

An update on the Krescent Program

The Krescent program is now in its second year of operation, with a total of 15 trainees at either the Post-Doctoral Fellowship or New Investigator level. The program provides salary support to research trainees, a core curriculum consisting of web-based learning modules and bi-annual workshops, and mentorship support. Krescent held its 3rd workshop at the Novotel Hotel in Montreal from November 24-26, 2006. Highlights included a career development session chaired by Dr. Cathy Whiteside, as well as core lectures on basic and clinical research in acute renal failure and on ESRD and its therapy. The workshop concluded with a “Transdisciplinary Research Challenge” chaired by Dr. Norm Rosenblum, in which the trainees, assembled in teams, have been asked to prepare mock grant proposals related to kidney development or genetic kidney disease. These proposals will be reviewed and presented orally at the next workshop in Halifax in May 2007.

Dr. Adeera Levin chairs the Krescent Curriculum Task Force, and she and her committee, including the Krescent administrative staff from The Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFOC) (Mr. Wim Wolfs and Ms. Anik Schoenfeldt) have done a superb job in setting the workshop objectives, organizing the venues, and ensuring that evaluations are completed and reviewed. The preparation of a comprehensive curriculum that spans 6 years is of course a considerable challenge, and the Task Force would welcome the involvement of additional CSN members with enthusiasm or expertise in research and education. If you are interested in joining this committee, or hearing more about its work, please contact Adeera directly at ALevin@providencehealth.bc.ca.

For the 2007 Krescent competition, 24 applications were received, representing a stable number compared to previous years. Dr. Paul Goodyer has been appointed as the incoming chair of the Krescent Peer Review Committee, taking over from Dr. Barbara Ballermann, who did outstanding work in chairing the committee for the first 2 competitions, and in setting guidelines for assessment of applications. The committee will meet in March 2007, and it is expected that 7-8 new training positions will be funded for the July 1, 2007 start date. Unfortunately, few applications were received for Allied Health Scholarships and New Investigator Awards, and I would like to take this opportunity to strongly urge all young scientists in the latter category (i.e. those within 3 years of their first academic appointment at an institution in Canada) to apply to the Krescent program in the fall of 2007. The application itself requires a limited time investment (e.g. no requirement for a detailed research proposal), and receipt of a Krescent award can provide a young investigator with up to 3 years of significant salary support, thereby ensuring time protection for research. Information about the program, including application forms, and profiles of the current trainees, can be found on the Krescent website: www.kidney.ca/page.asp?intNodeID=22338.

The Krescent program, funded from a variety of sources, represents a major and timely investment in the future of kidney research in Canada. A special contribution from the membership of the CSN, donations from the Branches of the KFOC, and funding from the CIHR-INMD and CIHR-ICRH have been complemented by the generous support of

AMGEN, Baxter Corporation, Hoffmann-La Roche, Maple Leaf Foods, Merck Frosst Canada Ltd., Ortho Biotech, Shire BioChem Inc., professional associations and private donors. I am also pleased to report that a Quebec funding body, the FRSQ, has recently agreed to partner with Krescent to support Quebec trainees who are accepted into the program.

Submitted by K. Burns, Chair, Krescent Program Steering Committee