

Nuit Rheum: A Night to Remember

By Lori Albert, MD, FRCP(C)

Coincident with the introduction of Nuit Blanche to Toronto in 2006 (a free, all-night, contemporary art event), Nuit Rheum was brought to University of Toronto (U of T) medical students in 2007. This free, two-and-a-half-hour contemporary rheumatology event marked its tenth anniversary on February 6th, 2017.

Nuit Rheum was designed to provide students with an informal and fun opportunity to meet and chat with rheumatologists and trainees, and to learn more about a career in rheumatology. Each year, approximately 50 medical students sign up to attend this soirée in early February, which follows “Rheumatology Week” in the undergraduate curriculum.

The original format of Nuit Rheum was an informal reception followed by dinner and speeches, held at the beautiful Faculty Club of the U of T. Speakers included the Division Head, Program Director, a rheumatology trainee and representative faculty from different career pathways.

Students received a “loot bag” with an information sheet about the U of T program and elective opportunities, contact information for The Arthritis Society (TAS) and the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA), a copy of the Canadian Clinician’s Rheumatology Handbook and, of course, a U of T rheumatology pen.

After a number of years, it became apparent that the most effective part of Nuit Rheum was the direct one-on-one and small-group discussions between faculty and students. Thus, in 2016, the speeches and formal presentations were phased out and a “cocktail-reception” format was initiated. Now at the event, students move around to “Meet the Pro-

fessor” stations where they can speak directly with faculty in specific career pathways or chat informally with faculty and trainees who move through the crowd wearing nametags declaring “Ask Me: I’m a Rheumatologist”. There is also a station hosted by the Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA) and CRA (represented by Dr. Jane Purvis), with promotional materials, including the “Rheumatology Heroes” posters, cards and pens. Our loot bag is now virtual, with a Quick Response (QR) code bearing the important program and contact information, and a code for a free download of the e-version of the Rheumatology Handbook (but they still get a pen!)

We have had an excellent response to the Nuit Rheum initiative, with all faculty noting an uptick in requests for electives and CRA summer studentships after each event. Here is an email I received on February 8th:

“Hi Dr. Albert,

I just wanted to reach out and say thank you for organizing Nuit Rheum last night! I had a great time getting to know the different rheumatologists, and I especially enjoyed the informal setting because it made it easier to approach people and learn what the work-life balance is like. Everyone was so kind and down-to-earth. It definitely made me (and many of my peers) much more interested in rheumatology. I wish every specialty organized a similar event!”

Nuit Rheum is also a great opportunity for faculty, who enjoy meeting some of the stellar young trainees interested in immunology, research and clinical rheumatology. Some productive research and clinical collaborations have had

Continued on page 11



Students talking to professors at “Meet the Professor” stations.



Dr. Jane Purvis at the Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA) station.

Young Rheumatologists Love to FLIRT

By Janet Pope, MD, MPH, FRCPC

Proudly, the CRA has taken the Future Leaders in Rheumatology (FLIRT) program under its wings. This is the third group of rheumatologists who are undertaking the program, which is a mentorship program designed for rheumatologists at an early career stage who are likely to become leaders in research, education, and or advocacy in Canada. There has already been one highly successful meeting, with another one booked for April 2017. There are 20 candidates enrolled, representing adult and pediatric rheumatology from across the country. Highlights to date include discussions on mentorship, promotion (for the academic group), and the delivery and critique of talks. Up next will be the communication wheel, time management and industry relations. The enthusiasm is palpable: Nearly all participants (96%) would recommend this program to others. Feedback reveals FLIRT is a resounding, unequivocal success.

Here are some of the comments we have received:

“Well organized and relevant”

“Excellent, timely and applicable talks”

“You made the most of our day”

“Wonderful experience for networking and leadership exercises”

“Well put together and great lectures and learning. Thank you for a wonderful session!”

We will need to keep an eye out for graduates of this two-year program who will represent the CRA of tomorrow.

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Flirt
FUTURE LEADERS
IN RHEUMATOLOGY
TRAINING

FLIRT participants (and a potential future FLIRT) at the most recent meeting, which took place at the ALT hotel in Toronto in November 2016.

Nuit Rheum: A Night to Remember *(Continued from page 10)*

their start at Nuit Rheum! It is also somewhat magical when faculty and students come together and get a glimpse into the world of the other. Nuit Rheum seems to have a positive impact on everyone who attends. The generous support of our Division Director (Dr. Claire Bombardier formerly, now Dr. Heather McDonald-Blumer) has allowed this event to succeed and thrive.

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