

The search for a new Medical School dean gets off the ground

An international airport is a fitting location for the first round of interviews in the search for Dartmouth Medical School's next dean. The search, which got underway in early 2010, will be global and swift—with the top three candidates selected by June 2010. Initial interviews are slated for April and are planned to occur over the course of a few days near Boston's Logan International Airport. That choice was made largely for the sake of convenience, but the symbolism, given the increasing interest in international medicine, is also appropriate. Second-round candidates will visit Dartmouth beginning in late May.

Post: DMS's current dean, William Green, Ph.D., was appointed in January 2008 with the expectation that he would return to his former position as chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. Green agreed to assume the post when former DMS Dean Stephen Spielberg, M.D., Ph.D., stepped down from the deanship to pursue international health initiatives and advances in therapeutics for children. Dartmouth College's president, Jim Yong Kim, M.D., Ph.D., hopes that the new DMS dean can be in place early in the 2010-11 academic year.

The timeline for the search, though ambitious, is achievable, the search committee members believe. They are meeting frequently and conducting a thor-

INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT

In this section, we highlight the human side of biomedical investigation, putting a few questions to a researcher at DMS-DHMC.

Mathieu Lupien, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Genetics

Lupien employs an “omics” approach to study how epigenetic (non-genetic) events contribute to breast cancer oncogenesis by altering gene expression profiles. He joined the DMS faculty in 2009.

What got you interested in science?

I would have to say my parents. They taught me to never back away from a challenge and to remain positive even when all fails. I think these are essential attributes to become a scientist. Plus they always signed me up for special science school programs.

How did you get interested in genetics?

Evolution got me into genetics. While fully agreeing with the theory of evolution, I could never be content with the hypothesis of natural selection. I therefore decided to learn more about biology and genetics to formulate my own opinion. Cancer is one clear proof that evolution is a theory and not a hypothesis. However, it is also a model where its evolution surpasses that of its environment, leading to devastating consequences.



What advice would you offer to someone contemplating going into your field?

Think systems biology and get into bioinformatics!

The next major revolution in biology is already underway. It is being driven by genome-wide sequencing efforts, proteomics, and all the other “omics.” These approaches are identifying genetic variations across the genome of normal and diseased individuals—protein-DNA, protein-RNA, DNA-DNA, and RNA-DNA interactions, just to name a few. A clear chal-

lenge will be to extract knowledge from all these datasets.

What do you like most about your job?

Le merveilleux est la source de l'imaginaire: I grew up under this notion that whatever amazes you will push your imagination to the limit. My job definitely provides all the “merveilleux” needed to feed my imagination.

What's your favorite nonwork activity?

Currently my kids. I love the fact that they force the routine out of our lives. Every day is truly a new day with them around. They also give me a new appreciation of my parents.

If you weren't a scientist, what would you be?

I grew up in Canada, where the government takes specific social measures to provide for its people and for future generations. I clearly benefited from these measures through universal access to education, health care, and an affordable cost of living. I would like to give back and contribute to new progressive social measures. If I were not a scientist, I would be a politician.

What famous person would you most like to meet?

Maurice Richard! Anyone who knows about hockey has heard of “the Rocket Richard.” Unfortunately, I saw little of his prowess on ice. I only wish I could spend a day with him to learn more about his true personality, about what got him to be the national symbol that he became . . . and maybe learn a few hockey moves.

Where would you most like to travel?

It would have to be New Zealand, specifically in 2011. That is when they will be hosting the rugby World Cup. I cannot imagine anything better than to be in New Zealand for the All Blacks victory in the World Cup final.

What about you would surprise most people?

I used to be a radio host. I founded and cohosted an international conflict news show while I completed my doctoral studies at McGill. We also featured songs from around the world with a strong focus on artists from conflict nations.

