lai, Sloan Kettering

Visit our [website](#) for event listings.

Faculty, Staff and Award Announcements



MoGen Professor Emeritus Alan Bernstein Honoured with Order of Canada

Alan Bernstein, a professor emeritus in the Department of Molecular Genetics at Temerty Medicine, has been recognized with the Order of Canada. His vast leadership in Canadian health research and science policy, including his transformative roles at CIHR and CIFAR, has earned him the [Companion of the Order](#) title. Bernstein's commitment to help advance young scientists makes this recognition well-deserved.

We are Pleased to Announce Faculty Promotions

Julie Claycomb – Professor

Jeehye Park - Associate Professor

William Navarre – Professor

Eric Campos – Associate Professor

Hannes Röst – Associate Professor

Julie Lefebvre - Associate Professor

Erin Styles – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream

Jessica Hill – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream

Aaron Reinke – Associate Professor

Community News

Grad Student Association (GSA) Recap: A Summer Season of Activity and New Beginnings

MoGen students have had an eventful summer, starting with Science Rendezvous in May, where they engaged high school students in exciting lab activities. June brought the 8th Annual Career Symposium and a Computational Biology in Molecular Genetics (CBMG) social at RendezViews and June Recruitment Day welcomed potential students.

After a brief July hiatus, MoGen students returned with excitement for a Jays Game in August, complete with loonie hotdogs and an unforgettable boat cruise. Despite the Jays' loss, they still were able to celebrate the end of Summer.

With the new school year underway, the 2023 incoming class was warmly welcomed during September Orientation Day, featuring lab Olympics and a lively trivia pub night at Prenup. [Read more about GSA's Summer highlights!](#)



©2024 Molecular Genetics | 1 Kings College Circle, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A8, Canada

Like Tweet

Web Version

Preferences

Forward

Unsubscribe

Powered by **Mad Mimi**®
A GoDaddy® company