

The HQP Summit4CI Working Group is pleased to present an exciting lineup of speakers for this year's HQP Development Day, taking place on March 29th from 12:30–4:30 PM.

HQP Development Day
Sunday, March 29th, 2026

Time	Sessions
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
12:55 – 1:00 pm	Introduction and Welcome Julie Jonkhans, Training & Research Manager
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Keynote Talk: <i>Regulating Human Immunity</i> Speaker: Dr. Megan Levings Moderator: Salar Pashangzadeh, PhD Student, University of Ottawa
2:00 – 2:30 pm	Industry-Sponsored Talks: Elizabeth Wang Epps, PhD, Immune Monitoring Specialist, Immudex Étienne Richer, PhD, Director, Genomics Programs, Genome Canada
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 – 3:30pm	Concurrent Breakout Sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Pharmaceutical Innovation and Alternative Translational Pathways for Immunotherapies 2. What now? A Practical Framework for Academics Transitioning into the Life Sciences Industry 3. Career Opportunities in the Biomanufacturing Workforce 4. Global Perspectives on the Future of Cancer Immunotherapy
3:30 – 3:35pm	Travel Time
3:35 – 4:20 pm	Concurrent Breakout Sessions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Pharmaceutical Innovation and Alternative Translational Pathways for Immunotherapies 2. What now? A Practical Framework for Academics Transitioning into the Life Sciences Industry 3. Career Opportunities in the Biomanufacturing Workforce 4. Global Perspectives on the Future of Cancer Immunotherapy

Plus: Join us on Monday, March 30th for the Meet the Experts Lunch from 11:30 – 1:20!

Breakout Session 1

Room: Oak 1

Social Pharmaceutical Innovation and Alternative Translational Pathways for Immunotherapies

This session will explore translational pathways for cancer immunotherapies beyond the traditional commercialization approach to include the social, economic, and policy ecosystems that shape access and equity. Drawing on perspectives from social innovation, the discussion will examine limitations of conventional market and reimbursement-driven models, highlight alternative approaches that have shown promise in addressing access gaps, and consider how different sectors contribute to translational impact. The session will also introduce trainees to a range of career pathways through which scientists can engage with and influence these systems.

Speaker: Conor Douglas, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Science, Technology and Society, Faculty of Science, York University

HQP Moderator: Eknor Walia, Master's Student, University of Ottawa

Breakout Session 2

Room: Cypress 1

What now? A Practical Framework for Academics Transitioning into the Life Sciences Industry

Exploring opportunities outside of academia can feel a bit like standing at a crossroads with hundreds of different roads to take, each of them with unique challenges - this workshop will introduce a practical framework for navigating that transition.

We'll explore common misconceptions about industry roles and hiring expectations, and focus on how to translate academic training into relevant, compelling narratives for non-academic careers. Participants will learn how to identify and articulate transferable skills, build a clear professional story that emphasizes what's most applicable, and better understand the value of diverse experiences, including international backgrounds.

We'll also address the psychological side of leaving academia, including the common perception that pursuing non-academic paths reflects failure, and provide practical guidance on how to begin exploring the breadth of career options within "industry" when the landscape can feel overwhelming or monolithic.

Speaker: Tianna Beharriell, MSc, Talent Acquisition Team Lead, Alimentiv

HQP Moderator: Shanshan Wang, PhD Student, University of Calgary

Breakout Session 3

Room: Oak 2

Career Opportunities in the Biomanufacturing Workforce

Hear from panelists across academia and industry working in the biomanufacturing sector on what the current landscape looks like in terms of current and future career opportunities. Panelists will share their own career journeys, offer an insider perspective on the types of roles and skills needed, and shed light on where the opportunities are geographically across Canada.

Panelists:

- Chloe Choi, MSc, Senior Manufacturing Associate, Genevant Sciences
- Jennifer Quizi, PhD, Director, Virus Manufacturing Facility, Biotherapeutics Manufacturing Centre
- Annegret Taubner, PhD, Senior Clinical Applications Manager (Cell & Gene Therapy), Miltenyi Biotec, Inc.

HQP Moderator: Cindy Shu, Undergraduate Student, McMaster University

Breakout Session 4

Room: Mackenzie

Global Perspectives on the Future of Cancer Immunotherapy

This session will feature a panel discussion with members of BioCanRx's Research Management Committee. Drawing on their experience as international immunotherapy experts and reviewers for BioCanRx funding competitions, panelists will highlight current opportunities and challenges in the clinical translation of immunotherapy and share practical insights on developing competitive grant applications in this field.

Panelists:

- Dr. Alan Melcher, Professor of Translational Immunotherapy, The Institute of Cancer Research, Chester Beatty Laboratories, London (UK)
- Dr. Awen Gallimore, Professor, Immunology, Infection and Immunity, Cardiff University
- Dr. Allison Betof-Warner, Assistant Professor of Medicine (Oncology), Stanford University School of Medicine

HQP Moderators:

- Jordan Yin, Integrated BSc/MSc Student, University of Ottawa
- Marcus Liang, Undergraduate Student, University of British Columbia