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...AND MUCH MORE!
Dear Colleagues,

As I read through this Summer Newsletter, what strikes me is the extraordinary level of accomplishment — not only by our amazing trainees, but by faculty at all stages of their careers. Put simply, we have been fortunate to have had a great year. Many new initiatives are gaining momentum. As an example, the GTA-OB Network is now providing a forum or engagement for a wide variety of clinicians and researchers, and is interfacing with both simulation research and initiatives in patient safety. Our evocative front cover reminds us of the varied ways in which trainees and faculty are engaged with our partner, Moi University, in Kenya. Our Research Day was, by all accounts, a great success, growing, in part, due to contributions by new cross-appointed faculty introduced here. As we go to production, Steve Lyte has just been awarded a prestigious CIHR Foundation Scheme and a national 2015 Lois Ross CAIR Award for Excellence in Resident Education. The Award is given to the best OB/GYN educator chosen by graduating residents at each medical school in North America.

Dr. Jon Barrett, Director of Women and Babies Program at the Sunnybrook Research Institute, has been appointed as the Waks Family Chair in Maternal-Fetal Medicine Research. Congratulations to Ms. Caroline Sutherland, our Postgraduate Programs Coordinator, who won the National 2015 Lois Ross CAIR Award for Service to Residents in February, 2015.

Our Department Promotions Committee is committed to helping our faculty advance their careers. Effective July 1, 2015, the following faculty were promoted to Associate Professor: Marcus Bernardini, Ian Rogers, Rachel Spitzer, and Suzanne Wong.

Congratulations to Dr. Grace Liu from Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, who received the William Dixon Award for her excellence in surgical teaching.

The Department hosted its first CBME Faculty Retreat on June 19, 2015. The Faculty Development Committee, along with the PGME Office, discussed the role of CBME and its implementation with our rotation and site coordinators.

This year’s Graduation Ceremony & Alumni Event took place at UofT’s historic Hart House on June 16. Over 180 people were in attendance, including 27 graduates.

Dr. Joan Murphy has been appointed as the Interim Head, Division of Gynaecologic Oncology, following the departure of Dr. Barry Rosen. She has also been appointed as the Program Director of the Women’s and Children’s Program at Trillium Health Partners.

Our personalized OB/GYN yoga jacket initiative has been extended to our faculty and fellows! Contact Andrew Greig (andrew.greig@utoronto.ca) to order one.

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Faculty Appointments

Dr. Barry Rosen has stepped down from his position as the Director, Division of Gynaecologic Oncology at the University of Toronto. We wish Dr. Rosen all the best in his new role as the Section Head for Gynecologic Oncology at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, MI.

Dr. Joan Murphy has undertaken the position of Interim Division Head of Gynaecologic Oncology effective July 1, 2015. Dr. Murphy is well-suited to this role, having served in many senior leadership capacities in Gynaecologic Oncology. She will undertake this city-wide role as she commences her new position as Program Chairman and Medical Director, Women's and Children's Program at Trillium Health Partners and the Mississauga Academy of Medicine.

Dr. Stephanie Laframboise has been appointed as Interim Chief at Princess Margaret Hospital-University Health Network, following Dr. Rosen’s departure. We congratulate them both on these appointments!

Dr. Jon Barrett, Director of the Women and Babies Program at the Sunnybrook Research Institute, has been appointed as the Waks Family Chair in Maternal-Fetal Medicine Research. Dr. Barrett plans to use the generous gift to fund research in high-risk pregnancy complications.

Faculty Awards

Our Faculty have distinguished themselves in many areas this year, including research and education. Congratulations to Dr. Samar Nahas on winning the Better Together Teaching Award at Trillium Health Partners! Dr. Nahas, a member of the Gynaecologic Oncology Division, received the Award at the end of May, 2015.

Dr. Grace Liu, a member of the Gynaecologic Oncology Division, has received the Dr. William Dixon Summer Research Award. The award is given to the Sunnybrook surgeon from any of the operative specialties who has made the biggest impact on the residents’ development and evolution as a surgeon. Congratulations to Dr. Liu on her continued excellence in surgical teaching.

Dr. Janet Rossant, Chief of Research at the Hospital for Sick Children, is the recipient of the 2015 Canada National Gairdner Wightman Award. The Award recognized her “outstanding scientific contributions to developmental biology” and “exceptional international leadership in stem cell biology and policy-making, and in advancing research programs for children’s illnesses.” Dr. Rossant has also been appointed to the ORDER OF CANADA, the highest civilian honour in Canada, for “advancing the global understanding of embryo development and stem cell biology, and for her national and international leadership in health science.” Congratulations!

New Initiatives in OB/GYN QIPS

Since the establishment of QIPS as our strategic priority, we have made several steps forward in advancing it. Our Department’s Quality Improvement & Patient Safety (QIPS) Committee, led by Dr. Gareth Seaward works closely with the GTA OBS Network, Chaired by Dr. Jon Barrett, to achieve the QIPS goals outlined in our Strategic Plan. Most recently, the GTA-OBS Network launched its first NEWSLETTER and presented preliminary results on six QIPS indicators measured at member-sites across the Network. Both of these can be found at http://www.obgyn.utoronto.ca/gta-obg-network. The QIPS Committee is also working on developing a new webpage, as well as creating an online tool, in UTERO HIGH RISK TRANSFER FORM; the initiative, led by Dr. Jennifer Cram, would allow the community hospitals to receive timely information on the status of their patients following transfer. Dr. Seaward also congratulates Dr. Joan Murphy on undertaking the position of Chair of Women’s Health at St. Michael’s Hospital into a position as the Program Chief and Medical Director of Partners and the Mississauga Academy of Medicine.

OB/GYN Jackets

The personalized OB/GYN YOGA JACKET Initiative has been extended to our faculty and fellows! If you would like to purchase a jacket, please fill out a form (http://www.obgyn.utoronto.ca/form/obgyn-personalized-yoga-jacket-form). Orders will be placed annually in July.

Special Awards & Recognitions for Faculty and Staff

During the Graduation Ceremony, our resident graduating class recognized staff and faculty who have made significant contributions to their education.

- Dr. Barry Rosen - Faculty Special Recognition
- Dr. Matthew Morton - CREOG National Faculty Award for Excellence in Resident Education
- Dr. Deborah Robertson - Neeal Sierra Resident Advocacy Award

Prevent Ovarian Cancer Program

Members of our Gynaecologic Oncology Division have initiated the POCP at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. Researchers at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre have launched the PREVENT OVARIAN CANCER PROGRAM (POCP; www.preventovariancancer.ca), the POCP (PI: Dr. Marcus Bernardini) is a project that aims to identify women with a first-degree relative (mother, sister, or daughter) who has died from high-grade serous ovarian cancer, offer them a genetic test to identify BRCA1/2 gene mutations, and provide them with the opportunity to decrease their lifetime risk for developing ovarian cancer.

Furthermore, Ms. Caroline Sutherland, our Post-graduate Programs Coordinator, was awarded the 2015 LOCS RSSS CAIR Award for Service to Residents. Ms. Sutherland was nominated by Mathew Leonardi (PGY4) and his peers for her contributions to the advancement of resident life in Canada.
Congratulations to Our Graduates!

Best of luck to this year’s graduates from our residency program as well as our fellowship and subspecialty training programs.

The Department celebrated another successful year at the 2015 GRADUATION CEREMONY AND ALUMNI EVENT. Graduation took place on July 16, 2015, at University of Toronto’s historic Hart House. Over 180 people were in attendance, including 27 graduates. Family members and faculty came to congratulate our newly-minted specialists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and their colleagues completing clinical fellowships. A new addition to this year’s program was giving fellowship program directors the opportunity to present their trainees with certificates of program completion.

Heather Millar Wins the 2015 PARO Teaching Award

Congratulations to Heather Millar (2015 Graduate) on winning the 2015 PARO TRUST FUNDS RESIDENT TEACHING AWARD. Heather was one of only two residents from all of University of Toronto’s residency programs to receive the award. It was presented at the PARO Clinical Teaching Awards Banquet.

Junior residents described Heather as having made “an enormous contribution to [their] rotations and laid a framework to benefit the education of residents on future rotations.” Heather was also described as a “team player and role model, who leads by example to create positive learning environments that made working...exciting and easy.” Well done, Heather!

Rebecca Rich Wins the CFWH Dawn Walker Award and MOH Funding

Congratulations to Rebecca Rich (PGY3) on obtaining MINISTRY OF HEALTH funding for the 2015-16 academic year! Rebecca is part of the Clinician Investigator Program at the University of Toronto. She is working on a Master’s degree in clinical epidemiology with a focus on Indigenous women’s health and the delivery of maternity care in rural and remote areas. In addition, Rebecca has been awarded the CFWH DAWN WALKER AWARD to complete her project, “Performance measurement in a circumpolar context: Developing indicators of health system responsiveness for maternity care.” She is looking forward to working in Yellowknife during her studies. Her dog, Medzhia, is also happy to be returning to the North.

Our resident graduating class also had an opportunity to say good-bye to their closest mentors at a private dinner on June 5, 2015. We congratulate our graduates on a 100% Royal College exam pass rate and wish them best of luck in all their endeavors.

Congratulations to Crystal Chan and her fiancé, Jonathan, on their engagement! The couple got engaged in May.

Congratulations to Claire Jones and Crystal Chan on an excellent review on safety and issues related to travel in pregnancy, published in the December SOGC issue!

Julie Thorne has obtained her MPH from the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health! Congrats, Julie!

Rebecca Rockman, Mathew Leonardi, Rebecca Rich and their team won the GOG/APOG prize for organizing the INSPECTION art event! The project won in the “most innovative and unique” category.

Congratulations to Rebecca Menzies and her husband Jason! The couple got married on May 16, 2015, in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They went to Italy for their honeymoon.

Congratulations to Joe George, our Departmental Assistant, and his wife, Sandee, on the arrival of their first baby! Sonam! Sonam was born at St. Mike’s on March 13, 2015.

Lynn Sterling presented her research on “Pregnancy Outcomes in Women with PCOS: an Historical Review” at the ESPIRE conference in Lisbon this June, with her supervisor, Dr. Ellen Greenblatt.

Julie Thorne travelled to Kenya to work with AMPATH for 3 weeks in January to start her research project, following her graduation from Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health.

Congratulations to Melissa Walker and her fiancé, Andrew, got married in Kleinburg on May 30th. Strong OB/Gyn showing at the wedding! Congratulations!

Kirsten Niles was the captain of Team Canada Women’s Masters. Her team won Silver at the World Beach Ultimate Championships in March, 2015, in Dubai.

Andrea Simpson helped coordinate a contest at St. Michael’s Hospital where people were asked to text in pictures of things that made them happy at work. Happy staff keep patients happy.

Congratulations to David Gureau and Rebecca Rockman who got married in March, 2015!

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The small (and big) things in life

Our trainees and staff lead busy lives outside of work as well! Here are some highlights.

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- Rebecca Rich and her dog, Medzhia (Photo Credit: Rebecca Rich)
Postgraduate Awards
Every year at the Graduation Ceremony, OBGYN residents receive awards to recognize their contribution to scholarship and education. The following residents were awarded the EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD: Carmen McCaffrey (PGY3), Andrea Simpson (PGY4), and Amanda Cipolla (PGY5).

Annually, one graduate is awarded the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL LEPAROSCOPISTS (AACL) AWARD. This year the Award was presented to Stephen Morris (PGY5) as a Special Resident in Minimally Invasive Gynaecology. Along with the certificate, Stephen receives a one-year membership to the AACL. We congratulate Stephen on this very impressive achievement.

Spotlight on a Recent Grad
Dr. Alice Han graduated from the Obstetrics & Gynaecology Residency Program in 2014. She is now working at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

Dr. Alice Han is currently an Associate Physician at Harvard Medical School's Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Division of Global Health Equity and an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the University of Toronto. Since September 2014, Dr. Han has been working as the Women's Health District Clinical Advisor for Partners in Health (PHI)/Inshuti Mu Buzima (IMB), Rwanda.

Dr. Han's clinical work focuses on clinical and surgical mentorship of Rwandan physicians and the development of training curricula. Her programmatic work includes the design and implementation of an initiative to increase contraception use in her catchment area and to strengthen community maternity care training. She is also helping initiate and lead a new maternal mortality reduction collaborative task force as well as a new multi-sectoral initiative to tackle gender-based violence (GBV). In addition, Dr. Han is collaborating with experts from Harvard Medical School to help design a pilot cervical cancer screening program.

Dr. Han's research and advocacy interests include GBV and maternal mortality. She has published and presented internationally on GBV in Latin America and the Caribbean, including presenting at the World Congress on Women's Mental Health in Peru upon invitation by the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health. Her previous experiences include health equity work in Brazil with the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre, research in Kenya on sociocultural determinants of obstetrical fistulae; and research and clinical electives in Israel, Ecuador, and Vietnam. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Society for International Health, as Medical Director of the University of Toronto International Health Program, and as co-host of a weekly radio show that highlights current issues in healthcare. Moving forward, she is committed to developing leadership in global women's health as an academic physician.

ObGyn Summer Newsletter ~ Issue 21
Advocating for Women's Health at Home and Abroad
By Rachel Spitzer

Our group also bids a fond farewell to Dr. Barry Rosen as he departs Toronto for new opportunities at Beaumont Hospital in Michigan. We are fortunate that Barry maintains an adjunct appointment in our Department in order to continue his leadership role in our oncology work in Kenya. We are also grateful for the support of Shayna Henry and Khrystyna Levyska in our Department office and wish them well as they both head off to medical school.

As usual, our residents lead the way in their enthusiasm and commitment to advocacy and underserved populations. A mere few examples of their commitments in recent months include:

• holding positions in OOGC and APOG within advocacy for junior members;
• an exciting new opportunity to present reproductive health information to a group of immigrant women, which will become an ongoing experience a few times per year for a few residents;
• a meeting of our resident global health interest group, with another planned over the summer to welcome new incoming trainees;
• initiating monthly videoconference rounds with registrants at Moi University, strengthening the relationship between the two sites.

We are gearing up for a busy fall of visitors including our 2 annual medical students as well as a senior registrar (resident) from Moi University, who will come here thanks to joint funding by the Rockefeller Foundations from our Department and teaching hospitals. We are also looking forward to welcoming 2 faculty members, Drs. Alice Kagwiria Kaaria and Philiph Kipkirui Tonui, who are coming as FIGO Fellows ahead of the FIGO meeting in Vancouver this October. We also have numerous students and residents visiting our AMPATH site in Kenya over the summer for research and clinical experiences and are excited for Dr. Heather Mullar, a recent graduate of our residency program, to assume the role of Team Lead for Reproductive Health in Eldoret.

This year was the first time we introduced a session on social media use for our residents. Mr. Pat Rich, invited from the Canadian Medical Association, spoke on professional and appropriate use of social media channels - an important topic in today's society where social media plays such a big role.

Our team looks forward to reconvening in the fall and developing new projects in advocacy and continuing to promote reproductive health for the women and families we serve locally and abroad.
Celebrating Our Research Potential
By Helen Robson

Once again, the Department hosted a successful Research Day, on May 8, 2015, the 32nd annual event. Research Day took place at St Michael’s College in the University of Toronto. Over 325 people registered and a record 109 abstracts made up the program, with 14 oral and 91 posters. We also had 4 Collaboration Corner abstracts, highlighting and encouraging the collaborative initiatives in the Department.

This year, we gave participants a chance to vote on the best poster at Research Day. The winner of the People's Choice Award for best poster, with 15 out of 60 votes, was "Spontaneous Uterine Rupture and Repair at 21 Weeks Gestation: A Case Report and Literature Review" by Lesley Hawkins, Deborah Robertson, Helena Frecker, Howard Berger, and Abheba Satkunaratnam.

Many thanks to Mrs. Helen Robson and Research Day Volunteers (easily distinguished by their blue t-shirts!) for helping make the day a success. 

New Appointments and Recruits

Several members have joined our hospitals as well as the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto. Here are the newest appointments and hospital staff.

Dr. Alice Han is now appointed as Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology. She is currently a physician at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Division of Global Health Equity (see P8).

Dr. Andrea Page joins our Department as a Clinical Lecturer (part-time). She completed medical school at the University of Western Ontario followed by her OB/GYN residency at the University of Toronto. Her interests are in patient safety and health care quality. She is currently doing a Master’s degree in this area.

Dr. Carol Peng has joined our Department as Assistant Lecturer, effective April 1, 2015. Dr. Peng is based at The Scarborough Hospital.

Dr. Jonathan Solnik has been appointed as Associate Professor, effective April 29, 2015. He is joining us at Mount Sinai Hospital after serving as Division Director of Urogynecology and the Center of Excellence for Minimally Invasive Surgery at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles for the last 9 years.

Dr. Shiraz Suleman has joined our faculty as Adjunct Lecturer. Dr. Suleman will be practicing at the William Osler Health System - Brampton Civic Hospital.

Dr. Dan Nayot has been appointed as Adjunct Assistant Professor.

Dr. Claire Jones joins the Faculty as Assistant Professor in the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, based at Mount Sinai Hospital. Dr. Jones completed her Bachelor of Science and Medical Degrees at the University of Western Ontario and her residency in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Toronto. Her main clinical and research interests include polycystic ovarian syndrome, fertility surgery, assisted reproductive technologies and improvement of both patient education and medical education.

Dr. Lindsay Sherriff joins our Faculty as Assistant Professor. She is based at Mount Sinai’s Division of Core Obstetrics & Gynaecology, effective July 1, 2015.

New Cross-Appointments
Welcome to Faculty of Medicine members who have joined our Department as cross-appointed members.

Dr. Mara Sobel joins Mount Sinai Hospital staff as Assistant Professor in the Division of Core Obstetrics & Gynaecology. Dr. Sobel is a graduate in Medicine from the University of Ottawa, and completed her Residency at the University of Toronto. She holds a Master’s Degree in Clinical Epidemiology and has completed a Fellowship in MUS at McMaster University. She has a special interest in Research in Education.

Dr. Crystal Chan joined staff at MSH as Assistant Professor in the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility as of July 1, 2015. She completed her medical degree and residency in OB/GYN at the University of Toronto and obtained an MSc degree through the Clinician Investigator Program. Dr. Chan is interested in the characterization of the endometrium in natural and assisted reproduction cycles, and is involved in surgical research education.

Dr. Kevin Kain is a Professor of Medicine, Science Director of Tropical Disease Unit at University Health Network-Toronto General Hospital and a Canada Research Chair. His work focuses on global maternal-child health. One of his major projects uses malaria-in-pregnancy as a model to elucidate the mechanisms underlying preterm birth and stillbirth in order to introduce interventions suitable for low-resource settings.

Dr. Alex Gershman is an Assistant Professor and radiologist at SickKids and Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto. His research interest is in studying the fetal circulation using MRI in the setting of congenital heart disease and IUGR. He has been investigating the impact of placental and cardiovascular dysfunction on fetal brain development.

Dr. Brian Cox is an Assistant Professor in Physiology, with training in biochemistry, bioinformatics and developmental biology. He focuses on applying large-scale systems biology techniques to identify genes involved in development and altered in pathology.

Senior Promotions
Congratulations to our faculty members being promoted this year from Assistant to Associate Professor, effective July 1, 2015.

Dr. Rachel Spitzer is Vice-Chair of Advocacy in our Department and is currently working closely with the AMPATH-RH program at Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya (see P10). Ms. Spitzer chairs the Advocacy Committee, the goal of which is to increase public awareness around women’s health at home and abroad.

Dr. Ian Rogers is an Associate Scientist at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute. His research focuses on stem cell therapies for peripheral vascular disease, kidney disease, and others.

Dr. Suzanne Wong is an active staff member at St. Joseph's Hospital in Toronto. Prior to working at St. Joseph’s Hospital, she was clinical staff at Brigham & Women’s Hospital in Boston and a Clinical Instructor at Harvard Medical School. She has a special interest in women's imaging, faculty development, medical education, and preventive medicine.

Dr. Marcus Bernardini is Head of the Gynaecologic Oncology Robotics Program at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and leads the Target Ovarian Cancer Program. His research focuses on the molecular characterization and behaviour of ovarian cancer and its precursors.

Junior Promotions
Congratulations to our faculty members being promoted this year from Instructor to Assistant Professor.

Dr. Mathew Morton is the Site Coordinator of Undergraduate Medical Education at Mount Sinai Hospital/University Health Network. He has a special interest in education, for which he was awarded the 2015 CREOG National Faculty Award for Excellence in Resident Education.

Dr. Jamie Kroft specializes in minimally invasive gynecologic surgery, with a focus on the surgical treatment of endometriosis and fibroids. She has a research interest in surgical outcomes of minimally invasive surgery, as well as simulation surgical education research.

Good-byes & Hellos
Our team at 123 Edward has changed this year. We’d like to say good bye to those moving forward and to those coming in!

Welcome to incoming trainees!
We are pleased to welcome our incoming group of 13 PGY1s and 2 PGY2s this year, as well as clinical fellows starting their training in July!

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Our team at 123 Edward has changed this year. We’d like to say good bye to those moving forward and to those coming in!
“Congratulations on the establishment of a new and wonderful tradition for the U. of T. Ob. Gyne Residents and their families. The Residents (including Fellows) put so much into their years of training and it is such a wonderful gesture to see them celebrated in such fine style for their successes. The venue was truly fitting for a graduation ceremony and the event was so very tastefully done. It was an honour to attend.”
~ Faculty member on 2015 Graduation Ceremony & Alumni Event

“Thank you ... for initiating and organizing the year end graduation! It was so special for me and my family to have an event and opportunity to recognize my (and their!) achievements. It gives closure to an amazing 5 years at an incredible institution! Thank you for creating this event and giving us true gift of this celebration. It was truly a special night for us all.”
~ PGY5 Graduate, on 2015 Graduation Ceremony & Alumni Event