

June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Graduate Research students in the Doherty Institute,

Like all first rank research institutes, the Doherty Institute aims to provide a high quality seminar program that is held most Thursdays at 12 noon with the seminar program of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology (DMI) on alternate Thursdays. The poor attendance by graduate researchers at both the Institute and DMI Seminars has become an issue of concern.

For the Doherty seminars, we specifically invite speakers on the basis of their outstanding science, their ability to communicate to a wide and diverse audience and whom often have personal inspiring stories. DMI seminars also include top quality speakers - many of whom work in the institute. Knowing about the work that your colleagues are doing, is one of the great advantages of working at the Doherty. For students enrolled in other departments, including Medicine and the School of Population and Global Health, similar high quality seminar programs are regularly held - but outside the institute.

Your attendance at the Institute and your host department seminars is an important part of your development as a scientist. In addition, as an Institute we are judged by our visiting speakers on the quality and size of the audience, the engagement of our graduate students with the speaker and their enthusiasm to follow-up. One of the key ways that scientists exchange ideas and build their reputation is by asking questions about presentations at both national and international conferences. For most people, this is not a natural skill but one that needs development. The Institute and departmental seminar programs represent not only a real opportunity to practice this skill, but potentially to set yourselves up for future positions through direct engagement with high quality scientists.

Each of you also have tremendous opportunities for professional development and growth through the Doherty PhD program. We are also concerned that attendance is poor at these events and wanted to remind you that we expect all graduate students to attend most events hosted as part of the PhD program.

Please think about what you might do to structure your week so that you can attend every Doherty Institute Seminar on a Thursday, most PhD program events and all seminars from your host department. We assume your supervisors place a similar importance on you attending all these events, but please let us know if this is not the case.

We look forward to seeing each of you as active participants of the Doherty seminars, your department seminars and other PhD program events.

Yours sincerely



Professor Sharon Lewin  
Director, Doherty Institute



Professor Andrew Brooks  
Head, Department of Microbiology and Immunology



Professor Dick Strugnell  
Co-director, Doherty PhD program



Professor Tim Stinear  
Co-director, Doherty PhD program