



Acceptance of Gold Medal From the Catalan Society of Transplantation by Drs. Lorraine Racusen and Kim Solez – With Remarks on the Banff Meeting Spirit

L.C. Racusen^a and K. Solez^{b,*}

^aDepartment of Pathology, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, 600 North Wolfe Street, Baltimore, Maryland; and ^bDepartment of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

ABSTRACT

The awarding of the gold medal from the Catalan Society of Transplantation to the organizers of the Banff Transplant Pathology meetings is an opportunity to acknowledge gratitude to all the people who have helped make these meetings a success over the past 26 years. Other large organizations have given up consensus conferences, but the Banff consensus process is thriving. It is unusual for any organization to have the same leadership for 26 years. It has only worked for the Banff meetings because the leadership was flexible and able to change with the times. People have often talked about the “special Banff spirit.” This year’s meeting gave us the opportunity to examine this spirit in detail by analyzing how the meeting consensus sessions and social events functioned. The meeting has never used expert facilitators, but instead has employed experts within the transplant pathology community to moderate discussions. The size of the working sessions is important; they have usually been less than 150 people, which is within “Dunbar’s number,” meaning that in gatherings of that size one can have empathetic feeling for all the people there. In larger gatherings one loses that “we are all in this together” feeling and people begin thinking “us” versus “them” thoughts. For “unknown” young people the ability to easily talk to well-known leaders in the field is rewarding and keeps them coming back for more time after time. Images of the social events do not suggest any sort of hierarchy; everyone interacts with everyone else.

GOLD MEDAL ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT BY DR. LORRAINE RACUSEN

I AM HONORED to receive the Gold Medal Award from the Catalan Society of Transplantation. For decades the Catalan Society has been recognized for fostering scientific activity in the field and promoting transplantation and organ donation. Like the Banff Process, the Society aims to integrate professionals in a variety of transplant related disciplines to develop transplant related research and to work in concert with other national and international societies to advance the field. The Society uses their biennial conferences to further their aims. Recognition of achievement by this Gold Medal is an honor indeed with a very distinguished group of previous recipients. I accept this award in concert with Dr. Kim Solez, who conceived of the Banff initiative and facilitated many of the consensus discussions leading to the working formulation for diagnosing rejection and other conditions in kidney transplants and a number of

other solid organ transplants as well. The meetings have expanded to include all solid organs allografts and there are now Banff schemas for the diagnosis of rejection in a variety of organs. We receive the award as well on behalf of the many pathologists, immunologists, tissue-typers, clinicians, and surgeons who have worked in the context of the Banff meeting and the Banff Process to examine experimental and clinical studies and update the working classification, evolving as the field as evolved. Banff has become a concept and a model for development of consensus with focus on refinement of the diagnostic process, and this acceptance of the Banff process has been a gratifying outcome which

*Address correspondence to Kim Solez, MD, Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, University of Alberta, 5B3.09 WCM HSC, Anatomical Pathology, 8440 112th Street, Edmonton, AB T6G 2B7, Canada. E-mail: kim.solez@ualberta.ca

Table 1. Banff Transplant Pathology Meeting Organ Steering Committee Chairs

Composite tissues: Linda Cendales
Heart: Rene Rodriguez (to 2013), then Patrick Bruneval
Kidney: Mark Haas
Liver: Jake Demetris
Lung: William Wallace and Carol Farver (to 2015), then Elizabeth Pavlisko and David Hwang
Pancreas: Cinthia Drachenberg

should continue with new leadership well into the future. My colleague and mentor Kim Solez will I am sure review the history and growth of the Banff process, and the many publications that have emerged from the plenary and organ-specific discussions of the many Banff working groups, working on specific aspects of transplant pathology. Once again, I thank the Society personally and as a representative of the Banff community for this award.

GOLD MEDAL ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT BY DR. KIM SOLEZ - WITH REMARKS ON THE BANFF MEETING SPIRIT

I agree with the sentiments Dr. Racusen has expressed above. I am humbled by the award presentation of Drs. Seron and Roman, and am honored to receive this prestigious award. I can think of no better way to receive it than jointly with Lorraine. Things have gone well with the Banff Meetings and Banff Process over the past 26 years in large part because of the shared responsibilities between us. As with any long-term friendship the workload proportions varied over time. There were years when Lorraine did nearly all the work. There were years when I did nearly all the work. There were years when we were central to everything that happened in the Banff meeting, facilitating and organizing it all. In recent years much of the work has been delegated to others, particularly to the organ chairs (Table 1) and the program committee. We are very grateful to everyone who has helped to make the Banff Meetings and Banff Consensus Process successful over



Fig 1. YouTube audience retention statistics.

Table 2. Audience Retention Peaks in YouTube Analytics of Video of Parmjeet Randhawa

Time	Subject Matter
01:32	i-IFTA definitions
03:06	Biochemical perspective
05:10	Banff 1997 Schema
07:45	Most i-IFTA bx have GE profiles indicating immune activation
10:19	Pittsburgh- Diagnosis of Acute TCMR in setting of i-IFTA
11:21	Dx of grade 1A TCMR in setting of IFTA
16:31	Adding i-IFTA to diagnosis
21:10	Randhawa Recommendations
27:21	Agnes Fogo Discussion 1
30:27	Agnes Fogo Discussion 2
32:31	Mark Haas Discussion 1
35:04	Peter Nickerson Discussion
37:10	Mark Haas Discussion 2
40:16	Ed Kraus Discussion
42:51	Cynthia Drachenberg Discussion
43:52	Mark Haas Discussion #3
45:56	Roz Mannon Discussion
50:35	Ian Gibson

i-IFTA Presentation and Discussion from March 30th, 2017 in Barcelona
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpRJoMMsXvs>

the years, and are confident that this success will continue well into the future.

Since the first Banff meeting in 1991 we have talked about situating the Banff meetings in beautiful places to summon the creative muses, and to help foster the special open and buoyant spirit that permeates our discussions in the Banff meetings. This special spirit allows us to achieve consensus while maintaining intellectual freedom, and staying youthful in mindset, staying curious, and avoiding rigidity. That spirit is something that had been at least partially achieved at all previous Banff meetings, but was never so fully manifested as it was at this 2017 meeting. Two pictures from the Barcelona meeting illustrate this special spirit well:

Figure 1 shows the YouTube audience retention statistics from March 31 to May 7, 2017 for the video of the iIFTA discussion on March 30th. One person responding on the feedback form wrote “The lively discussion after the i-IFTA talk embodied the spirit of Banff”. Indeed the dynamic of the hour-long discussion among an audience of 140 people was remarkable. There were identifiable audience retention peaks in the discussion where viewers came back to re-watch portions of the video over and over again.

Table 2 show the times and who was speaking at those times and the PowerPoint <https://www.slideshare.net/ksolez/kimsolez-spirit-of-banff-embodied-in-i-ifta-discussion> contains some screen captures of the action. The video is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpRJoMMsXvs>. It shows engaging, highly memorable action, this meeting’s finest hour.

Figure 2 also shows a portion of the crowd of 140 meeting attendees, with many overlaps with the people in **Fig 1**, but in a very different setting: the Gala Evening Cocktail Event the night of March 30th. Note the highly dynamic character

of the happy conversations taking place. The social event was a true cross section of the 470 meeting attendees and involved both famous speakers and young trainees attending for the first time, and the full spectrum of humanity in between. There was no constituency left out and everyone intermingled.

The number 140 in both instances is highly significant, because it is within Dunbar’s number (the human brain’s capacity to be influenced by or have empathetic friendships with 150 people at one time, [1-4]).

The stimulus for my interest in Dunbar’s number and its relation to the success of the Banff meetings was Peter Diamandis’s Huffington Post article of July 5, 2014 “Dunbar’s Number: Why Celebrity Train Wrecks Grab Your Attention” [5] containing an excerpt from pages 36 and 37 of his 2012 book *Abundance: The Future is Better Than You Think* [6] the section entitled “Dunbar’s Number”.

Dunbar’s number refers to the surprising observation made by R.I.M. Dunbar in 1992 [1] that there was a correlation between neocortical volume in the brain and typical social group size in a wide range of primates and human communities. Neocortical processing limitations appear to limit human beings to 100 to 200 meaningful relationships, a mean of 150 being the number most commonly quoted. These relationships are not all face-to-face, some are with famous people we never met who nevertheless influenced us in profound ways.

Part of the reason for the remarkable success of the Banff meetings in that most of the consensus sessions and social events involve fewer than 150 people. This is very important to the “special spirit of Banff” which participants talk about. It means that participants have capacity for empathetic friendships with the other people taking part, and positive interactions that could never occur in a larger meeting take place. On the other hand, we would never limit Banff social gatherings or sessions to 150 people. There should be as many people at the meeting sessions as want to be there, consistent with the intellectual freedom that is also an important part of the Banff spirit [7].



Fig 2. The Gala Evening Cocktail Event the night of March 30th.



Fig 3. Simplified graphical depiction of Kim Solez’s world with a 204 year trajectory from the birth of Homer Smith in 1895 to the fanciful date of August 7, 2099 from the K’naan song “Hurt Me Tomorrow” that could become a real date of a future medical or technology milestone. The ten celebrities are distilled down from a longer list of 150 Kim Solez influencers. The Future and All That Jazz is a partnership between Kim Solez and Mallory Chipman to use music and poetry to reach the general public with important message about science that they would be reluctant to sit through a lecture about but can accept quite readily as part of an evening of entertainment. A Future and All That Jazz performance has been proposed as part of the Banff 2019 meeting in Pittsburgh. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hJxTgUPKE> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OS0wlpZ96o> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTQHJun_66Y <https://www.mallorychipman.com> Images purchased from Shutterstock. Peter Diamandis image licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 4.0 International license <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peter-Diamandis-Headshot.jpg>.

So how in the long run do we resolve this conflict between Dunbar’s number and our wish to include everyone who wants to be at Banff meeting sessions? As brain enhancement becomes more common, as we “merge” in some sense with sentient machines in the future, one of the most likely areas in which the added intelligence will be used is to enlarge Dunbar’s number. As a consequence we develop the ability to have empathetic friendships with larger numbers of people, and meeting sessions can grow beyond 150 people without any diminishment of the Banff spirit.

With my strong interest in the future a natural question is “how long will the spirit of the Banff meetings survive”? I talk a great deal about the technological singularity occurring in 2045 at which time we think machines will be smarter than the whole aggregate human race. However that is only 28 years from now, and the spirit of Banff is already 26 years old, and could persist for a very long time. No one knows what will happen after 2045, but I like making the positive assumption that the good attributes and accomplishments of human beings will persist long after 2045, and that would include the Banff consensus process. The only current popular song I know with a specific future date is Somali Canadian artist K’naan’s “Hurt Me Tomorrow” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E3c-X86Y6o> with reference to August

7, 2099. I like the idea of associating that date with some future as-yet-unnamed milestone important to the Banff process, as a way of stating I think human beings will still be around then, human society will still be active, and there will still be Banff meetings and a Banff classification!

While machines will eventually be able to perform most tasks faster and better than humans, we are still smarter because the number of things the human mind can conceive of is infinite, our imagination is limitless. There will always be something we can teach machines to do for us, while freeing our own minds to explore and implement even more novel concepts.

So if 2099 is the “last listed date” in a timeline of Kim Solez’s world, what would be the first listed date? For that I would pick 1895, the birthdate of consummate renal physiologist, poet, philosopher, musician, and composer Homer Smith https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer_Smith. I became aware of his name and his book “From Fish to Philosopher” as a third year medical student, and the idea that his range of skills and accomplishments were possible within the confines of a medical career inspired me from an early age. You might say Homer Smith “enabled” me, even though I never met him. Homer Smith made me feel that what I wanted to do in life was worth striving for and possible, and pointed me in the direction of the kidney, whereas my mentor Robert Heptinstall “trained” me, and was ultimately the more potent influence, with much face to face contact. Along the way many other people had significant impact (Fig 3). If you visit my office and see the photographic collage the students I am working with provided on the stand under my microscope, you will realize how life comes full circle: Robert Heptinstall’s first act of kindness when I started working with him in the early 1970s was to say that I needed a stand under my microscope so I would not be so hunched over while doing microscopy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The video of the actual award ceremony this paper is associated with is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMHMro91bO4>

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