Dr. Genevieve Wier

Written by Laura McGary

M.Sc. Trainee

Education and post-academia journey

Dr. Weir completed her BSc co-op degree majoring in Biochemistry at the University of Waterloo, where she found her passion in Immunology through a 4th year course. She then decided to pursue a thesis-based MSc at Dalhousie University in Immunology, studying Multiple Sclerosis under the supervision of Dr. Issekutz. After completion of her MSc, Dr. Weir began working at IMV as a Research Associate. Through her time at IMV, and as a result of her passion for research, Dr. Weir completed an industrial-based PhD in Immunology under the supervision of Dr. Liwski and Dr. Mohan at Dalhousie University. Thereafter, she continued her work at IMV where she was quickly promoted to Research Scientist Director.

After 12 years at IMV, Dr. Weir started a new career position at a start-up company, Avanda Biolabs. As Senior Director of Preclinical Research at Avanda Biolabs, her role is quite diverse, extending from writing research proposals, inventory, data analysis, presenting ideas to collaborators, etc. She enjoys much of her work being self-directed and reminds her of her time as a PhD student, but with a higher bar set. Prior to the pandemic, she loved having the opportunity to travel around the world for various work events.

Skills and qualities recommended for success in the scientific industry

Dr. Weir found that meticulous planning plays an essential role in staying on track for complex experiments and overall organization when balancing many tasks on the go. The ability to troubleshoot is also key, which is a great skill you gain through graduate school. Furthermore, the ability to work through complex problems both independently and with the collaborative support of others is essential.

Advice to current graduate students

Dr. Weir recommends keeping an open mind throughout graduate studies. Oftentimes, students will have a set plan in mind (career, specific program for graduate studies, etc.), and in contrast to what they plan originally, they often go in a different direction. Being open to different possibilities opens more doors and can lead you down a path that may even be a better fit than originally planned. Also, failure is a key component of research. Through failure, you always learn something and gain valuable troubleshooting skills that will be critical down the road. In addition, perseverance is key! As we all know in the field of science, things don't always work out how we want them to the first time. Stay determined- failure is a normal part of research! Also, don't be afraid to take risks when job searching. Dr. Weir joined Avanda Biolabs as the second member a start-up company, which has continued to grow in the last two years since the start-up with ongoing plans to continue expanding. Ultimately, with keeping an open mind, go in the direction to which you are most passionate about and feel like you will be a good fit.