

# PAW

## Postdoctoral Association at Western

### PAW Executive Council Meeting

September 25<sup>th</sup> 2020 @ 12:00-1:30pm

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/93195997301?pwd=QXp2cTVzT0JMT0MwdzBnUE5MbGdBZz09>

Meeting ID: 931 9599 7301 Passcode: PAW

### MINUTES

#### Attendance

Stephen Tuffs	President, Department of Microbiology and Immunology	X
Roberta Bgeginski	Vice-President Internal, Department of Kinesiology	X
Sabina Rakhimbekova	Vice-President External, Department of Microbiology and Immunology	X
Harvi Hart	Vice-President Finance, Department of Physical Therapy	X
Cassie Ellis	Secretary, Ivey Business School	X
Mariya Goncheva	Vice-President Communications, Department of Microbiology and Immunology	X

#### 1. Ratification of the Minutes from the previous meeting

- Passed

#### 2. Ratification of the Agenda

- Passed

#### 3. Announcements/ Introduction of new members/ Attendance

- Steve asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves
  - Kate Parham, Microbiology and Immunology
  - Kasey Van Hedger, Brainscan
  - Roopa Devasya, Chemical Engineering
  - Farzaneh Daneshzand, Ivey
  - Vasudeva Bhat, Schulich
  - Alexandra Levine, Psychology at WIRB
  - Nima Taefehshkor, Microbiology



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- Karine Dufresne

#### **4. AGM (Stephen & Cassie)**

- 12-1pm
- Update from the President (Stephen)
- Election of VP EDI (Cassie)
  - Steve introduced role and explained why we thought it was important – see Agenda Item #7.
- Stephen continued with AGM by updating on PAW:
  - Had to cancel event this year
  - Introduced Ruth Martin and her role in SGPS and advisor to PAW
  - Launched Road to Recovery Survey – got an impression with how postdocs are being affected:
    - Most postdocs reported with negative affects to their mental health – we improved our website and clarified mental health resources
    - Another concern was the inevitable impacts on academic and industry in future career paths – we continue to offer workshops and panels due to demand
  - As a result of the events in the USA this year, we realized the importance and need for an executive position focusing on EDI. Created, posted, and elected role.
  - Created YouTube page – record workshops, speakers, activities, in order to help postdocs with time management and access to content regardless of schedule
- Stephen opened floor to group:
  - Open Forum (Theme: Postdocs during COVID-19)
  - No comments
  - Stephen concluded AGM

#### **5. 2020 PAW Executive Committee (Stephen)**

- Any updates?
- Advertise current open positions
  - Vasudeva Bhat has volunteered to represent Schulich

#### **6. PAW during COVID-19 (Stephen)**

- COVID-19 PAW page
  - Significant updates made to our website this summer
  - Mental health resources much more clearly labelled and accessible
  - Roberta to follow-up with Elli re: add to our website and whether it is okay with Ontario's Accessibility Act, E.g., subtitles, etc.
- Stephen attended a Canadian Postdoc (CAPs) meeting Monday -



## Postdoctoral Association at Western

- Asked to share their COVID survey through email and Twitter – Mariya will communicate this to postdocs at Western
  - Mariya will use the PAW email and register – Steve to contact Emma
- Mariya spoke on Schulich higher-ups wanting to plan for continuing research, especially Lab-based research, regardless of COVID outbreaks and any new lock-downs
  - For instance, Robarts and Schulich are both operating in Labs at 60% capacity
  - WIRB roled back to 40% capacity, restricting participants to the in-Western bubble (Alex)

### 7. Vice President Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Cassie)

- Nomination period closed on September 20<sup>th</sup> – nomination distributed to Exec
- Nominees announced September 21<sup>st</sup> and invited to speak at this PAW Exec meeting
- New Position Nominee elected
  - Cassie read the call for nomination and the nomination for Alexandra Levine from colleague Kasey Van Hedger:

*"I would like to nominate Alexandra Levine for the position of Vice-President EDI within PAW. Alex is currently a member of the BrainsCAN EDI committee and I can attest to her dedication and commitment to EDI work. Through this committee, Alex has consistently advocated for EDI on issues that are directly relevant to postdocs (how postdocs are hired, length of contracts - especially given unforeseen circumstances), and has provided helpful and constructive feedback on EDI-related communications and policies. Alex and I are also both working with Schulich leadership to plan an event later this month designed to educate attendees on the importance of anti-racism, and Alex has been an outspoken advocate for best practices since the beginning of our involvement with that group. Alex is a strong collaborator, an exceptional team player, and she is highly motivated to continue her own education in EDI topics that are outside of her lived experience. I cannot imagine anyone more deserving or who would have a greater positive impact in this position. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information, and I hope you will give Alex your utmost consideration for the position of Vice-President EDI within PAW."*

- Commence development of EDI strategy
  - Alex was officially nominated. No oppositions. Thanked the group. Spoke on her experiences and goals for bringing EDI to the forefront at Western.
    - Happy that we are seeking postdocs from every department/faculty at Western to represent and provide insight to share with Ruth and Nicole
    - Hoping to collect experiences, seeking need for improvements, any implicit marginalizations, etc
    - Alex wants to have an EDI corner built into our PAW website. Share information and resources, advertise workshops.
    - Focus on supporting one another. Wants to ensure all under-represented groups heard.
- Stephen told Alex that he is organizing a meeting with Nicole, Mihaela, and Ruth. TBD.



## Postdoctoral Association at Western

- Any areas in particular or concerns we need to advocate for? (open forum)
  - Mariya – tried to get an EDI workshop organized but COVID cancelled it. Wants a training video or workshop or certification or video for our YouTube page. Especially considering our need for cultural sensitivity, which Alex completely agreed with.
    - Alex spoke on Brainscan-specific EDI tutorials for cultural sensitivity awareness in the University, and will speak with Nicole on material to access and methods of delivery.
    - Roberta loves the idea about adding the EDI section to our website. Asked Alex to provide Elli with some links. And for videos from Nicole.
      - ◆ Ask Nicole to share videos with us to post to our YouTube page.
    - Mariya also wondered if Nicole or Alec know of any public domain videos and resources that are available from Brainscan and elsewhere.

### 8. Workshops (Stephen)

- Postdoc Orientation
  - Approx. 30 postdocs attended
  - Included EDI topic
- Revisit and brainstorm
  - Continue to focus on career-workshops, for example document-specific workshops (research proposals, teaching statements, teaching dossiers, etc.). Look at what CTL is offering and see what we can offer that is postdoc-specific.
    - Roberta will ask CTL for a speaker and create a series of workshops – “Academic Development Series” ? These seem to be the most well attended.
  - Harvi agreed that a package of academic-series would be very valuable to postdocs
    - Perhaps offer postdocs to bring their material with them and to the workshop so that feedback can be incorporated and work through the document
  - Stephen suggests asking Ruth Martin - perhaps she can lend insight into her experiences with these workshops and invite her to host one of the workshops
  - Roberta will draft a proposal and submit to Steve
- No upcoming workshops have been scheduled
- Halloween event this year – create categories for Best Pictures, - “Most Spooky Halloween” contest. Mariya can take charge and will advertise.
  - E.g., Best costume, best pumpkin, best child’s costume, best porch
  - Ask postdocs to send/submit, we will share on social media, offer vouchers as prize
  - Mariya is offering to make cake pops to deliver to the winners

### 9. Coffee and Conversations (Mariya)

- Ask what people want ... only 2 or 3 people were attending

# PAW

## Postdoctoral Association at Western

- Voted – Zoom fatigue, conflicts with kids and teaching etc.
  - Mariya suggests stopping C&C for remainder of 2020
    - ◆ All in favour, no one opposed.

### 10. PAW Representatives (Roberta)

- Culture and Arts Officer – remain open. Needs description.
- Department Reps – which ones are still open? which ones are filled? Will discuss again next meeting.

### 11. Postdoc Appreciation Week (Sabina)

- Wrap-up – comments, feedback
  - Sabina summarized events – all in-person events were cancelled ahead of time.
  - Virtual events: 5 participants in Yoga (recorded and shared to YouTube), 50 for panel, 6 for social (Quiz was cancelled).
  - Terry Fox – only \$170 raised, goal was \$500, due to virtual and international and lack of finances ... perhaps we need to advertise and explain Terry Fox better in the future to stress importance of this charity event. Funding lacking for many charities due to COVID.
    - All in favour of providing more explanation
- Postdoc Association at Western applauded at CAPs meeting (Roberta and Kate)
  - PAW one of the few associations not affiliated with the Union, it's about the postdocs, being social, and about career development, not bargaining.
  - CAPs wants to continue promoting the return to work results and initiatives

### 12. Socials (Steve)

- Nothing for now. TBD.

### 13. President's Newsletter

- Newsletter was sent out in beginning of September
- Asked to share good news with Steve
- No other updates

### 14. New business/Open Forum

- CAPs is asking us to share our resources and videos and workshop ideas with them to build a better community
  - We are willing to share with them as long as Miheala approves the content
  - Will also be adding EDI position
  - Other discussion was focused on COVID survey results, Union matters, Mitacs ... (Kate)



## Postdoctoral Association at Western

- We can't share the results from our COVID survey results publically since we didn't ask participants to consent to this so only generalizations were shared
- Roberta asked Alex to share her photo and bio to add to our Council website and Twitter

### **15. Next PAW meeting**

- Tuesday November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 4:00-5:00pm – Zoom details to be sent out.