Dear Microbiology and Immunology members,

The start of 2013 is turning up to be a very challenging time. The financial situation with looming cuts in the order of $19.1 million from now until the end of April 2013 is a daunting challenge by itself. We, at MIMM Department have taken a proactive approach, taking this situation as an opportunity to revisit what we do, how we do it and how we can improve it. This exercise requires sharing of facts, engagement in information sessions and taking on a degree of activism to let our community know about the importance of McGill in the local, National and International arenas. In this context, the department has taken a leadership role in outreaching the community through the 13-to-1 campaign, to ask for support to prevent the financial cuts to Quebec universities. 13-to-1 is the return for every $ the Quebec government spends in McGill. I wish my pension had such a return!!! Certainly, if it had, I would not stop contributing.

We have already obtained over 1400 signature in one week. The goal is to achieve 13,001 signatures in 2 weeks, the time at which the specific cuts are expected to be announced. I would strongly encourage you to sign the 13-to-1 petition (information below).

RESEARCH

Publication of the Month

TEACHING

McGillX

As we all were made aware by an email from Provost Anthony Masi on February 20 that McGill has joined several other leading universities as a member of the edX consortium, founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. edX is a not-for-profit enterprise that offers online learning to on-campus students and to millions of people around the globe. This effort will allow us to provide individuals from around the world with access to world-class educational experiences and will yield valuable insights to help educators better understand how they can leverage IT-enabled technologies to enhance teaching and learning.

MIMM’s Teaching Retreat
The Department of Microbiology and Immunology held a productive full day teaching retreat for Faculty on March 8th 2013. The primary purpose of this retreat was to generate a shared vision of the content, skills, values and integration abilities that our students should have upon completion of their BSc. These program outcomes will be finalized in the next few months and will serve as the basis for a process of renewal in our undergraduate curriculum. We hope that members of the Department will continue to be actively involved in this process and we welcome any feedback!
Successful PhD Examinations
Ms. Mia Biondi has successfully defended on February 19th. Her thesis title was “From the Notorious to the Novel: Identifying and Characterizing Mutations in HIV-1 Reverse Transcriptase and Integrase”. Congratulations Mia!

Ms. Laura-Isobel McCall has successfully defended on February 26th. Her thesis title was “Parasite and host determinants of Visceral Leishmaniasis”. Congratulations Laura!

13 to 1 Campaign (Join Us!)
In response to the budget cuts looming to McGill by Quebec government, it was time for us to get engaged to oppose these financial cuts. Under the direction of Dr. Joaquin Madrenas, A 13-to-1 Campaign was put in place to voice our opposition. The “13” number has been traditionally associated to bad luck. And 2013 may be an "annus horribilis" for McGill if we do not do anything to change it. But there are many positive aspect to the number “13”. The best for McGill: Did you know that for every $1 invested by the Quebec Government into McGill there is a return on investment of $13 to the Quebec economy? Well, to promote this positive aspect of “13” we, at McGill’s Department of Microbiology & Immunology, have started the "13-to-1" Campaign. This campaign aims at gathering your signature to express your support in educating the Quebec government on the positive contributions of McGill to Quebec and to ask for the reversal of any dangerous budget cuts being pushing through. Please join our 13:1 campaign: for every signature you secure, ask for 13 more. Campaign your friends, family, colleagues, etc. To access the petition please go to: http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/the-13to1-campaign/

Registration is now open: The 9th International Retroviral Nucleocapsid Protein and Assembly Symposium will be held in Montreal from August 25-28, 2013. To contribute to this year’s scientific program, submit your abstract before Monday, July 1st, 2013. For more information, please visit http://ncsymposium2013.org/

The King’s Lab Party
Dr. Irah King and his lab team are inviting MIMM’s members to stop by their lab on March 22 to celebrate their new membership in the Faculty of Medicine and the department of Microbiology and Immunology at McGill. The party will begin at 4 pm in room 406 in the Lyman Duff Medical Building.

Congratulations to
Dr. Jörg Fritz for receiving his Canadian permanent resident card. Félicitations Jörg!

Ms. Saleema Nawaz’s Departure
Ms. Nawaz will be leaving her position as a “Student Affairs Coordinator” to take on a new position at the Department of Philosophy, McGill University. Her last day is March 13, 2013. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Saleema for her outstanding contributions and efficiency in handling students affairs matters. We wish her best of luck in her new position!
UPCOMING

Community/Education outreach initiative (April 19, 2013)
On April 19 at noon we will be welcoming grade 3 students from F.A.C.E. school. They will be participating in a talk given by Dr. Madrenas as well as taking a tour of our labs and facilities and even taking part in lab activities. This is part of an initiative aimed at reaching out to our community and getting young people interested and excited about science. If you would like to be a volunteer tour guide, please contact Maria Babiak at maria.babiak@mcgill.ca. More details to come!

Student Research Day (April 29, 2013)
Independent Studies in Microbiology and Immunology (MIMM 501/502), our research-intensive honours course that is co-coordinated by Dr. Jörg Fritz and Dr. James Coulton, requires students’ commitment of at least 40% of their academic time in U3 to laboratory-based, basic science research, an opportunity to learn from those more senior in experience. At the conclusion of the course, students participate at Student Research Day, the last day of their McGill undergraduate experiences. PowerPoint-supported presentations of 15-minutes are delivered by the students, with up to 50 in the audience. Attendees include professors, research personnel, graduate students and PDFs, plus fellow undergraduates. Our celebration of undergraduate microbiology research stands as a landmark annual event, this year on April 29, 2013. Complimentary lunch at mid-day for all who attend.

The International Day of Immunology and Café scientifique (April 29, 2013)
CHIR Human Immunology Network and Immunology-Montreal are organizing a Café Scientifique event which will be held on the World Immunology Day (Monday, April 29th). Stay tuned for more details!

Sincerely,

Joaquin (Quim) Madrenas

You are all encouraged to submit any news, pictures, or items that you want to include to our monthly newsletter. We will be happy to share them with the rest of the department. You can email them to Ms. Ireini Ghobri at ireini.ghobri@mcgill.ca