

Biomedical Sciences

# Newsletter

State of the Department, March, 2017

We have all heard and hopefully participated in some way in Bell's "Let's Talk" Day, a National campaign that raised awareness and brought to the forefront the importance of communication to end the stigma around mental health issues. I want to assure everyone that although that national campaign has passed, the issue of mental health on the U of G campus remains one of the top priorities of the senior management team. This issue remains on the agenda at Senate and at the Council of Chairs, and we are updated on a regular basis regarding the challenges our students face. Also, the issue of how best to communicate mental health resources available on campus to our undergraduate and graduate students, as well as access to services and resources are ongoing issue that the President is committed to resolving. This issue and the associated challenges was summarized in the Star article (<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/02/12/university-of-guelph-struggling-to-meet-students-mental-health-needs.html>) that I would encourage you to read if you have not already done so.

As administrators, the way in which we have been asked to assist our faculty and staff (as well as students), is to raise awareness for recognizing the signs of those in need of counselling services (<https://mindyourmind.ca/illnesses/mood-disorder-depression>). Also, please take the time to familiarize yourself with the resources UofG has to offer (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/counselling/mental-health-resources>), so when confronted, you have access to this resource information and be able to pass it on.

I also want everyone to be aware that, as much as our student population requires assistance, I don't want us to lose sight of the fact that staff and faculty, who sometimes are the "first responders", may also be in need of assistance. One of the most noble professions is being an educator/teacher. You cannot teach without compassion. As much as we need to assist our students, we also need to be there for each other. Let's make an effort to support each other and pay-it-forward by continuing to do **random acts of kindness** that shows our

compassion for others. This can be as simple as a smile to someone in the hallway, even a stranger. As Kim's sign reminds us every day... "**Keep smiling Biomed**"!

### Updates/happenings from around the Department:

1. We are grateful to the Dean and dean's Council who have been given us permission to recruit a **Reproductive Biologist**. The search committee is composed of Drs. Jim Petrik, Matthew Vickaryous, Eduardo Ribeiro, Pavneesh Madan, Tracy Chenier and Kathy Matuszewska (PhD candidate). We hope to advertise for this position next week, with the anticipation of a September start date.
2. We have short-listed 4 candidates for the tenure-track Assistant Professor position in **Neuroscience**. We hope to interview throughout the month of April. Please make every effort to attend the candidate's presentations and meetings set up for the various groups (faculty, staff and graduate students).
3. We have made an offer to the lead candidate for our **Operations Manager, Mrs. Holly Illman**. Holly will take up her position on March 20th.
4. In case you missed it in the OVC bulletin, **per diems** are now allowed as an eligible claim in your travel expense form (<http://bulletin.ovc.uoguelph.ca/post/157207411495/uofg-makes-enhancements-and-updates-to-expense>).
5. Get the "**SAFEGRYPHON**" app! (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/police/safegryphon-app>). As the recent evacuation of buildings on campus reminds us, safety while on campus, as well as communication strategies for any emergency or crisis is of utmost importance. I would recommend that you download this app which is going to be a mandatory part of the **University's Emergency Response System** set to roll out in the near future.

6. **Tami Martino's** lab published a new study showing that the circadian molecule "CLOCK" plays a key role in healthy heart aging, and when disturbed it causes heart disease. This has profound implications for individuals with disturbed rhythms, such as shift workers, people with sleep disorders, and anyone subjected to the 24/7 demands of society. Published in the high impact Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology, with first author PhD student **Faisal Alibhai**, this study has also attracted media attention, by the University of Guelph, Guelph Today, and Tami was interviewed Thursday morning on CBC radio. TWO links to the stories: <https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/heart-health-and-the-body-clock-549282> and <http://news.uoguelph.ca/2017/02/body-clock-plays-key-role-healthy-heart-u-g-study/>
7. **Centre for Cardiovascular Investigations** held it's inaugural Cardiovascular Scientist Seminar Series with Invited distinguished speakers **Dr. Tarek Saleh & Dr. Philip Millar**. Goals of the series are to promote the great research of our faculty at UGuelph, facilitate networking for our graduate students, and attract the best and brightest undergraduates to cardiovascular and health sciences research. Our inaugural event was coordinated by the Centre, and with the help of our Student Executive Council, and was a great success with over a hundred attendees.
8. **Thomas Koch's** research was featured on the UofG website regarding "**Stem Cell Cartilage Regeneration Could Offer Hope for Damaged Joints**". <http://news.uoguelph.ca/2017/02/stem-cell-cartilage-regeneration-offer-hope-damaged-joints/>
9. **Tami Martino** and her American collaborator Martin Young were very pleased to publish an e-Letter in Science, on circadian medicine and applications to clinical cardiology, especially work by their laboratories. The letter was in response to a special issue on circadian physiology, which had neglected to address the translational applications.  
LINK to Letter in SCIENCE:  
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/354/6315/986/tab-e-letters>. Thanks also to **Dr. James Raeside** for informing Tammy of her appearance in the

Science special issue, and passing forward his copy for reading, much appreciated!

10. Congratulations to all of our **graduates** at this year's convocation. Please see picture below of those in attendance. Thanks for the photo Kim!
11. Congratulations to **Jeffery Thomason** who reached a milestone at the University of Guelph. Jeff will complete **25 years of dedicated service**. This is an incredible achievement and milestone. Congratulations Jeff!
12. ***Guess whose retiring!!*** After almost 29 years of service to the department, College and University, I wish to announce that **Dr. Alastair Summerlee** has decided to retire on March 1<sup>st</sup>. CONGRATULATIONS Alastair!! Alastair will be leaving a lasting impression and a significant legacy on the UofG campus. He has helped build the department, faculty and University since his arrival here in 1988. Among his academic and administrative positions including Professor in Biomedical sciences, Associate Dean OVC, Dean of Graduate Studies, Acting Associate VP Academic and Registrar, Associate VP Academic, Provost and VP Academic and President and Chancellor at the University of Guelph (during which time he received a 3M teaching award!), Alastair has been instrumental in shaping the past and future of this institution.

Alastair plans to continue to participate in departmental functions in his capacity as retired faculty. Please ensure you stop by his office and offer him your congratulations. We wish you all the best and continued success as you embark on this next phase of your career. Enjoy!!

13. In case you missed the opportunity to provide feedback in person, a video of the Dean's presentation regarding the **OVC's Strategic Plan** can be found here: <https://youtu.be/5HKNCRE2OcQ> and the *Feedback Qualtrics Survey* can be found here: [https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe1/preview/SV\\_6ETXwXDezUmsFM](https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe1/preview/SV_6ETXwXDezUmsFM)  
1. The survey is anonymous and it will be open until **Friday, March 10, 2017**.

14. Reminder: for room bookings, please forward requests to: [roombiom@uoguelph.ca](mailto:roombiom@uoguelph.ca)

15. Statisticians in OVC: FYI, if you are in need of assistance with statistical analysis or experimental design, the following statisticians are available for consultation: **William Sears**, Population Medicine, [wsears@uoguelph.ca](mailto:wsears@uoguelph.ca), OVCS Rm:2503, x54754 and **Gabrielle Monteith**, Clinical Studies, [gmonteit@ovc.uoguelph.ca](mailto:gmonteit@ovc.uoguelph.ca), OVCP Rm:2145, x54029



**From left to right:** Laura Favetta (standing in for Allan King); Anja Stojsin (King); Sarah Lepage (Koch); Shan Karuppusamy (Kirby); Matt Vickaryous (as himself); Emily Gilbert (Vickaryous) and Faisal Alibhai (Martino).  
Congratulations and best wishes!

Remember that my door is always open, so pop in anytime for a chat.

Cheers! Tarek, Chair, BMS