



MBIM NEWSLETTER

UBC Department of Microbiology & Immunology



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MESSAGE FROM DEPARTMENT HEAD

This past year, the Department of Microbiology and Immunology has been through a great combination of normality and change. With an increase in comfort for meeting in-person, we eased back into hosting regular seminars, symposiums, and celebrations throughout the year - including our Graduation Tea in May to celebrate the class of 2023.

The department hosted alumni networking events, our first in-person Holiday Party since 2019, and new EDI events specifically tailored for our trainees to celebrate diversity and inclusivity on campus. We also welcomed new members into our department while saying goodbye to ones we have known and loved for many years.

Message from Department Head cont...



With Sue Palichuk's retirement, we welcomed Jarrad Wiens to our staff as the new HR Director of Operations. And we also welcomed a new research faculty member: Professor Kayla King from Oxford University!

Research from our department made great headway – publications are showing up on multiple national news outlets, being celebrated across the UBC campus, and receiving prestigious awards for both students and faculty. Check for recent results on our website under the [Research tab](#). We are very proud of our MBIM community and everything they have accomplished over the years.

In this year's newsletter, we celebrate the department's resilience, hard work and achievements, while introducing new ways for alumni to connect. We look forward to seeing you again very soon.

Dr. Michael Murphy



RESEARCH

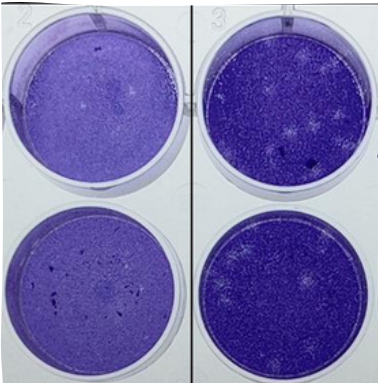
News Stories



B.C. Sea Sponge Has Covid-Blocking Powers

UBC researchers (Dr. François Jean, Dr. Jimena Pérez-Vargas) have identified three compounds that prevent COVID-19 infection in human cells, derived from natural sources including a B.C. sea sponge. The discovery paves the way for the development of new medicines for COVID-19 variants made from natural sources. And given nature's abundance, there could be a wealth of new antivirals waiting to be discovered.

<https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/bc-sea-sponge-has-covid-blocking-powers/>



Av-Gay Lab identifies infection-halting compound, broadly effective from COVID-19 to the common cold

Researchers at UBC's Life Sciences Institute have identified a compound that shows early promise at halting infections from a range of coronaviruses, including all variants of SARS-CoV-2 and the common cold. The findings, published in *Molecular Biomedicine*, reveal a potential path toward antiviral treatments that could be used against many different pathogens.

<https://lsi.ubc.ca/2022/12/14/av-gay-lab-identifies-infection-halting-compound-broadly-effective-from-covid-19-to-the-common-cold/>



Breastmilk & how it helps us better understand the development of infant gut microbiomes

The microbiome is a complex community of microorganisms – the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in and on our body. And often, one of the most significant early exposures to our body's own microbial community is through breastmilk and our gut. Recent data has suggested that the development of the early infant gut microbiome may be influenced by factors such as mode of delivery, early antibiotic exposure, and feeding patterns. This research is also the focus of *Zahra Pakzad's* PhD (Deborah Money Lab), which recently made it to the 3MT finals: *The breast milk microbiome and how it might be influencing gut microbiome development.*

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/news/zahra-pakzad-infant-gut-microbiome>

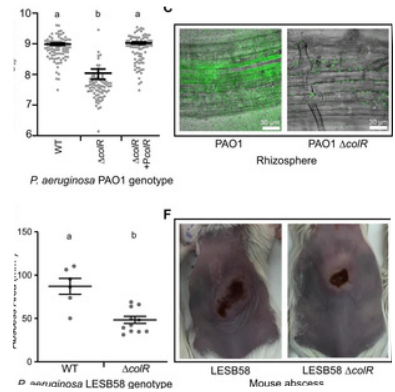
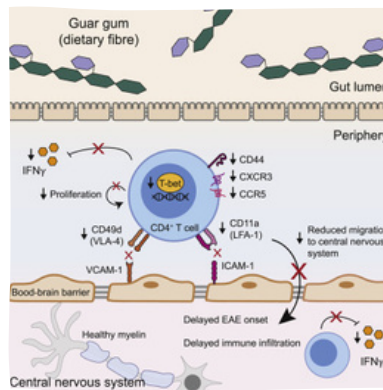
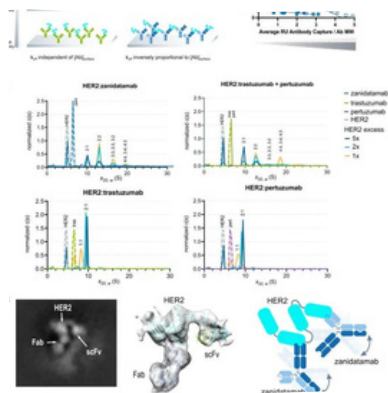
RESEARCH

Publications

Stay up-to-date with MBIM publications:

Every week, the department updates the website with new publications from research faculty and students! Research has been featured in journals in publications such as Nature, mBio, Cancer Research Communications, frontiers, ScienceDirect and many more!

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/articles>



GOLD LAB

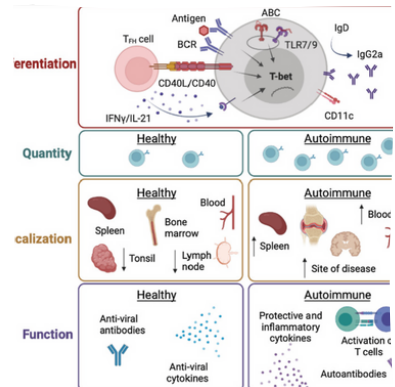
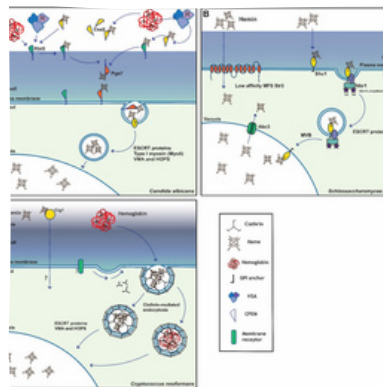
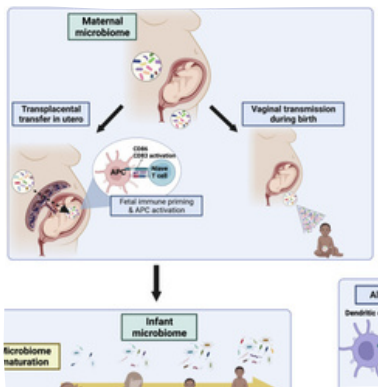
An anti-HER2 biparatopic antibody that induces unique HER2 clustering and complement-dependent cytotoxicity

OSBORNE LAB

Inhibition of Th1 activation and differentiation by dietary guar gum ameliorates experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis

HANEY LAB

The ColR/S two-component system is a conserved determinant of host association across *Pseudomonas* species



FINLAY LAB

Like mother, like child: The maternal microbiome impacts offspring asthma

KRONSTAD LAB

Heme sensing and trafficking in fungi

HORWITZ LAB

Age-associated B cells in autoimmune diseases

PEOPLE

Awards

Awards won by the MBIM community!

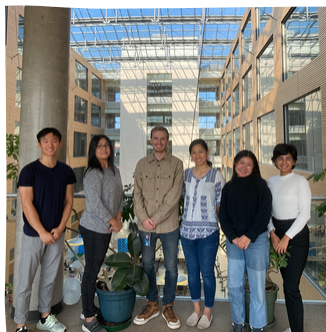
The Department of Microbiology and Immunology is full of talented, hardworking researchers. We are proud of *all* the department's achievements and are extra excited to celebrate the recognition of awards. Congratulations to these award winners!



OSBORNE LAB

Dr. Lisa Osborne wins funding for two projects from Scialog: Microbiome, Neurobiology and Disease Competition

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/news/lisa-osborne-scialog-funding>



TOKUYAMA LAB

Maria Tokuyama receives MSFHR Scholar Award for research program on Endogenous Retroviruses (ERVs) and their impact or influence on immune responses

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/news/maria-tokuyama-msfhr-scholar-award>



ZYMEWORKS – MBIM, MSL

Stephanie Besoiu and Petya Popova receive the 2022 Zymeworks Fellowship in Immunotherapeutics

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/zymeworks-fellowship-2022>

PEOPLE

Awards



TROPINI LAB

CIFAR researcher Carolina Tropini is appointed Alan Bernstein Fellow

<https://cifar.ca/cifarnews/2023/03/01/cifar-researcher-carolina-tropini-is-appointed-alan-bernstein-fellow/#topskipToContent>



UBC SCIENCE EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

Congratulations to Michelle Moksa and Andrew Sharon for receiving a 2022 Faculty of Science Dean's Award for Excellence in Service

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/news/excellence-in-service-awards-2022>



BROOKE OWENS FELLOWSHIP

MBIM and EOAS undergraduate student Raveen Sidhu selected for the prestigious Brooke Owens Fellowship

<https://www.eoas.ubc.ca/news-events/news/1676620800>



KRONSTAD LAB

James Kronstad named Power Corporation Fellow

<https://cifar.ca/cifarnews/2023/05/15/james-kronstad-named-power-corporation-fellow/>

PEOPLE

Department Members



Happy Retirement, Sue Palichuk!

In April, we celebrated the retirement of our HR Director of Operations, Susan (Sue) Palichuk.

Sue has been a part of UBC for decades and part of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology for over 20 years. We had a wonderful time celebrating her and are so grateful for everything she has done for all of us in the department.

We will miss Sue's humour, kindness and zest for life. But we are excited for her many more exciting life adventures ahead. We love you, Sue!



PEOPLE

Department Members



NEW FACULTY: Welcome Professor Kayla King to the UBC Departments of Microbiology and Immunology, and Zoology!

After 10 years of teaching and research in Oxford University's Biology department, Dr. Kayla King has moved back to British Columbia to join the UBC Vancouver Department of Microbiology and Immunology and the Department of Zoology as a Professor.

At the King lab, their main research focus is on evolutionary and ecological interactions between animal hosts and microbial pathogens. Read more about Kayla and the King lab:

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/news/welcome-professor-kayla-king>



NEW STAFF: Jarrad Wiens joins the Department of Microbiology and Immunology as new Director of Operations (HR)

With the retirement of Sue Palichuk, Jarrad Wiens has joined our team! He was recently the Director of Administration for Extended Learning at UBC and is now the new Director of Operations for the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. Welcome, Jarrad!



PEOPLE

Department Members



In Memory of Erin Gaynor

Dr. Erin Christine Gaynor
February 26, 1968 – March 6, 2023

Dr. Erin Gaynor, a Professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, has been a valued member of the departmental community for the last 20 years since her recruitment as an Assistant Professor in June 2003.

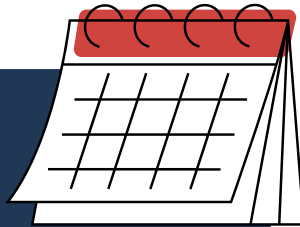
Sadly, she passed away in her home on Monday March 6, 2023. Erin's sudden death at an early age has shocked and saddened those who knew and worked with her – her family, friends, colleagues, trainees, and the UBC science community.

Erin is remembered for her wit and creative drive to excel as a teacher and microbiologist, and her kind and caring heart. She will be deeply missed.

A memorial seminar in her honour is currently being planned.
If you would like to read more about her life and research, you can do so at:
<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/in-memory-of-erin-gaynor>

EVENTS

This past year, the department hosted many of our popular events in person for the first time in years. It was wonderful to be together again and we look forward to reconnecting with the community for years to come.

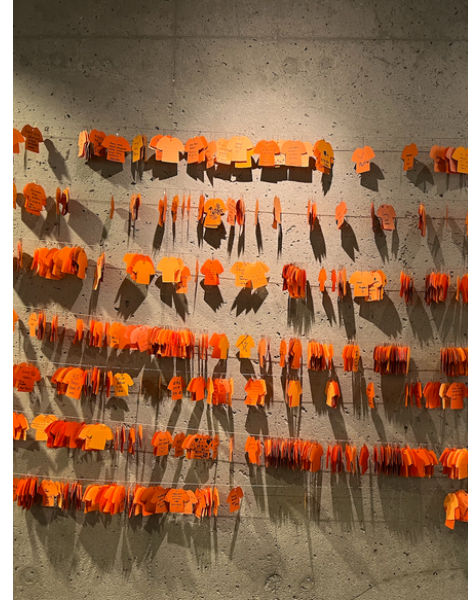


- June 6, 2022
Research Day
- June 30, 2022
LolA-Palooza
- September 13, 2022
Welcome Back
- September 21, 2022
Postdoc Appreciation Dinner
- October 6, 2022
UBC-BCIT Biotechnology 20-year Anniversary
- October 26, 2022
MBIM Fall Symposium
- December 3, 2022
Holiday Party
- March 9, 2023
Alumni Night (MIGSS)
- April 29, 2023
Day of Immunology at Science World
- May 2, 2023
MBIM Spring Symposium
- May 30, 2023
Graduation Tea - Class of 2023



EDI

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



Located on the University of British Columbia's Vancouver Campus on the **traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) People**, we believe it is the responsibility of all community members to maintain a safe space and welcoming community that supports successful research, leadership, and connection.

Our EDI team meets regularly to discuss important issues and how we can learn from our history to ensure our present reflects our values. We think hard about who we want to be as a department, and the legacy we want to leave behind. Part of this process is transforming the department's academic experience such that power relations are equalized for everyone, something that we are working towards across multiple efforts.

Read more about our EDI goals at: <https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/edi>

Let's Talk

EDI

"Let's Talk EDI" is an inclusive space for all MBIM trainees (Postdocs, Graduate Students, Undergraduate Students) to celebrate diversity in our department, and discuss their experiences and hopes for the future.

Our events have inspired discussions around important EDI topics such as Pride, Indigenous Reconciliation, and Black History.

<https://www.microbiology.ubc.ca/edi/lets-talk-edi>

ALUMNI



On Tuesday May 30, we celebrated the graduating class of 2023 at our Graduation Tea! The event was well-attended and an enjoyable way to celebrate the end of the school year and welcome the newest group of alumni.

This past year, we expanded our alumni engagement by hosting some exciting events - including the UBC-BCIT 20-year reunion in October, and an alumni networking event with MIGSS (Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Student Society) in March. We are planning another, bigger gathering soon. So make sure to check your emails for future alumni events to come! We look forward to seeing you soon.

For regular department updates, please follow us on Social Media!



KEEP *in touch*

5 Ways to Share and Celebrate Your MBIM Experience

1. Feature on our website and social media! To feature your post-grad research and experiences, please contact our Communications Coordinator: Laryssa Vachon, laryssa.vachon@ubc.ca
2. Attend one of our [Seminars and/or Events](#)
3. Support one of our [Dedicated Funds and Scholarships](#)
4. Keep your contact information up-to-date with [UBC Alumni Affairs](#)
5. Visit the [Faculty of Science Alumni](#) page to stay in touch with other UBC Alumni

