

# PhysioLINK

February 23, 2022

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

**February is Black History Month!** Physiology is proud to join the University in celebrating the many contributions and achievements of our Black community members. We reaffirm the University's commitment to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, and are working hard to ensure that everyone feels recognized and included.

To bring to life our vision of inclusive excellence, we are focusing on being more intentional about recruiting, and supporting diverse and underrepresented groups of faculty, staff and students. Our researchers and graduate programs are world class, and waiting for you!

I encourage everyone to visit the [Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office](#) to learn more about the key strategies to advancing racial equity, diversity and inclusion at U of T.

Within our own Department, we have formed an internal Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee that oversees, in consultation with the Chair, future initiatives around anti-Black racism and other EDI-pertinent issues. See page 5 for more on our planned initiatives.

I look forward to working with a broad cross-section of the department's faculty, post-docs, students, and staff to identify and carry out meaningful initiatives that lead to real change.

**Scott P. Heximer, PhD**

Ernest B. and Leonard B. Smith Chair,  
Department of Physiology

## **PHYSIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES**

*~ Eligible for PSL1000H/PSL2000H/PSL4000Y Course Seminar Attendance*

### **"Neuro and data science from the perspective of dynamical systems"**

**When:** *Thursday, March 3, 2022, 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)*

**Speaker: Dr. Tosif Ahamed**

Post-doctoral Fellow in Mei Zhen Lab, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute

**Join Zoom Webinar:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86567056887>

**Hosted by the Zhen Lab**

## PHYSIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES

*~ Eligible for PSL1000H/PSL2000H/PSL4000Y Course Seminar Attendance*

### “Metabolic regulation of proinsulin trafficking”

**When:** *Thursday, March 31, 2022, 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)*

### **Speaker: Samuel Stephens, PhD**

Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine and FOE Diabetes Center  
University of Iowa

Website: <https://stephens.lab.uiowa.edu>

**Join Zoom Webinar:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81550751506>

**Hosted by the Rocheleau Lab**

**Visit [Physiology's Home Page](#) to see the Full Seminar Series**

## HONOURS & AWARDS

Congratulations to all of the graduate students below who are on the 2022 March graduation list. We are very proud of your accomplishments and wish you much success in your future endeavors!

Student	Supervisor(s)	Degree
Meng, Jun	Zhen M	PhD
Wlodarek, Lukasz	Li R-K	PhD
Velayudhan, Prashanth	Wheeler A	MSc
Shoaib, Falak	Giacca A	MSc
Prince Yogarajah, Priyanka	Dimitrijevic A	MSc

Congratulations to the seven Principal Investigators from Physiology on receipt of funding from **CIHR's Fall 2021 Project Grants competition**. From new approaches to gestational diabetes to a closer look at reading disabilities to potentially better outcomes in mild brain injury, research from all of our platforms is represented and shows the depth, breadth, and importance of the work being done in Physiology in collaboration with our hospital partners. Join us in wishing the grant recipients and all of their co-investigators all the best with these exciting projects.

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Cathy Barr

**Project:** Neurobiological Mechanisms of Reading Disabilities

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Kim Connelly

**Project:** Role of the alpha 11 integrin in mediating RV remodeling in response to pressure overload

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Brian Cox

**Project:** Role of imprinted microRNAs in fetal growth restrictions affects on placental development and maternal immune tolerance to pregnancy

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Neil Goldenberg

**Project:** Targeting Danger Signals In Systemic Sclerosis-Associated Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Richard Horner

**Project:** Control of Breathing During Sleep: Brainstem Mechanisms of Respiratory Control

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Anne Wheeler

**Project:** Impact of myelin changes on behavioural recovery after mild traumatic brain injury

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Michael Wheeler

**Project:** Understanding the metabolic underpinnings of future Type 2 Diabetes in women with a history of Gestational Diabetes: Disrupting the gluco-centric view of risk assessment and disease development

For the full list of funded applications, please see [Project Grant: Fall 2021 results - CIHR \(cihr-irsc.gc.ca\)](https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/en/project-grants/fall-2021-results)

Congratulations to **Dr. Brian Cox** who's been awarded a 2022 Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grant from the Preeclampsia Foundation to further his work of "disentangling some of the environmental influences that may affect preeclampsia". Named for the infant son of preeclampsia survivor Lauren Pappas and her husband Clement, the Peter Joseph Pappas Research Grants program awards grants totaling up to \$200,000 each year. [Full story here.](#)



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: What Physiology is Doing!



### More From the Chair

Reflecting on the [message from Temerty Medicine's Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#), I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight the work that continues toward meeting the goals I laid out in my [statement on racism](#) in the summer of 2020.

As I reported in August of last year, significant strides have been made toward the development of more equitable faculty hiring guidelines to help support search committees in implementing institutional policies around EDI best practices and training for academic searches. [Click here to view the Departmental Guidelines.](#)

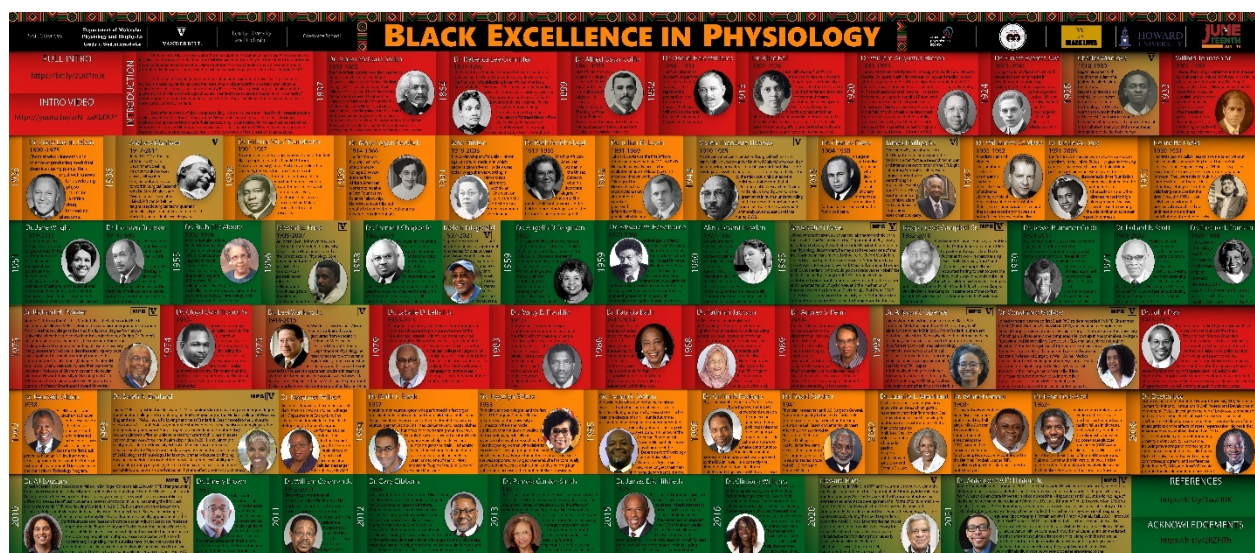
developed by our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee to act as a 'companion' checklist to the University's official Policies on Faculty Recruitment.

As their work on faculty hiring guidelines becomes more finalized and entrenched, the EDI Committee will move on to researching and rolling out pathways for diverse student recruitment and enhanced reporting mechanisms to ensure a departmental culture grounded in anti-racism.

Today we celebrate the Black [excellence already happening](#) in our department and look forward to highlighting much more of it as we continue to grow stronger through diversity. Please consider taking part in some of the initiatives listed in the link below and be sure to read the important message from Drs. Houston, Richardson, and Nnorom. [Keep reading](#)

Have a wonderful, reflective February everyone.

## CELEBRATING BLACK EXCELLENCE IN PHYSIOLOGY

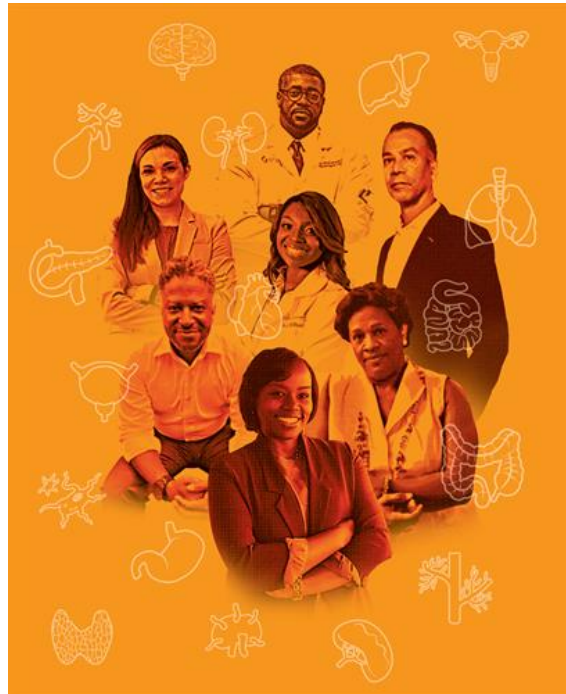


To highlight key contributions of Black Physiologists, students at Vanderbilt University created a poster charting key achievements from Black scientists stretching back to 1837. Downloadable [poster](#)



## BEING BLACK IN SCIENCE

**Black physiologists share what it's like to navigate a majority white academic culture.**



[This article was originally published in the January 2021 issue of The Physiologist Magazine.](#)

In August 2020, a group of Black physiologists teamed up to organize a community dedicated to promoting Black scientists in physiology-related fields. Using the Twitter handle @BlackInPhysio and the hashtags #BlackinPhysiology and #BlackPhysiologistsMatter, these scientists facilitated a conversation and started a movement around diversity and inclusion and being Black in physiology-related fields.

The week included a panel discussion focused on providing real strategies to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of Black physiologists and other scientists.

***Recruiting Black Scientists*** - "You have to have a diverse search committee. And these committees need to start actively and aggressively recruiting minority candidates." Jan Michael Williams, PhD

**Recruiting Black Students** - *"It's a great transition to our second question ... recruiting Black students to physiology and physiology-related disciplines is the key to increasing Black faculty in academia. In other words, it's hard to convince someone to be what they can't see. Representation does matter. How do we recruit Black students when the number of successful Black faculty examples are so few? Dexter Lee, PhD*

You can watch the full panel discussion at <https://bit.ly/BiPWeekPanel> to hear about strategies to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of Black physiologists.

To learn more about Black in Physiology, visit [www.BlackinPhysiology.com](http://www.BlackinPhysiology.com)

## THE BLACK RESEARCH NETWORK AT U of T

The BRN is a U of T Strategic Research Initiative with the purpose of promoting Black excellence at the University of Toronto, and to enhance the research capacity of Black scholars within the university and world stage! [Learn about BRN](#)

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH – Events Around Campus

The University's Advancement and Hart House are hosting the [20<sup>th</sup> U of T Black History Month Luncheon](#) on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Featuring appearances by Olympian Andre De Grasse, his mother Beverley De Grasse, Ontario Poet Laureate Randell Adjei and actor Tatyana Ali. The event will also include musical performances, prizes and highlights two scholarships in support of U of T students of colour.



[Anti-Oppression in Health Care & Sciences: Learner-Led Virtual Symposium Tickets, Fri, 11 Mar 2022 at 4:00 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Eventbrite - Faculty of Medicine, Office of Inclusion and Diversity presents Anti-



Oppression in Health Care & Sciences:  
Learner-Led Virtual Symposium - Friday, 11  
March 2022 - Find event and ticket  
information.

[www.eventbrite.ca](http://www.eventbrite.ca)

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***Stay safe everyone!***

**Please continue to visit the central COVID-19 hub  
for the U of T community**

**UTogether**