



FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

Dear MIMMers,

With this newsletter we close the 2014-15 academic year and start to prepare the arrival of the summer break! To all, I wish you a relaxing, reinvigorating and inspiring summer break.

We saw amazing discoveries during last year: many papers to pick from McGill and beyond. One of my favorites is a paper not exactly in Microbiology and Immunology but full of “life lessons”, from the Romesberg group from the Scripps. In this *Nature* paper (2014; 509: 385. doi: 10.1038/nature13314), this group reports a semi-synthetic organism incorporating a couple of unnatural base pairs in addition to the traditional A/T/G/C. Practically, they were able to expand the “code of life” on earth from 4 bases to 6 with the implications on new ways for life transmission, resistance to pathogens, etc. As said before, what natural selection was not able to do in 4 billion years, scientists were able to do in 12 years (the time this project went on). That is the other lesson: it took this group 12 years to develop this new life code against all odds and with many difficulties to get funding from NIH and other traditional sources. Peer review may not always identify breakthroughs. But we must always surrender to the data. Excellent science always pays off. I hope that this group is now getting all the funding that they need and did not get before.



In line with this story, please enjoy below a feature article on the 4th MIMM Graduate Research Day written by one of our Work Study Student (Astha Agarwal). Such an event was a great success, portraying the excellent research done in the labs of our department. I encourage you to continue the pursuit of the highest standards of innovation and excellence and work towards your dream discovery!

Have a great summer!

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