Welcome to (a safer) Fall!

I wanted to welcome everyone back to Biomed for the Fall of 2021. What a difference a year makes! Although vaccinations have been mandated, I hope everyone will remain vigilant in terms of avoiding crowding in rooms, continue to maintain a 2 m safe working distance, and wearing masks indoors at all times (unless alone in your office/carrel space). Faculty and grad students no longer need permission to access their offices, but please continue to coordinate with your lab and office colleagues to ensure everyone's safety and comfort level.

Kim and I are back full time if you have any questions or concerns.

All the best and stay safe Biomed!
Dr. Brenda Coomber named University Professor Emeritus

It is my distinct pleasure to announce that Dr. Brenda Coomber has attained one of the highest honours to be bestowed on a faculty member by an academic institution, University Professor Emeritus.

Brenda’s research throughout her 30 year career focused on the cell biology of angiogenesis and inflammation, cancer biology and DNA repair, often with a comparative and translational approach. During her career she was awarded over $3.7 million dollars in research funding, and was a co-applicant/collaborator on additional research funds totalling over $2.8 million from a variety of sources.

To date, Brenda has published 100 peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters and technical reports, 75 of them as first or senior author. Brenda has been very active in training the next generation of biomedical scientists. She has been the primary or co-supervisor of 44 graduate students and participated in the training of 59 others by serving on their thesis advisory committees. Among her greatest achievements and the culmination of her academic career and expertise in Cancer Cell Biology, is the creation and stewardship of the University of Guelph’s Institute for Comparative Cancer Investigation (ICCI).

Congratulations Brenda!
Dr. Laura Favetta has been named the 2021 University of Guelph's Faculty Association's Distinguished Professor Award for Teaching Excellence. These awards provide tangible recognition for excellent contribution toward teaching and learning in such areas as classroom and laboratory instruction, consultation with students outside of class, including individual tutoring and advising; thesis supervision; course design; curriculum development and development of innovative teaching methods.

Laura now joins the ranks of Drs. Glen Pyle (Innovation), Lisa Robertson, Pavneesh Madan and Brad Hanna as award-winning UGFA Distinguished Professors of Teaching Excellence in Biomed!

Dr. Laura Favetta's project proposal for the 2022 Globalink Research Internship has been approved!

Her project titled "THC effects on oocytes, sperm and early embryonic development" is now eligible for hiring an international student in the Summer of 2022 on this research internship.

Congrats Laura!
Welcome Dr. Sarah Rouhana!

Please join me in welcoming **Dr. Sarah Rouhana**, a Lebanese postdoc fellow in Dr. Glen Pyle’s Lab. Sarah moved to Canada with her husband and daughter a couple of months ago. She completed her PhD thesis in Université de Montpellier, France and in Université Saint Joseph, Beirut, Lebanon where she focussed on studying a “newly” identified subtype of heart failure, the diastolic heart failure.

"**Cardiovascular diseases are such an interesting subject for me since they are the leading cause of mortality in the world. I have been doing internships and working in this area since my master’s degree. With the experience and knowledge acquired during the past few years, I’m looking forward to pursuing my research in this field with a focus on the implication of sex differences in cardiovascular diseases.**"

"**Other than research, being a first time mom, I enjoy spending time with my daughter. Traveling with the family and discovering new places that are on my bucket list. I’m so grateful to have the opportunity to be part of the biomedical sciences department, I hope I will make the best of it.**"

Welcome Sarah!
Dr. Melissa Perreault has been invited to serve on the Tri-Agency Grants Management Solutions External Advisory Board. This newly established committee is mandated to "modernization of the grant management system for the 3 agencies (the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)) to better support applicants, administrators and reviewers during the grants management lifecycle".

Congrats Melissa!
I am extremely pleased to report that Gabriella Burdette (MSc candidate, Vickaryous lab) and Reem Sabry (PhD candidate, Favetta lab) are our new departmental graduate student representatives. Congrats!

The overarching goal of the graduate student representatives is to create a positive experience for graduate students in the department of biomedical sciences. This encompasses planning and hosting informal social events throughout the year and being one point of contact for graduate students regarding policies and communications within the department. Moreover, the graduate student representatives work closely with the departmental Chair to assist in making important decisions for the department and to relay any comments or concerns voiced by graduate students. I look forward to working with Reem and Gabriella to continue to improve the wellness and research excellence of our graduate students and graduate program.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Anita Luu and Kathy Jacyniak, our out-going grad reps and peer helpers. You both helped improve the lives of our graduate students and have made the grad program in Biomed the envy of this campus! On behalf of Biomed.... Thank you!!
With the start of the Fall semester upon us, I am sure we are all looking forward to returning to campus and getting back into the swing of things. Kim and I were preparing to hold department seminars face-to-face (F2F) in 1642, but now realize that is no longer an option given capacity limits.

So for the Fall at least, we have decided to continue with the virtual format. Attendance has been fantastic since the start of the pandemic, so that was another deciding factor. Thank you!

I want to continue to encourage attendance and completion of the evaluation forms. Our response rates have dropped significantly since we went virtual, but the feedback to the student (as well as the cash prizes!!) are very important, so PLEASE continue to fill these out and send them to Kim.

Thanks folks, "see" you soon!
More Grad Students Learn to Drive a Manual!

Dr Brad Hanna (Biomedical Sciences), has continued to accommodate as many graduate students as possible in teaching them to drive a manual "stick" shift in 50 days (https://community.hagerty.com/t5/hagerty-lounge/we-re-on-a-mission-to-get-more-people-shifting-gears/m-p/90942/highlight/true#M7822)

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Keeley "could your smile be any brighter" Schwaan
(MSc candidate, Vickaryous lab)

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Jessica Ruffolo's wins GSA Award!

Jessica Ruffolo (MSc candidate, Khokhar lab) won the best presentation award at the Graduate Student Association Conference titled "Rethink Before you Vape and Drink: Alcohol and Vapourized Nicotine Co-Exposure During Adolescence Induces Sex-Specific Behavioural Effects in Adulthood"

Congrats Jessica!
The Vickaryous lab (aka The Eublephosphere) did the ultimate University of Guelph tradition of painting the cannon 'Old Jerimiah'. What a great team-building exercise!

Well done Matt and the gang!


Buckhalter, S., Soubeyrand, E., Ferrone, S.A.E., Rasmussen, D.J., Manduca, J.D., Al-Abdul Wahid, S., Frie, J.A., Khokhar, J. Y., Akhtar, T.A., Perreault, M.L., The antidepressant-like and analgesic effects of kratom alkaloids are accompanied by changes in low frequency oscillations but not ΔFosB accumulation. Front Pharmacol (Accepted)

Majesta J Roth and Roger A Moorehead. miR-200 family in normal mammary gland development. BMC Developmental Biology 2021 (in press)
*Majesta Roth worked in Roger’s lab during the past 2 summers and most recently as an undergraduate research project student, just published this first author review paper!

*Ellner and Hallam were undergraduates in the Khokhar lab!


*Ziyad wrote this review as his BIOM*4500 research paper with Dr. Neil MacLusky.
Dr. Glen Pyle is participating in a "Back to School Q&A session" on Sept 7th featuring Laureate Professor Peter Doherty. You will note that one of the sponsors is the Royal City Science group, for which Dr. Pyle is on the Advisory Panel (https://royalcityscience.ca).

Way to go Glen!
Please do not hesitate to knock on my door (with your mask!) or contact me by email if you have ANY questions/concerns at tsaleh@uoguelph.ca

Stay safe, stay well

#biomedstrong