



Dr. Megan Mahoney

Written by Janet Debly, M.Sc. Trainee



Megan's interest in neuroscience sparked at a very young age when her mom brought home a book on the topic from a Psychology 101 bookstore. This led her to pursue a BSc with a focus in psychology at the University of Ottawa, followed by an MSc and PhD in psychology with a specialization in neuroscience from Queen's University. Upon completing her PhD in 2015, Megan had a few different positions in the life sciences ecosystem before transitioning into the cancer immunotherapy sector. In 2017, Megan joined BioCanRx, where she is now the Director of Scientific Affairs and Training Programs and is based in Ottawa. BioCanRx is a federally funded, not-for-profit entity founded in 2015 with the goal of helping to translate bench to bedside cancer biotherapeutics.

Megan's role at BioCanRx changes on a day-to-day basis and depends on the time of year as well. One of her major deliverables are overseeing and providing strategic advice for BioCanRx's research and training program. For instance, Megan reviews reports from researchers, puts calls out for funding, and aids in planning and strategically prioritizing tasks within the organization. To complement the translational research program, Megan directs the training program, which provides a cadre of offerings aimed to build capacity in the cancer immunotherapy field, and to help fill training gaps in cancer immunotherapy translation. Another important aspect Megan takes part in is patient engagement, i.e., engaging with patients to align BioCanRx's activities with what is most needed, and where the organization can make the most impact.

When asked how Megan feels about her role and the workplace environment, she said she absolutely loves her workplace! While working alongside a small but mighty team, what Megan enjoys most is how the organization is impact-oriented, as well as the workplace



culture. She likes the workplace culture because everyone's opinions matter and having different challenges and opportunities each day is exciting. With everyday being different, Megan thinks it is important for intelligent and creative people, such as graduate students and researchers, even if they do not pursue a science role, that there is something new and exciting to do on a day-to-day basis.

In Megan's spare time, she founded and continues to run a national mentorship program for STEM-based graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Megan encourages you to find her on LinkedIn if you wish to learn more. Megan is also passionate about science policy and is a program member of the Canadian Science Policy Centre.

In her leisure time, she enjoys travelling, camping, trying new foods, and is an avid competitive frisbee player. She has even competed in nationals! Megan also loves spending time with her two French bulldogs, Wilson and Basel.

For students looking to enter the workforce after graduation, Megan suggests starting to think about your next steps as soon as possible – as intimidating as it sounds, it will ease the stress in the long-run! She advises reaching out and meeting people in the field similar to your interests, gathering information, and growing your network. This can be through informational interviews or conversations with employers/employees. Megan says that being prepared and confident is very important, as well as being humble and accepting that everyone always has more to learn.

Megan is passionate about supporting trainees and postdoctoral fellows, and welcomes connecting with her on LinkedIn.