



Attendees: Alberto Caminero, Bruce Vallance, Christopher Rose, Christopher Williams, Daniel Mulder, David Rojas, Derek McKay, Ebele Ola, Eric Benchimol, Fernando Vicentini, Francois Boudreau, James King, Jessica Travis, Juan-Nicolàs Peña-Sanchez, Kate Lee, Kim Barrett, Linda Pires, Lisa Reynolds, Mary Vyas, Maude Hamilton, Natahsa Haskey, Nathalie Perrault, Nicola Jones, Philip Sherman, Stuart Johnston.

Absent: Giada Sebastiani, Laura Targownik

Objective: Develop a marketable, sustainable, financial plan for the TRIANGLE program that strengthens program delivery by building on existing strengths and addressing current weaknesses, ensuring the continued exceptional training of the next generation of GI and liver researchers beyond 2027.

Interactive Session 1: Program Delivery Discussion

The workshop focused on improving key components of the program. Participants were divided into four groups of 6-7 people, each focusing on all aspects for the program. Each group brainstormed for 20 minutes, identifying opportunities for improvement, followed by 10-minute presentations of their insights and recommendations. Key themes included enhancing equity and diversity in selection processes, integrating and strengthening curriculum components, formalizing mentorship opportunities, increasing program awareness, and improving wellness and tracking metrics.

Curriculum

- Collaborate with other Health Research Training Programs (HRTPs) to share training resources.
- Increase patient engagement training
- consider creating advocacy groups where clinicians support non-clinical researchers.
- Address siloed curriculum structure by integrating components for a cohesive experience.
- Circulate all committee meeting minutes to relevant stakeholders (define scope and delivery method for distribution).
- Strengthen engagement with patient advisory groups in curriculum development.
- Develop written rules for ECRs on how to succeed as scientists.

Selection

- Enhance equity in award distribution. Only five provinces currently receive awards, with little Black and Indigenous representation.
- Establish a funding threshold with affirmative action to prioritize underrepresented populations
- Host information sessions in underrepresented areas or with underrepresented groups, led by ECR awardees to enhance CVs, raise awareness, and highlight excellence.
- Remove the co-funding model, as some institutions do not apply due to inability to guarantee funds.
- Require all awardees to apply for national funding and include this in the annual report (add a checkbox).
- Incentivize application reviews to encourage participation.
- Diversify the review pool to minimize unconscious bias.
- Use DORA principles to evaluate applications.
- Prioritize applications from fellows and doctoral students in awarded ECR labs
- Reserve specific CONNECT Summer Student awards for underrepresented groups.
- Provide feedback on applications, including two strengths and two weaknesses, alongside rankings.



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- Introduce a wildcard award for candidates meeting specific criteria (e.g., geographic area, race, research specialty).

Mentorship

- Assign patient partners as mentors to non-clinician awardees.
- Formalize opportunities for awardees to connect with multiple mentors, making the process more accessible and flexible (currently informal and not widely known).
- Train awardees to become mentors, involving different levels (e.g., ECRs mentoring fellows, fellows mentoring doctoral students).
- Improve mentorship metrics using existing technology (e.g., apps) to track effectiveness.
- Arrange for mentors and mentees to present together at the Summit
- Grow mentorship capacity by involving new mentors and mentor teams
- Create an advisory group for new supervisors to strengthen mentorship

Experiential Learning Placements (ELPs)

- Increase funding for ELPs to make them competitive and support cross-sectoral careers.
- Require ELP applications to include a Mitacs application
- Explore short-term internship opportunities with government research labs, leveraging past collaborations with universities.

Metrics

- Explore adopting Vanderbilt University's Flight Tracker (REDCap) to track alumni, noting its limited success with fellows and doctoral students.
- Track alumni and awardees pursuing cross-sectoral careers (outside academia) and include this in annual and alumni reports.
- Investigate tracking Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) metrics or gather more information on implementation.
- Conduct a survey on awardee wellness to follow up on training initiatives.
- Celebrate and amplify trainee successes to broker program impact.
- Provide research allowances for PDFs to enhance training outcomes.

Awareness

- Increase TRIANGLE's visibility by setting up booths at external meetings (e.g., CDDW, CASL annual meeting, research days).
- Create virtual badges for LinkedIn to promote program recognition.
- Expand outreach to research areas such as cancer, nutrition, and organizations supporting chronic diseases.
- Enhance engagement with patient partners and supervisors for greater program impact.
- Engage alumni as ambassadors to sustain involvement and support succession planning

Organization Structure

- Maintain separate Wellness and EDI committees to ensure focused efforts.
- Un-silo committees

Advisory Board

- Increase Advisory Board involvement by assigning more responsibilities at the Summit.



Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

- Address ECRs' need for tailored content; they currently organize and run sessions but require support for their own needs.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings with ECRs to identify their specific requirements.
- Support ECR networking and community-building for career development

Interactive Session 2: Strategic Support - Partnering for Long Term Impact

The workshop focused on identifying creative and novel ways for partner organizations to expand their support for TRIANGLE to ensure long-term impact. Participants were divided into four groups of 6-7 people, each brainstorming innovative partnership strategies for 30 minutes, followed by 10-minute presentations of their ideas. Key themes included leveraging patient groups for donor partnerships, expanding outreach to interdisciplinary organizations, engaging corporate sponsors (e.g., banks, probiotic companies), and strengthening ties with institutions, governments, and CIHR to enhance funding and visibility.

Patient Groups

- Partner with patient groups to create named awards funded by donors, incorporating overhead costs.
- Capitalize on TRIANGLE's Canadian identity to appeal to Canadian patient groups for increased support.
- Leverage patient advisory groups to advocate for TRIANGLE at CIHR head office, using articulate partners to request funding.

Broaden Disciplinary Groups

- Reach out to interdisciplinary organizations (e.g., Cancer Society, obesity networks, nutrition organizations) to expand TRIANGLE's scope, potentially collaborating with other health research training platforms to avoid overlap and increase program awareness and applications.
- Set up booths at conferences like CDDW/ CLM and Meeting of the Minds to promote TRIANGLE and connect with interdisciplinary groups.

Industry and Corporate Partnerships

- Engage banks and life insurance companies (e.g., Manulife, TD) for multi-year funding, noting TD's simple application process and preference for national networks.
- Approach probiotic companies (e.g., Danone, Nestlé) for research budget sponsorships.
- Organize branding talks by awardees sponsored by pharmaceutical or other companies, similar to Café Scientifique events.
- Apply for educational grants and in-kind sponsorships through online portals.
- Make personal connections with industry partners to align their needs with TRIANGLE's goals.
- Ask foundations and community foundations with endowments to co-fund programs.
- Include a donation option for TRIANGLE in CAG membership renewals, potentially forwarding to the TRIANGLE website to boost traffic.
- Expand partnerships to include veterinary companies.
- Engage biotech companies for targeted partnerships.

Institutional and Governmental Partnerships



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- Ensure TRIANGLE remains a priority for CIHR head office by aligning with their needs assessment and advocating for continued inclusion.
- Advocate for additional funding from CIHR central.
- Identify politicians with an interest in GI and liver health to facilitate partnerships with federal and provincial governments.
- Leverage SickKids Foundation for fund development support (accept donations)
- Create bidirectional relationships to demonstrate how TRIANGLE can benefit partners.
- Establish university partnerships to support TRIANGLE's programs.
- Connect with institutions, hospitals, regional GI groups, and chairs to partner on awards, including overhead costs.

Interactive Session 3: Exploring Funding Opportunities & Crafting a Compelling Value Proposition

The workshop explored diverse funding opportunities and strategies for crafting a compelling value proposition tailored to different funders (e.g., pharma, CIHR, foundations, institutions). Participants were divided into four groups of 6-7 people, brainstorming for 30 minutes on identifying funding sources, key impact metrics, and persuasive storytelling elements, followed by 10-minute presentations. Key themes included enhancing social media presence, leveraging storytelling through videos and patient/researcher narratives, incorporating industry interactions in training, and emphasizing TRIANGLE's role in workforce development and community impact to strengthen funding requests.

Social Media and Marketing

- Collect data on website and social media site visits (hits) to track engagement.
- Increase social media presence to drive traffic to TRIANGLE's sites.
- Create a simple advertising/awareness slide to enhance visibility

Storytelling and Value Proposition

- Develop a value proposition highlighting TRIANGLE's impact on disease and vision for the future.
- Profile patients and awardees in storytelling to showcase impact
- Emphasize TRIANGLE's role in advancing and investing in careers for improved patient outcomes.
- Tell compelling stories: the story of the researchers and why they are doing this work; the story of patient partners; the story of why TRIANGLE is so important. Share via video as a marketing tool (videos believed to be better for capturing stories; note that CIDSCANN tried this and it did not work well for them).
- Everyone understands or has experienced a liver/GI issue; leverage that relatability.
- Show the gap between GI/liver researchers and people with the disorder.
- Hire a consultant to help develop the pitch.
- Bring influencers and patients to accompany us when approaching funders.
- Storytelling is key; needs to show impact and vision of the program, packaged correctly.
- Stories need to come from awardees and patients.
- When returning to CIHR, present solid metrics alongside evidence of additional supporters to demonstrate growth.
- Showcase TRIANGLE via CAG/CASL/CCC.
- Enhance community links.
- Showcase results to CIHR, including where funding has been spent and outcome stats.



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- Supporter newsletters: Highlight patient involvement, membership stats, return of investment

Industry Partnerships (Pharma)

- Provide pharma with the cream of the crop in researchers.
- Pharma will recruit our people to their organizations.
- Incorporate interactions with industry as part of training.
- Position TRIANGLE as a destination for clinical trials training- we don't have the skills for this

CIHR/Foundations

- Emphasize that TRIANGLE is doing the training work for them, thereby encouraging them to provide funding.

Institutions

- Highlight how TRIANGLE makes awardees more efficient and hireable, adding to universities' mandates to build the workforce.

CATEGORY	ACTION ITEM	ASSIGNED TO	DUE DATE	PRIORITY
Advisory Board	Email each member and ask them if they would like to be more involved at the Summit	Linda	30-Nov-25	High
Awareness, Social Media and Marketing	Develop marketing material and shared it with members to present and include in external meetings and presentations	Linda	31-Dec-25	High
Awareness, Social Media and Marketing	Increase social media presence driving traffic to TRIANGLE websites and track metrics (hits, etc.)	Linda	31-Dec-26	Low
CAG	Add TRIANGLE donation option to CAG membership renewals linking to TRIANGLE website	Stuart	31-Dec-25	High
CASL	Add TRIANGLE donation option to CASL membership renewals linking to TRIANGLE website	Carla/Giada	31-Dec-25	High
CIHR Head office	Advocate for TRIANGLE inclusion in CIHR needs assessment. Request additional funding from CIHR central. Send articulate patient, CASL members & CCC Josh Berman to CIHR head office to advocate for funding. Present CIHR with solid metrics and evidence of growing supporter base	Leadership	31-May-26	High
CONNECT Summer Students	Meet with Premysl (CAG) to discuss targeting awards for underrepresented groups	Linda, Derek, Nicola, Laura, Juan Nicolas	31-Dec-25	High
Curriculum	Collaborate with HRTPs to share curriculum training resources	Linda	31-Aug-26	Medium
ECRs	Conduct one-on-one meetings with ECRs to identify needs. See if the are interested in: leading information sessions in underrepresented areas, giving research talks where they share their research and talk about the program and how it helped they r research	Leadership	31-Dec-25	High
ELPs	Email Dan Mulder to explore government research lab internships for ELPs	Linda	30-Nov-25	Medium
Expansion	Expand outreach to cancer, nutrition, obesity, other HRTPs, chronic disease organizations, biotech companies, influencers, veterinary companies, foundations, universities, institutions, hospitals, regional GI groups, and Chairs for support, award partnering with overhead.	Linda	31-Dec-26	Medium
Industry Partnerships	Apply for educational grants and in-kind sponsorships via online portals, and Organize branded talks by awardees sponsored by pharma or other companies	Linda	31-Aug-26	Medium
IRDP	Improve IRDP metrics by reviewing Flight Tracker (Vanderbilt University REDCap) to identify potential gaps, ensuring awardees are applying for national funding, and tracking cross-sectoral interests of awardees.	Linda	31-Dec-25	Medium
Mentorship	Enhance mentorship by expanding diversity of mentor pool and formalizing multiple mentor connections	Linda	31-Dec-25	Medium
Metrics	Strengthen mentorship, EDI, and website metrics.	Linda	31-Aug-26	Medium
Patient Advisory Group	Partner with patient groups to create named awards with donor funding including overhead costs, advocate to help train non-clinicians, and strengthen patient advisory group engagement in curriculum	Mary Vyas	01-May-26	Medium
Selection Committee	Modify awards to include a Wildcard award, provide two strengths two weaknesses with each review, and requiring membership in CAG, CASL, etc.	Linda	01-Mar-26	High
Steering Committee	Send all minutes from all committees to the steering committee at the beginning of each month	Linda	30-Nov-25	High
Storytelling	Source stories from awardees and patients for funding proposals	Linda	01-May-26	High