

RIO FALL 2011 UPDATE

The “QI” Initiative

A university-wide consultation was initiated in the spring in order to arrive at recommendations to the VPRIR for the use of the McGill space in the **Quartier de l’innovation** (QI) development. As is now well known, the QI is located near Peel and Notre-Dame streets. Peter Grutter and RIO participated in this exercise, during which we met and consulted with several Science faculty members. The building is still in need of extensive renovation before it becomes converted to useful space.

Zamboni Chem Solutions

Last September 9 marked the first year of operation of **Zamboni Chem Solutions** Inc. (ZCS). Operating as a medicinal chemistry consultant and contract research organization, ZCS has provided free-of-charge, steady support to McGill clients. As expected, ZCS has also been successful in attracting an external, paying customer base. It is the revenues from the latter which enable ZCS to offer free service to McGill researchers. In addition to Robert Zamboni, the team now includes three other medicinal chemists. ZCS is currently located on the fourth floor of the Otto Maass building, having weathered two moves made necessary by the soon-to-be-completed extensive renovations in the Chemistry department.

It has become very clear that, for medicinal chemistry proposals, the funding agencies (CIHR, etc) are increasingly demanding that in vivo work and pharmacokinetic (PK) studies must have been performed with candidate compounds. Performing these studies with outside vendors would cost at least \$5K per compound, and 3-4 times as much if mice are used. The past year has

enabled ZCS to identify suitable suppliers and partners to conduct such studies. Their experience in interpreting results has also proved very valuable.

To date, the internal clients of ZCS (over 10) have come primarily from the departments of Chemistry, Pharmacology and the Montreal Neurological Institute. All projects accepted have been successful; virtually all internal proposals became an accepted project. Members of ZCS have given much advice, in addition to their capacity to synthesize desired compounds in the requisite quantity for PK or other studies. High performance analytical instrumentation (HPLC, MS) belonging to ZCS has been made available to researchers on a selective basis, coupled with technical assistance and data interpretation.

Overall, the ZCS experiment has met a number of challenges but has been successful in working through them to establish a sufficient external customer base. In written testimonials received by RIO, both internal and external clients have expressed great satisfaction with the stellar quality of the results achieved by ZCS. Challenges still remain, but ZCS is indeed proving to be a win-win proposition.

One area **needs improvement**, however. RIO is not receiving the written project proposals, nor the ensuing signed Project Agreement, in a timely manner. Without the information contained in the proposal regarding context, it is virtually impossible to track the impact that ZCS support is actually contributing to technology transfer and actual drug development. Verbal exchanges and actual delivery by ZCS are excellent indicators that good things are happening, but

it is essential that the Faculty of Science be in a position to quantify the activity so that its positive impact may be unequivocally demonstrated. **Thank you for heeding this reality and for encouraging compliance with due process!**

Science TEC

The **Technological Entrepreneurship Club** (Science TEC) will hold the first meeting of this academic year on Thursday September 29. Both returning and new students are welcome – see invitation below.

Fessenden program

Two Fessenden **Professorship** projects are coming to a close (Paul Wiseman and Masad Damha), with final presentations being planned for October. Three projects are currently ongoing (Greg Dudek, David Burns and Youla Tsantrizos). See more information at <http://www.mcgill.ca/science/research/rio>. The next call for letters of intent is expected in early 2012.

DIALOGUE with OSR

Bimonthly meetings are continuing between Associate Dean Research Peter Grutter, RIO and OSR associate directors Michèle Beaulieu (Commercialization) and Nathan Currier (Research Contracts and Agreements). Our goal is to ensure optimal collaboration so as to generate the best possible impact from Science research activity.

This newsletter highlights activities in the Faculty of Science which encourage and support effective technology transfer or which provide tools for a clearer understanding of the process. Please contact erica.besso@mcgill.ca or call 514-398-3897 for questions or for electronic delivery.

McGill Faculty of Science – Research Innovation Office

SCIENCE STUDENTS! Interested in how to

- cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset ?
- translate technology-based ideas into products ?
- commercialize a technology ?

Bring your questions & ideas to the next meeting of

Science TEC
(Technology Entrepreneurship Club)

Thursday, September 29, 2011
12:00pm – 2:00pm
Adams Building (corridor)
3450 University, Room 27

No need to already have a business idea;
Focus will be on “What it takes”

Erica Besso (514)398-3897

www.mcgill.ca/science/research/rio