

# U of T Biochemistry

[Biochemistry Website](#)

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The end of the fall term is upon us, and it has been a unique and eventful one! Most importantly, this fall has seen the gradual return to campus. Unfortunately, the recent resurgence of COVID and the emergence of omicron, is a disappointing set-back that prevented us from scheduling a departmental social event.

December is always a short but busy month as we get ready for the holidays. Especially now, this is an important time for us to stop and take time to remember to be grateful for all the people in our lives - our families, our friends, our neighbours. Don't forget to take a minute amidst the hustle and bustle to enjoy each other.

Thank you to all the faculty, staff and students who have helped me transition into the Interim Chair role, I have learned a lot since starting in May. Communication and giving a voice to our department was a goal of mine and together we've been able to accomplish that using the monthly newsletter. We've really appreciated the contributions from the various groups, please keep sharing, as we continue to be better together as a department.

Congratulations to the BCH students who have graduated this year including 12 MSc and 16 PhD students (see list in this newsletter) – a job well done and all the best in your future endeavors.

Some recruitment updates:

As you know we have a search for the new Chair of Biochemistry, and it has been posted with a deadline of Jan 4<sup>th</sup> (see sidebar).

We are also in the process of finalizing the posting for an Assistant Professor faculty position. When you receive my email in January with details, please spread the word widely.

Wishing you and yours a safe and happy holiday, looking forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

*Liliana Attisano*

For comments/feedback on the newsletter and to provide news to be include in the next issue send an email to [biochemistry.office@utoronto.ca](mailto:biochemistry.office@utoronto.ca). We are always happy to hear from you!



## Job Post

The position of Chair, Department of Biochemistry has been posted with applications being accepted until Jan 4<sup>th</sup>. Please direct any candidates to the following application link:

[Chair & Professor - Department of Biochemistry](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Upcoming Seminar Schedule

#### January 2022

**Jan 5:** Piriththiv Dhavarasa (Shana Kelley) / Nadia Zafar (Liliana Attisano)

**Jan 12:** Amy Nouanesengsy (JP Julien) / Jia (Robert) Liu (Walter Kahr)

**Jan 19:** Jan Falguera (Justin Nodwell) / Nevraj Kejiou (Alex Palazzo)

**Jan 26:** Lilian Kim (Angers Lab) / Mishaal Munawar (Peter Kim)

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## Graduate Updates

### Graduate Courses

There are a few new courses being offered in the Winter 2022 session that we just posted, including two courses on Islet Biology, by Rob Screatton and Erin Mulvihill (University of Ottawa), covering diverse topics related to diabetes research.

Here is the current list of courses.

#### Winter 2022 Semester:

BCH2125 Structure and Dynamics of Biomacromolecules Using Solid State NMR Spectroscopy

Course Coordinator: Simon Sharpe

BCH2135 Mitochondria and Metabolism in Human Health and Disease

Course Coordinator: Angus McQuibban

BCH2119 Advances in Epigenetics

Course Coordinator: Carol Schuurmans

BCH2120 Studies of Tissue Barriers: Regulation of Phenotype and Transport Across the Epithelium and Endothelium

Course Coordinators: Warren Lee & Andras Kapus

BCH2112 From Chaperones to CRISPR-Cas: The Incredible Genius of Phages

Course Coordinators: Karen Maxwell & Alan Davidson

BCH2203 Intro programming in Python

Course Coordinator: TBA

BCH2200 Design Thinking for Scientists

Course Coordinator: Nana Lee

BCH2139 Islet Biology I: Gene to Cell to Organ to Disease

Course Coordinators: Robert Screatton & Erin Mulvihill

BCH2140 Islet Biology II: Beyond Glucose Control: Molecular Targets, Diagnostics and Cutting-edge Technologies

Course Coordinators: Robert Screatton & Erin Mulvihill

JBB2025 Protein Crystallography (1/2 Credit)

Course Coordinator: Jim Rini

## Undergraduate Updates

### Calling BCH Supervisors to participate in the BCH 2022 Summer Student Research Program

Beginning in December 2021, the Biochemistry Department will be accepting applications for the 2022 Summer Student Research Program (UROP/SSRP) which aims to foster research experiences for undergraduate students who have completed at least one biochemistry course or a biochemistry lab. The value of the award is \$5000.00. (\$2500.00 support PLUS a minimum of \$2500.00 from you). Students are expected to engage in full-time research in your lab for at least 12 consecutive weeks (May to August) and attend a weekly seminar series to enrich their experiences. In late July/early August, students will present a summary of their project results.

If you intend to host undergraduate summer students in your lab, please submit your response to [Jennifer Haughton](#) so that your lab can be included on the BCH UROP/SSRP website.

### COVID-19 planning updates

With the recent updates, please continue to check the below link for the latest information regarding vaccinations, social distancing, masking and any other policy changes.

Guide to Fall 2021: [U'Together - Your guide to fall 2021 at U of T](#)

## BGSU News

Hello Biochem!

Last month we had our first athletic social event: bouldering at Basecamp. Thank you for everyone who turned up! Many students enjoyed the experience a lot and decided to get a membership. Hope to see more climbers in the future! If you have any suggestions for social events, don't forget to contact us at any time.

We had some setbacks for the holiday party this year, but the BGSU is working hard to have an in-person event again. Stay tuned for more info very soon!

Lastly, we want to wish everyone a warm and safe holiday season and see you all in 2022!

Your BGSU

Facebook: U of T Biochemistry Graduate Student Union – BGSU

Twitter: @yourbgsu

Email: [yourbgsu@gmail.com](mailto:yourbgsu@gmail.com)

## Spotlight:

### Temerty Students Support High School Students with Career Education



Temerty Faculty of Medicine learners Ikran Ali and **Zaky Hassan**, who is in Dr. Rini's Lab, are part of a group of Somali students who recently organized a virtual high school career fair. The idea was to help connect young people with Somali professionals in a variety of fields. *Read more of the article [here](#).*

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## Transcripts News

Hey Biochem! This month we have a new piece of biochem cartoon about the first step of working in the lab:

transcripts

### BIOCHEMISTRY CARTOON SERIES: STEP ONE OF WORKING IN THE LAB

Surely, many of us will find it relatable.



In addition, we want to hear from you - what's your favourite amino acid, and why? We are working on putting together a list of reasons why members of the department love every amino acid - both for scientific reasons and for silly things like projecting some personality trait onto the molecules based on their properties or making a pun you like out of their name.

If you have some extra love for a particular amino acid, biochemistry-based or otherwise, let us know in this Google form!

### People's Choice of Amino Acids

Keep up with our newsletter column each month and follow us on Twitter or Instagram @transcriptsblog for more updates on our work.

Have a great holiday, everyone!

## Dr. Robert James SARGEANT



DR. ROBERT JAMES SARGEANT (Rob) Passed away peacefully on November 28, 2021. Rob graduated with a PhD in the Department of Biochemistry in 1995 under the supervision of Amira Klip where he focussed on insulin-stimulated glucose transport. Rob practiced General Internal Medicine at St. Michael's Hospital and was diagnosed with brain cancer about a year ago.

### [Dr. Sargeant's Obituary](#)

Globe and Mail Article: [A bitter pill: When the doctor becomes the patient](#)



# Graduates (2021)

Last Name	First Name	Program	Supervisor	Joint Supervisor	Exam Date
<b>Moon</b>	Emily	MSc	Robert Scream		January 18, 2021
<b>Orrell</b>	Kathleen	PhD	Roman Melnyk		March 11, 2021
<b>Huang</b>	Jingjing	PhD	Regis Pomes		March 23, 2021
<b>Vladimirov</b>	Maria	PhD	Alan Davidson		April 6, 2021
<b>Guljas</b>	Andrea	MSc	Regis Pomes		April 13, 2021
<b>Liang</b>	Anna	MSc	Regis Pomes		April 15, 2021
<b>Miranda</b>	Maria Zena	PhD	Andras Kapus	Craig Simmons	April 27, 2021
<b>Khan</b>	Alima Naim	MSc	Karen Maxwell	Trevor Moraes	April 28, 2021
<b>Mehta</b>	Meera	MSc	Aleixo Muise		June 21, 2021
<b>Lee</b>	Eliza Sharon	PhD	Alex Palazzo		June 29, 2021
<b>Soroor</b>	Forooz	PhD	William Trimble		July 9, 2021
<b>Walpole</b>	Glenn Franklin Wilson	PhD/MD	Sergio Grinstein	John Brumell	July 22, 2021
<b>Sheppard</b>	Anneka Caroline	MSc	Haley Wyatt		July 27, 2021
<b>Mylvaganam</b>	Sivakami Meena	PhD/MD	Sergio Grinstein		July 27, 2021
<b>Lim</b>	SangHyun (Kevin)	PhD	Igor Stagljär		July 28, 2021
<b>Malhi</b>	Manpreet	PhD	Jason Maynes		July 28, 2021
<b>Pogmore</b>	Justin	PhD	David Andrews		August 12, 2021
<b>Liu</b>	Boyuan	MSc	Oliver Ernst		September 3, 2021
<b>Han</b>	Sisu	PhD	Carol Schuurmans		September 8, 2021
<b>Tsang</b>	Brian	PhD/MD	Julie Forman-Kay		September 14, 2021
<b>Lefebvre</b>	Maxime	MSc	Justin Nodwell		September 17, 2021
<b>Hossain</b>	Lamia	MSc	Regis Pomes		September 27, 2021
<b>Patel</b>	Ayushi	MSc	Haley Wyatt		October 26, 2021
<b>Bourkas</b>	Matthew	PhD	Joel Watts		November 10, 2021
<b>Bhandari</b>	Vaibhav	PhD	Walid Houry		December 13, 2021
<b>Sen</b>	Sabrina	PhD	Liliana Attisano		December 14, 2021
<b>Mark</b>	Alison Elisabeth	MSc	David Andrews		November 15, 2021
<b>Lam</b>	Jamie	MSc	Karen Maxwell		December 16, 2021