



# DOBSON NEURO INNOVATION LEAN STARTUP PROGRAM

February 1 - March 22, 2022



**McGill**

Dobson Centre  
for Entrepreneurship

BUILDING INNOVATIVE COMPANIES WITH A PURPOSE

In Partnership with



HEALTHY BRAINS  
HEALTHY LIVES



neuroSphere

# DOBSON NEURO INNOVATION LEAN STARTUP PROGRAM 2022

---

## Turning Neuroscience Innovation Into Startups

The McGill Dobson Centre is delighted to partner with Healthy Brains, Healthy Lives (HBHL) with the mission to support and accelerate emerging innovation and scientific discovery in the fields of neurosciences, neurobiology, neuroinformatics, neurotechnology, neurorobotics or artificial intelligence.

HBHL builds on McGill's scientific excellence and global leadership in areas of neuroscience to accelerate translational discoveries, create a center of excellence in neuroinformatic, and deliver implementable, clinically effective outcomes in brain and mental health. To promote innovation and entrepreneurship in neuroscience, HBHL funds and relies on the expertise of NeuroSphere, McGill's neuroscience innovation accelerator.

The maturation and the acceleration of neuro innovations developed at McGill ultimately require the creation of a dynamic entrepreneurship ecosystem in neuroscience. To do this, NeuroSphere is very proud to partner with the McGill Dobson Centre for Entrepreneurship.

The McGill Neuro Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program is a tailored learning approach intended specifically for scientific researchers. It is designed to help take you from the idea stage to developing and launching a viable start-up while immersing you into the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Through informative workshops and mentoring with industry and subject matter experts, you will gain exposure to business frameworks and tools to evaluate your idea and generate challenging, yet feasible goals for your start-up. You will bring your vision to life and develop a roadmap to take your business to the next stage.



**Marie-Josée Lamothe**

Directorship  
McGill Dobson Centre For Entrepreneurship,  
Professor of Practice  
Desautels Faculty of Management



**Krystle van Hoof**

Managing Director and  
CEO of Healthy Brains,  
Healthy Lives

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

---

## Program Dates:

February 1<sup>st</sup> to March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

## Duration:

Tuesdays from 5:30 – 7:30 PM for 8 weeks

---

## Key Learning Themes:

- Why some startups fail, and others succeed
  - Understanding your market
  - What matters to customers
  - The framework to creating a viable product
  - IP Considerations
  - Funding an innovative venture & Defining KPIs
  - Generating a business model to move from idea to startup
  - Crafting and articulating your vision to stakeholders
- 

**WEEKLY WORKSHOPS:** The central platform for introducing strategic frameworks and business concepts that guide the process of turning an idea into a business plan. Workshops also provide the opportunity to bridge theory with real-world application through stories, examples and insights from guest speakers. Workshops will generally last one hour, but we reserve an extra hour for group discussions and learning activities.

**ACTION LEARNING:** Throughout the program, participants work on achieving milestones related to their startup idea and iterating their business plan. This process is a crucial component of the program and will ultimately lead to the development of a viable startup concept.

**COACHING SESSION:** Upon completion of the workshops, participants are encouraged to submit their business plan to be reviewed during a one-on-one coaching session.



**“It can be intimidating launching a start-up and I had many questions and concerns. The program gave me direction and helped me focus my ideas. I am excited to see what the future holds, and I am grateful for this program!”**

**Cindy Hovington Ph.D.  
Founder, Curious Neuron**

# PROGRAM OUTLINE

---

01

## Why some startups fail, and others succeed

- Keynote speaker: overcoming prevailing challenges and avoiding common pitfalls
- Program introduction and overview

02

## Understanding Your Market

- Tools for competitive analysis
- Researching your market and determining its size
- Identifying your beachhead market
- Building a customer persona

03

## What Matters to Customers

- Using value proposition design to define what problems you are solving
- Analysis of direct/indirect stakeholders
- How to overcome innovation resistance
- Impact of neuro tech on sectors/consumers

04

## The Framework To Creating A Viable Product

- Building a proof of concept
- The purpose of a minimum viable product (MVP)
- Criteria for building and testing your MVP

05

## Protecting Your IP & Open Science

- What does it mean to be “venture ready” from a legal point of view?
- Managing your IP: talking about your idea without revealing trade secrets
- How to navigate the regulations of tech and neuroethics
- Find a balance between IP and Open Science

06

## Funding an innovative venture & Defining KPIs

- Basics to finance and accounting
- Barriers to funding in an innovative-driven field
- Defining the right metrics

07

## Crafting and Articulating the Vision and Strategic Plan to Stakeholders

- Creating and telling a compelling story
- Tips for communicating data and scientific information
- Understanding what goes into an elevator pitch and a pitch presentation
- Putting together an attractive business plan to present to stakeholders

08

## Building A Business Plan

- Moving from concept to operating a viable business – identifying the key building blocks
- Roadmap for the future
- Crafting a revenue model

Upon completion of the Neuro Innovation Lean Startup Program, participants are encouraged to apply to the 2023 McGill Dobson Bootcamp & Cup Competition.

# PROGRAM SPEAKERS

---

In order of appearance

Sonia Israel is the Director of Scientific Partnership for Afred Health. Nearing the end of her Honours Neuroscience degree at McGill University, Sonia co-founded Afred Health with the intention of enhancing the interface between leading research and mental health care. Her experience as a research student at the Montreal Neurological Institute has provided Sonia with insight towards the inter-professional approach that is necessary to optimally refine health care. She is the recipient of numerous leadership awards, including the Lieutenant Governor's Medal of Quebec. Sonia's thirst for innovation drives her to create and identify opportunities for collaboration in the psychiatric sector.

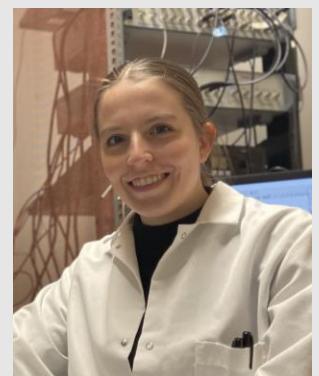
---



Sonia Israel

Stephanie Mouchbahani-Constance is a Ph.D. student at McGill in the Department of Physiology and co-founder of a start-up called Ptero Tech. She is the recipient of the Vanier Scholarship from the Canadian Institute for Health Research and is one of 3 Canadians invited to attend the 2020 Lindau Novel Laureate Conference. For the past 3 years, her Ph.D. research has focused on studying the venom responsible for excruciatingly painful stings produced by lionfish with a focus on understanding how this venom causes so much pain on a molecular level. From her research, Stephanie and her Ph.D. supervisor co-founded a start-up called Ptero Tech to commercialize the first-ever treatment for pain caused by lionfish stings. They have since taken their product, called StingMaster, from lab to the market in 1 year and it is the first-ever over-the-counter topical cream that treats the pain caused by lionfish and jellyfish stings.

---



Stephanie  
Mouchbahani-Constance

Amanda Wheatley is the Liaison Librarian for Entrepreneurship at McGill University. She has a Masters in Library and Information Science from Western University, and prior to her work in librarianship, was employed in the private sector as a data analyst and market researcher. Amanda provides research assistance to start-ups in the McGill Community and has worked with winners of the Dobson Cup and the ACFAS génies en affaires competitions.

---



Amanda Wheatley

# PROGRAM SPEAKERS

---

In order of appearance

Claude MacDonald is the founding president of Talentuum. Over the last 26 years, he has trained more than 30,000 managers, professionals, and employees from major organizations across Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Claude is a certified business coach (Registered Corporate Coach), a certified professional from the ROI Institute (CPR), and is also a faculty member of the McGill Executive Institute. Fluent in both French and English, he has designed several tools, workshops, and training programs offered by TALENTUUM. His areas of expertise are customer success, sales leadership, sales management & B2B consultative selling.

---



Claude MacDonald

Robert Lalonde brings over 25 years of executive management and advisory experience to lead go-to-market, growth acceleration, and entry into new markets for startups and early-stage companies. Rob has held executive positions in multiple, successful high-tech companies and startups. He possesses a unique and multi-disciplined set of skills having held positions in Sales, Marketing, Business Development, and CEO and board positions. Rob has completed MBA studies at York University's Schulich School of Business and holds a degree in computer science from Laurentian University.

---



Robert Lalonde

Dr. Naeem Komeilipoor, a scientist and an entrepreneur, is passionate about finding solutions that could have huge impacts on people's lives. He has studied and worked in several countries around the world in different fields such as Neuroscience, Biomedical Engineering, and AI. Currently, at his company, AAVAA, he is leading a group of engineers and scientists that are building neural-interface devices that enhance human capabilities and have both consumer and medical applications.



Naeem Komeilipoor

# PROGRAM SPEAKERS

---

In order of appearance

Béatrice T. Ngatcha is a partner, patent agent and lawyer in Lavery's intellectual property group. She is registered as a patent agent in Canada and the United States and is also a lawyer admitted to the Bar of Ontario and a member of the Barreau du Québec (cjc). Béatrice holds a doctorate in chemistry from Laval University and was a postdoctoral fellow at the National Research Council in Ottawa. In addition to an important practice in drafting and obtaining patents for Canadian and foreign clients, Béatrice's expertise is used in the areas of intellectual property litigation, trade secrets, transactional due diligence reviews, development, patent-related business strategies, patent portfolio value creation, licensing and arbitration. Béatrice frequently lectures on intellectual property at academic and professional conferences.

---



Béatrice T. Ngatcha

Dr. Garth Smith is the VP, Business Development and Partnerships for the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI). His mandate is to manage the OBI's commercialization efforts and its relationships with Canadian neurotechnology companies and multinationals. Previously, Dr. Smith also was a product and business development consultant that helped clients with their drug and device development programs. He also worked for a product development consulting firm offering product and regulatory assistance to life science companies focused on a wide range of clinical indications. He was also Director, Drug Development for a start-up pharmaceutical company focused on various CNS indications and was responsible for the lead candidate's development from concept to first-in-human clinical trial. His work experience also includes working in the tech transfer office of the University Health Network, Canada's largest research organization. His academic career started with a B.Sc. (Hons.) degree in Neurosciences at the University of Toronto, followed by a M. Sc. in Neurophysiology, at the University of British Columbia. He completed his academic training with a Ph.D. in Physiology at the University of Cambridge where he was designated as a Cambridge Commonwealth Trust Scholar.

---



Garth Smith

Nathaniel Haeems is a seasoned coach, trained facilitator and consultant with international experience in both Europe and North America who has spearheaded a number of leadership development initiatives for various multinational organizations. His subject matter expertise is focused on effective business communications -Analyzing, organizing and presenting ideas clearly and with impact as well as conflict resolution. He is currently a faculty lecturer for the McGill Executive Institute 'Building and Selling a Winning Business Case' seminar as well as an important contributor to various custom programs. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Concordia University and an MBA from McGill University.

---



Nathaniel Haeems

# PROGRAM SPEAKERS

---

In order of appearance

Stuart Kozlick is a Strategic Advisor, Executive-In-Residence within the Emerging Technology & Startup practice at Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP. Stuart also serves as Professor of Practice in McGill University's Faculty of Medicine, Department of Surgery, and as Faculty Lecturer in the university's Faculty of Engineering, Department of Mechanical Engineering. In 2019, Stuart became CEO of Puzzle Medical Devices Inc. Previously, Stuart held executive positions at Medical Robotics, Kinova Robotics Inc., CAE Healthcare, Medtronic Inc., and the former CryoCath Technologies Inc. He is passionate about early-stage ventures and opportunities that require market analysis, needs assessment, product and business model discovery and definition, corporate strategic positioning and planning, and go-to-market execution. Stuart continues to support the growing Medtech ecosystem of Montreal through various board positions and in an Advisory/Mentor capacity for entities such as L'institut TransMedTech, CTS Santé, RTI Inc., and TechStars Montreal AI, to name a few.

---



Stuart Kozlick

Dr. Francine Gervais has over 30 years of scientific and management experience spanning from academic research to private and publicly traded biopharmaceutical companies. Dr. Gervais was Senior VP of Pharmaceutical Development at PainCeptor Pharma Corp for 4 years. Prior to this, she was VP of R&D for 9 years at Neurochem (now Bellus Health). She was successful in establishing and managing several research & development programs which led to the identification of 4 drug candidates that advanced clinical studies in several fields (pain, neurodegeneration, inflammatory diseases). Prior to joining the biopharmaceutical industry, Dr. Gervais was an Associate Professor in the Department of Experimental Medicine, McGill University, and at the McGill Centre for the Study of Host Resistance. Dr. Gervais received her Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology from the University of Montreal, completed her post-doctoral study working in immuno-hematology (stem cell research) at the Research Centre, Hôpital du Sacré-Coeur. Dr. Gervais is now working as a consultant in pharmaceutical Development.



Francine Gervais

# PROGRAM APPLICATION

---

## Ideal participant profile

This program is for McGill-affiliated researchers and trainees that have been working on an idea, discovery, or prototype - ideally for 3 months or more, that are looking to legitimize their concept and move towards launching a startup.

- You or your team has at least one founder that is a McGill University student, faculty member, or staff member.
- You or your team has at least one technical co-founder and can build your business upon a technology, science, or idea that is significantly or radically disruptive.
- The project must be aligned with one of [HBHL's research themes](#)
- All team compositions: unidisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and inter-professional teams are welcomed and encouraged, as are teams that include learners or graduates.

## How to apply

A commitment towards attending all the workshops and executing the project work is required.

Following completion of the Neuro Innovation Lean Startup Program, participants are encouraged to enter the 2023 McGill Dobson Bootcamp and Cup competition.

[Register here to be notified when applications open.](#)

# LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

For general inquiries:

[dobson.mgmt@mcgill.ca](mailto:dobson.mgmt@mcgill.ca)

Sign-up for our Monthly Newsletter:

[Monthly Newsletter](#)

Follow us on social media:

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Website: [www.mcgill.ca/dobson](http://www.mcgill.ca/dobson)



**McGill**

Dobson Centre  
for Entrepreneurship

BUILDING INNOVATIVE COMPANIES WITH A PURPOSE