



THE ORGANIZATION FOR CYTOGENETIC
& MOLECULAR PROFESSIONALS

GENETIC EDUCATORS AND MENTORS (GEMS): MEET AND GREET

GEMs 2022

Meet and Greet

- Introduction

- Review of 2022 Virtual GEMs meeting
 - ▣ Cytogenetics Shortage Discussion Update
 - ▣ Educational Program Updates

- Open Discussion



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Cytogenetic Shortage Update

- ACMG discussion held in Nashville, TN on March 25, 2022
- Discussion points
 - **Training:** How and where cytogenetics technologists are trained (national training programs, healthcare system programs, in-house training) and the need to standardize these learning programs into a more collaborative effort?
 - **Career awareness and recruiting efforts:** How did technologists become aware of the field? Can ASCP and AGT assist in increased awareness and professional visibility? Is it beneficial to partner with community colleges, MLT programs, and BSc graduates to attract students?
 - **Employee satisfiers:** What is the best way to attract and retain technologists (remote options, salary equity (regional / discipline specific)?

Cytogenetic Shortage Update

- ACMG discussion held in Nashville, TN on March 25, 2022
- Actions
 - ▣ **Short term:** Survey to formalize the staff shortage, to be shared with advocacy groups and individual institutions.
 - ▣ **Long term:** Increase awareness to the field, combine cytogenetic and molecular training, increase recruitment and funding for recruitment.

Cytogenetic Shortage Update

- ACC discussion held on Hilton Head Island, SC on May 18, 2022
- Summary
 - Most meeting attendees attended discussion (~300 people)
 - Over 90% of attendees indicated Cytogenetic Technologist vacancies
- Discussions
 - Increase awareness of profession
 - Establish pipeline through universities and colleges
 - On the job training / Difficulty in starting NAACLS-accredited training programs

Cytogenetic Shortage Update

- The next meeting is planned in conjunction with CGC in St. Louis, MO later this summer.
- Please direct further comments and questions on this topic to agtinfnow@gmail.com.

Educational Program Updates (Survey)

- NAACLS accredited programs
 - CGT – 3
 - DMS – 9
- Survey sent to program directors (5 responses)
 - Number of students range from 3 to 34
 - Some programs increased in student number while others decreased.
 - Some noted increase due to COVID
 - Others struggled with recruiting
 - Most programs have returned to in-person while others are virtual or hybrid.
 - Most programs retained the same number of rotation sites or increased while one responded with a decrease.

Educational Program Updates (Virtual Meeting)

- Attendance
 - Education Directors
 - Canada – Dual Undergraduate Programs
 - US – CGT and MGT Master, Undergraduate, and Certificate Programs
 - Canadian Clinical Laboratory Supervisor and Manager
 - International Private Academy Representative
- Updates
 - Education program updates are similar to survey results
 - Clinical laboratory personnel expressed technologist vacancies, workload increase, and recruitment needs

New Business

- Are there any constraints or limitations that your educational program is facing, such as securing and retaining rotation sites, attracting more students? Has your program instituted any incentives to assist with these struggles?
 - Cytogenetics is not as well-known as molecular
 - Pipeline for colleges would be helpful
 - Retention needed due to retirement and few experienced replacements
 - Only about 100 people took CG ASCP this year – [ASCP Exam Report 2021](#)
 - New training programs needed
 - Assistance for on the job training needs to be set up (ASCP route 2 and 3)
 - Cross training between MGT/CGT should be considered
 - Programs need recruiting assistance
 - Shared marketing videos would be helpful
 - Molecular job descriptions need clarification / more consistence and improved communication

New Business

- What still needs to be improved in the clinical genetics classroom and clinical genetics laboratory setting to effectively create and/or maintain and continue an environment in which students and new graduates further their knowledge-base and technical skills, so they can be an asset to the institution and to themselves? What curriculum or skills are missing from new graduates?
 - ▣ Interpretation missing in CG curriculum
 - ▣ MGT continues to evolve with new technologies and it becomes hard to pick and choose the important ones, while continuing to teach the basics and expanding to bioinformatics and other applications
 - ▣ AGT has the largest CGT database; lab directors information is needed for outreach
 - ▣ Prior to 1999 Canadian technologists did not become dually certified; this group needs resources for cross-training

New Business

- Finally, how can AGT better assist this community?
 - A video describing the professions (1 for Cytogenetics and 1 for Molecular Genetics) would be helpful for recruiting
 - Opening the Cytogenetic program director requirements to allow Molecular directors to hold the positions (with cytogenetic faculty) could assist in cross-training or new programs – NAACLS recommendation would be needed
 - AGT to assist in recruiting by promoting the profession at colleges / universities, also specifically at science societies and groups
 - Expand director directory for better outreach

