



RNA Salons 2024/2025

Report to the **RNA SOCIETY** Board of Directors

by Dr. Minna-Liisa Änkö

The RNA Salon program aims to foster and enhance interactions between RNA researchers within local/regional research communities. The RNA Salons bring together RNA researchers with diverse expertise and interests, and provide training and professional development opportunities for junior scientists.

The RNA Salon program stronger than ever

The 2024/2025 season is already the ninth for the RNA Salon program. Launched in 2016, we are getting ready to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the program this autumn. The RNA Salon program has continued its growth, and the number of RNA Salons is now 64 with estimated reach of more than 7,000 RNA researchers around the world. Thank you for all the RNA Salon Organisers!

RNA Salons 2024/2025:

- 64 RNA Salons reaching >7,000 RNA researchers globally
- 46 RNA Salons funded for two years
- 18 new Salons in 2024/2025
- Continued support by Lexogen

The past funding cycle introduced a dedicated contact person for all RNA Salons to facilitate the communications between **RNA SOCIETY** and the RNA Salons. From the coordinator perspective this has been a great improvement, and I hope it has also been beneficial for the RNA Salons. In the past applications round, 18 new RNA Salons were established. As before, established RNA Salons could apply for 2-year funding. Currently, 46 RNA Salons are on the first or second year of their 2-year funding cycle. In addition to providing sustained support for the local RNA-focused programs, the aim of the 2-year awards has been to reduce the administrative burden of all parties involved. For the next selection cycle, we aim to continue offering 2-year awards that will be selected based on the merit of the application. We are also grateful for the continued support by Lexogen and hope to continue this partnership.

RNA Salons run diverse programs that foster and enhance interactions between RNA researchers within the local or regional science community. Some RNA salons encompass RNA enthusiasts from one city while others cover broad regions or even multiple countries. The one city-one RNA Salon rule aims to break institutional boundaries and increase interactions between RNA scientists. In the annual RNA Salon survey, the most recurring suggestion going forward was again the increased interactions between RNA Salons. As a bottom-up program, I would like to encourage all RNA Salon organisers to reach out to other Salons and simply make this happen. It was very pleasing to see that some RNA salons have already taken first steps towards this and organised or are

planning to organise joint events. The inter-Salon events may be especially helpful for Junior scientists to build collaborative networks and find future supervisors. As the RNA Salon program is now established across the world, including regions where RNA science is still emerging, there are almost limitless opportunities to collaborate. To facilitate this and share good practises between RNA Salons, we are holding again the RNA Salon organiser luncheon in the RNA Society meeting in San Diego. We will also host two online get-togethers in June to cater all the time zones. Additionally, I invite all RNA Salon organiser to write an RNA Salon feature and share their activities to the RNA community on the RNA Society webpage.

Now more than ever, I want to remind that the RNA Salon program has a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion. We continue monitoring the gender balance of participants and speakers as well as the presentation of minority groups to assure that RNA Salons welcome all RNA enthusiasts alike. With many challenges that RNA scientists are facing today, a central goal of the RNA Salon program is to provide a sense of belonging for RNA researchers. This may be important especially in regions where RNA researchers are scattered in multiple universities and different institutions. I have had first-hand witnessed how the RNA Salon brings together researchers with diverse backgrounds and expertise and how this can strengthen the RNA community, help building critical mass and increase the visibility of RNA science.

What you are doing is outstanding. In our salon, it's totally organized by the trainees, with only mentorship from the PIs. This helps them to gain leadership and organization skills. The talks are fantastic ways to highlight research in our community, learn about new techniques, and find collaborators, and to just feel like we are a part of a bigger community. **Julie Claycomb, Toronto RNA Club**

I think it is an excellent initiative in that it provides independent funding to support RNA research. Without it, we would not have been able to build up our RNA culture at the University. **Sarah Newbury, Sussex RNA network.**

Overall, the RNA Salon initiative is a powerful model for fostering local scientific communities. With increased visibility, interconnectivity, and targeted trainee support, its reach and long-term impact could grow even further. **Stefan Ameres, Vienna BioCenter (VBC) RNA Salon**

In conclusion, the RNA Salon program continues to strengthen RNA research globally and is a major program of the **RNA SOCIETY**. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be part of this program. During the past year, it has been again wonderful to interact with RNA enthusiasts around the world, learn about various RNA-focused programs and support RNA research communities. I look forward to the next RNA Salon season 2025/2026.



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