



Image by Tara Christie

### Diversifying our Programs for Changing Times - Annual General Meeting

This is an unprecedented time in higher education. Our students and postdoctoral fellows are attempting to navigate online learning, remote research and a changing job market. They're trying to foster connections and build a network in a "socially distant" environment. Some things haven't changed; we still live in racist society, and we continue to prepare our students and postdocs to move into a working world that is also racist.

Let's come together to discuss how we are adapting and evolving our programs, services, and initiatives to meet the diverse needs of our students and postdoctoral fellows.

## November 18:

<p><b>1:00-1:15pm EST</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome</b></p>
<p><b>1:15-2:15 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Keynote speaker</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Neil Price, <i>Re-imagining the academy: moving beyond ineffective approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)</i></u></a></p>

<p><b>2:15-3:30 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Lightning talks: Innovative curriculum development</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Kristy Clarke, <i>Lessons learned from a formal evaluation of our Leadership Essential Series</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Lorna MacEachern, McGill University. <i>The ABCs of an IDP</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Gina Beltran, Concordia University. <i>Concordia PhDs: A Summary of their Career Outcomes</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Catherine Swytink-Binnema and Derrick Rancourt, University of Calgary. <i>Vicarious Professional Development via Online Forums</i></u></a></p>
<p><b>3:30-3:45 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>
<p><b>3:45- 4:45 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Lightning talks: Career preparedness in uncertain times</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Teresa Didiano and Jonathan Turner, University of Toronto. <i>The OPTIONS Program: Cohort-based career supports for engineers at the University of Toronto</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Emily Bell, Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, <i>Piloting a curriculum of self-learning, peer-learning, and experiential learning to enhance career preparedness in clinical and regulatory affairs</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Ryan Klopp and Derrick Rancourt, University of Calgary. <i>Determining the Value of Informational Interviews</i></u></a></p>
<p><b>4:45-5:00 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>
<p><b>5:00-6:00 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Happy hour/Social</b></p>

# November 19:

<p><b>11:50am-12:50pm EST</b></p>	<p><b>AGM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPDN executive (15 minutes)</li> <li>• Case study working group (5 minutes)</li> <li>• PD committee (10 minutes)</li> <li>• Responsibilities May Include (5 minutes)</li> <li>• Benchmarking committee (10 minutes)</li> <li>• Career Symposium (5 minutes)</li> <li>• Communications Committee (10 minutes)</li> </ul>
<p><b>12:50pm-1:00 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>
<p><b>1:00-2:00 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Plenary session</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Shalini Nag, <i>Cultural Humility Primer</i></u></a></p>
<p><b>2:00-2:15 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>
<p><b>2:15- 3:15 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Lightning talks: The COVID pivot</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Julie Jonkhans, Western University. <i>Empowering Doctoral Students to Take Charge of their Future during Covid</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Helen Miliotis, University of Toronto. <i>More than just careers - professional development courses during COVID-19 may contribute to resilience in biomedical graduate students</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Loleen Berdahl, University of Saskatchewan and Jonathan Malloy, Carleton University. <i>COVID-19 and Doctoral Professional Development at the Unit Level</i></u></a></p>
<p><b>3:15-3:30 EST</b></p>	<p><b>Break</b></p>

<b>3:30-4:30 EST</b>	<p><b>Lightning talks: New student transition and building community online</b></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Carrie Hanson and April Babey, McGill University. <i>Beyond Zoom Gloom: Building community online with our graduate student team</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Sarah Howard and Angela Rooke, University of Waterloo. <i>Grad Ready: How COVID-19 made us rethink graduate orientation and transition</i></u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Mabel Ho, Dalhousie University. <i>Together@Dal: Grad Edition --Fostering Online Engagement and Facilitating Community Building for Incoming Graduate Students.</i> (Contributors: Kenneth Conrad, Lexie Milmine, Jo Minx, Andrew Riley, and Jasmine Smart)</u></a></p>
<b>4:30-5:15 EST</b>	<b>Final wrap up and goodbyes</b>

## Descriptions of talks and speaker bios:

Neil Price, [Re-imagining the academy: moving beyond ineffective approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\)](#)

The goal of fulfilling commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in higher education has come up against the harsh reality of entrenched systemic racism and the ongoing exclusion of Black, Indigenous and other racialized persons. In our contemporary moment, it is clear that our current approaches to EDI are broken and will not achieve our intended goal. In his keynote address, educator and writer Neil Price will outline how we arrived at this critical juncture, and discuss why EDI—as it is typically delivered—will not shift our institutions toward change. Neil's presentation will provoke critical questions and dialogue related to ways in which educators, administrators, faculty and students can begin to collectively think our way toward new and urgently needed approaches.

Neil Price is an educator, writer and editor whose work focuses on community, higher education and culture. Neil is currently Dean at Fleming College's School of Justice and Community Development, and is pursuing a PhD student in Adult Education and Community Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) - University of Toronto. Neil is the former Executive Director of LogicalOutcomes, a not-for-profit consulting firm that aims to improve the effectiveness of human services work and social policy. His writing has appeared in NOW Magazine, Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Hazlitt, Canadian Art and This Magazine. A CivicAction Fellow, Neil taught at George Brown College for over 10 years.

[Kristy Clarke, Lessons learned from a formal evaluation of our Leadership Essential Series](#)  
Concordia University's GradProSkills is at the forefront of professional development for graduate students in Canada. It seeks to empower graduate students and postdoctoral fellows with valuable resources that can help them realize their professional and academic goals. One of our main objectives is to ensure we offer innovative and up-to-date resources that serve the needs of today's graduate

students. With this purpose, we have undertaken a rigorous evaluation of our Leadership Essential Series. The series consists of seven workshops that cover topics such as emotional intelligence, problem solving and negotiation skills. It was put into place in 2016 with the purpose of equipping graduate students with leadership competencies for their transition from school to work, whether in the industry as professionals, entrepreneurs or in academia. The series was co-designed in partnership with McGill's SKILLSETS program and developed through provincial funding. To this day, over 900 students from all disciplines have completed one of these workshops, and in 2020, GradProSkills relied on their feedback to assess the impact of the Leadership Series. This presentation will be an opportunity to share the findings and recommendations of the Leadership Essential Series Evaluation (LEEP) project. We will share how the mixed methods methodology —which implemented a survey, interviews and focus groups— provided valuable insight into participants' comprehension of workshop material and their ability to transfer their learning to their work context (2 months to 3 years after). We will detail how the results helped us update an evaluation tool for future pedagogical assessments at GradProSkills and our preliminary recommendations on the elements that can be improved to better support student learning and learning transfer. Our intention is to open up a broader conversation on how evaluating the impact of professional development programs leads the way to more innovative programming that better supports graduate students. We are interested in discussing and hearing from others on what they perceive as graduate students' current needs and interests, and how being attentive to these can contribute to better offerings that are in tune with our changing times.

Kristy Clarke is the Manager of Academic Programs and Development at Concordia University, where she has been overseeing Concordia's graduate professional development program for 5 years. Prior to joining Concordia, Kristy held various program management roles in government and universities in Montreal, Ottawa and Dublin. She holds an MBA from University College Dublin and undergraduate degrees from Memorial University.

#### [Lorna MacEachern, McGill University. The ABCs of an IDP](#)

Thinking about creating an IDP for your institution? In this session we will talk through the steps that were undertaken at McGill University to create myPath, the IDP tools and programming. We will discuss best practices, challenges, and lessons learned. The current tools and programming, including how it has been adapted for online delivery, will be described, along with feedback to date.

For 15 years Lorna MacEachern has been helping graduate students and postdocs in a wide variety of disciplines to plan their goals and transition into meaningful careers. Lorna is currently a Program Manager for myPath: a network of tools and programming to help students and postdocs to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP), in Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at McGill. She has previously worked as a Career Counsellor, Director of career services for postdocs, and Project Officer.

#### [Gina Beltran, Concordia University. Concordia PhDs: A Summary of their Career Outcomes](#)

The current COVID-19 crisis has introduced a new level of uncertainty and economic hardship that will further shift the labour market for students completing their PhDs. This seems like a suitable time to gain more insight into the career prospects of Canada's rigorously trained scholars. Hoping to contribute to this conversation, Concordia University's School of Graduate Studies has recently completed a study tracking the career outcomes of alumni who graduated from all Concordia PhD programs between 2009 and 2019. This presentation will be an opportunity to share for the first time the findings of this study

on a national graduate platform. The project successfully tracked 92% of the 1600 PhDs that graduated from Concordia over the past ten years. We will provide an overview of their career paths detailing where they are placed in the workforce and geographically, how different disciplines are represented in different sectors and what trends can be observed over the years. Alumni were tracked 1, 2 and 5 years after graduation as well as for their current employment status. This data provides valuable insight into PhDs' career advancement and into how long it takes to secure stable positions inside and outside academia. Overall, the results draw a positive picture for PhD graduates from all disciplines when it comes to their career prospects. The presentation will look back at PhD career outcomes over the past decade while reflecting on how doctorates have evolved over this period and on the necessary and desired changes to meet the trends of the current and future labour market. The hope is to open up a discussion on the future of PhD programs and on how PhD graduates are actively broadening the relevance and reach of graduate education across all employment sectors.

Gina Beltran is a curriculum developer at Concordia University's School of Graduate Studies. She supports and advises on the development of graduate academic programs with the view of rethinking and transforming graduate education. She is an experienced researcher and administrator who directed the Scholarship Program at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. She has led multiple collaborations between academics, communities, the public and the private sector. In 2012, she completed her PhD in Hispanic Literature at the University of Toronto as a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Fellow.

*Catherine Swytink-Binnema and Derrick Rancourt, University of Calgary. Vicarious Professional Development via Online Forums*

In-class, experiential learning approaches should be implemented early to help graduate students make rational decisions about their training and career trajectory. In our first semester core course, graduate students are introduced to professional development concepts and encouraged to think critically about the ideas raised, discussing them with their classmates. Through discourse, students gain the language to reflect on and conceptualize their experiences, positioning those experiences into a paradigm transferable to outside of academia. Last year, we experimented with online forums to prime in-class discussion. These forums centred around animated book summaries of popular professional development books. Threaded online discussions provided valuable vicarious learning opportunities, allowing more time for thinking, reflection, and integration of concepts than face-to-face discussions. This year, due to the COVID pivot, students will build a "reflection journal" as a substitute for live discussions. For each video forum, students will add an entry to their journal, considering their experiences, examining how the concept relates to their life and/or career, and ending with a recommendation of how they could incorporate the concept in their own journey. Using the language of the experiential learning cycle, each entry will thus include a short reflective observation, an abstract conceptualization, and an active experimentation. Last year, students completed a multiple-choice, anonymous survey before and after the course, designed to evaluate their knowledge of and comfort with career exploration and planning. In general, students' career confidence increased. Although this year's online course cannot provide all the necessary experiences needed to prepare graduate students for a non-academic career, our aim is to help them develop the vocabulary and understanding they need to succeed. Experiential learning should, in our opinion, be viewed as an ever-ascending spiral rather than an infinite loop. We trust that students will take the structure they develop in our course and build it upwards and outwards.

Catherine is a biomedical engineering PhD student at the University of Calgary. Although her research goal is to improve how we use focused-ultrasound as a neuroscience tool and therapy, she discovered a passion for science communication and a strong interest in how professional development can be taught. She volunteers with Let's Talk Science, a Canadian non-profit organization that provides STEM programming to children and youth. Catherine is also the Teaching Assistant for Dr. Rancourt's graduate-level professional development course working with him to continuously improve course structure and delivery.

A stem cell biologist by training, Derrick Rancourt developed a passion for professional development education, when he directed Master of Biomedical Technology (MBT) Program (2003-2009), a one-year course-based-masters that merges business and life science. At the time, the MBT program was not delivering on its promise to transition life science students to industry. Together with Career Services, Derrick developed the University of Calgary's first embedded professional development course. Under Derrick's direction, the MBT program then successfully transitioned over 100 students into the life science industry. Since stepping down from that role, Derrick has been teaching biotechnology business and professional development at the graduate and graduate level. Several of his students have gone on to form successful companies including Surface Medical, which won the 2015 Manning Prize.

### [Teresa Didiano and Jonathan Turner, University of Toronto. The OPTIONS Program: Cohort-based career supports for engineers at the University of Toronto](#)

The majority of engineering PhD students find employment outside the academy in many different sectors including healthcare, technology, finance, and manufacturing. According to the Conference Board of Canada, 14.7% of engineering PhD graduates (including architecture and related technologies) are employed as professors, while at the University of Toronto, 26% of engineering PhD graduates are employed as professors. To support graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in transitioning from school to work, in 2017 the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto formed a working group of faculty and staff to develop a professional preparation initiative called The OPTIONS Program. OPTIONS is a ten-week, cohort-based, non-credit program for thirty participants. Facilitated by faculty and professional development experts, the program supports participants to: 1) reflect on their strengths, desires, and interests to engage in active career management; 2) communicate their skills in job application materials; and 3) apply networking strategies to explore career options. Each year we facilitate one cohort for PhD students and post-doctoral fellows, and one cohort for professional-based masters students. By attending this presentation, you will be able to: 1) Create a multi-stakeholder team to launch career preparation initiatives and raise the profile of professional development 2) Describe pedagogical approaches and curriculum that fosters student's self-awareness, sense of belonging, and career clarity 3) Identify innovative strategies and practices for online learning to continue to support students in building connections from a distance and navigating an uncertain labor market

Teresa Didiano is the Graduate Professional Development Coordinator at the Troost Institute for Leadership Education in Engineering in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto. She develops and coordinates leadership and professional development programs for undergraduate students, graduate students, and engineering professionals. Teresa has an HSc and MSc

from the University of Toronto, and Life Skills Coaching Certification from George Brown College. She also recently completed Stanford University's Life Design Training.

Jonathan Turner is an Institutional Strategic Initiatives Officers at the University of Toronto. He supports the growth of interdisciplinary research and training networks. He is one of the co-founders of GPDN, a former member of the Executive, and currently leads the Benchmarking Project, a joint project with CAGS. Jonathan has been a Career Educator and Professional and Graduate Skills Strategist. He has a BA from York University, BSc from the University of Waterloo, and MA and PhD from the University of Toronto.

### Emily Bell, Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, Piloting a curriculum of self-learning, peer-learning, and experiential learning to enhance career preparedness in clinical and regulatory affairs

The enhanced pace of new discoveries in the life sciences is forcing the industry to develop new ways of working that will speed discoveries to market. With new innovations in science and in business, industry is experiencing a shift in the training needs away from research and development, and towards clinical and regulatory affairs. Unfortunately, doctoral training in the life sciences is focused on acquiring complex technical and research-related skills that are ideal for research and development careers but are not adequate for other in-demand jobs. To remedy this mismatch, we developed a pilot program in clinical and regulatory affairs, funded by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, to prepare our graduate students for careers in this sector. In this lightning talk, we will describe our initial curriculum (self-learning and experiential learning). We will discuss what changes we made to the curriculum when trainees were urgently withdrawn from our clinical trials centre due to COVID-19 precautions. We'll focus on how this change, which included incorporating peer-learning in the form of teachbacks, was a particularly useful way to foster community among our cohort in these times, to use timely case studies (COVID trials) to discuss topics in the learning material, and allowed students to engage remotely with onsite personnel to verify their understanding. We'll provide data on the satisfaction and outcomes of this first cohort of 8 students. We believe that a curriculum that combines self-learning, peer-learning and experiential learning takes into account constraints on graduate student time away from the lab; allows graduate students to demonstrate skills of knowledge synthesis, critical analysis, and communication; and requires that they take ownership of their learning in the program.

Emily Bell is Manager of the Desjardins Centre for Advanced Training of the RI-MUHC which is responsible for supporting the professional and career development of the approximately 1200 trainees at the RI-MUHC. She has a PhD in Psychiatry and completed postdoctoral work in neuroethics at the Institut de recherches cliniques de Montreal. From 2010-2015 she was Researcher in neuroethics and with NeuroDevNet, a Canadian Network of Centres of Excellence. She has been awarded support, in the form of fellowships and operating grants, from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, FRQS, the CIHR, Killam Trusts and Burroughs Wellcome Fund. She has been an Adjunct Professor at McGill since 2011 where she leads professional development in ethics and integrity for the Integrated Program in Neuroscience, one of Canada's largest neuroscience graduate programs. In 2018, Emily completed the Canadian Association of Career Educator and Employers (CACEE) Career Educator Certificate Program. As part of her role as Manager of DCAT, she has worked to develop structured



career development and mentorship programs for trainees at the RI-MUHC, and regularly advises trainees.

## Ryan Klopp and Derrick Rancourt, University of Calgary. Determining the Value of Informational Interviews

COVID-19 has changed operations, strategic visions, and introduced uncertainty to organizations. These changes impact graduate students: Skills identified as a priority by educational providers may not be the current priority of rapidly changing organizations in the process of finding best practices in the environment of virtual teams. Further, the number of in-person networking events has decreased, making it harder for students to form connections with professionals and the referral job market. Students need an agile approach that facilitates the development of professional relationships for exploring career pathways. Furthermore, students need this approach to provide meaningful connections when physical interactions are impossible. A solution to these problems is informational interviews (IIs). IIs provide students an agile method to explore career paths, allowing them to tailor their knowledge to careers of interest, while forming professional connections. Typically, IIs provide insight into a career and best practices. To understand the value and investigate the longer-term effects of teaching IIs in university programs, we interviewed graduates of both the Biomedical Engineering Graduate program and the Bachelor of Health Science program. Cohorts from 2014-17 experienced IIs as course assignments. Preliminary results have shown that graduates continued to use IIs after graduation. One graduate even evangelized the use of IIs to others. Common benefits graduates noted were an increased understanding of the certifications required to progress in a career path, a greater understanding of their desire to pursue the career area, and increased networking confidence. Of the jobs or research areas graduates entered, the majority came through referrals, supporting the importance of building strong professional networks. The likelihood a student would continue to use IIs after graduating depended heavily on the student's experience within program. To break the dependency between positive interview experiences and continuing II practice, we propose to develop lessons and activities that allow students to conduct II while building their resilience. To encourage experiential learning, we also propose to include reflection piece be included and lessons learned about the assignment be made available in a digital repository that students can access to promote further vicarious learning opportunities.

Ryan Klopp is a Research Assistant at the University of Calgary. He recently received his Master of Biomedical Technology degree from the University of Calgary after completing a Bachelor of Health Science there. Ryan is interested in examining the process Health Science graduates take when transitioning from their educational program to careers. He is currently conducting research on non-technical skills valued in professional roles and is evaluating the effectiveness of using Informational Interviews as a tool for career exploration. A believer in life-long learning, Ryan is currently pursuing his Project Management Professional certification.

A stem cell biologist by training, Derrick Rancourt developed a passion for professional development education, when he directed Master of Biomedical Technology (MBT) Program (2003-2009), a one-year course-based-masters that merges business and life science. At the time, the MBT program was not delivering on its promise to transition life science students to industry. Together with Career Services, Derrick developed the University of Calgary's first embedded professional development course. Under Derrick's direction, the MBT program then successfully transitioned over 100 students into the life science industry. Since stepping down from that role, Derrick has been teaching biotechnology business

and professional development at the graduate and graduate level. Several of his students have gone on to form successful companies including Surface Medical, which won the 2015 Manning Prize.

### Shalini Nag Cultural Humility Primer

This session will build on the topics discussed during the keynote and will be part 1 of a two-part professional development training opportunity for the GPDN membership. Part 2 of the training, “Integrating inclusion in our programs” will take place December 7 – registration information will follow closer to that date.

Objectives:

- Review the thought-starters from the Keynote by Neil Price
- Explore personal identity vs. prototypes, stereotypes, and archetypes
- Build awareness of how we embed our lived experience in policies and programs that we create

A global citizen and avid traveler, Dr. Shalini Nag is a firm believer in the limitless potential of people united by a common goal. She has experienced this first-hand in her work with over 85 organizations worldwide. Shalini leans on her scientific background and natural empathy to blend data-driven approaches with real-world business know-how to shift organizations from reactive problem-solving to proactive issue prevention. Her experience in curriculum design and training, group facilitation, individual mentoring and coaching has delivered measurable results at non-profits, academic institutions, and for-profit companies across industries ranging from Start-Ups to Fortune 500 companies. Having personally transitioned from academia, to business consulting to entrepreneurship, and experienced a range of social, and organizational cultures, Shalini is passionate about inclusion, equity and justice. Her personal experiences add remarkable depth to her work in creating high-trust, high-inclusion, high-development cultures through consulting, training and keynote speaking. Shalini completed her PhD. in structural biology at the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, Singapore, her postdoctoral research in cell biology at Yale University. She was a management consultant at the Boston Consulting Group prior to starting her firm EvidaSolve.

### Julie Jonkhans, Western University. *Empowering Doctoral Students to Take Charge of their Future during Covid*

Own Your Future is Western University’s curriculum-based doctoral professional development program that offers career planning and professional skills training to help doctoral students build meaningful careers within and outside of academia. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Own Your Future team rapidly adapted workshops to an online format, drawing significant attendance with over 500 participants in the spring and summer of 2020. The online format provided the opportunity to build a digital repository of resources, including workshop recordings and student-authored workshop summaries, increasing the accessibility of resources for doctoral students. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed an even more urgent need to support doctoral student career planning, Own Your Future has expanded the Career Engagement curriculum in the 2020-2021 program from 4 workshops to 9. The workshops are offered as a sequential series targeted towards graduating students and couple continuous self-reflection with elements of an effective job search. The pandemic has further compounded the career stress and isolation that doctoral students experience when navigating

career decisions. This year's program aims to provide regular points of contact and valuable information to build confident and resilient doctoral students.

Julie coordinates the Own Your Future doctoral professional development program and brings together expertise to offer programming that helps doctoral students advance their professional skills alongside their academic training. Julie draws on her graduate school experience to develop and facilitate Career Engagement workshops and collaborates across campus to integrate career planning into the PhD curriculum.

*Helen Miliotis, University of Toronto. More than just careers - professional development courses during COVID-19 may contribute to resilience in biomedical graduate students*

Graduate professional development is embedded into the curriculum in many biomedical departments at the University of Toronto. These courses include skills development, career exploration, and innovative course design, including Stanford Life Design principles. When the Physiology course was interrupted in spring 2020 due to COVID-19 and had to be pivoted quickly online, student retention and engagement remained surprisingly high. Students became locked out of research labs, and feelings of uncertainty prevailed. Students that had not taken the course before requested an extra summer course session to be offered so they can use their time out of the labs more effectively. Despite the isolation and online only approach, a strong sense of community emerged in the summer session, strengthened by breakout groups, guest speakers, and thoughtful reflections. Qualitative comments and reflections from students revealed more than just career insights from these courses. Excerpts will be shared that uncover themes of reframing, hope, and resilience. These preliminary findings reinforce that graduate professional development provides more layers of value to the student experience, and should be retained regardless of challenging circumstances. The tools that student gain go beyond simply career planning, and should be supported now more than ever.

Helen Miliotis is an Assistant Professor (Teaching Stream) and Director of Graduate Professional Development in the Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Toronto. Helen completed her PhD in the Institute of Medical Science, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. Her interest in combining her scientific training with education led her to study student development theory at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where she earned a certificate of Leadership in Higher Education. After teaching core physiology undergraduate courses at the University of Toronto, her role expanded to include graduate education with the aim to complement scientific training of graduate students with professional skills to be successful after graduation. Helen successfully launched a Graduate Professional Development course module for MSc and PhD students. The goal of this course is to empower graduate students by expanding their professional network and develop their core competencies for them to be market-ready for careers both within and outside of academia.

*Loleen Berdahl, University of Saskatchewan and Jonathan Malloy, Carleton University. COVID-19 and Doctoral Professional Development at the Unit Level*

Academic departments struggle with professional development at the best of times: most faculty feel they lack the skills necessary to train students for non-academic careers, and believe that students are aspiring for academic careers over other alternatives. COVID-19 presents additional challenges: faculty are pressed for time due to remote teaching, the academic job market is increasingly uncertain, and graduate students are dealing with constraints on their research due to university

restrictions/shutdowns. What does COVID mean for doctoral professional development within academic departments? In this presentation, we will draw upon our original research into doctoral professional development in Canadian political science departments. We will examine faculty, department chair, and graduate student perspectives, and then build upon this to discuss the implications during times of university shutdowns; access and travel restrictions; and remote working and teaching. This presentation links to the conference theme of Diversifying our Programs for Changing Times in its consideration of how unit-level professional development programs will need to evolve and adapt in light of COVID-19.

Loleen is a Professor at the University of Saskatchewan. She served as department head of Political Studies from 2016 to 2020, and is now the Executive Director of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. After completing her PhD at the University of Calgary, she worked for ten years in the non-profit sector. Her research examines how institutional, cultural, and political factors shape individual attitudes and collaborative decision-making practices. Drawing on her interest in teaching and educational leadership, her work also considers career mentorship, including the use of career skills training in the undergraduate classroom and graduate career mentorship. She is the Principal Investigator for a SSHRC Insight Grant project examining doctoral professional development within the discipline of political science, and her most recent book is *Work Your Career: Get What You Want From Your Social Sciences or Humanities PhD* (2018, University of Toronto Press; co-author Jonathan Malloy).

Jonathan is Professor of Political Science at Carleton University where he holds the Bell Chair in Canadian Parliamentary Democracy. He served as Chair of the Department of Political Science from 2012 to 2018 and remains involved in various aspects of university governance and administration including serving on the university board of governors. He is the co-Principal Investigator for a SSHRC Insight Grant project examining doctoral professional development within the discipline of political science, and his most recent book is *Work Your Career: Get What You Want From Your Social Sciences or Humanities PhD* (2018, University of Toronto Press; co-author Loleen Berdahl).

*Carrie Hanson and April Babey, McGill University. Beyond Zoom Gloom: Building community online with our graduate student team*

Pre-COVID19, many graduate students were already working alone or in small groups, and the pivot to working remotely throughout the summer led to many students' further isolation from their communities. The Student Skills Development Team of McGill's Teaching and Learning Services office employs around 15 graduate students to facilitate workshops and coordinate events. After the work from home order mid-March, we wanted to provide our Student Skills Assistants (SSAs) an opportunity to maintain the community they had created with this team earlier in the year. As co-supervisors of the SSAs, we organized monthly check-ins using Zoom to stay connected, provide community building opportunities, and expand our shared knowledge of Zoom as a teaching and learning tool for the remote environment. As we lead a team of peer facilitators, we hope to foster an environment that co-creates explicit norms on inclusive facilitation practices that they will use in their facilitation of workshops for the broader McGill community. In this lightning talk presentation, we will review best practices for community building on Zoom and how to structure these meetings to be as engaging as possible. We will also share student feedback on this process and future plans to transform these check-ins into regular training opportunities for our student team on topics like accessible online facilitation, anti-racist teaching practices, and more.

Carrie Hanson works in McGill University's Teaching and Learning Services office as a Skills Development Officer. After herself working as a Student Skills Assistant while completing her Master of Information Studies at McGill, she works now to combine her passion for student success, library and information studies, and collaboration. She co-supervises a graduate student team and heads the skills development program for undergraduate students, SKILLS21.

April Babey is Skills Development Officer at McGill University's Teaching and Learning Services where she leads the SKILLSETS program of personal and professional development offerings for Graduate Students and Postdocs. In this role, she develops programming, facilitates workshops and webinars, and co-leads a team of graduate student facilitators. April is passionate about many things including yoga, meditation, sharing knowledge in community and corgis.

*Sarah Howard and Angela Rooke, University of Waterloo. Grad Ready: How COVID-19 made us rethink graduate orientation and transition*

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many of us to rethink the way we provide programming and services to students. At the University of Waterloo, the prospect of the campus closure persisting into the Fall term meant we could not rely on traditional in-person orientation activities. Nor, in light of the unprecedented circumstances, could we rely on the same programming that's been delivered year after year. COVID-19 forced us to rethink our strategy. This lightning talk will highlight how we developed a robust 5-month long transition and orientation program for incoming graduate students using our learning management system, live webinars, discussion boards and more. If you've been thinking about shaking up your transition or orientation programming, this lightning talk will be of interest to you.

Sarah Howard, M.A. (she/her) is Student Experience Specialist in Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (GSPA) at the University of Waterloo. Sarah manages GSPA's Professional Skills Foundations program, and develops and delivers programming on a range of other topics, from intercultural communication to impostor phenomenon to thesis timeline preparation.

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*Mabel Ho, Dalhousie University. Together@Dal: Grad Edition --Fostering Online Engagement and Facilitating Community Building for Incoming Graduate Students. (Contributors: Kenneth Conrad, Lexie Milmine, Jo Minx, Andrew Riley, and Jasmine Smart)*

COVID-19 presented a unique opportunity to re-imagine orientation and programming to address the needs and concerns of graduate students as they begin to navigate their journey online. The Faculty of Graduate Studies created a new program, Together@Dal: Grad Edition (T@DGE), to welcome incoming graduate students to Dalhousie and help them gain a sense of community with peers in an online

environment. There are two components to T@DGE. First, there's an online program tailored to incoming graduate students. Second, there's a mentorship program that trained current graduate students to act as graduate mentors for incoming students. The online program consists of four modules that provide supports and resources for graduate students to be successful in their studies. The four modules (What the Dal?; Thriving in Graduate School; Relationship Building; Creating a Graduate Student Game Plan) were released on a weekly basis and consisted of short readings, tangible takeaways, and reflection questions. In addition, incoming graduate students were able to interact with one another and graduate mentors in the discussion board (asynchronous) and #gradchat sessions (synchronous video conferencing). Individuals who completed the reflection questions had T@DGE added to the co-curricular record, a formal recognition from Dalhousie on students' extracurricular involvement on campus. The mentorship program focused on training nine graduate mentors who were hired to facilitate #gradchats on a weekly basis to foster online engagement and community building. This curriculum included sessions on topics such as anti-racism, intercultural communication, online facilitation skills, and technology training. At the end, the grad mentors were equipped to lead #gradchats and share their own graduate student experiences and insights with incoming students. As a team, we identified best practices moving forward for online programming and ways to build on the success of T@DGE. This initiative will be incorporated into future orientation programming as we have witnessed high levels of participation and engagement from incoming graduate students. In addition, we are exploring ways to expand our programming to encourage graduate students to build connections and engage with campus resources.

Mabel Ho is curriculum developer at the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Dalhousie University. She leads the Professional Development Certificate and is involved in projects that supports graduate students and post-doctoral fellows professional development and success.