



## 2020 Video Abstract Spotlight Winners



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IN THIS ISSUE

# From the President...

By Nick Lukacs



Nick Lukacs,  
SLB President

The final issue of iSLB for 2020 presents the many outstanding programs, highlights, and future plans for the society that will allow us to grow and deliver outstanding science, career opportunities, and collaborations. SLB continues to be a place for all of us to contribute to our scientific fields and participate in the many areas of research and development that drives our individual passions. This past year highlights how we can successfully accomplish society business and share our research ideas even with being limited by the pandemic. Thanks to Society members, organizers, and outstanding speakers, the 2020 Meeting went virtual and, by all criteria, was extremely successful in delivering fantastic and cutting-edge science to SLB members and introduced nonmembers to SLB. This issue highlights plans for the 2021 meeting "**Immunometabolism: Fueling the Flame of Aging, Cancer and Immunity**". We all hope that the 2021 SLB Annual Meeting will be in-person but SLB is prepared to go virtual and have a vibrant program with outstanding science if necessary. Importantly, the commitment of SLB and its members to deliver career development and DEI workshops highlights how our organization continues to be a positive influence on our future science community and supports members

at all levels, from all backgrounds, around the globe. **What a great Society!**

As we welcome newly elected SLB Councilors and thank outgoing members, please remember that we can all add to the Society by volunteering to participate. iSLB includes many opportunities to join committees, organize webinars, and provide topic ideas for SLB and JLB sponsored programs. These are fantastic ways to get involved and add to the excitement of our Society as we continue to grow and develop our community.

As we end a difficult year faced with a continuing pandemic, it is an important time for all of us, as scientists, to advocate for science and research. While we belong to FASEB, which provides SLB with outstanding science advocacy, we all have to do our part in our day-to-day lives. The lack of understanding that has surfaced during this pandemic has highlighted that we, as scientists, have more work to do. Opportunities to convey the importance of science, research, and medicine need to be identified and taken to engage the public, governments, early education, and especially within our own networks of families and friends to enhance their understanding of research and the importance of what we do.

Thank you for all you do. I look forward to 2021 and rising to the challenge ahead together.

- [Interview with Gabriel Rabinovich](#)
- [DEI in mentoring](#)
- [Behind the Science: Author Interviews](#)
- [ECR Perspectives of Navigating during COVID](#)
- [LinkedIn Profile Building](#)
- [2020 Conference Recap](#)

### Seeking Topics & Guest Editors for Member-driven JLB Issues

What would *you* like to see as the theme of a JLB issue? A few ideas proposed to date include CNS immunity, parasite immunity, the complement system in health and disease, immunity of tissue regeneration, and invertebrate immunity. Have another idea? [Email](#) or [click here!](#)

Interested in guest editing your proposed topic? [Let us know!](#) This is an excellent opportunity for early-career or established scientists to network and build community as they shape a high-visibility cluster of articles addressing a current topic in leukocyte biology. Statements of interest are being accepted and responded to on a rolling basis. Guidance and support are provided including an outline of the process and mentoring from past guest editors.

## 2020 Speaker Interview: Dr. Gabriel Rabinovich

By: Stephanie Silva-Del Toro

[Read this interview in Spanish...](#)



*Gabriel Rabinovich is the Director of the Laboratory of Immunopathology, Institute of Biology and Experimental Medicine, CONICET and Professor of Immunology at the University of Buenos Aires. For more than 25 years he has investigated the role of glycans and glycan-binding proteins in mediating cellular processes central to immune regulation and human diseases.*

**Q:** I think it is pretty amazing that you published your first manuscript in the Journal of Leukocyte Biology. Why did you choose that journal? Do you think it helped you in your career? How?

**A:** Our first discovery was a huge surprise because it was pure serendipity. I started as a graduate student with 2 projects that did not have anything to do with each other. In one project, I generated monoclonal antibodies against a specific chicken eye's retina protein, nothing to do with Immunology nor cancer. For my other project, I had a cell fractions of different immune cells, like macrophages, monocytes, etc. One day, I decided to test if my 2 unrelated projects were linked somehow. To do this, I used one of the antibodies against chicken's retina to probe my immune cell lysates. I got a cross reaction with a 14 kDa protein, which ended up being a beta-galactosidase binding protein in macrophages. As macrophages became more activated and more inflammatory, more beta-galactosidase binding protein expression was detected. During this time, no one talked about galactosidases. I was 23-24 years old, now I'm 51; it was a long time ago. The Journal of Leukocyte Biology (JLB) was starting and the results we had

were proteins in leukocytes, so this journal was perfect for us. We were located in Argentina, so we had to mail our manuscript to the USA. It took months to receive an answer from the journal; the internet did not exist back then. I still remember the letter signed by Dr. Oppenheimer saying that my manuscript was accepted with minor revisions. How the JLB marked my life? By publishing my first manuscript in 1996 where I identify for the first time Galectin 1 in antigen presenting cells, that the inflammatory response increased with them and the possible functions of this new protein. Later, other people became interested in this field and our working hypothesis expanded: the galectin we found in macrophages was upregulated in tumors, it eliminated activated T cells, played an important role in immune escape. After all these years we can conclude that this protein achieves a new paradigm in the inflammatory response. It increases during the inflammatory resolution and diminishes inflammation (when it is exacerbated) to protect you from autoimmunity disorders. On the other side, tumors use this protein to eliminate tumor specific T cells. We have published these findings in Autoimmunity journals, Journal of Experimental Medicine, Nature Immunology, Cancer Cell, Cell; this new paradigm grew immensely. However, I will never forget the first journal that accepted my work, the JLB. Also, the first journal that asked to write a Galectin review was the JLB. I will always remember this with a lot of affection because it was my first chance to publish.

**Q:** You were one of the speakers at SLB 2020. You completed a full circle with your first article published in JLB and now speaking at SLB 2020. How has your journey been after getting that article published? What is your story?

**A:** I studied Biochemistry and graduated in 1993. I always thought I would work on Biomedical biochemistry and that I would treat patients. I never thought of doing research. I like to say that I did not choose to do research, but that research chose me. The opportunity of doing a PhD in Immunology showed up and I took it. My thesis originally was in Neuro

Endocrinology and my thesis project was not working for me. I was about to quit. However, I got a faint band in a western blot which encompassed my whole career. I was enjoying my time thinking about questions and possible explanations of that faint 14kDa band. I got my article published JLB and it validated that I can actually do Science. I defended my thesis on February of 1999 in Córdoba, Argentina. Originally, I wanted to go to USA or Europe so I could focus on my research and not having to deal with the complications of funding, bureaucracy of the government, lack of resources, and overall delays to get reagents and tools all the way to Argentina. I had arranged a post-doc at NIH but a family situation arose, so I postponed my move. Since I was still in Argentina, I kept working on my galectin project and kept postponing the trip. I became very excited about my project and its possibilities, since we learned that it was expressed in tumors and could kill activated T cells. I thought that if I traveled to USA, I would need to stop working on this. Thus, I cancelled my trip to NIH and stayed working on my project. Due to my work during this time, I got my Cancer Cell manuscript published describing the role Galectin-1 in tumor escape ("The sweet Kiss of Death"). I also got my first graduate student. I worked at the hospital using patient samples as well as cell lines. In 2005, we moved to the Institute of Biology and Experimental Medicine and we established the Immuno Pathology research lab where we currently have 30 members. We study the role of galectins and glycans in different pathologies like infections, autoimmune diseases, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and now Coronaviruses. For us, it is very meaningful and quite special that we have been able to make all these discoveries from Argentina. In 2017 something extremely good for my career happened, I was named a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

**Q:** Is there something you would have liked to know then (when you were writing that first manuscript) that you know now?

**A:** At the time my English was not the best and my writing needed a lot of work... so I would have liked to have written in a more profound and refined language. But I think

that humble first paper established the basis of my whole career. As for advice, I always tell my students: we need to generate waterproof stories. We need to design experiments to question every angle, test it via western blot and RT-PCR, determine if its physiological relevant, if can we find a clinical model for it. There will be experimental limitations, of course. We have to tell a story as simple and clear as possible and by using different strategies to address the same question. If you do this, then you trust your results and they can be reproduced anywhere in the world.

**Q:** Did you have any obstacles in your career? If you had at least one, can you tell us what it was and how you overcame it?

**A:** My career has been full of obstacles. During my PhD, I was about to quit. None of my experiments worked and my results

were leading me nowhere. A year and a half passed by, I lost competitions, grants, and I thought that research was not for me. However, I remembered some old cell extracts I had from another research advisor and decided to try them. The results of that Western Blot saved my life! One of the hardest things was finding and importing reagents to Argentina. We did not even have an animal housing facility at the beginning. To add layers of complexity: the stipend was very little, economic crisis in Argentina led to defund research, at times we had to share and ration the very little resources we had to move our research forward. Additionally, we had to wait 3-4 months for an antibody to arrive... They were challenges at every turn, but if you are full of enthusiasm and perseverance you can do Science anywhere. It is possible to do outstanding Science as long as you have a clear and defined hypothesis.



Stephanie Silva-Del Toro

## Commentary by the Interviewer

See? You can be failing and experiments not working, but if research is your passion, you

surround yourself with good mentors and a stimulating environment; you might become a member of the National Academy of Sciences! Do not lose hope, try to enjoy the journey and embrace and learn from chaos. It seems it is a constant in research.

*This interview was conducted in Spanish and translated by the interviewer to English. Esta entrevista está disponible [en Español aquí](#).*

# Addressing DEI in mentoring and career development

Archana Gopalakrishnan



While growing one's career as a scientist, we all seek mentors- someone who can guide us and illuminate what it means to BECOME a mentor. Dr. Amanda Brown, Dr. Xiaoyu Hu, and Dr. Carlos Henrique Serezani explore this journey in an inspiring workshop hosted by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee of the Society for Leukocyte Biology.

"I am here today, as somebody believed in me and gave me an opportunity", Dr. Brown's words resonate with every trainee and young investigator seeking that window of opportunity. Being a woman of color in science presented its own set of challenges for her. She was accustomed to people discussing her career in her absence, advising her to choose to either to run a family or a lab, not both. Her personal struggles crept into academic reviews leaving her feeling vulnerable. Yet, she paved her way through graduate school and a postdoctoral career to be a successful Associate Professor of Neurology at Johns Hopkins University today.

Dr. Hu immigrated into US in 1997 to pursue her passion for Science and was always perceived to be the "submissive Asian female"- She eventually moved back to her home country and is currently a Professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing. "Reverse culture shock is a very real phenomena that occurs to all international students and trainees." Says Dr. Hu. There is an inability to blend easily into a foreign culture. This only compounds when international scholars return to their home country, like Dr. Hu. She believes there is a strong contrast between society's perception of someone and their actual nature. The only way to move on is to "learn to get over it", she recommends.

Dr. Serezani was one of the first international students who came to the University of Michigan nearly 15 years ago. As an international student from a minority background, he struggled to find role models. From getting accustomed to people attributing his successes to his minority status to fighting microaggressions with tears, he struggled to prove his competency and earn the trust of his peers and mentors. These challenges made him a stronger recipient of grant or manuscript rejections. While gaining confidence in himself, he consciously began to disregard racial inequities directed towards him. Today, he is an Associate Professor at Vanderbilt University.

Hear from our experts as they navigate through their career challenges and how they faced racial inequities. Learn from their experiences of how you can play a role in strengthening Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Mentoring Workshop  
[Recording available for members](#)

# Behind the Science

## Interviews with JLB Authors

Alan Hsu and Albert Sek



**Matheus Mattos**, PhD student in the lab of Gustavo Menezes, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Department of Morphology, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil

Prolonged neutrophil survival at necrotic sites is a fundamental feature for tissue recovery and resolution of hepatic inflammation (<https://doi.org/10.1002/JLB.1MA0420-634R>)

*"To be a scientist is to keep burning that flame of curiosity of childhood. But now you have the power to be a miner for truth."*

**Q:** Where did your journey in science begin?

**A:** I decided to become a scientist when I was in high school after reading about the Griffith's experiment about bacteria transformation process. I was amazed with the simplicity and how genius that experiment was, and I knew, back then, that I wanted to do things like that. During my first year at university, I went into a lab and asked for an undergraduate trainee position. And this was how my journey in science began.

**Q:** How did you choose your current research topic?

**A:** Actually, I think I was chosen. I started researching neutrophils during my master's degree. At that time, the main line of research of my former lab was neutrophilic airway inflammation. Since then I fell in love with innate immunity and, mainly, neutrophils. I hope to keep researching neutrophils forever.

**Q:** Could you use a few lay sentences to summarize your findings in this paper?

**A:** Our knowledge about the functions of neutrophils is undergoing a renaissance. In this work we showed that neutrophils are not end-target cells, which reaches into the tissue and, in an attempt to cease the inflammatory stimulus, it degranulates, produces powerful oxidants and die. We showed that neutrophils stay alive during the entire course of liver injury, actively patrolling dead hepatocytes and change its gene expression profile from pro-inflammatory to pro-resolutive at later stages of inflammation and, after complete its mission, they do not die at the site of inflammation. Thus, neutrophils are active players to drive tissue repair.

**Q:** What was the most exciting moment during this research?

**A:** It was the first intravital microscopy that I performed. I could not believe that I was watching the inflammatory process happening in real time and in a physiological context. I still watch some of the intravital movies that I generated during this work. The feeling stays the same.

**Q:** What was the biggest challenge associated with this story?

**A:** In matter of fact, this is a work of cell biology in which we were investigating the behavior of neutrophils. In this sense, we never knew exactly the path that the results would take us. It is quite challenging because there is not much precedent in this subject, and anything can be a very important pattern of neutrophil behavior. This is also why I keep watching the intravital movies that I generated. It is likely that I missed something.

**Q:** Besides your PI is there anyone that significantly helped you in your path to become a scientist?

**A:** Being a scientist is to live on a roller coaster of emotions. At least at the beginning. So, my family and friends were (and still are) important in this journey. Having someone to talk (even though they do not understand a thing) is very important in the path of any scientist.

**Q:** What is next for you?

**A:** My next step will be towards a postdoctoral position abroad. It is very important to a scientist to learn how science is made within other realities.

**Q:** What would your advice be for junior or incoming Ph.D. Students who want to pursue a career in your field?

**A:** To be a scientist is to keep burning that flame of curiosity of childhood. But now you have the power to be a miner for truth. Science is not only a profession. It is a way of living. It changes the way you see everything around you and it is challenging to change. Despite everything, keep going for your dream.

**Q:** Tell us something interesting outside of being a scientist about yourself.

**A:** I am also a musician. Actually, to play an instrument is a great way to reset and clarify the mind. It is synergic with science, because the best insights arise when we are not really thinking about the problem.



**Giselle Barbosa-Lima**, Researcher, Lab of Immunopharmacology, Oswaldo Cruz Institute, Brazil

Dengue virus-activated platelets modulate monocyte immunometabolic response through lipid droplet biogenesis and cytokine signaling (<https://doi.org/10.1002/JLB.4MA0620-658R>)

*"Find a supervisor that contributes to your development, this could make the difference..."*

**Q:** Where did your journey in science begin?

**A:** My journey in science began as an undergrad student. I studied Pharmacy and was curious about how our body reacts during infection and how medicines could improve (or not) the disease. I decided that I wanted to be in a lab, designing experiments to have answers for problems.

**Q:** How did you choose your current research topic?

**A:** When I was in the first year of my Pharmacy bachelor course, I was looking for my first experience in a scientific lab and I had the opportunity to start in the Immunopharmacology laboratory, under the supervision of Patricia Bozza. As an undergrad, I worked closely to my co-supervisor Patricia Pacheco (a PosDoc student) trying to understand the biogenesis and functions of specific cellular organelles (named lipid droplets) in leukotriene production during sepsis. For my PhD, I had a new challenge that was to study mechanisms of immunometabolic regulation in dengue virus disease. Dengue is characterized as one of the most important arthropod-borne human viral diseases, representing a public health problem, and I felt excited to work with this topic.

**Q:** Could you use a few lay sentences to summarize your findings in this paper?

**A:** During dengue disease, platelets interact with other blood cells, like monocytes, and induce the release of several molecules that contribute to the progression of the disease. Importantly, platelets also induce the formation of lipid droplets (LD) in monocytes. They exist inside the cells and have many functions, including regulation of lipid metabolism, control and synthesis of inflammatory substances, sites for dengue virus protein accumulation, involvement in replication of dengue virus inside the host, etc. LD formation in monocytes is partially dependent on a platelet-secreted molecule (called MIF). Additionally, LD formation is higher in monocytes which have platelets in close contact, suggesting that beyond the secretion of substances that induce LD formation, platelet adhesion is an important event that modulates lipid metabolism in monocytes. These events may contribute to dengue illness and might represent an attractive therapeutic target.

**Q:** What was the most exciting moment during this research?

**A:** With the experience obtained with dengue virus, I also got involved in research related to Zika virus, under the supervision of Thiago Moreno. We investigated drugs (new or clinically approved to treat other viral diseases) that were able to inhibit virus replication, showing therapeutic options to treat Zika. It was a moment of hard work that generated many publications for our group. During this research I had a little daughter waiting for me at home and she motivated me to get better results.

**Q:** What was the biggest challenge associated with this story?

**A:** The biggest challenge was to leave my daughter at home to go back to work. But after the adaptation period, I established an important collaboration with Eugenio Hottz and we worked hard together on the bench to obtain this relevant work.

**Q:** Besides your PI is there anyone that significantly helped you in your path to become a scientist?

**A:** Besides Dr. Bozza, Drs Kuriyama, Pacheco and Moreno helped in my path to become a scientist. Sergio, a family friend, is a scientist too and introduced me to Dr. Pacheco. She was my first co-supervisor in Dr. Bozza's lab and taught me what was necessary to become a scientist. Dr. Moreno was my last supervisor and contributed a lot to the development of my career. Dr. Bozza consolidated all this with her supervision, patience, brilliance, and huge experience in the field.

**Q:** What is next for you?

**A:** I am now keen to gain experience in more applied aspects of drug development. I had a new opportunity as a researcher in a Pharmaceutical company. It was like starting over; it is so different from academia. I am working on the development of new pharmaceuticals to treat important diseases.

**Q:** What would your advice be for junior or incoming Ph.D. Students who want to pursue a career in your field?

**A:** Scientific careers bring satisfaction but are not perfect. It is important to love what you do because the path is not easy. Find a supervisor that contributes to your development (this could make the difference and I really thank Drs. Bozza and Moreno). Study not only things related to your research, but also from different areas. Design your experiments, try them several times, build collaborations, discuss results, and publish. And most importantly, believe in yourself.

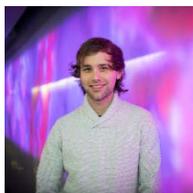
**Q:** Tell us something interesting outside of being a scientist about yourself.

**A:** My other passion, besides science, is to dance.

# Navigating a Research Career in 2020

Caitlin Gillis, Georgios Karagiannis & Katherine Martin

The MTTG connected with early-career researchers across the world to find out how they have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, and its associated personal and professional challenges.



**Daniel Simpson** PhD Student | Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne, Australia

*Inspired by a senior lecturer, I started as a TNF-signaling enthusiast and now I am studying the role of unique regulators of cell death signaling in the context of innate immunity.*

**Serena Lucotti** Postdoctoral fellow | Weill Cornell Medical College, New York City, USA

*An enthusiastic cancer researcher with a strong interest in metastatic disease. My research focuses on the interplay between tumor cells & the coagulation system during metastatic dissemination.*



**Jon Iker Etchegaray** Postdoctoral fellow | University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA

*Our lab works on understanding the process of efferocytosis (phagocytosis of apoptotic cells) and its role in development, homeostasis, and disease.*

**Charlotte Scott** Principal Investigator & U.Ghent Professor | VIB Center for Inflammation Research  
Ghent, Belgium

*I am a newly appointed PI: I established my independent lab in October 2019, supported by an ERC starting grant. We focus on unravelling the heterogeneity and function within myeloid cells, specifically in the liver and intestine, & in the context of tissue damage and inflammation.*



## How did the Covid-19 pandemic play out in your location?

**SERENA, NYC:** After a week of preparation, New York City went into lockdown on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Although closure of non-essential businesses was strictly enforced, social distancing was more loosely observed, especially outside Manhattan. Where I live, patrolling police officers would enforce wearing masks and disperse large groups of people. However, most people would not refrain from outside recreational activities (jogging, playing in the parks), and others did not wear masks or respect the 6ft distancing. Public transport was empty, and, like others, I got into the good habit of walking places as much as I could.

**DANIEL, MELBOURNE:** Melbourne was exposed to two waves of COVID-19. Australia did well to combat the first wave, but a rise of 'mystery cases' necessitated a second lockdown in Victoria, and we were under restrictions until very recently. The lockdown remains a controversial and highly politicised issue, entwined with concerns around police enforcement and the power of government. As such, compliance with the lockdown regulations has unfortunately waned over time. Permits were issued to people who had to leave their homes to work, and checkpoints were set up around the city to limit movement of people into regional areas. The lockdown has also resulted in the closure of businesses and huge job losses, which has only partially been remedied by federal government funding schemes. As a scientist, I can rationalise and adapt to the new lockdown lifestyle, but this is not the case for many others, whose frustration with the pandemic has been fueled by biased media outlets and outrageous social media commentary. Yet the declining case numbers in Victoria ultimately show that a lockdown is effective.

**IKER, CHARLOTTESVILLE:** The US has been hit hard by the pandemic: it has the most registered infections. Fortunately, UVA is in a small city in Virginia that was not badly affected. We did go into heavy lockdown at first, but as the number of cases did not spike, the heavy restrictions were removed within three months and lighter ones have been in place since then.

**CHARLOTTE, GHENT:** With a high number of recorded infections and deaths per capita, Belgium was significantly affected by Covid-19. From March 2020, we were placed in lockdown. However, I am very grateful that essential work could still be carried out.

## Has your ability to do science been affected during this period? How did your work patterns change?

**CHARLOTTE, GHENT:** At the time of lockdown we were in the middle of addressing reviewers' comments for a paper, and the mice were due to be sacrificed in April. Working with a reduced team (myself and the PhD student), we were able to do some of the planned experiments. I am very grateful for this, as I know it was not the case in all countries. Although we had to make tough choices, and it put a lot more pressure on the limited experiments, we were able to address some of the reviewers' comments and get the paper published. As a new lab, this was really critical: there is a lot of pressure on junior PIs to 'prove' themselves with the first publications, so I am very grateful we could do this. All other lab activities were shut down for the duration of the lockdown. For some projects, this was a good time to analyze data and think about future directions, while for others, especially those of new recruits yet to get started, this was especially difficult.

**SERENA, NYC:** From March 23<sup>rd</sup>, all non-essential research activities were shut down, and we were asked to work from home for an indefinite amount of time. As I was not involved in COVID-19 research, I had to terminate a lot of ongoing experiments, which caused a six-month set back in my projects. During lockdown, most of my days were spent at home paced by zoom meetings, grant administration and paper writing, but I was still very productive. I was allowed to continue one long-term collaborative *in vivo* experiment, on-site 1-2 days a week. Doing research in an empty building was far from easy, as I had to include extra time (and pressure) to start machines usually maintained by core facilities. Any instrument fault would have cost me the experiment. In addition, there were labs on my floor doing COVID-19 research and a lot of COVID-19 patients hospitalized every day on the other side of the road. I thought I would catch the virus any day and bring it home to my family, it was like walking on a razor edge.

**IKER, CHARLOTTESVILLE:** Not really, in fact. I was fortunate to be deemed as essential staff and was able to carry on my work. However, the lab, the building, and pretty much the whole University felt like a ghost town.

**DANIEL, MELBOURNE:** The pandemic has very much stopped the workaholic mindset - in a good way. I was taking too much onboard for a PhD student, and was burning myself out. The lockdown presented an opportunity for change. Throughout the second wave, I've worked from home unless absolutely necessary and this has allowed me to better develop my scientific thinking: I am now more critical of my own work and have importantly switched to a "quality over quantity" of data mindset.

## What challenges has 2020 brought?



**SERENA, NYC:** Being from Italy, the biggest challenge of 2020 for me was not being able to visit my family and friends. It is unclear if and when I will be able to see them in the foreseeable future. Also, the recent changes in immigration policies have put my future permanence in the USA at risk. This climate of uncertainty and isolation is taking a huge toll on my wellbeing.

**IKER, CHARLOTTESVILLE:** On a personal level, I think the inability to travel has been the hardest part of the pandemic. I had planned many trips and had to cancel them all due to the epidemic.

**DANIEL, MELBOURNE:** I am so lucky that our institute (WEHI) has gone above and beyond to support its student body, although many PhD students are still concerned about their future, with overseas Post-Doctoral positions not looking like a viable option for now. I still have some time before I finish my PhD - but perhaps the pandemic might also end the narrative in Australia which says that you must travel overseas after your PhD if you want to succeed in science. Outside of work, it has been difficult to remain positive. I am thankful that I am not going through this alone. I cannot fathom the difficulty those who living alone and overseas are facing in these times.



**CHARLOTTE, GHENT:** Heading a team with new recruits and maintaining the collaborative, friendly atmosphere in the lab was particularly challenging during lockdown. I focused a lot of time and effort on keeping spirits up, one-on-one and group discussions, and organising online coffee breaks to prevent anyone from feeling isolated (especially international postdocs, recently moved to Belgium). I organised a self-care package for everyone and did what I could, however I know this was not the start to postdoctoral life they had hoped for, so I felt a lot of pressure that I was letting them down. I think this was one of the biggest challenges. Similarly, I was also in the process of hiring a new PhD student when lockdown began. I had two top candidates, both international. I have always felt that meeting potential candidates in person is crucial for creating an effective team and positive lab environment; however, we were forced to do this online. This was a learning curve in itself, as it is much easier to read people in person than online! The process took way longer than usual, but I was thankful for the participation of my team members and we were able to make a decision - fingers crossed it will turn out to be a good one!

## What have you been doing to keep yourself entertained outside of work?

**IKER, CHARLOTTESVILLE:** Lots of podcasts, audiobooks, and Netflix. Once things started opening up, a few outdoor activities.



**DANIEL, MELBOURNE:** I really love cooking, and the lockdown inspired me to enjoy it much more. I also enjoy reading, although I found it hard to delve into a good book while getting news updates every twenty minutes. I must admit that gaming has been a true outlet for me when I need to escape the stresses of work and the outside world.

**SERENA, NYC:** I took up playing the piano after a ten-year break and I am now preparing my conservatory examination. I have also started oil painting and decorated the walls of my house with little canvases I made. Finally, I have devoted a lot of time to cooking new recipes, and for the first time I learned how to bake a perfect loaf of bread. These activities were crucial to create a healthy work-life balance that kept me on track.



**CHARLOTTE, GHENT:** I was able to keep myself sane and entertained, thanks to the four-legged family member. Walking the dog and taking a break to throw a toy in the garden for her really helped me keep things in perspective. As everyone was in a similar situation, this also created opportunities to call friends abroad more often than usual!

## What do you think are the biggest positives to have come out of the pandemic?

**CHARLOTTE, GHENT:** One of the biggest positives has been the chance to reflect on projects and take time to decide on future research. Being able to do this with team members has opened up new hypotheses, and we are motivated to test these ideas. Globally, the ability of funding agencies to rapidly review calls for funding based on public need has been hugely positive. Moreover, Covid-19 research has shown that the peer review system can be adapted. Those extra 20 experiments from 'Reviewer 3' are perhaps not essential for the message of the paper. I hope this attitude can be rolled out across the life sciences. Data must be solid and reproducible, but we should focus on only asking for extra experiments that are required to substantiate the conclusions. One of the ways the scientific community is adapting is the accessibility of conferences to those who can't travel abroad regularly. This is not without its challenges, for example we must ensure unpublished data can still be presented and enable networking opportunities. I don't think moving solely to an online conference experience is the answer, yet having the option to participate digitally will create additional opportunities for many.

**DANIEL, MELBOURNE:** I appreciate the massive shift that organisers have made to move conferences online - this is a fantastic, eco-friendly approach. I think Australian scientists, particularly students and post-docs, would favour more virtual conference opportunities in the future - even if it means attending at 2AM. Globally, the response to the pandemic has starkly highlighted the human contribution to global warming. I am amazed at the effects that shutting down travel, manufacturing and tourism had on the natural environment in only a few days and hope this might stimulate some environmentalist action in these areas. Closer to home, the pandemic has really triggered a proactive response from our institute. Staff are more aware of safety protocols, and there is greater transparency between institute leaders and the staff and students with fortnightly "Town Hall" meetings. I am enjoying the more balanced lifestyle: I love that I can see the sun on weekdays.

**IKER, CHARLOTTESVILLE:** If the outpouring of scientific media coverage continues after the pandemic, that would be great! As far as science goes, this pandemic has forced us to make knowledge more accessible. There are now countless lectures available online which before were only available to conference attendees. Weekly seminars, open to everyone, are also becoming more ubiquitous. I think this is a great positive because, unlike papers, talks tend to be simplified and do a better job in highlighting the recent advances of a field. This makes it easier for people wanting to learn more about a branch of science different to their own. However, I can also see investigators becoming complacent, preferring to give talks online and not wanting to travel for seminars or conferences. In that case, it would impact the exchange of ideas that occurs during face-to-face interactions which, as yet are difficult to replicate online.

**SERENA, NYC:** The pandemic has taught us to take better care of ourselves and others. Improved hygiene and awareness of social distancing will reduce the spread of infectious diseases. Remote working policies allow families to spend time together. Importantly, the psychological toll of the pandemic has taught us the importance of mental wellness, human connection, and compassion. I believe the pandemic has revolutionized the way that we conceive research. While lab-based life was the core of biomedical research pre-pandemic, now scientists have adapted to be productive in every environment. This new work-life balance will ultimately improve efficiency. Impromptu virtual meetings have flourished and have fostered the . If we keep these good habits, science will move fluently from the bench to the drawing board and experiments will be more carefully designed and performed. A renewed value will be given to the privilege that is doing research.

# LinkedIn is a Vast Network of Connections and Job Opportunities

SLB Communications Committee

LinkedIn provides users a vast network of connections and job opportunities. Hosting more than 600 million professional profiles, it is more than the old-style rolodex and an ecological replacement of paper business cards. The LinkedIn network is often the starting point for finding a new job in the industry, finding experts in specific areas, or maintaining a personal brand. It is also, through the posts of its users, a convenient way of staying in touch with colleagues from the same field and a non-intrusive way to get professional updates. To take full advantage of the LinkedIn capabilities, one should use it not only to display a resume or search for jobs,

- Use LinkedIn to enlarge your network with people that you meet at conferences or other professional events. Unlike Twitter, both parties have to agree before people are added to the network.
- Use LinkedIn to enhance your professional reputation of expertise on a topic by posting updates and interacting with other people.
- Sign-up to trade and professional groups and regularly post content relevant to your career. Show that you are an authority on a subject.

How to get started? Start your LinkedIn profile with a professional picture. Fill in your education and experience. Spend some time on your headline, which should capture your unique strengths in less than 120 characters - you thought Twitter was brutal? Ready to build your profile? [Check out this guide for building your LinkedIn profile as presented at the SLB 2019 Annual Meeting](#)

## 2020 Virtual Conference Recap

The 2020 Virtual meeting was a great success and SLB was excited to connect with so many new researchers from around the globe. The program and all of the valuable scientific and professional development content lives on in recordings available to SLB members. Check out the links below!

### Scientific Sessions

A compilation of 32 hours of scientific presentations

### SLB SCHOOL

A program for Trainees

### Video Abstracts

Award winning video abstracts

### Scientific Illustrations

Creating images for your articles & presentations

### DEI in Mentoring

Challenges & Opportunities

### Beyond Academia

Career Pathways and Options

## AND THERE'S MORE.....

- SLB is currently **accepting volunteers for all Committees**. Trainees are encouraged to apply, and leadership opportunities are available.
- Have a new job, publication, or other exciting news? Share it with your SLB community.
- Want to organize your own webinar? SLB is happy to take care of the logistics of registration and hosting the event online. Contact us with your ideas.
- Remember, all paid 2020 memberships have been extended through 2021 so you can continue to enjoy all the benefits of membership.
- Coming soon! Member access to the first ever digitized archive of RES.

[CONTACT SLB](#)

## iSLB

Society for Leukocyte Biology  
10770 Columbia Pike  
Suite 300  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
301-204-2233  
[www.leukocytebiology.org](http://www.leukocytebiology.org)

contacts:  
[Membership](#)  
[Meetings](#)  
[Administrative Office](#)



## See the Program...

### **SLB 54TH ANNUAL MEETING**

**Immunometabolism:  
Fueling the Flame of Aging,  
Cancer and Immunity**

**September 22–25, 2021  
InterContinental Cleveland  
Hotel & Conference Center,  
Cleveland, Ohio**

*SLB is currently planning for an in-person 2021 event. At the same time, the society is ready to utilize a virtual format as conditions dictate. Please check the website for updates.*

## Thank you to our Sustaining Members:



Robert Clark, Univ of Texas Health Science Ctr



Richard Kew, Stony Brook University

Charles Rinaldo, University of Pittsburgh