

AllerGen awards \$250,000 for advanced allergy research



Dr. Marilyn Desjardins has been awarded the prestigious **AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship**. Dr. Desjardins will begin her fellowship in January 2015 at the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre and The Montreal Children's Hospital in Montreal, Quebec, where she will train under the supervision and mentorship of AllerGen Principal Investigator Dr. Bruce Mazer, a pediatric allergist and immunologist at the Meakins-Christie Laboratories. Her research focuses on interleukin-21 (IL-21), a protein that plays a key role in stimulating the body's immune system and antibody production.

Dr. Desjardins completed her medical degree and pediatric specialty training at the Université de Sherbrooke and her residency training in Paediatric Immunology and Allergy at The Montreal Children's Hospital. Dr. Desjardins has worked with Dr. Mazer at the Meakins-Christie Laboratories as a clinical and research Fellow since 2011, where she launched her research program by recruiting a cohort of patients with Common Variable Immunodeficiency (CVID).

This is the third *Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship* awarded by the AllerGen network. **Dr. Philippe Bégin**, from the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM) and the Centre hospitalier universitaire Sainte-Justine (CHU Sainte-Justine) in Montreal, Quebec, received the fellowship in 2013. Dr. Bégin's research showcases an international collaboration between Canadian researchers and Dr. Kari Nadeau at the Stanford Alliance for Food Allergy Research in California. **Dr. Moshe Ben-Shoshan**, a pediatric allergist from McGill University and the Montreal Children's Hospital, received the inaugural fellowship in 2010 and is now an AllerGen Principal Investigator.



Emerging Clinician-Scientists with AllerGen's Scientific Director and Research Leaders at 2014 CSACI Scientific Meeting in Ottawa, ON

Front Row (Left to Right): Moshe Ben-Shoshan, AllerGen Scientific Director Judah Denburg, Marilyn Desjardins, Philippe Bégin

Back Row (Left to Right): AllerGen Research Leaders Dean Befus, Allan Becker

HQP success highlighted in Annual Report



Since 2005, AllerGen has provided education, training and capacity-building opportunities to **1,227 Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)** and disbursed over **\$2.3 million in trainee awards and fellowships**. The valuable contributions of AllerGen trainees towards advancing research and improving the quality of life of those impacted by allergic disease, asthma and anaphylaxis are highlighted in AllerGen's recently published **2013-2014 Annual Report**.

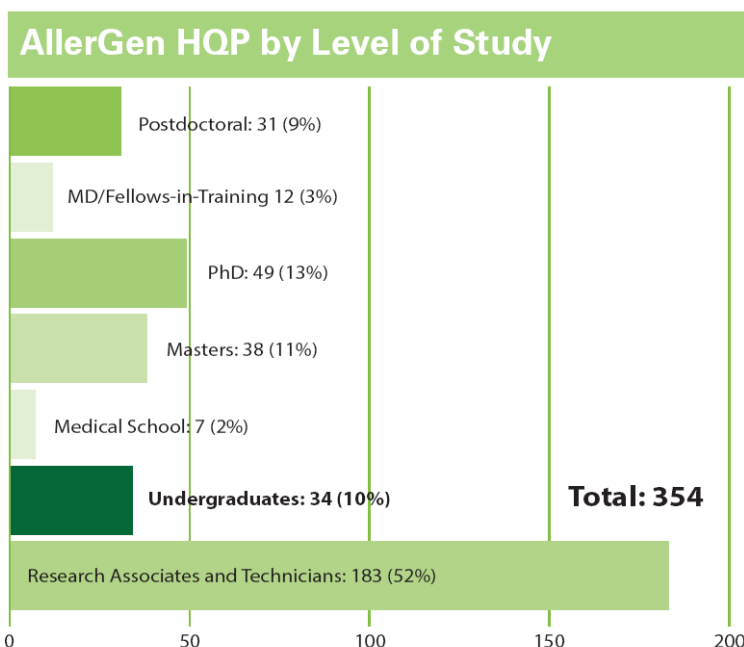
"The output of AllerGen trainees over the past year is one of the Network's biggest accomplishments," says Dr. Judah Denburg, AllerGen's Scientific Director. "The Network

provides not only quality research environments in which to train, but also expands opportunities for trainees beyond the localized environment."

In 2013-2014, trainee accomplishments included the receipt of two Banting Fellowships—Canada's most prestigious awards for post-doctoral research—and invited participation in the 64th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting (Physiology or Medicine). This annual event—the only one of its kind in the world—brings together Nobel Laureates in chemistry, physiology, medicine and physics with talented young scientists from across the globe.

Between April 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014, the AllerGen HQP program awarded 39 travel awards that allowed trainees to participate in six national and 10 international events, five skills training opportunities and two international research visits. The program also accelerated undergraduate research training by funding 10 studentships and highlighted HQP research in an annual poster competition held in conjunction with the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (CSACI) Annual Scientific Meeting in Toronto, ON.

[Read the 2013 - 2014 Annual Report](#)



AllerGen research showcased at clinically-oriented conference

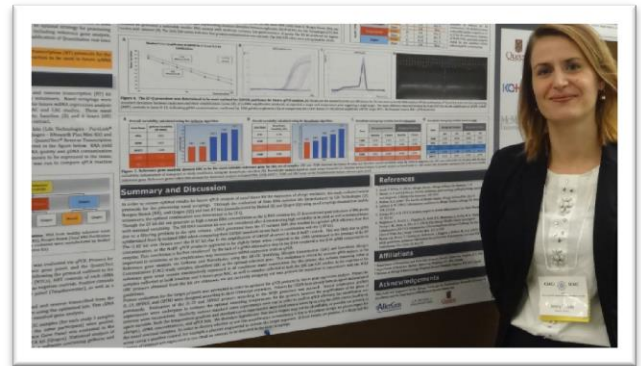
From the impact of air pollution on physician office visits to the characterization of IgE receptor expression in asthmatic epithelial cells, AllerGen's **2014 Poster Competition** showcased the outstanding research of Network trainees at a national gathering of Canada's top allergists and clinical immunologists. Hosted in partnership with the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (CSACI) at its Annual Scientific Meeting in Ottawa, ON, October 23-26, 2014, the competition provided a unique opportunity to AllerGen trainees to share the results of their research with a diverse audience of clinicians and researchers in the field of allergic disease.

"The CSACI conference gave us a unique insight into the clinical aspects of our respective disciplines, highlighting the practical concerns and potential applications of our research," says Laura Feldman, a first year MPH student in epidemiology at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. "It was a wonderful opportunity and a fantastic experience."

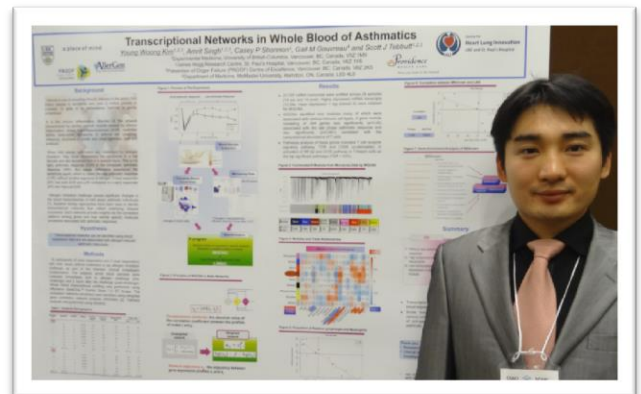
The Poster Competition featured two-minute oral presentations and poster viewing and adjudication. For the first time at a CSACI Scientific Meeting, the oral presentations were integrated into the meeting program during plenary and interest section meetings.

AllerGen awards were presented in three categories, Masters, PhD and Open, which included postdocs, research staff and young professionals. AllerGen trainees also competed successfully in the CSACI Poster Competition, winning several awards, including first place honours in the *Basic Science/Immunology* and *Food Allergy/Anaphylaxis* categories.

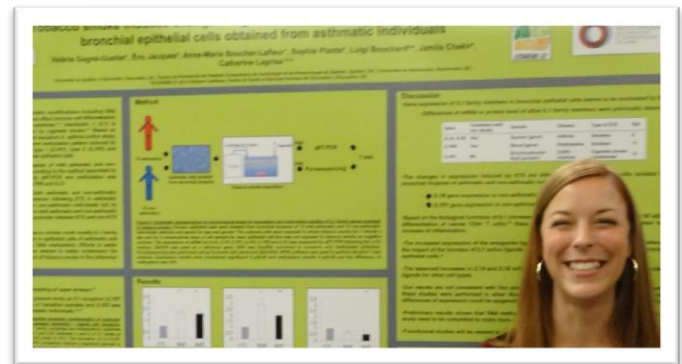
Thank you to the Chairs Drs Anne Ellis and Harissios Vliagoftis, and the AllerGen judging panel which included: Drs Dean Befus, Deborah Danoff, Moshe Ben-Shoshan, Mark Bisby, Samuel Godefroy and Susan Wasserman.



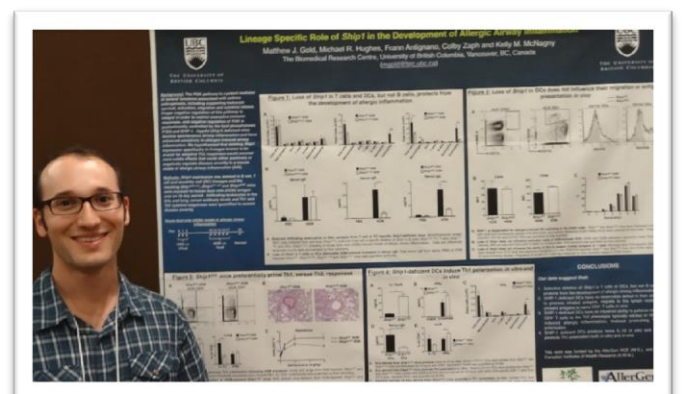
Jenny Thiele, Queen's University



Young Woong Kim, The University of British Columbia



Valérie Gagné-Ouellet, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi



Matt Gold, The University of British Columbia

2014 AllerGen Poster Competition Award Winners

Place	Category	Name	Level	Institution	Supervisor	Abstract Title
1st	Master's	Laura Feldman	MSc (c)	The Hospital for Sick Children	Teresa To	Impact of air pollution on physician office visits for common childhood conditions in Ontario, Canada
2nd	Master's	Ali Hosseini	MSc (c)	The University of British Columbia	Chris Carlsten	Co-exposure to allergen and diesel exhaust enhance inflammatory responses in human airway submucosa
1st	PhD	Amrit Singh	PhD (c)	The University of British Columbia	Scott Tebbutt	Blood biomarkers of the late phase asthmatic response using RNA-Seq
2nd	PhD	Philippe Bégin	PhD (c)	Université de Montréal	Elie Haddad	Deep TCR repertoire sequencing reveals relative change in peanut specific clonotype in subjects undergoing rush oral immunotherapy
1st	Open	Pia-Lauren Reece	Postdoc	McMaster University	Judah Denburg	IL-4 and IL-13 regulate toll-like receptor expression and eosinophil-basophil differentiative function of cord blood CD34+ progenitor cells
2nd	Open	Gurpreet Singhera	Research Staff	The University of British Columbia	Del Dorscheid	IgE receptor expression in asthmatic and non-asthmatic airway epithelial cells

CSACI Poster Competition Award Winners

1st	Food Allergy/ Anaphylaxis	Sarah De Schryver	Postdoc	McGill University	Moshe Ben-Shoshan	C-CARE: Comparing three years of anaphylaxis in children treated at the Montreal Children's Hospital
1st	Basic Science/ Immunology	Vivek Gandhi	PhD (c)	University of Alberta	Harissios Vliagoftis	Growth factors regulate Proteinase Activated Receptor – 2 (PAR-2) on Airway Epithelium
2nd	Allied Health	Claire Unruh	Research Staff	University of Manitoba	Allan Becker	Teenagers and Food Allergy Education: A Systematic Review



Poster Competition Award Winners

Left to Right: Philippe Bégin, Laura Feldman, Amrit Singh, Ali Hosseini, Claire Unruh, Vivek Gandhi, Gurpreet Singhera, Pia-Lauren Reece **Missing:** Sarah De Schryver

AllerGen Trainee Symposium: April 29 - May 1, 2015



The 10th Annual AllerGen **Trainee Symposium** will be held from April 29 - May 1, 2015 at the Intercontinental Yorkville Hotel in Toronto, ON. The objective of the symposium is to provide Network trainees and ASNPN members with a unique, value-added professional development opportunity that allows for skill and knowledge acquisition to enhance career development and complement academic and scientific training. In addition, the event aims to foster networking and collaboration amongst trainees and young professionals with a shared interest in the fields of allergy and asthma research and clinical practice.

AllerGen covers the cost of flights and accommodations (based on double occupancy) for ASNPN members. There is no cost to register for the Symposium. Registration opens Monday, January 19, 2015.

For more information, please contact AllerGen's HQP and Events Coordinator at michelleharkness@allergen-nce.ca.

2015 AllerGen *Undergraduate Summer Studentships*

Call for Applications - Deadline Friday, February 13, 2015

AllerGen **Summer Studentships** are intended to foster interest in allergic and related immune disease research among students at the undergraduate level of study. It is AllerGen's hope that this experience will spark an enduring interest in either research or clinical practice in allergic and related immune diseases and lead to the pursuit of advanced studies in this speciality.

In 2015, ten studentships will be awarded, valued at \$3,000 each and matched 1:1 with non-AllerGen funding for a total value of \$6,000 per studentship.

For more information please [CLICK HERE](#).

International Trainee Research Visit Program



Through a competitive process, the **International Trainee Research Visit Program** offers funding for AllerGen graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to spend from six weeks to six months outside of Canada working on research projects with international investigators and their research teams. Research visits must contribute to the advancement of the objectives and intended outcomes of an AllerGen research project.

The next deadline for the 2015 *International Trainee Research Visit Program* is April 1, 2015. Interested trainees are required to provide a letter of intent to AllerGen's HQP and Events Coordinator, Michelle Harkness, as the first step in the application process.

For more information please [CLICK HERE](#).

AllerGen Research Skills Awards gain in popularity

AllerGen's *Research Skill Awards* fund workshops and individual training opportunities, including lab visits, specialized skills training, scientific courses and internships that enable sharing and development of specialized technical and laboratory skills relevant to AllerGen research. Since 2012, AllerGen has funded nine unique training opportunities in diverse areas: science communications; institutional ethnography; computational methods for studying biological samples; statistical analysis; basic immunology; processing meconium and fecal samples for data sequencing; and microbiota research methods in bio-informatics and data analysis.

For more information please [CLICK HERE](#).

2014 AllerGen Research Skill Awards

Name	Institution	Training Opportunity
Jeremy Hirota	The University of British Columbia	Workshop: Banff Centre Science Communications
Leah Shaver	University of Waterloo	Workshop: Working with Texts in Institutional Ethnography
Petya Koleva	University of Alberta	Lab visit: DNA extraction and sequencing Dr. James Scott; University of Toronto
Pia-Lauren Reece	McMaster University	Lab visit: Bioinformatics and data analysis Dr. Michael Kobor, The University of British Columbia
Emile Bernatchez	Université Laval	Lab visit: CD34 and transgenic mice Dr. Kelly McNaghy, The University of British Columbia

Call for applications extended for SAFAR/AllerGen Fellowship in food allergy



The **Stanford Alliance for Food Allergy Research (SAFAR) / AllerGen Research Fellowship Award** will provide a \$50,000 to a Canadian investigator (PhD or MD) with an interest in the prevention and treatment of severe food allergies to pursue academic research training with **Dr. Kari Nadeau**. Dr. Nadeau leads translational research and clinical studies at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital and directs the Nadeau Laboratory at Stanford University.

Dr. Nadeau recently received a \$2.25 million grant from Amazon chief Jeff Bezos to expand her clinical food allergy research – [read the Press Release](#).

"AllerGen is delighted that this award will allow a young Canadian scientist with an interest in developing new and safe therapies for food allergies to work with Dr. Nadeau," says Dr. Judah Denburg, Scientific Director and CEO of AllerGen. "Food allergy is the next, rising wave of the allergy epidemic. Research in this area is a priority for both organizations, given the rising prevalence and accompanying risk of life-threatening anaphylaxis, and the many challenges that allergic patients face in everyday settings such as schools, public venues and restaurants."

The Call for Applications for this award will remain open until a suitable candidate has been found.

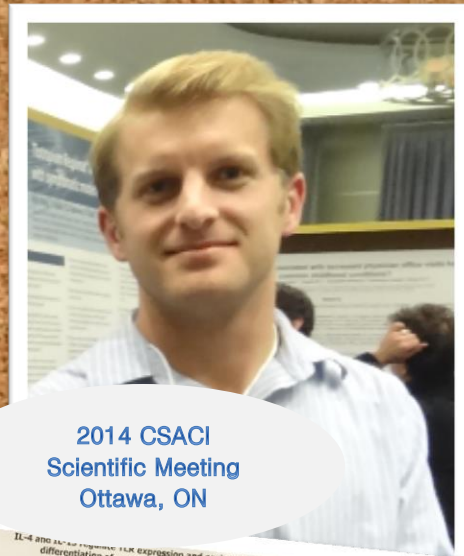
[Call for Applications](#) | [Application Form](#)

HQP

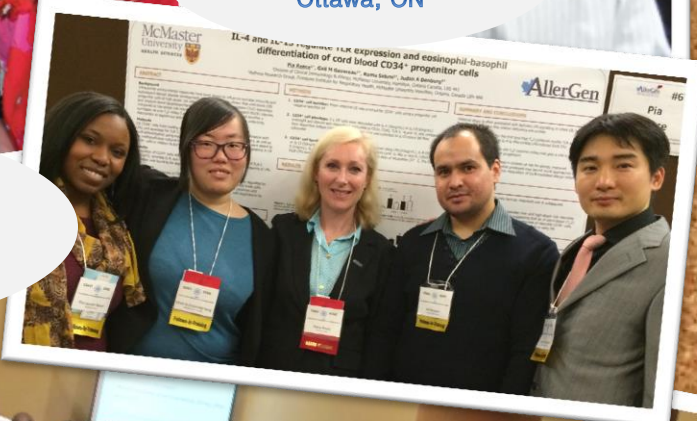
Snapshots



Anaphylaxis Canada
7th Annual
Community Conference
Toronto, ON



2014 CSACI
Scientific Meeting
Ottawa, ON

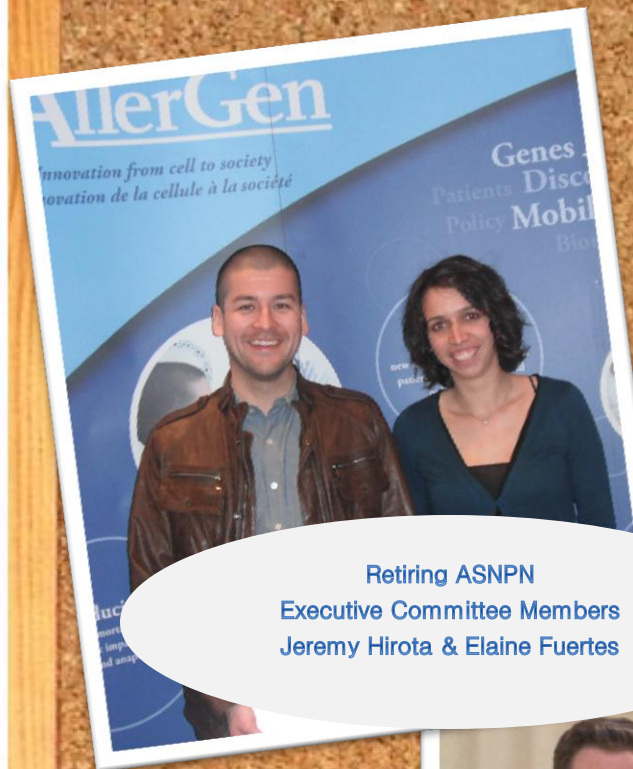


2014
Trainee Symposium
Richmond, BC



Speed Networking





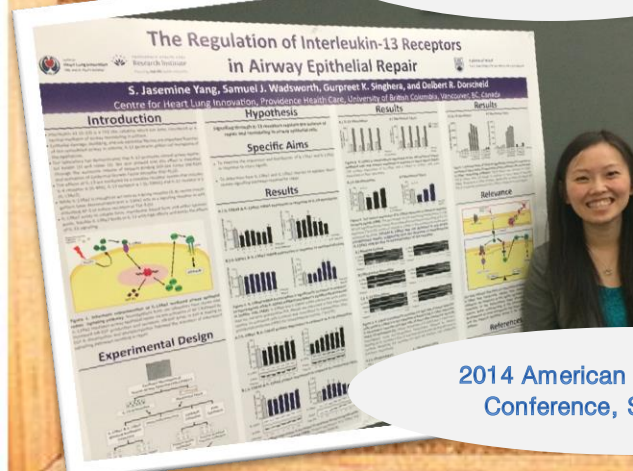
Retiring ASNPN
Executive Committee Members
Jeremy Hirota & Elaine Fuertes



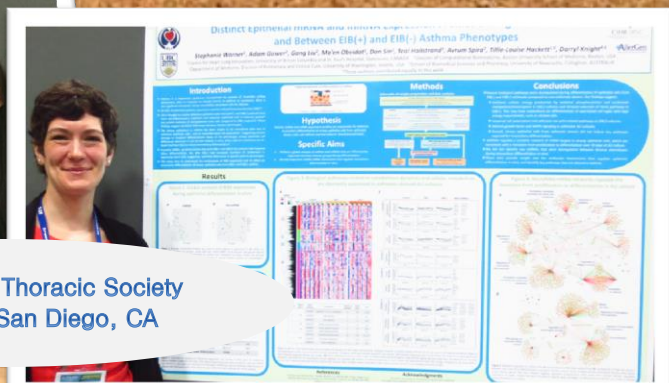
2014 CSACI
Scientific Meeting in
Ottawa, ON



Dan Moldaver & Claudia Hui
with Stephen Galli,
Collegium Internationale
Allergologicum (CIA) President,
Petersberg, Germany

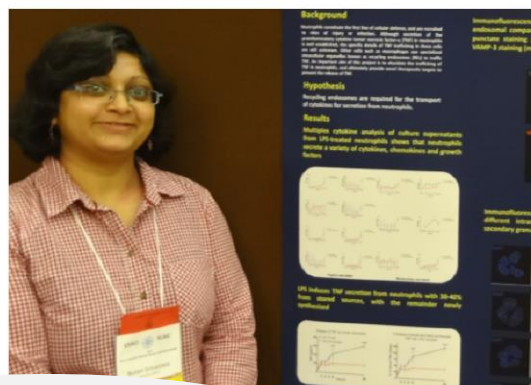


2014 American Thoracic Society
Conference, San Diego, CA

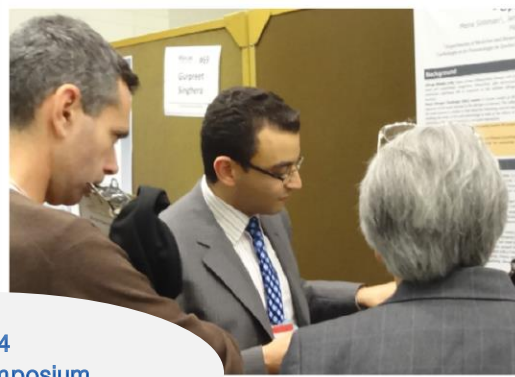




November 2014
Board of Directors'
Strategic Planning Retreat
Port Credit, ON



2014 CSACI Scientific Meeting
Ottawa, ON



2014
Trainee Symposium
Richmond, BC



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Why you should use Twitter during your PhD

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This post is by Sheree Bekker, who is originally from South Africa and now based in Australia as an international PhD scholar at the Australian Centre for Research into Injury in Sport and its Prevention (ACRISP), Federation University Australia. Her research centres around sports safety. Follow her on twitter @shereebekker

[Read here](#)

NCE Mid-Term Review

AllerGen NCE Inc. is a national research network funded by Industry Canada through the **Networks for Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program**. In March 2012, Industry Canada announced support in the amount of \$36.5 million for AllerGen NCE Inc. to 2019. The Network must continue to fulfill the NCE eligibility criteria and undergo a **mid-term review in September 2015** in order to receive the final three years of NCE funds (2016-2019).



The review has two main purposes:

1. To assess the Network's progress to date in achieving the goals set out in the 2012-2019 Strategic Plan.
2. To evaluate the updated strategic plan based on the five criteria of the NCE program.

AllerGen's Progress Report and Strategic Plan are reviewed against the five NCE program criteria:

- Excellence of the Research Program
- Development of Highly Qualified Personnel
- Networking and Partnerships
- Knowledge and Technology Exchange and Exploitation
- Management of the Network

HQP Testimonials for Mid-Term Review

Early in 2015, the AllerGen Administrative Centre will ask for written and video testimonials on the value that participation in the Network's HQP program has contributed to your training and personal/professional development.

AllerGen welcomes new ASNPN members

Trainees and new professionals working on AllerGen-funded research automatically become ASNPN members. Students and new professionals not directly involved in AllerGen research, but training or working in the field of allergy, asthma and/or anaphylaxis, may apply for membership.

New members joining ASNPN since April 2014:

Jean-Christophe Bérubé, Université Laval
Julyanne Brassard, Université Laval
Catherine Biggs, Boston Children's Hospital
Anne-Marie Boucher Lafleur, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi
Julie Dixon, University of Waterloo
Youkai (Kris) Hong, The University of British Columbia
Aruni Jha, University of Manitoba
Yayuk Joffres, Simon Fraser University
Young Woong Kim, The University of British Columbia
Elizabeth Lee, Queen's University
Stephanie Legere, Dalhousie University
Cristina Longo, McGill University
Navneet Makker, University of Calgary
Daniel Moldaver, McMaster University
Giselle Morean, University of Calgary
Keegan Phillips, University of Waterloo
Jaclyn Quirt, McMaster University
Tarandeep Singh, McMaster University
Mark Tenn, McMaster University
Britt Voaklander, University of Alberta
Peipei Wang, Lakehead University
Chen Xi (Yolanda) Yang, The University of British Columbia



Julyanne Brassard, Université Laval (centre)
with members of Marie-Renée Blanchet's
(top right) Research Team

ASNPN Executive Committee (2014 - 2015)

Lianne Soller, PhD (c), ASNPN President; McGill University
Pia-Lauren Reece, PDF, ASNPN Vice-President; McMaster University
Leah Shaver, M.Sc. (c), Events Director; University of Waterloo
Mena Soliman, M.Sc. (c), Communications Director; Queen's University
Amrit Singh, PhD (c), Pacific Director (BC); The University of British Columbia
Vivek Gandhi, PhD (c), Central Director (AB, SK, MB); University of Alberta
Elizabeth Simms, MD/PhD (c), Ontario Director; McMaster University
Stephanie Nairn, PhD (c) Québec/Atlantic Director; McGill University
Carlo de Olim Rugginenti, M.Sc. (c), Member-at-Large; Université de Montréal

[Read
Committee
bios here](#)