



RNA SOCIETY
SPONSORSHIP OF LOCAL/REGIONAL 'RNA Salons'

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION
Academic year - 2020/21

Objectives:

In the fall of 2016, the **RNA SOCIETY** launched an initiative to financially support recurring local and/or regional RNA science-based gatherings - to be collectively referred to as "**RNA Salons**". Society support of RNA Salons serves as a mechanism to cultivate year-long interaction, engagement, and sharing of knowledge among RNA researchers. This program will continue for the 2020/2021 academic year with some adjustments due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

For consideration of **RNA SOCIETY** support, a proposed RNA Salon must be broadly aimed at enhancing interaction between RNA researchers with diverse expertise and interest in RNA science, so as to facilitate communication and training opportunities in RNA research and/or to promote scientific professional development for RNA scientists. Given the pandemic, the RNA Society supports and encourages virtual events, including collaborative events between RNA Salons, as long as these events are organized in a way to foster local and regional engagement and interaction, in particular for junior scientists.

Depending on the nature of RNA Salon activities and the amount of carry-forward funds from 2019/2020, applicants can request a maximum of \$1,500.00 USD in support by the **RNA SOCIETY** for their proposed activities. This sponsorship is made possible through an agreement with our corporate sponsor Lexogen to provide up to \$500.00 USD to each successful RNA Salon application.

New this year, each successful RNA Salon will be offered three, one-year student/postdoc **RNA SOCIETY** memberships for 2021 for junior RNA researchers (valued at \$36 USD each) to be used as trainee awards.

Proposals will be reviewed solely by the **RNA SOCIETY** and selected based on the nature and perceived benefit of described activities to RNA scientists (and to junior researchers, in particular). Budgets may be modified based on the proposed activities, the amount of carry-forward RNA Salon funds, and/or number of applications to be supported. Successful applicants must agree to the 'Terms of Sponsorship' to receive RNA Society support, and may 'opt-out' of accepting funds provided by Lexogen (those that 'opt-out' will thus be eligible for a maximum of \$1,000 USD for their Salon events; see below for details). RNA Salons supported by the **RNA SOCIETY** will represent the international diversity of **RNA SOCIETY** members and, thus, funding will be distributed in accordance with member demographics. RNA Salons funded previously can re-apply for funding in 2020/2021, but must do so through the formal application process; no preference will be given to RNA Salons funded previously.

Supported Activities:

All programs that involve recurring online or in-person engaging activities falling into the broad mandate of RNA Salon sponsorship as outlined above are welcome to apply. These activities may include, but are certainly not limited to, one or more of the following examples:

- RNA Journal Clubs and RNA Seminar Series (including internal and/or external speakers) held multiple times throughout the academic year.
- Recurring workshops on, for example, Experimental or Computational Methods in RNA Research (excluding workshops offered by professional entities).
- Professional Development Activities such as Workshops on scientific writing or oral presentations, CV development, alternative careers, etc., targeted specifically to a community of RNA researchers.
- Women in Science or other events promoting diversity in RNA research.
- Discussion Rounds on trends in RNA research or other relevant RNA-related topics.

Application Guidelines:

- Requests for sponsorship of an RNA Salon must be submitted through the formal application (provided) which requests the following information:
 - a) a detailed description of the year-long activities (including speakers, if applicable) and how these activities will be organized and promoted. This description must include a justification whether events are planned to be virtually or in-person and how interaction will be promoted.
 - b) a clear statement that addresses how the proposed RNA Salon activities align with RNA Society objectives for this program and how funding will benefit participants in the short- and long-term (also, see below for requirements for consideration of support).
 - c) a description of the anticipated RNA Salon members (i.e. number of participants; stage of training [i.e. student/post-doc, PIs, etc]; affiliation of participants, etc.).
 - d) evidence for organizational and leadership experience of the applicant(s).
 - e) a budget proposal and justification how funds (a maximum of \$1,500.00 USD) will be utilized.
 - f) NEW: Existing RNA Salons must provide information on funds remaining from 2019/2020 which can be used in 2020/2021.
- The application deadline for requesting support of an RNA Salon is **September 11th, 2020**.
- Applications will be submitted through a webform provided on the RNA Society homepage.

Requirements for Consideration of Support:

- Applications must be submitted by a Principal Investigator (or equivalent) who is a Full and current member of the RNA SOCIETY. Involvement and leadership by students/post-doctoral fellows (together with the PI) in the organization of the RNA Salon is highly encouraged and will be considered favorably during evaluations. Students and post-doctoral fellows are not, however, eligible to apply as lead organizers.
- RNA Salons must hold no less than **three** qualifying events per year to successfully meet the requirements for support.
- RNA Salons should foster engaging relations among local/regional RNA researchers with diverse scientific backgrounds, experiences and/or interests, and must, therefore, include members from multiple laboratories/research units. Where applicable, this should include members from different departments and/or institutions. Accordingly, only a single RNA Salon proposal within an institution or geographical location is likely to be supported within a given program year.
- A maximum of \$1,500.00 USD can be requested by each applicant per year. It is also possible to request less funding as suitable for the proposed activities and the amount of carry-forward funding. A clear budget justification is expected for applications to justify the expenses.
- New this year, all successful RNA Salons will be offered three, one-year student/postdoc **RNA SOCIETY** memberships including online subscription to the journal RNA for 2021. The **RNA SOCIETY** memberships must be distributed as merit-based awards, and the nature of the competition for these awards must be described in the RNA Salon application.
- RNA Salon funding may be used for promotional material, student recognition/awards, catering, and/or invited speakers. However, no more than 40% of the funding shall be used for speaker-related expenses (i.e. travel, reimbursements, and/or honorariums for outside speakers). In addition, no more than 20% of the funding is allowed to be used for the purchase of alcohol. Funds used inappropriately or outside the scope of these guidelines must be returned to the **RNA SOCIETY**.
- The **RNA SOCIETY** promotes ethnic, gender and geographic diversity. It is expected that RNA Salon organizers make every effort to ensure that Salon participants and invited speakers reflect the diversity within the disciplines represented in the local/regional RNA community. Efforts to expand the diversity of Salon participants will be viewed favourably during the evaluation process.

Exclusive Lexogen Sponsorship:

Each successful RNA Salon is eligible to receive up to \$1,500.00 USD to support their events (\$1,000 USD from the **RNA SOCIETY** and \$500 USD, respectively, provided through Lexogen, the exclusive industry sponsor of the 2020/2021 RNA Salon series). To qualify for the full amount, RNA Salon applicants must, at the time of application, agree to the 'Terms of Sponsorship' which include terms provided by Lexogen that are outlined below. In the event that applicants wish not to engage in this relationship with Lexogen, they can choose to 'opt-out' and their application would, therefore, be eligible only for up to \$1,000 USD of support from the **RNA SOCIETY**.

- RNA Salon proposals will be reviewed solely by the **RNA SOCIETY**. Successful applications that also agree (i.e. 'opt-in') to Lexogen co-sponsorship will then, and only then, be made available to Lexogen.
- Successful RNA Salons will receive a single payment from the **RNA SOCIETY** in the amount up to \$1,500 (or up to \$1,000 USD if applicants 'opt-out' of the Lexogen co-sponsorship).
- For those applicants that agree to the full Terms of Sponsorship (including those outlined by Lexogen; i.e. 'opt-in'), RNA Salon organizers agree to:
 - a) display the Lexogen corporate logo alongside the **RNA SOCIETY**'s logo on the Salon's web-site, other online and print material, and all advertising of RNA Salon events.
 - b) mention @lexogen alongside @RNASociety in any RNA Salon social media posting such as on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.
 - c) display a 20-min video by Lexogen at a minimum of one event (real life or virtual) per academic year. Such video will provide educational content related to Lexogen's products as well as a disclaimer that the **RNA SOCIETY** does NOT promote Lexogen's products. Lexogen will provide a range of videos on different transcriptome-analysis related topics to choose from.
 - d) allow a representative from Lexogen to contact, via e-mail, the RNA Salon organizer once during the academic year to arrange for Lexogen either to present a promotional seminar at an RNA Salon event or to organize (and pay for) an academic speaker to present at an RNA Salon event. These seminars and presentations can also have a virtual format. RNA Salon organizers retain the right to refuse a suggested topic or speaker, and agreement to these opportunities is not required to receive the supplemental funding provided by Lexogen. In addition, any arrangement will be based on mutual agreement between Lexogen and the RNA Salon organizer will in no way involve the **RNA SOCIETY**.
 - e) share product literature provided by Lexogen at an RNA Salon event. Material will be mailed at the expense of Lexogen or shared online. RNA Salon organizers agree to provide to Lexogen a shipping address and an

approximate number of Salon participants to facilitate this process.

Alternatively, Lexogen can also provide product literature digitally, in form of a PDF document, which is then forwarded by the RNA Salon organizer to the RNA Salon participants.

- f) agree to announce and share (at a minimum of one event) entry forms for a prize drawing for Lexogen products (e.g. RNA sequencing products and services). Also here, a digital format can be chosen by Lexogen. In this case, a short description of the prize draw and a link to the respective entry form will be e-mailed to the RNA Salon organizers to be forwarded to the RNA Salon participants. Participation (i.e. completion of the entry form) by Salon participants is completely voluntary.

Application Evaluation and Administration:

- RNA Salons supported by the **RNA SOCIETY** will represent the international diversity of **RNA SOCIETY** members. Therefore, funding will be distributed in accordance with member demographics.
- Funding decisions will be made by the Membership Committee of the **RNA SOCIETY**. Proposals will be considered based perceived impact to RNA researchers according to the objectives and guidelines outlined above, in particular:

“RNA Salons must cultivate year-long interaction, engagement, and sharing of knowledge among RNA researchers. (...) RNA Salon must be broadly aimed at enhancing interaction between RNA researchers with diverse expertise and interest in RNA science, so as to facilitate communication and training opportunities in RNA research and/or to promote scientific professional development for RNA scientists.”
- The proposed budget will be evaluated independently of the merit of the application taking into consideration the nature of the proposed events and the remaining funding from 2019/2020 if applicable. Based on this budget evaluation, the offered funding might be adjusted and differ from the requested amount.
- Funding decisions will be announced by October 1st and funds disbursed by October 31st for activities during the 2020/2021 academic year.
- Funding for RNA Salons will be distributed by direct deposit, check, or wire transfer to the institution hosting the respective RNA Salon (note, funds will not be issued to individual payees).
- Sponsorship funds in their entirety are to be used to support RNA science-based events. No administrative, overhead or indirect costs will be provided or allowed by the hosting institution of RNA Salon events.

Successful Applications:

- Successful applicants for funding of an RNA Salon by the **RNA SOCIETY** will be expected to sign a Sponsorship Contract outlining the terms of the RNA Salon funding and defining the roles and expectations of all parties involved (including the RNA Salon applicant/organizer, **RNA SOCIETY**, and Lexogen).
- At each event, support by the **RNA SOCIETY** must be acknowledged. The **RNA SOCIETY** requires that the organizers display the Society logo on their website and in any virtual and print material provided to participants at the event. Additionally, any electronic promotion of RNA Salon events (i.e. Departmental/Institutional websites, Twitter, LinkedIn, and/or Facebook, etc.) must include acknowledgement of **RNA SOCIETY** support for the event(s). In case of acceptance of co-sponsorship (i.e opt-in), Lexogen must also be acknowledged in all cases mentioned above, alongside of the **RNA SOCIETY**.
- The **RNA SOCIETY** does not assume responsibility for activities supported by the RNA Salon. The organizers will be responsible for complying with the outlined regulations pertaining to the use of the funds.
- At the completion of the academic year, each successful RNA Salon applicant will be required to report their activities via an on-line survey. These data may be used by the **RNA SOCIETY** on their website and/or the **RNA SOCIETY** Newsletter and will be provided to Lexogen. Failure to complete the survey will disqualify that RNA Salon program for funding in the subsequent academic year.
- By December 10th, 2020, the names and e-mail contacts of all participating RNA Salon members must be made available to the **RNA SOCIETY**. Participant information will be used for the sole purpose of communicating **RNA SOCIETY** membership information. At that time, RNA Salon participants will be offered an exclusive discount on a 2021 RNA Society membership. **Please note, participant information will not be used for any other purpose and will not be given to any third party (including Lexogen).**