

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

Division of Experimental Medicine

Annual Report 2016

(a) Experimental Medicine 2016:

After a year of transition due to the move of most of our professors and students to the Glen site, year 2016 has been a year of development. New courses, workshops and programs have been developed and implemented.

(b) Courses and Program Development

Following the EMGSS recommendations made in 2013, we developed and are still developing new courses so that our students have access to a wider range of courses within their own Division.

New courses and programs:

- 1) A course on Biostatistics has been developed by Dr. Nandini Dendukuri. It has received approval by McGill and was offered in the Fall semester of 2016. Enrolment was limited to 30 students during this pilot phase. Dr. Dendukuri consulted the professors of Experimental Medicine to adapt her lectures to the exact needs of our students. The course was highly successful and received excellent feedback from the students. The course will be open to more students next year as well as to other programs (see Oncology program below).
- 2) An interdepartmental Option in Clinical Epidemiology is being developed in collaboration with Dr. Kaberi Dasgupta from the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Dr. Gilles Paradis from the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health. The goal of this new program is to give an appropriate training to Experimental Medicine students involved in epidemiological research projects. Towards these efforts, a new Epidemiology course has been developed by Dr. Mark Goldberg.
- 3) An interdepartmental program on Stem Cells is being developed by Dr. Terry Hebert. The departments of Pharmacology, Physiology and Human Genetics are involved. Discussions are ongoing to either have Experimental Medicine be the host of this program or to have an interdepartmental program with the other departments involved.

- 4) An agreement has been made to help the development of a new graduate program in the Department of Oncology. Reserved places have been made for the Oncology students in the following Experimental Medicine courses: EXMED 40, 14, 34, 17-20, 25, 26. The Department of Oncology will contribute money towards a TA for the ExMed statistics courses.
- 5) Several other courses are in development including: Fundamentals of Research: Shaping and Situating Your Research; Vaccine; Host-Parasite Interactions: From Bench to Bed Side, etc.

(c) Workshops for student supervisors:

A workshop on Graduate Student Supervision in Biomedical Research was organized and offered by the Faculty Development office to the professors of Experimental Medicine in November 2016. Dr. David Ragsdale presented and entertained discussions. There were 59 participants. The event was highly successful as attested by the very positive feedback. The experience will be repeated at least once a year aiming to get every professor to attend.

(d) Experimental Medicine Graduate Student Society (EMGSS):

The most significant achievements of the EMGSS every year is the organization of the Annual McGill Biomedical Graduate Conference" (AMBGC) that was held at the Omni Hotel Mont Royal on March 23rd, 2016. This event offers graduate students in biomedical research the opportunity to present and discuss their work in a stimulating and collegial environment that permits networking opportunities among their peers. Several students attended again this year's conference, representing graduate students from the Montréal area. There were again both oral and poster presentations from students engaged in biomedical research. The Keynote Speaker was Dr. Dr. Keith Mostov from the University of California San Francisco. The EMGSS managed to secure sponsorship from several organizations to aid in funding the event although it is getting more and more difficult to raise such funds. In addition to the AMBGC, the EMGSS hosted several other social events. A summary report of the EMGSS' activities for 2016-2017 is attached as Appendix 1.

(e) Graduate Students

(i) Numbers: There were 268 students registered in Experimental Medicine as of the Fall 2016 semester, a slight but continuous decrease since the peak of 322 reached in 2013. Of these, 74 were newly admitted to our programs in 2016, in the following proportions (20 Ph.D., 42 M.Sc., 11 Diploma in Clinical Research and 1 special student).

Seventy-three (73) students graduated from our programs in the 2016 calendar year, in the following proportions: 29 Ph.D., 35 M.Sc., and 9 Clinical Research Diploma. Overall the enrolment in Experimental Medicine Graduate programs decreased by approximately 12 % relative to 2015. With an anticipated enrolment of approximately 52 students in the upcoming calendar year, our numbers are expected to slightly decrease.

(f) Conclusion

2016 was a year of development to elevate the quality of the program to the highest standards.



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Experimental Medicine Graduate Student Society (EMGSS)
Executive Council Annual Report 2016-2017
May 10th, 2017

The 2016-2017 EMGSS Executive Council formed on June 1st 2016. The roles of president, all VP positions, and several representative positions were filled during the May 2016 General Election. Vacant representative positions were filled by interim appointment until our November 2016 By-Election. Throughout 2016-2017, we experienced a higher turnover than usual. I attribute this to the large size of the current executive council, the duration of service some members had already contributed including previous years, and completion of degrees. Furthermore, I have consistently supported our executives to prioritize their graduate studies first and their service on EMGSS council second. I wish to thank all 24 EMGSS members who served on the executive council during 2016-2017 their efforts and dedication. A table listing EMGSS executive council members and their terms are indicated in Appendix A.

We had a wide variety of engaging social events in 2016-2017. During the summer, we organized a trip to the Calypso waterpark, however both the original and alternate dates had to be canceled due to inclement weather conditions. In September, we held a reception for all EMGSS members following the fall semester orientation session for new students. In October, we organized a pre-party apartment crawl with games and food before attending the McGill Postgraduate Student Society (PGSS) Halloween Party at Thomson House. In November, we had a board games night at the Glen. In January, we held an orientation session for new students. In February, we organized an indoor skating event followed by hot chocolate. In April, we held a karaoke pub night following the Annual General Meeting. EMGSS also collaborated with other McGill Post-Graduate Student Societies to organize social events with support from our VP External. We held a pub and games night mixer with Physics (MGAPS) at Bar Des Pins in August, and a holiday party with Neuroscience (GSAN) at Bier Markt in December. Finally, we will host a BBQ at Beaver Lake on Mont Royal in May to celebrate the end of the academic year and toast EMGSS members who will be graduating this spring.

During the summer of 2016, we sponsored an EMGSS volleyball team in the PGSS summer intramural sports program. In fall 2016 we had soccer and volleyball teams, and in the spring 2017 we had dodgeball and volleyball teams with the McGill Athletics intramurals program. Our VP Internal also managed our EMGSS branded clothing sales. We organized one sale this year with pick up mostly at the AMBGC. Clothing items included pullovers, tank tops, zip-up hoodies, sweatpants and toques. These items were subsidized by approximately enough to cover the cost of embroidery or silk-screening.

The addition of a Wellness Representative on EMGSS council was effective and well received. Our Wellness Representatives prepared a bank of wellness tips at the beginning of the year and provided these to our VP Communications, who then

included one at the bottom of each newsletter we sent out to EMGSS members via email. In the fall semester, our VP Wellness coordinated an EMGSS team at the 5km Colour Run, a healthy food bake sale to support our intramurals, and a nutrition talk from a student in dietetics and a dietician. In the winter semester, we held a yoga class at Thomson House and a hot yoga class in collaboration with Moksha studio in NDG. Finally, we had Dr. Pierre-Paul Tellier, the former director of student health at McGill, come in and give a helpful talk about dealing with stress during graduate studies.

Following the success of our healthy bake sale event, we arranged three sales of churros pastries, two at the Glen and one at the IRCM, in support of the Annual McGill Biomedical Graduate Conference. The churro sales were much more efficient, as council members didn't need to take the time to bake and the churros were very popular. We raised \$75-200 per fundraising event, and put these proceeds into our budget for the AMBGC, which effectively decreased the AMBGC contribution from our Student Life fund.

In March 2017 we organized the 17th Annual McGill Biomedical Graduate Conference, following a well-established tradition. We were delighted to have the distinguished Dr. Keith Mostov of University of California San Francisco accept our invitation as keynote speaker. His lecture was extremely engaging and served as a perfect ending to the day. This year changed the venue from La Plaza to the Omni Hotel Mont Royal to cut back on our costs. Because the space was smaller, both the talks and the posters were in the same room, and there was no dedicated area to sit for lunch. However, we received very positive feedback from a number of participants regarding the venue choice. Based on feedback and support from the Division of Experimental Medicine, we have made an internal reservation to hold the AMBGC at the Glen, which would eliminate venue costs. We also received feedback from students presenting posters as well as judges indicating that they would prefer to have two prizes per category, one for junior and one for senior students. The EMGSS council of 2017-2018 will consider these options. The 17th AMBGC was another great success, and I would like to thank the Division of Experimental Medicine for their ongoing support for this initiative.

We collaborated with the Desjardins Centre for Advanced Training (DCAT) of the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (RI-MUHC) and SKILLSETS at McGill to organize a non-academic career and networking event with alumni in the fall. Following a talk on the non-academic job search from SKILLSETS, attendees were introduced to Experimental Medicine and RI-MUHC alumni to discuss their career paths outside academia. We also collaborated with DCAT to organize a series on the academic career path in the spring, including career panels, talks and a CV building workshop. These events were open to all members of EMGSS as well as all trainees at the RI-MUHC.

As far as social media presence, we have continued to operate an EMGSS Page on Facebook, and this year we also added a Group. The Page is easier for EMGSS

members to join and easier for the Vice President of Marketing to control. The Group, on the other hand, allows EMGSS members to post their own content in a discussion board format. We continue to operate both the Page and the Group simultaneously, posting the same content to both. This year we have also resumed using the EMGSS account on the Instagram social media platform to post photos of events. We drew prizes of pre-season NHL hockey tickets at the fall orientation and Thomson House gift cards at the AMBGC for EMGSS members who subscribed to our social media group and page on Facebook All photos are posted with a note that they can be taken down by request to our VP Marketing.

We manage a website (www.emgss.org) where we post communications regarding events including the AMBGC. This year we added a comments section, and in our email newsletter we asked students to post any suggestions or feedback in this field. We received a few scam replies on our website, and later had our website taken down due to malware detected by the server. It's possible that the two issues may be related. For now we are asking students to provide feedback by email, through our social media accounts or in person instead. Changes to the website may be required next year in order to prevent such issues from recurring.

Our annual general election has been organized for May 15th to 23rd. Several excellent nominations have been received. I am certain that the 2017-2018 will do an excellent job of continuing to build upon the success we have achieved as a graduate student society over the past several years.

EMGSS would not be the same without our members, our executive council and volunteers, and our external supporters including PGSS and the Division of Experimental Medicine. I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing support and involvement as we work to create a more enriching environment for trainees in the Division of Experimental Medicine.

Best regards,

Heather Duncan
EMGSS President 2016-2017

Appendix A: EMGSS Executive Council 2016-2017 members and their terms

	Elected during May 2016 General Election	Interim appointment until November By- Election	Elected during November 2016 By- Election	Interim appointment until May end-of- term
President	Heather Duncan			
VP Academic	Ruba Halaoui			
VP Administration	Naomi Li			
VP Communications	Aparna Dintakurti			
VP External Affairs	William Liu			
VP Finance	Nida Haider			
VP Internal Affairs	Mònica Gómez Palou <i>Resigned November 2016</i>		Katarina Pessina	
VP Marketing	Rola Hamed			
VP Social	Zhor Senhaji Mouhri and Roman Radetsky*			
Post-Graduate Student Society (PGSS) Representative (2 positions)	Katarina Pessina <i>Resigned November 2016 to run for VP Internal</i>	Brian Hsu* <i>Resigned November 2016</i>		Roxanne Vanderbeek* and Vatsal Sachan*
Glen Site Representative	Karina Gasbarrino			
Glen Site Volunteer			Rehka Raveendrakumar	
Goodman Cancer Research Centre Representative		Alexandra Cooke		Alexandra Cooke
Institut de Recherches Cliniques de Montréal (IRCM) Representative	Neera Sriskandarajah and Cameron Bauer*			
Lady Davis Institute and Jewish General Hospital Representative		Daryan Chitsaz* <i>Resigned November 2016, and Khaled Moumneh*</i>	Khaled Moumneh	Sophie Fiola
Montreal General Hospital Representative		Alexandra Cooke	Alexandra Cooke	
Wellness Representative	Victoria Roodman <i>Resigned November 2016</i>	Mirela Maier*	Mirela Maier	

*Elected or appointed to serve cooperatively (ie: Co-VPs of Social Affairs)

NB: The Montreal General Hospital and Goodman Cancer Research Centre representative positions were combined on council due to the close proximity of these sites, however they were entered separately on the election ballot in case both could be filled