

**Volume 1, Issue 1
January 30, 2006**

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

As Program Director of the ART Program, I welcome you all to the first issue of our newsletter.

It is hard to believe, that ART has already been in existence for 2 years and recently submitted its mid-term report to CIHR as a pre-condition for continued funding. Much has been accomplished by our faculty and trainees.

This newsletter brings you an update of recent activities and accomplishments and a glimpse of what is to come.

The overall objective of our Training Program is to increase Canada's research capacity in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

ART has brought together, clinical and population-based researchers, and has created opportunities for inter-disciplinary research training not available from classical training programs.

We have received immense support from all ART Faculty, who not only mentor trainees, but also lecture, and attend research presentations by our trainees during the annual Summer Program.

The ART Program has attracted top students from across Canada, USA, China, the UK, and Europe.

The wide range of backgrounds of our trainees and the diverse group of mentors under which they can

receive their training make the ART Program a unique and exciting program to be in.



Dr. Eric Fombonne
Program Director

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ART STEERING COMMITTEE Who are they?

As the faculty listed on the initial grant has 22 individuals, it is not possible to have everyone involved in the management of the Program. A Steering Committee was established in January

2004. The Program Director invited five faculty members, reflecting a balance between disciplines and universities to serve on the Steering Committee. This Committee serves a 3 year

term, after which a new Committee is selected from the other faculty members in the program. The role of the Steering Committee is to assist the Program Director in the development of the

ART is sponsored by:



ART STEERING COMMITTEE (continued from cover)

curriculum, the selection of applicants, the organization of the summer school, monitoring of the training program, monitor the progress of the trainees and disseminate program information to the rest of the faculty. The Steering Committee meetings are usually conducted via conference calls once every 3 months. At least once a year a face to face meeting is held at International Conferences/Scientific Meetings where all committee members are in attendance.



Steering Committee Members:

Dr. Eric Fombonne (2004-2009)
 Dr. Steven Scherer (2004-2007)
 Dr. Isabel Smith (2004-2007)
 Dr. Peter Szatmari (2004-2007)
 Dr. Lee Tidmarsh (2004-2007)
 Dr. Joanne Volden (2006-2009)

Representing Trainees:
 Adrienne Rombough (2005-2006)

Previous committee member:
 Dr. Laurent Mottron (2004-2005)

MENTORS

The ART Program consists of 22 Faculty Members who act as Mentors for trainees enrolled in the ART Program. The Mentors work closely with the trainees and provide guidance and supervision during their Autism Research Training.

During the course of the trainee’s ART Program, a rotation at each of the 3 Mentor’s facilities should occur. At least once a year the Mentors, and

Trainees meet to evaluate the Trainee’s progress. Guidelines for Mentors and Trainees have been

established by the Steering Committee. A complete list of all Mentors, their trainees, and Mentoring guidelines can be found on the ART website .

Visit the ART website at:
www.traininautism.com
 Under “Links/Mentors”
 to find out who your Trainee /Mentor is

TRAINEE STATS

Over the past 2 years the ART Program received 40 applications from candidates from various disciplines. ART accepted 16 trainees providing funding to 11 trainees and offering supervision /mentors to 5 non-funded students.

3 year track program
 6 trainees are 2nd year
 10 trainees are 1st year
Summer School only
 4 professionals

Funded Trainees:
 Nancy Garon, Nathalie Girard, Catherine Hambly, Michelle Liu, Tracey McMullen, Adrienne Rom-

bough, Paula Hutchinson, Kerri Staples, Jodi Yager, Danielle Ostfield, Fabienne Samson.

Non-Funded Trainees:
 Samantha Goldwater-Adler, Lixin Wang, Melanie Couture, Anna Matejka, Cynthia Koning,

Summer School participants:
 Elan Golan (2004), Patricia Colton (2005), Dilys Leung (2005), Laura Russell

TRAINEE STATS (Trainees by Discipline and University)

	Dalhousie	McGill	McMaster	Simon Fraser	U of Alberta	U of Montreal	U of Toronto	Total
OT		1=Post Doc			1=PhD			2
Kinesiology		1=PhD						1
Genetics		1=Post Doc					1=Res. Fellow	2
Psychiatry						1=MSc.		1
Psychology	1=PhD 1=Post Doc	2=PhD	1=PhD	1=PhD 1=MA		1=PhD		8
Speech Pathology		1=PhD						1
Interdisciplinary	1=PhD							1

For trainee profiles and research interests, visit the ART Website under "Trainees".

ART FUNDING

ART Travel Awards

The Steering Committee decided to offer \$1,000 travel stipend to all trainees (funded and non-funded), and allow some flexibility in how the trainee uses this stipend (i.e: use \$500 to attend IMFAR, and \$500 to visit lab; or visit 2 labs or attend 2

conferences). A request for travel stipend will have to be made by the trainee to the Steering Committee. After the travel has been completed a report from the trainee and the mentor will have to be submitted to the Steering Committee. Applications and guidelines on Travel awards can be

obtained on the website under "Links/Travel Fund Applications".

ASO Travel Bursary


Autism Society of Ontario has launched a Travel Bursary Program for Ontario students to support attendance at IMFAR valued at \$500.00 Guidelines and Application can be found on the website under "Links/ASO Travel Bursary" *Deadline for applications is February 15th, 2006.*

Awards are at CIHR annual rates
 MD/Post Docs (\$35K - \$45K/yr)
 PhD (\$20K/yr)
 Graduate Students (\$17K/yr)

**McGill University
CIHR Top-Ups**

CIHR Top ups are awarded to full time McGill graduate students registered under the Faculty of Medicine or Faculty of ARTs and in a CIHR Training Program.

Congratulations to both Trainees!



In 2004-2005,
ART Trainee
Catherine Hambly
received
the
Maysie MacSporran
Graduate Studentship valued at
\$9,000.



In 2005-2006,
ART Trainee
Anna Grivas-Matejka
received the McGill
Graduate Studies Fellowship valued at \$10,000.

ART SUMMER PROGRAM

The 6 day Summer School Program has been running for two consecutive years. The Summer School is held in Montreal at the end of August.

Courses for 1st year trainees are equally divided between theoretical concepts and clinical aspects of Autism. Second year trainees receive courses on special topics and present their own research work. Third year curriculum is geared towards research methodologies in Autism.

In 2005 Dr. Ami Klin attended the Summer Program and spent a day with our trainees presenting his research.

Main topics for 1st year trainees:

Intro. to ASD	Drs. E. Fombonne, P. Szatmari, L. Tidmarsh
Epidemiology	Drs. E. Fombonne, P. Szatmari
Genetics	Dr. G. Rouleau
Neurology	Dr. W. Roberts
Neuroimaging	Dr. A. Evans
Assessment & Diagnosis	Dr. E. Fombonne
Neuropsychology	Drs. S. Bryson, L. Mottron, J. Burack
Intervention in ASD	Dr. I. Smith
Immunology	Dr. B. Mazer
Speech Development in ASD	Dr. J. Volden
Transitions to adulthood	Dr. E. Fombonne

Special Topics for 2nd year trainees:

To Subgroup or not to Subgroup	Dr. P. Szatmari
Advanced Genetics	Dr. G. Rouleau
Immunization in ASD	Dr. E. Fombonne
Developmental Paediatric Research	Dr. W. Roberts
Intro to ADOS/ADI	Dr. E. Fombonne
Early Identification/Siblings	Dr. L. Zwaigenbaum
ASD: Differential or Disease?	Dr. L. Mottron

ART SUMMER PROGRAM & IMFAR

Attention 3rd year & 2nd year ART Trainees and ART Faculty. ART will be having a special one day course at the end of IMFAR in June in Montreal.

Dr. Simon Baron-Cohen has been invited to meet with all ART Trainees & Faculty to

discuss his work on TOM and his recent theory on E and S and recent research findings. He has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday June 4th, 2006

& 3rd year trainees and will replace the 6th day of the Summer Program in August. More information will be made available in the April newsletter.

Dates to remember:

IMFAR: June 1-3, 2006
 Dr. S. Baron-Cohen: June 4th, 2006
 ART Summer Program: August 21-25, 2006

for the entire day. This one day lecture will be mandatory for all 2nd

ART NEWSLETTER

This is your newsletter and we want to hear from you! Send in your snippets of information and share with your colleagues what is happening with your research and your lab.

Autism Journal Club



ART Trainee Dr. Melanie Couture has started an Autism Journal Club at the Montreal Children's Hospital. All ART Trainees in Montreal are welcome to attend.

Autism Website

ART Trainees Adrienne Rombough &



Jodi Yager have a website of their research lab. www.sfu.ca/autism-lab



For more information on ART or to submit snippets contact:

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ART Newsletter is published:
January
April
December

DEADLINES / EVENTS

February 15, 2006	ASO Funding Application to IMFAR
March 3, 2006	ART Application Deadline
March 3, 2006	ART Steering Committee Meeting
April 1, 2006	IMFAR Registration
April 20, 2006	Articles for ART Newsletter
May 17, 2006	Donald Cohen Autism Lectureship: Guest Speaker Dr. William McMan
June 1-3, 2006	IMFAR Conference in Montreal
June 4, 2006	Dr. S. Baron-Cohen lecture for ART
August 21-25, 2006	ART Summer School Program

DISCUSSION FORUM

A discussion Forum has been added to the website for ART Trainees and Faculty. Visit the website, register as an ART Member and join in the discussions. The Forum can be found under "Links/Forum".

ART SUMMER PROGRAM:

What are trainees saying?

"The range of speakers was excellent. I learned something from each one. I appreciated hearing the science/medical speakers because I wouldn't have otherwise had the chance".

"Being able to have access to the mentors that lectured during the week. It was wonderful to hear them lecture and interact and to be able to ask them research/theoretical questions. Although I had background in autism, I felt I had the most up-to-date, "state-of-the-science" and reliable information presented by our speakers"

"The lectures in general were of great value as they provided a very broad based view of all fields and how they mesh with autism re-

search. It broadens and gives new perspectives to my particular vision of autism"

We are the first ever Summer School Program in Autism bringing together students, researchers and clinicians across various disciplines training in Autism. Feedback from trainees best describe why and how the ART Program has made a difference in comparison to other programs.

"The chance to sit and talk with the mentors/lecturers is of the greatest value. I can attend lectures and scientific presentations at conferences but only ART gives the chance to get to know leading researchers on a professional yet personal basis; this contact helps us feel welcome in the research

community, helps us bounce our ideas off someone other than our supervisors, and helps us understand how research in other fields than our own is conducted".

"It was particularly useful to meet researchers involved in the same subject but different fields of re-