



ImmunoE

Networking & ImmunoHackathon Pitch Event

Interested in exploring a career
in **immunoengineering**?

*Current and prospective trainees, industry
and faculty collaborators welcome!*

- Network with industry and faculty experts
- Learn about our value-added programs
- Get inspired by our inaugural ImmunoHackathon pitches



Wednesday, November 12
4 - 7 pm



Life Sciences Centre, UBC



Refreshments provided!

Hosted by ImmunoEngineering NSERC CREATE

For more information, visit: <https://immunot.ca/events/>

Register
here



2nd Annual Networking & ImmunoHackathon Pitch Event

ImmunoEngineering NSERC CREATE (ImmunoE)

Date Wednesday, November 12, 2025
Time 4:00 - 7:00 pm
Location Life Sciences Centre (2350 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver)

ImmunoE is excited to welcome both current and prospective trainees, as well as industry and academic collaborators to our **2nd Annual Networking and ImmunoHackathon Pitch Event!**

The event offers a valuable opportunity for trainees — including undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-docs — who are interested in careers in immunoengineering and immunotherapeutics to connect with members of local biotechnology companies, explore diverse career paths, and gain insights into the evolving industry landscape.

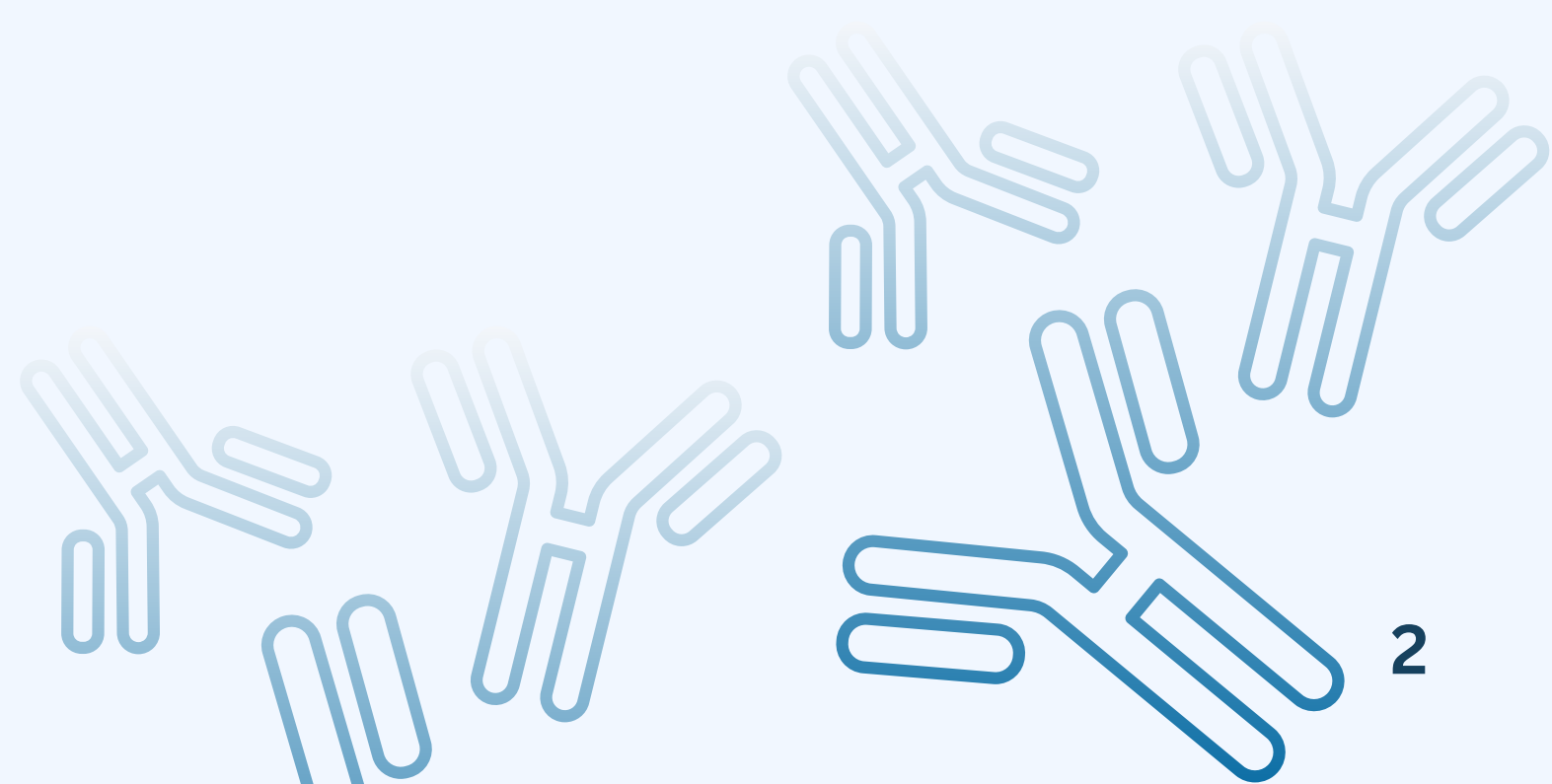
The evening will feature a **Speed Networking** session with mentors from industry, academia and entrepreneurial groups, an overview of the **ImmunoE program**, and **ImmunoHackathon Pitches** from the inaugural ImmunoE Class, showcasing innovative solutions to real-world immunoengineering challenges.



ImmunoEngineering NSERC CREATE

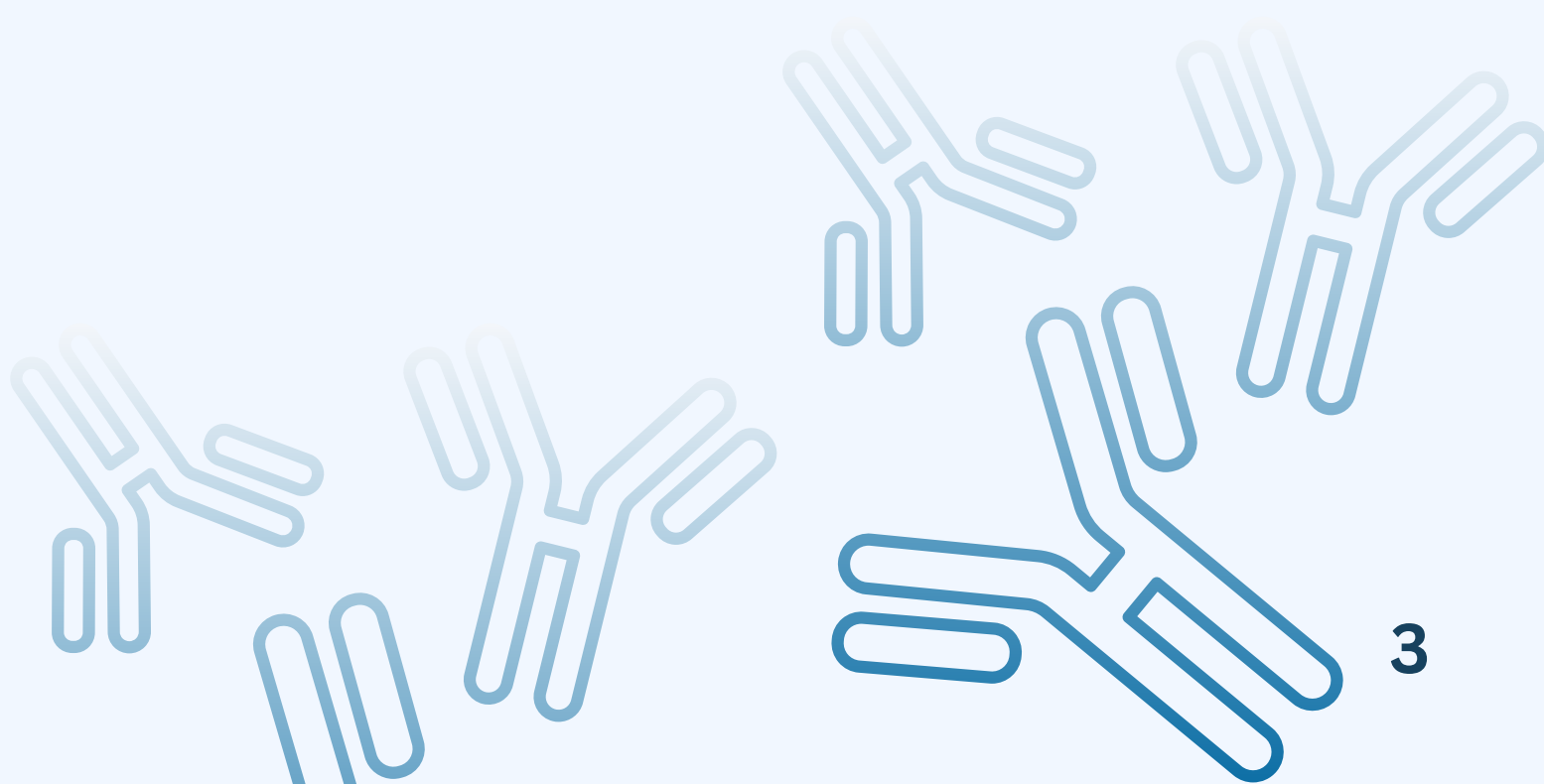
E-mail immunoengineering.create@ubc.ca
Website <https://immunot.ca/immunoe-create/>

Funded by



Schedule

Time	Activity		Location
3:30 - 4:00 pm	Registration		West Atrium
4:00 - 4:15 pm	Welcome & Overview of the ImmunoE program presented by Dr. Peter Zandstra & Dr. Pauline Johnson		LSC1
4:15 - 5:00 pm	Hackathon Pitches Presentations and Awards		
5:00 pm	Networking (info booths, complimentary refreshments)		West Atrium
5:15 - 6:15 pm		Speed networking rotations (4 x 15 min, in parallel with ongoing info booths)	
7:00 pm			



ImmunoHackathon Pitches

Two teams of graduate student trainees from the inaugural ImmunoE class will present solutions to real-world immunoengineering challenges for a chance to win a prize!

Pitches



Enhancing anti-PD-1 checkpoint blockade efficacy through precision microbiome engineering in melanoma patients

Dream Team • Lily Bertolo, Cynthia Huang, Ali Koshyk, Imogen Porter, Katia Rosenflanz, Claire Sie, Kaye Soriano, Megha Srinivas, Lucas Zhu



ImmunoVive: Reviving Immunity, Redefining Aging

Team Immortal • Ceren Gulhan, Ahmed Kabil, Sam Khalilitousi, Tae Kim, Grace Kuo, Maggie Ma, Parisa Nazari, Jeff Yoon

Judges



Christy Thomson

Scientific Associate Director, Amgen | Interests include advancing high-throughput protein solutions and leveraging biochemistry and immunology to enable the early-stage discovery of novel molecules.



Kayla Clark

Technical Sales Consultant, Miltenyi Biotec | Interests include CAR-T cell immunotherapy, manufacturing patient cell therapies in clinical trials



Jennifer Hamilton

Biotechnology-focused PhD scientist with 25+ years working for global venture capital firms, big pharma, and independent biotechnology companies | Interests include global health-care impact investing and rare diseases.



Nooshin Tabatabaei-Zavareh

Associate Director of Immunology, Culture & Applications in the Research and Development department, STEMCELL Technologies | Interests include the evaluation of business opportunities for STEMCELL

Speed Networking

During the Speed Networking session, mentors from industry and faculty will be seated at small tables, and groups of 3-4 trainees will meet with each mentor for 15 mins at a time to talk about career paths.

Interested mentees, please see our list of mentors below and sign up via this [survey](#) to indicate your preference for mentors, in addition to [registering](#) for the event by Nov 7.

Mentors



Barbara Mui
Acuitas Therapeutics

Barb earned her PhD from Dr. Pieter Cullis' lab at UBC and has been involved with various applications of lipid nanoparticles (LNP) in the past 30 years, including their use as model cell membranes to the development of the Covid-19 vaccine, Comirnaty. Her current focus is developing targeted LNP for mRNA delivery to hard-to-transfect cells readily accessible within the vascular compartment. Clinical application of this technology is mostly focused on the generation of CAR T cells in vivo. Other applications include gene editing of hemopoietic stem cells in the bone marrow.



Christy Thomson
Scientific Associate Director, Amgen

Christy received her PhD in Biochemistry from McMaster University where her research focused on protein structure and function. Her post-doctoral research at the University of British Columbia examined the human antibody response to common pathogens such as HCMV and H1N1. Since joining Amgen in 2012, her focus has been on therapeutic discovery.



Faezeh Borzooee
Postdoctoral fellow, Kuchenbauer & Rouhi Labs, BC Cancer

Faezeh is a postdoctoral fellow at BC Cancer, Terry Fox Laboratory, in Drs. Kuchenbauer/Rouhi's lab working in collaboration with the lab of Dr. Mani Larijani at SFU. Her goal is to investigate the roles of APOBECs in the metabolic rewiring of cancer cells, with a focus on myeloma but potential applicability to other cancers as well. Faezeh completed her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at SFU. During her Ph.D. she studied how the AID/APOBEC genome-mutating enzymes impact anti-viral and anti-tumor immunity.



Georgina Lopez
Clinical Applications Manager, Miltenyi Biotec

At Miltenyi Biotec, Georgina supports academic, biotech, and clinical organizations across Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest in advancing cell and gene therapy programs. Her work has contributed to the successful implementation of complex technologies, including innovative T-cell manufacturing projects and translational research initiatives. Prior to her current role, Georgina held progressive positions at Miltenyi Biotec and led early-stage commercialization efforts at two startup biotech companies, where she co-authored patents and scientific publications that contributed to product development and innovation in molecular-based medical devices.



Harsimran Khara
Postdoctoral fellow, Mui Lab, UBC

Simran earned her PhD in Life Sciences from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and completed her first postdoctoral fellowship at the University of British Columbia studying host-pathogen interactions. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Alice Mui's lab at UBC, focusing on interleukin-10 receptor signaling and its anti-inflammatory potential in macrophages.



Hongshen Ma
Professor, Dept of Mechanical Engineering, School of Biomedical Engineering, UBC

Hong is a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and School of Biomedical Engineering at UBC. He obtained his BSc in Engineering Physics from UBC, master's from at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and PhD from Electrical Engineering at MIT. Hong's research program aims to develop new technologies to interrogate and manipulate biological systems at the cellular scale with a specific focus on cytometry and cell separation.



Isabel Pablos
Research Scientist II, AbCellera

As a Research Scientist on the Biology team at AbCellera, Isa has dedicated the past three years to the early discovery phase of therapeutic antibodies. She is fortunate to spend her days with amazing colleagues who are equally passionate about delivering new medicines to patients. Her scientific journey began in Cuba, with a BSc in Biochemistry from the University of Havana and a junior researcher role in cancer vaccine immunotherapy, which ignited her passion for immunology—a passion that ultimately led her to AbCellera. She then earned a PhD in Molecular Biology and Allergology from the University of Salzburg, Austria, before moving to Vancouver for a postdoctoral fellowship at UBC, investigating protease network dysregulations in diseases like COVID-19.



Jaime Korner

Postdoctoral fellow, Laboratory for Microtechnologies for Quantitative Biomedicine (uQB), Kaigala Lab, UBC

Jaime is a postdoctoral fellow in the Laboratory for Microtechnologies for Quantitative Biomedicine (uQB) under the supervision of Govind Kaigala. Building upon her PhD experience with lipid bilayers and artificial cell plasma membranes-on-a-chip, her current research aims to create a microfluidic device for urinary exosomal miRNA detection for early cancer screening. Outside of academia, Jaime has also applied her analytical chemistry background to industrial quality control and fermentation science.



Jordan Chiu

Research Scientist I, Early Discovery, AbCellera

Jordan is a two-time graduate of UBC, with a BSc in Microbiology & Immunology (2017) and a Bachelor of Computer Science (2020). Through UBC Co-op, he gained experience in life sciences research (BC Children's Hospital) and software development (Public Services and Procurement Canada). Since joining AbCellera in 2020, he has split his time between the lab, leading the Cell Screening portion of several Early Discovery programs, and developing software-based tools to help streamline our workflows.



Kaley Wilson

Vice President, Business Development, NanoVation Therapeutics

Kaley has over 15 years of experience working with academic investigators and biotech companies to advance early-stage innovation. Throughout her career, she has focused on the identification of innovative technologies, actively supporting company creation and growth, strategic partnerships, technology advancement and exit through Director positions on Boards as well as interim CEO roles (ARTMS, Sitka BioPharma). She has held business development roles at the Centre for Drug Research and Development (now AdMare) and at Quark Venture. In addition to her role at NanoVation, she currently serves as a Director on the Boards of Crohn's and Colitis Canada, GlycoNet, NZ Technologies and SeraGene.



Kayla Clark

Technical Sales Consultant, Miltenyi Biotec

For 2.5 years, Kayla supports researchers across Western Canada as a Technical Sales Consultant with Miltenyi Biotec. Her prior experience includes 3.5 years manufacturing patient cell therapies in clinical trials at BC Cancer in Victoria. Kayla graduated from the University of Victoria with a bachelor's in biology and explored a variety of roles in her early career journey, including elementary school teaching and various lab technician positions.



Laura Sly

Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, UBC

Laura is a Professor at the Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine. She completed her PhD training in Medical Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Alberta and did post-doctoral training at UBC in Infectious Diseases and at the Terry Fox Laboratory, BC Cancer Research Centre. Laura's research focuses on the contribution of macrophages to inflammation with a special interest in reducing inflammation in immune-mediated diseases, like inflammatory bowel disease, specifically Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis.



Louis-Alexandre Fournier

Senior Venture Manager and Biomedical Engineering Stream Lead, Creative Destruction Lab (CDL)-Vancouver

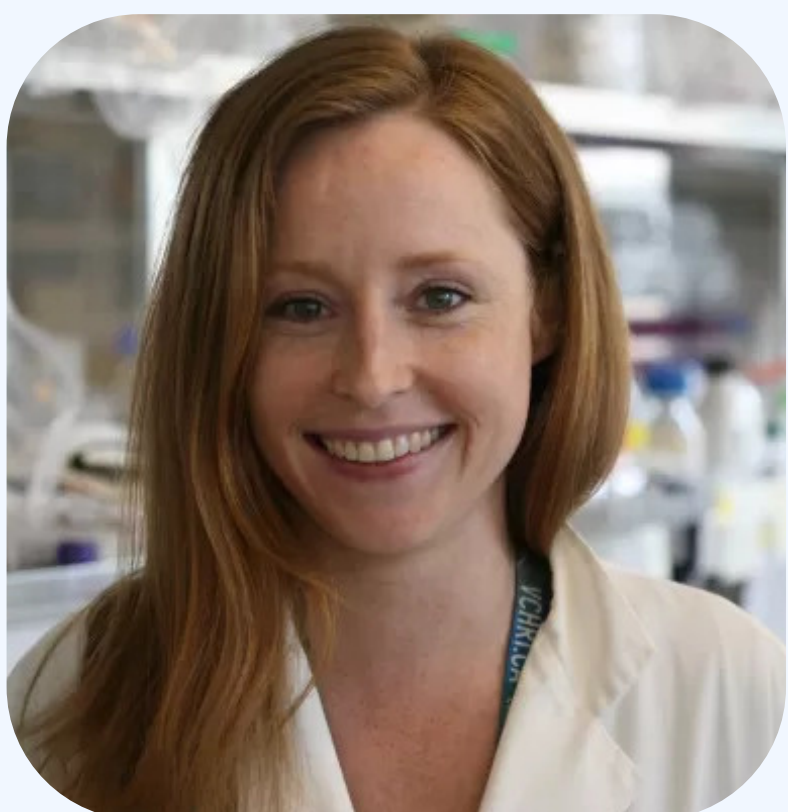
Louis is a scientist turned strategist with a PhD in oncology and about a decade of experience across research, innovation, and science policy. At the Creative Destruction Lab, he works with early-stage biotech, medtech, and health tech startups, helping turn cutting-edge research into deep tech ventures. He has also served on the Chief Science Advisor of Canada's Youth Council, where he helped shape national science and innovation policy - especially around AI governance, research commercialization, and developing STEM talent.



Melissa Dennis

Acuitas Therapeutics

Melissa has worked at Acuitas since 2019 – first as a Preclinical Scientist, and now as a Senior Research Scientist. Her work focuses on the immune response to various lipid nanoparticles (LNP) and examining the proteins that bind to LNP when administered intravenously. Melissa completed her PhD in Protein Biochemistry at SFU. During her PhD, she characterized the differential activity and cell membrane binding affinity of multiple membrane-associated enzymes. During her post-doc at the University of Toronto, she investigated the molecular interactions between anthrax toxins and the two host cell receptors that it binds using comparative and mutational analysis. Prior to joining Acuitas, she worked at Symvivo Corporation, a clinical stage biotechnology company with a bacteria-based gene therapy platform.



Morgan Roberts

Assistant Professor, Urologic Sciences, UBC

Morgan studies urologic immuno-oncology at the Vancouver Prostate Centre. She earned her PhD in Microbiology and Immunology from UBC in 2015, studying how signaling thresholds in innate immune cells influence mucosal immune responses. Her work explores mechanisms of anti-cancer immunity and immune evasion, with a particular emphasis on sex-dependent tumor-immune interactions.



Nichole Escalante

Senior Scientist and Group Lead, in vivo Pharmacology and PK, Multispecific Antibody Therapeutics, Zymeworks

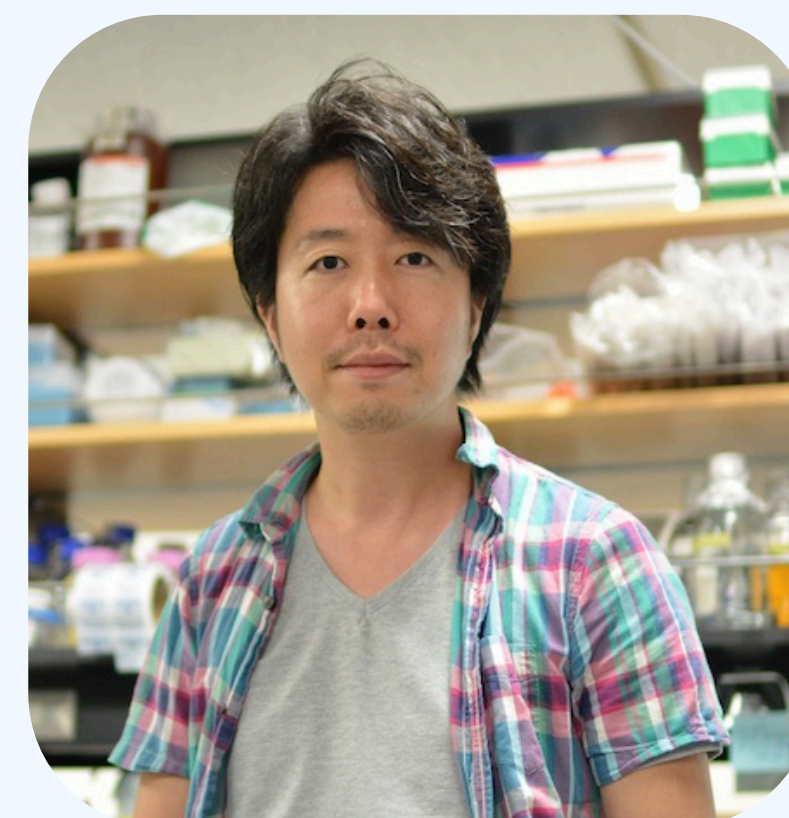
Nichole leads multidisciplinary teams in the development and in vivo evaluation of novel multispecific antibody therapeutics for oncology and autoimmunity.



Nooshin Tabatabaei-Zavareh

Associate Director of Immunology, Culture & Applications in the Research and Development department, STEMCELL Technologies

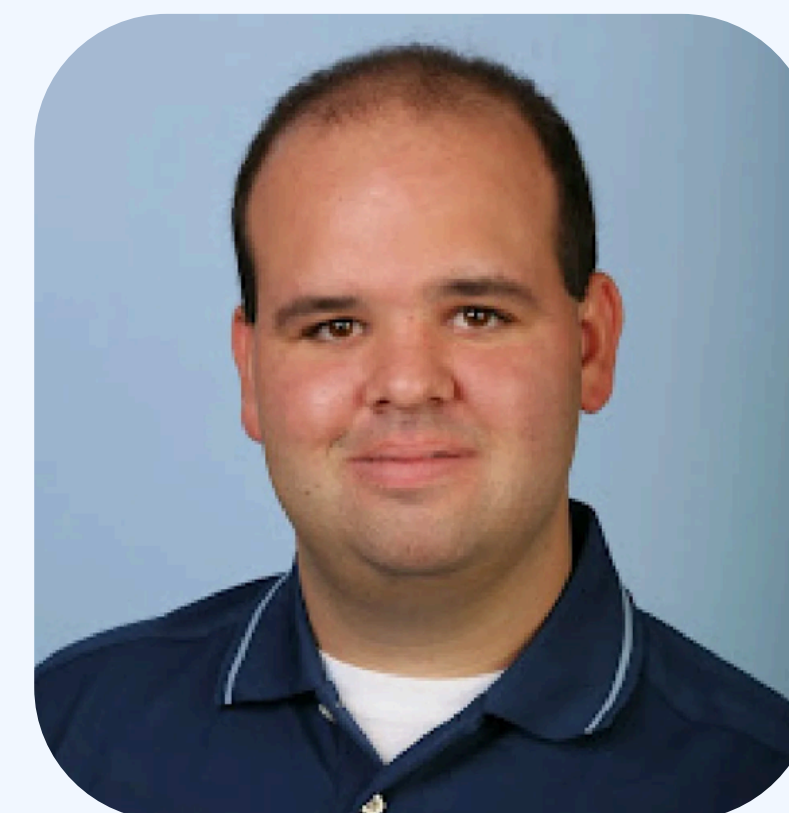
Nooshin received her PhD in Immunology at UBC, where she focused on lymphopoiesis and NK cell development. With 16 years of experience at STEMCELL, she has made significant contributions to the development of immunology research products and intellectual property. Since 2019, Nooshin has been leading the Immunology, Culture & Applications Team, which provides solutions for the generation, expansion, and differentiation of immune cells. These solutions are crucial for various research and pre-clinical applications, including disease modeling and cell therapy.



Nozomu Yachie

Professor, School of Biomedical Engineering, UBC

Nozomu is a Professor and Director of Research at the School of Biomedical Engineering (SBME) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and a Specially Appointed Professor at the Premium Research Institute for Human Metaverse Medicine (PRIME) at Osaka University. Combining technologies in cell engineering, genome editing, and computational biology, the Yachie laboratory at UBC and Osaka University is developing new technologies to measure the dynamics of molecules and cells in complex biological systems, including mammalian development and cell differentiation.



Philip Domeier

Assistant Professor, Microbiology & Immunology, UBC

Philip is an Assistant Professor at UBC, specializing in B cell immunology. He earned his PhD in Biomedical Sciences with a concentration in Virology and Immunology from Penn State University. Following a postdoctoral fellowship in the Ziegler laboratory at the Benaroya Research Institute in Seattle, Washington, he now leads research focused on identifying mechanisms that regulate protective and pathogenic B cell activity.



Robyn Roscoe
Principal, Lyric Management

After many years in research project management, since 2011, Robyn has been principal of Lyric Management, specializing in management and leadership training and teaching, proposal writing and grant facilitation, and coaching and mentorship.



Tess Kirilenko
Scientific Training Specialist, AbCellera

Tess started as a bench scientist with the Cell Screening team at AbCellera, and is now a training specialist dedicated to ensuring a seamless onboarding and training experience for scientific teams across the company. In addition, she helps manage change and foster adoption of new technologies and processes. She is passionate about translating complex processes into clear, accessible learning that empowers teams and drives results.



Yanpu He
Assistant Professor, School of Biomedical Engineering, UBC

Yanpu is an Assistant Professor in the School of Biomedical Engineering at UBC. He completed his postdoctoral training with Prof. Angela Belcher in the Department of Biological Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2024, and his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering at MIT in 2021, co-advised by Profs. Paula Hammond and Darrell Irvine. His research lab focuses on protein and cellular engineering to develop immunotherapies for cancer, infectious disease, and neurodegenerative disorders.

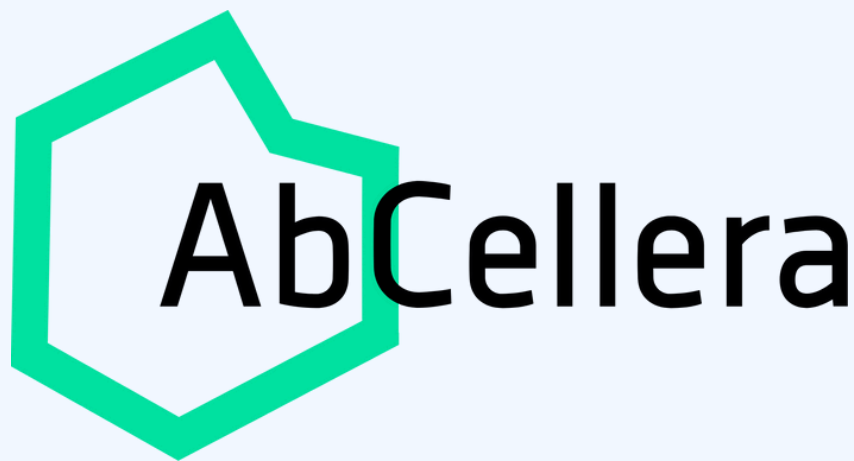


Zach Morse
Postdoctoral fellow, Evgin Lab, BC Cancer Research Centre

Zach is a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Laura Evgin's lab at the BC Cancer Research Centre, where he is exploring genetic engineering to improve CAR T cell immunotherapies to treat aggressive lymphomas that resist conventional treatments. He received his PhD from the University of British Columbia where he researched how viral infections and microbiome dysbiosis trigger the onset of type 1 diabetes and other autoimmune diseases.

Thank you!

A huge thank-you to all who made this event possible - mentors, booth hosts, judges, trainees, volunteers, attendees, and organizers! Below are the groups that contributed to this year’s event.



Miltenyi Biotec

