

CIRTN

Canadian Islet Research
and Training Network



R2FIC

Réseau de recherche et
formation sur les îlots du Canada

NATIONAL MEETING 2025

TORONTO, ONTARIO

November 24 & 25

*Metro Toronto
Convention Centre*

**Beyond Academia:
Connecting Innovation
and Impact**

ISLETS.CA

EVENT PAGE



National Meeting - Toronto 2025

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Acknowledgements



National Meeting - Toronto 2025

MTCC **ROOM 201AB/CD**

DAY 1 – NOVEMBER 24, 2025

7:30 – 8:30 am EST Check-in & Welcome Breakfast

8:45 am Welcome from the Organizing Committee

9:00 – 9:45 am **Trainee Oral Presentations (5 min.) – Session 1**
Chair: Bruce Verchere

9:50 – 10:55 am **3MT Presentations – Session 1**
Chairs: Rob Screaton & Tara MacDonald

Full Details
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11:00 – 11:10 am Break

11:15 – 11:50 am **Trainee Oral Presentations (5 min.) – Session 2**
Chair: Cristina Nostro

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11:55 am – 12:25 pm **3MT Presentations – Session 2**
Chair: Tara MacDonald

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12:30 – 1:30 pm Lunch

1:40 – 2:30 pm **Bridging the Academic-Commercial Chasm in Translational Science**
Guest Speaker: Daniel J. Drucker
Chair: Kacey Prentice

2:45 pm – 4:00 pm **3MT Presentations – Session 3**
Chairs: Kacey Prentice & Tara MacDonald

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4:05 – 4:30 pm Awards Presentation

4:30 – 5:00 pm **Mentorship Award Lecture**
2025 Recipient: James Johnson

6:00 – 9:30 pm **Social Mixer**
Location: Loose Moose – Antler Room (146 Front St W.)



National Meeting - Toronto 2025

MTCC ROOM 201AB + CD

DAY 2 – **NOVEMBER 25, 2025**

7:45 – 8 am EST

Check-in

8:10 – 9:30 am

CREATE Training Program Presentations

Chair: Jon Rocheleau

Pg. 12

9:35 – 10:15 am

Career Paths Beyond Academia

Introductions with the MyRoad Mentors
Chairs: André Tchernof & Zoe Lofft

10:15 am

Meeting Sponsor Presentations

10:35 – 11:00 am

Break – Coffee and Snacks

11:00 – 11:55 am

**Beyond the Genetic Code: Translational Control
in Islet Development and Disease**

Keynote Speaker: Teresa Mastracci
Chair: Tara MacDonald

12:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Closing Remarks & Lunch

**Trainee Event
(Non-PI)**

1:30 – 6:00 pm

MyRoad Training Sessions & Networking Events

1:30 – 3:50 pm

Workshop: Strategies for an Effective Job Search

Chair: Jennifer Polk

4:00 – 4:30 pm

Group Mentorship Sessions - Introduction

Chairs: Zoe Lofft & Rob Screatton

4:30 – 6:00 pm

MyRoad Roundtable Mentorship Sessions

1:30 – 4:30 pm
Room 201 E

Annual General Meeting & Mentorship Workshop

Chairs: Jen Estall & Savita Dhanvantari

**PI-only
Event**

6:30 – 10:30 pm

Banquet Dinner

Location: Kelly's Landing (123 Front St. W.)
Registration Required



National Meeting - Toronto 2025

FROM DR. JEN ESTALL, CHAIR OF THE CIRTN-R2FIC LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Welcome to the 4th Annual Canadian Islet Research and Training Network – Réseau de Recherche et Formation sur les Îlots du Canada (CIRTN-R2FIC) National Meeting in beautiful Toronto!

The theme of this year's meeting is: Beyond Academia – Connecting Innovation and Impact: Synergy Between Academia and Industry in Islet Research. With this goal in mind, we are proud to partner again with Diabetes Canada and MyRoad to encourage engagement of islet biologists with the broader diabetes research community.

After missing last year's meeting in Halifax, I'm thrilled to reconnect with familiar faces and welcome new members. Please don't hesitate to say hello! With nearly **130 participants** this year, we've planned numerous opportunities to connect, share ideas, and learn from one another.

As always, the heart of our National Meeting is the research presented by our outstanding trainees from across Canada. Your work shapes this network—today and for years to come. This is your moment to shine, celebrate your achievements, and discover new ways to amplify the impact of your research through collaboration.

We are honored to host two distinguished guest speakers. First up is **Dr. Daniel Drucker** (University of Toronto), who will share insights from his career-long experience collaborating with industry to translate award-winning research into clinical practice. On the second day, we welcome **Dr. Teresa Mastracci** (Indiana University), who will discuss her pioneering work on the translational control of islet development and her emerging leadership in bridging research and business. In addition, our panel discussion led by our **MyRoad** partners will feature academics who have successfully transitioned to industry. They'll share their decision-making processes, journeys, and lessons learned—followed by a networking session in the afternoon. Take advantage of these opportunities to ask questions and build new connections.

We're also excited to present a mentorship-themed lecture by **Dr. James (Jim) Johnson** (UBC), recipient of the 2025 CIRTN-R2FIC Mentorship Award. Dr. Johnson has been instrumental in bridging academia and industry while also training many of our next generation of scientific leaders.

Since its inception, CIRTN-R2FIC has aimed to strengthen connections among Canadian islet biologists. Today, our network has grown to over **400 members**, and we continue to build partnerships with agencies, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to advance our mission of training, support, and mentorship.

Finally, this meeting would not be possible without the dedication of many individuals and organizations. We extend our deepest gratitude to our sponsors for supporting the meeting's programming, and to Diabetes Canada for generously providing space at the Toronto Convention Centre ahead of their own event later this week.

We acknowledge and honor the First Peoples on whose lands we live, work, and study as part of our commitment to truth and reconciliation. This meeting takes place on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, and remains home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island.



We recognize these Nations as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land and affirm their inherent rights. Land acknowledgments have long been an Indigenous tradition, and today we continue this practice to express gratitude for their stewardship.

We are grateful to gather in Toronto and remind ourselves that we are all Treaty people with a shared responsibility to uphold Treaty Rights. We invite you to reflect on your relationship with the land and consider how you can contribute to advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

THE INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF TKARONTO

[INDIGENOUS.UTORONTO.CA](https://indigenous.utoronto.ca)



The annual National Meeting would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. Their generosity and efforts to support emerging Canadian researchers is integral to the success of this event.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

CIRTN-R2FIC Funding Partners



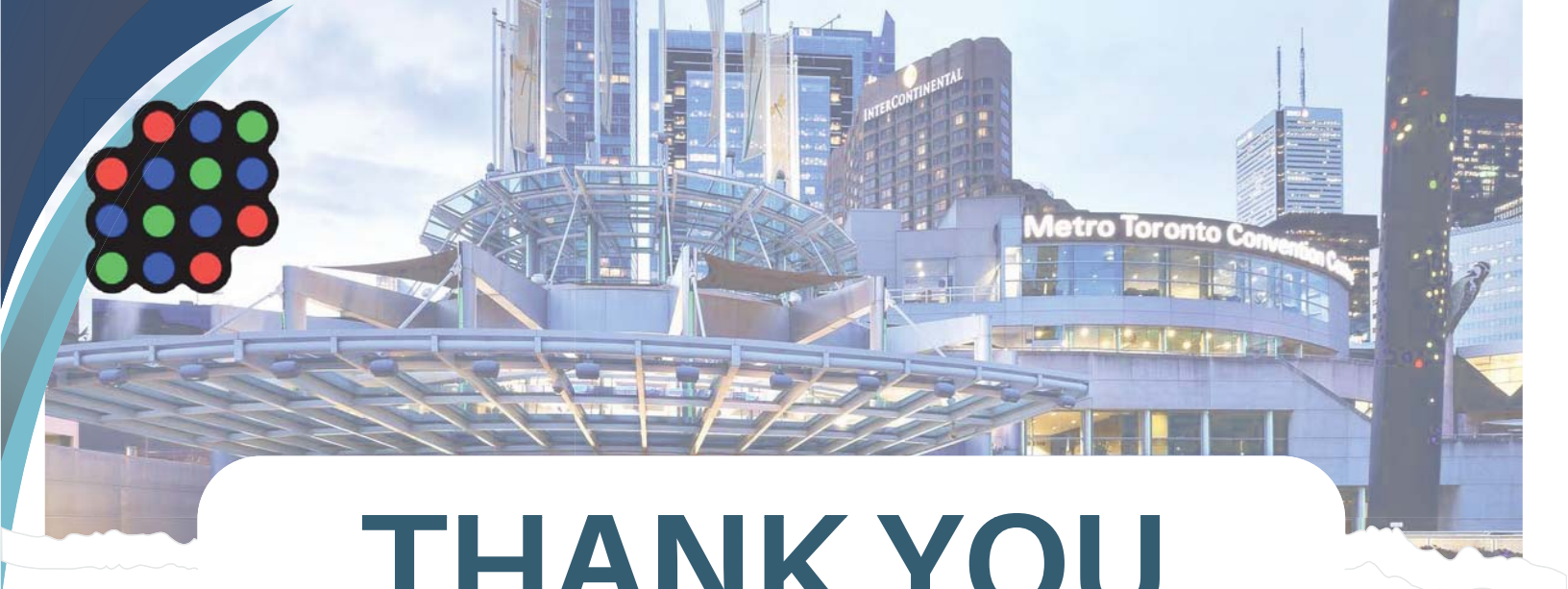
Breakthrough T1D™
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Natural Sciences and Engineering
Research Council of Canada (NSERC)

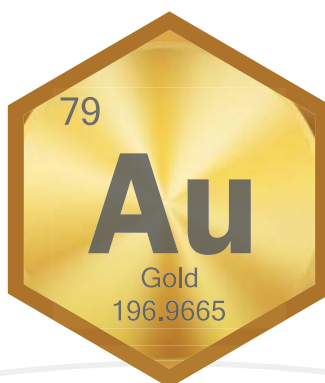


Maximize your Research on Obesity
and Diabetes (MyRoad)



THANK YOU

TO OUR SPONSORS



Gold Sponsors

Vertex Pharmaceuticals
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Silver Sponsors





Questions?

Find one of us and we'd be
happy to help.

Toronto 2025 Planning Committee



Rob Screaton
CIRTN-R2FIC



Cristina Nostro
CIRTN-R2FIC



Mélanie Nadeau
MyRoad



Jon Rocheleau
CIRTN-R2FIC



Kacey Prentice
CIRTN-R2FIC



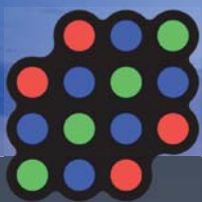
Tara MacDonald
CIRTN-R2FIC



Chris Peacocke
CIRTN-R2FIC
Program Coordinator



Jen Estall
CIRTN-R2FIC
Leadership Chair



NATIONAL MEETING 2025: EVENT VENUES



Metro Toronto Convention Centre
Room 201 AB&CD

All venues are located within a 5-minute walk from the MTCC

1

Metro Toronto Convention Centre November 24 & 25

- 255 Front St. W
- All CIRTN-R2FIC programming at the MTCC takes place in **room 201 AB/CD**
- Breakfast is provided to registered attendees on Nov. 24, and lunch is provided on both days

2

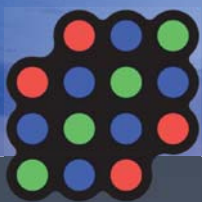
Loose Moose / Antler Room Monday, November 24 6:00 – 9:30 pm

- 146 Front St. W
- Registered attendees are invited to attend a social mixer, including PI trivia
- Drinks and snacks provided

3

Kelly's Landing Tuesday, November 25 6:30 – 10:30 pm

- 123 Front St. W
- Registered attendees are invited to attend a banquet dinner to end the meeting
- Sold-out event (No +1s permitted)



NATIONAL MEETING 2025: GUEST SPEAKERS



Metro Toronto Convention Centre
Room 201 AB&CD



Dr. Daniel J. Drucker
University of Toronto
Banting and Best Diabetes Centre



Dr. Teresa Mastracci
Indiana University
Indiana Diabetes Research Center



MyRoad Mentors:

Abhiram Dixit
André Tchernof
Jefferson Tea
Jennifer Polk
Judith Mintz
Justin Grant
Lisa Petermann
Maura Campbell
Mélanie Nadeau
Rachel La Touche
Samira Belhocine-Bachouchi
Yeseul Lee
Zoe Lofft

Guest Lecture



Monday, November 24
1:40 pm EST

- Bridging the Academic-Commercial Chasm in Translational Science
- Guest Speaker: Daniel Drucker
- *CIRTN-R2FIC Chair: Kacey Prentice*

Keynote Presentation



Tuesday, November 25
11:00 am EST

- Beyond the Genetic Code – Translational Control in Islet Development and Disease
- Guest Speaker: Teresa Mastracci
- *CIRTN-R2FIC Chair: Tara MacDonald*

Workshop and Networking Sessions



November 25, 2025
1:30 – 6:00 pm

MyRoad workshop and mentoring sessions open to all **non-PI CIRTN-R2FIC Members** and invited guests

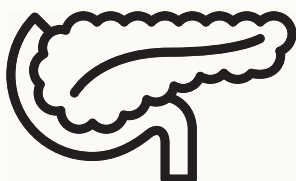


National Meeting - Toronto 2025

MEMBER PRESENTATION SCHEDULE – DAY 1, NOVEMBER 24

9:00 – 9:45 am EST

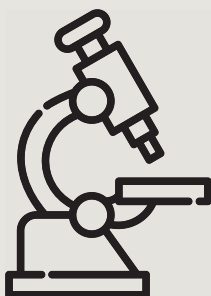
5-Minute Oral Presentations – Session 1



- Samantha Mar, *Lynn Lab*
- Victoria Johnston, *Hull-Meichle Lab*
- Mystica Amonyi, *Thompson Lab*
- Mithusha Peragerasingam, *Screaton Lab*
- Bailey Laforest, *Bruin Lab*
- Sing-Young Chen, *Johnson Lab*

9:50 – 10:55 am

Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) Presentations – Session 1



- Ali Abdalbari, *Mulvihill Lab*
- Clara Goubault, *Poitout Lab*
- Jasmine Maghera, *P. MacDonald Lab*
- Maria Galipeau, *Estall Lab*
- Madison Girouard, *Fullerton Lab*
- Arghyadip Bose, *Korbutt Lab*
- Yihan Luo, *Prentice Lab*
- Wenyeue Ye, *Wheeler Lab*
- Carling Smith, *Rideout Lab*
- Angela Ching, *Bruin Lab*
- Priscila Carapeto, *Rutter Lab*

11:15 – 11:50 am

5-Minute Oral Presentations – Session 2



- Hing Chuk (Latisha) Lau, *Screaton Lab*
- Lai Wei, *Bruin Lab*
- Frances Ford, *Rogers Lab*
- Pratap Singh Markam, *Poitout Lab*
- Myriam Hoyeck, *Bruin Lab*

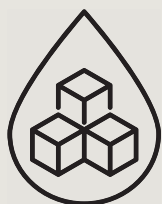


National Meeting - Toronto 2025

MEMBER PRESENTATION SCHEDULE – DAY 1, NOVEMBER 24

11:55 am – 12:25 pm

Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) Presentations – Session 2



- Angela Pelligra, *Ferron Lab*
- Xiong Liu, *P. MacDonald Lab*
- Lahari Basu, *Bruin Lab*
- M. Zeynel Cilek, *Delibasi Lab*
- Laura Reininger, *Poitout Lab*

2:45 – 4:00 pm

Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) Presentations – Session 3



- Rana Minab, *Verchere Lab*
- Zuraya Angeles Olvera, *Poitout Lab*
- Eamon Fitzpatrick, *Hull-Meichle Lab*
- Samuel Ugulini, *Dhanvantari Lab*
- Lili Grieco-St-Pierre, *Bruin Lab*
- Siyi He, *Lim Lab*
- Ekaterina Filatov, *Lynn Lab*
- Manuel Sebastian, *Doucette Lab*
- Vriti Bhagat, *Verchere Lab*
- Kaitlyn Rodricks, *Wheeler Lab*
- Sharini Sam Chee, *Rocheleau Lab*
- Eli Landau, *Rocheleau Lab*

MEMBER PRESENTATION SCHEDULE – DAY 2, NOVEMBER 25

8:10 – 9:30 am EST

CREATE Training Program Presentations



- Amélia Bouabcha, *Poitout Lab*
- Camille Prefontaine, *Thompson Lab*
- Shawn Duckett, *P. MacDonald Lab*
- Ying Deng, *Aghazadeh Lab*
- Haiyang Huang, *Nostro Lab*
- Nitya Gulati, *Rocheleau Lab*
- Youngmin Song, *Nostro Lab*
- Nayara Rampazzo Morelli, *Thompson Lab*
- Nerea Cuesta Gomez, *Korbitt Lab*
- Shreyasi Sarkar, *Lim Lab*
- Summer Helmi, *Pepper Lab*

National Meeting - Toronto 2025

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF ALL CIRTN-R2FIC EVENTS

None of CIRTN-R2FIC's events, especially the National Meeting, would be possible without the dedicated contributions of our volunteers. In just five years the Network has expanded to over 400 active members and alumni, and the passionate engagement of this membership has been indispensable.

In no particular order, we would like to thank and acknowledge the valued contributions of:

JEN ESTALL, PATRICK MACDONALD, JENNY BRUIN (CURRENT, FORMER, AND ACTING LEADERSHIP CHAIRS); JIM JOHNSON AND ERIN MULVIHILL (CURRENT STRATEGIC PLANNING CHAIRS); GARETH LIM AND ELIZABETH RIDEOUT (CURRENT EDI CHAIRS); SAVITA DHANVANTARI AND MATHIEU FERRON (CURRENT MENTORSHIP CHAIRS); THEO DOS SANTOS, AMANDA OAKIE, HUI HUANG, NOA GANG (CURRENT AND FORMER TRAINEE CHAIRS); ROB SCREATION AND CARRIE HARBER (ONLINE GRADUATE COURSE); SARAH HUGHES, KRISTA LAMB, SENTA GEORGIA, JAMIE CHU (CREATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE); SARAH LINKLATER AND LARA GREEN (BT1D); ERICA NISHIMURA AND ERWIN ILEGEMS (NOVO NORDISK); MARJORIE GRADY AND MICHELLE HOYLE (UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA); MÉLANIE NADEAU AND ANDRÉ TCHERNOF (MYROAD); JOE ORECCHIO (ROAD AHEAD); EKATERINA FILATOV (SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER); SAMANTHA GOLLOP (NSERC)

AND THE MANY OTHER CURRENT AND FORMER COMMITTEE MEMBERS, APPLICATION REVIEWERS, AND VOLUNTEERS WITHOUT WHOM THIS NETWORK WOULD NOT EXIST



ATTENDEES OF THE 2024 NATIONAL MEETING IN HALIFAX