

ANATOMY & CELL BIOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

December 2022

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UPCOMING SEMINARS

January 13th, 2022
January 20th, 2022
February 3rd, 2022
February 13th, 2022
February 24th, 2022



WINTER BREAK

Western will close on Thursday, December 22, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. and will reopen Wednesday, January 4, 2023.
Classes will resume on Monday, January 9, 2022

SEASONS GREETINGS

To our Western family, near and far, we wish you a safe and joyous holiday season and the very best for 2023. [Watch it here.](#)



ALAN SHEPARD
President & Vice-Chancellor
Western University

STAY IN THE LOOP

Tag us at [#westernuACB](#)



ACB Events
Calendar



@westernuACB



ACB Graduate
Council



PRIDE

SPIRIT WEAR COMING SOON!



For more information, please visit schulich.uwo.ca/anatomy/

WELCOME DR. JIBRAN KHOKHAR



Earlier this year Anatomy & Cell Biology had the delight of welcoming **Dr. Jibran Khokhar** as a new tenured Associate Professor in the area of translational neuroscience on July 1, 2022. Dr. Khokhar's innovative and highly productive research program uses a variety of behavioural, pharmacological and translational neuroimaging techniques to understand the mechanisms underlying, and the consequences of, substance use in vulnerable populations such as patients with schizophrenia, adolescents, or those genetically at-risk for substance use. Dr. Khokhar came to us from the University of Guelph, where he was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences in 2018.

Since then, he has been extremely successful in establishing his independent research program, including publishing more than 30 papers from his own laboratory and attracting almost \$4 million in operating and infrastructure funding from agencies such as CIHR, NSERC, NIH and CFI. We are excited to have Dr. Khokhar as part of the ACB team and look forward to his research and teaching contributions to the department and the broader neuroscience community at Western. Welcome Jibran!

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to **Faye Carr** and family who welcomed their son, Jameson Finn Carr on Friday, September 16th, 2022 weighing 4 lbs 4 oz.

Congratulations to **Dr. Lauren Flynn** and family who welcomed their daughter, Ava Claire Brzezinski on Monday, October 24th, 2022 at 10:58AM weighing 7 lbs 2 oz.



CONGRATULATIONS CONT...

Congratulations to [Jennifer Devlin](#) who raised over \$17000 in support of Youth Opportunities Unlimited, and trained to participate in the Fight to End Homelessness 2022 event. On November 9th, 2022 Jenn went toe to toe in the ring with a fellow fundraiser for 3 - 1 minute rounds, where she was unanimously crowned the winner.



Congratulations to the following students who successfully completed their PhD Comprehensive exams:

Julia Brott - Berube Lab	Hien Nguyen - Singh Lab
Jacob Haagsma - Shepherd Lab	Amanda Rampersaud - Renaud Lab
Alyssa Moore - Willmore Lab	Dylan Tinney-Dickinson - Hamilton Lab
Sarah Myers - Whitehead Lab	Wendy Wang - Whitehead Lab

Congratulations to the following students on successfully defending their PhD thesis examinations:

- [Georgia Nikoloudaki](#) (Hamilton Lab) - "Extrinsic And Intrinsic Factors Influencing Homeostasis And Repair In Oral Tissues "
- [Chidambra Halari](#) (Lala/Renaud Lab) - "Role of decorin at the fetal-maternal interface"
- [Austyn Roseborough](#) (Whitehead Lab) - "Identifying and developing candidate indicators of brain inflammation"

Congratulations to the following students on successfully defending their MSc thesis examinations:

- [Sierra Pellizzari](#) (Parsyan/Allan Lab) - "Investigating mechanism of anticancer effects of Polo-like Kinase 4 (PLK4) inhibitor CFI-400945 in combination with radiation in breast cancer."
- [Adam Jaremek](#) (Renaud Lab) - "Elucidating the Role of Hypoxia Signaling in Placental Trophoblast Differentiation"
- [Mohammed AlYouzbaki](#) (Allman Lab) - "Past and Present Experience Alters Audiovisual Temporal Synchrony Perception in Rats"
- [Marina Sertsis](#) (Lajoie Lab) - "Localization and function of Pannexin2 isoform 202"
- [Malisa Fernando](#) (Lajoie Lab) - "The role of Ire1 in azole sensitivity in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*"

SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS & GRANTS

We are proud to announce that **Jennifer Devlin** was recognized with a 2022 Western Award of Excellence for her exceptional commitment to the University's values. The 2022 recipients will be formally celebrated at a ceremony being held February 8, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. in the Great Hall, Somerville House.
[Read Western News coverage of the 2022 recipients.](#)



Congratulations to **Dr. Silvia Penuela** on receiving a Brain Tumour Foundation research grant for the project "Inhibition of Panx1 as a novel target for glioblastoma multiforme"

https://www.braintumour.ca/research_recipients/silvia-penuela-2022-feature-grant-recipient/

Congratulations to **Dr. Nathalie Berube** on receiving a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Grant for five years of funding to examine the role of microglial ATRX in brain development and cognition and how the brain's immune cells regulate learning and memory.

Congratulations to the following NSERC Discovery Grant Recipients:

- **Dr. Tyler Bevrige** - "Functional Neuro-organization of the Peripheral Abdominopelvic Autonomic Plexuses in Humans; an Immunohistochemical and Radiologic Approach"
- **Dr. Dale Laird** - "Role of junctional complexes in the maintenance and renewal of the epidermis"
- **Dr. Patrick Lajoie** - "Regulation of endoplasmic reticulum stress resistance in yeast"
- **Dr. Steven Laviolette** - "Understanding Functional Interactions Between Cannabinoid and Dopamine Signaling Pathways: Impacts on Emotional and Cognitive Processing"
- **Dr. Silvia Penuela** - "Pannexin-2 Channel Regulation and Signalling"



Congratulations to **Khadija Ahmed**, a former MSc student in the Lajoie lab on receiving the Dr. L. DeWitt Wilcox Award.

https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/about/news/2022/december/srtp_student_awards.html

Congratulations to **Tiffany Johnston** (Shepherd Lab) who was awarded an Obstetrics & Gynaecology Graduate Scholarship for 2022-2023.



Congratulations to the following trainees who were award winners at ACB Research Day 2022

MSc Research Poster Presentation Award: **Diba Chowdhury** - Drs. Stephen Renaud & Patrick Lajoie

MSc Research Poster Presentation Award: **Kasha Mansour** - Dr. Nathalie Berube

MSc Clinical Poster Presentation Award: **Vivienne Hang** - Dr. Timothy Wilson

PhD Poster Presentation Award: **Nikita Ollen-Bittle** - Dr. Shawn Whitehead

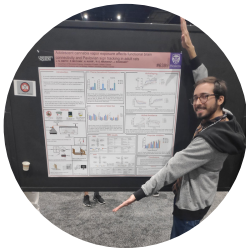
3-Minute Thesis Presentation Award: **Alice Zheng** - Drs. Susanne Schmid and Brian Allman

Oral Presentation Award: **Dr. Sarfraz Shafiq** - Dr. Nathalie Berube

PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES



Jibran Khokhar was invited to attend the Neuroscience Summit in Crans-Montana (Switzerland) in September, which is a gathering of established and emerging leaders in Neuroscience (picture above).



Pedro Marinho (Khokhar Lab) presented a poster entitled "Adolescent cannabis vapor exposure affects functional brain connectivity and Pavlovian sign tracking in adult rats" at the Society for Neuroscience meeting in San Diego

Dr. Trevor Shepherd co-organized the Western Organoid Workshop that took place on November 3rd. Invited presentations were given by Dr. Stephen Renaud (placental organoids) and Dr. Vasu Bhat (breast cancer organoids).

Congratulations and thank you to all the trainees who presented their research at ACB Research Day 2022

Oral Presentations

Ethan McQueen - Dr. Timothy Wilson
Jacob Haagsma - Dr. Trevor Shepherd
Wendy Wang - Dr. Shawn Whitehead
Dr. Sarfraz Shafiq - Dr. Nathalie Berube

Poster Presentations

Alyssa Moore – Dr. Katherine Willmore
Brent Wakefield – Dr. Silvia Penuela
Brooke O'Donnell – Dr. Silvia Penuela
Emily Tomas – Dr. Trevor Shepherd
Hien Chi Nguyen – Dr. Krishna Singh
Jennifer Guo – Dr. Douglas Hamilton
Mohammed Al-Youzbaki – Dr. Brian Allman
Carlijn Van Kessel – Dr. Silvia Penuela
Jack Webb – Dr. Trevor Shepherd
Kasha Mansour – Dr. Nathalie Berube
Samuel Stack-Couture – Dr. Patrick Lajoie
Dylan Tinney-Dickenson – Dr. Douglas Hamilton
Vivienne Hang – Drs. Timothy Wilson & Abhijit Biswas
Dr. Gabriela Nunes Marsiglio Librais – Dr. Patrick Lajoie
Alireza Ghahramani – Drs. Nathalie Berube & Parisa Shooshtari
Stephanie Leighton – Drs. Dale Laird & Silvia Penuela
Diba Chowdhury – Drs. Stephen Renaud & Patrick Lajoie

3- Minute Thesis Presentations

Leah Killing - Dr. Stephen Renaud
Amy Pietrantonio - Dr. Katherine Willmore
Berk Rasheed - Dr. Krishna Singh
Alice Zheng - Drs. Susanne Schmid & Brian Allman
Donovan McDonald - Dr. Martin Duennwald
Emily Thomas - Dr. Trevor Shepherd

Poster Presentations Cont...

Erinn Brown – Dr. Geoffrey Ng
Ethan McQueen – Dr. Timothy Wilson
Hannah Martin – Dr. Shawn Whitehead
Livianna Gallone – Dr. Timothy Wilson
Rebecca Elgie – Dr. Martin Duennwald
Katherine Quesnel – Dr. Nathalie Berube
Khaleda Afrin Bari – Dr. Patrick Lajoie
Matthew Borrelli – Dr. Trevor Shepherd
Nikita Ollen-Bittle – Dr. Shawn Whitehead
Violet Patterson – Dr. Stephen Renaud

RESEARCH NEWS

A team of Western and Schulich Medicine researchers under the supervision of [Dr. Steven Laviolette](#) is investigating how cannabis exposure during pregnancy may impact the developing brain of the fetus. [Read the full article here](#)



Through a global collaboration of researchers, [Marco Prado, PhD](#), and his team have developed a better understanding of the part a protein plays in major neurological disorders. [Read the full article here](#)

Western researchers, including [Dr. Susanne Schmid](#) are investigating what happens to a baby's developing brain when an infection occurs during pregnancy.

[Read the full article here](#)

We want to feature your new publications here!

submit them to anatomy@uwo.ca

NEW PUBLICATIONS

[Khaleda Afrin Bari](#), Matthew D Berg, Julie Genereaux, Christopher J Brandl, [Patrick Lajoie](#), Tra1 controls the transcriptional landscape of the aging cell, G3 Genes|Genomes|Genetics, 2022;, jkac287, <https://doi.org/10.1093/g3journal/jkac287>

Vy Ngo, [Martin L. Duennwald](#), Nrf2 and Oxidative Stress: A General Overview of Mechanisms and Implications in Human Disease, Antioxidants 2022, 11(12), 2345; <https://doi.org/10.3390/antiox11122345>

[Halari CD](#), Nandi P, Sidhu J, Sbirnac M, [Zheng M](#), [Lala PK](#). Decorin–induced, preeclampsia--associated microRNA-512-3p restrains extravillous trophoblast functions by targeting USF2/PPP3R1 axis. Front Cell Dev Biol. Oct. 2022. Sec. Molecular and Cellular Pathology <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcell.2022.1014672>

[Brent Wakefield](#), [Silvia Penuela](#), Potential Implications of Exercise Training on Pannexin Expression and Function, J Vasc Res. 2022 Nov 10;1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000527240>

[McCunn, P.*](#), Chen, X., Gimi, B., Green, A.I., [Khokhar, J.Y.](#), 2022, Glutamine and GABA alterations in cingulate cortex may underlie alcohol drinking in a rat model of co-occurring alcohol use disorder and schizophrenia: An 1H-MRS study. Schizophrenia (formerly NPJ Schizophrenia) (Accepted). 2022 Aug 23;8(1):67. doi: 10.1038/s41537-022-00272-6. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41537-022-00272-6>

[MKayir, H.*](#), [Ruffolo, J.*](#), [McCunn, P.*](#), [Khokhar, J. Y.](#), The Relationship Between Cannabis, Cognition, and Schizophrenia: It's Complicated. Current Topics in Behavioral Neurosciences 2022 Nov 2. https://doi.org/10.1007/7854_2022_396

ACB PAST EVENTS

ACB HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST

Staff, Students, and Faculty showed off their creative sides at this year's Halloween Costume Contest! [The Penuela Lab](#) felt the need for speed with their Top Gun costume and took the prize for the best group costume. [Dr. Sean McWatt](#) showed off his very timely Covid-rapid test costume, with swab and results included, and won the best individual costume. Some honorable mentions:

The Zombies - [The Renaud and Lala Labs](#)

A Squirrel - [Dr. Tyler Bevrige](#)

Starwars - [The Admin Team](#) and [Archer](#) as Chewbacca

Hippie - [Dr. Vanessa Dumeaux](#)

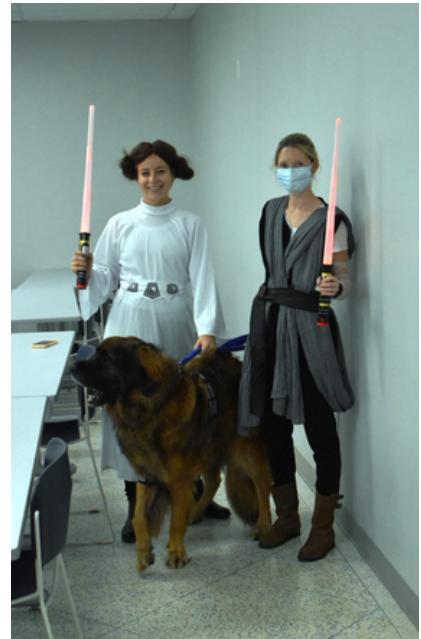
The Months of the Year/ Calendar - [The Schmid Lab](#)

Gru and his Minions - [Second-year Clinicals Anatomy Students](#)

Tom's Cat Shirt - [Charlotte Jones- Whitehead](#) and [Supreet Singh](#)

Social Butterfly - [Dr. Sarah McLean](#)





ACB PAST EVENTS CONT...

HOLIDAY PARTY

We hope everyone enjoyed the Jingle and Mingle Holiday Party on December 14th. It was so great to get together in person again!

Congrats to the ugly sweater contest winners, [Dr. Silvia Penuela](#) and [Stephanie Leighton](#) (Penuela Lab)



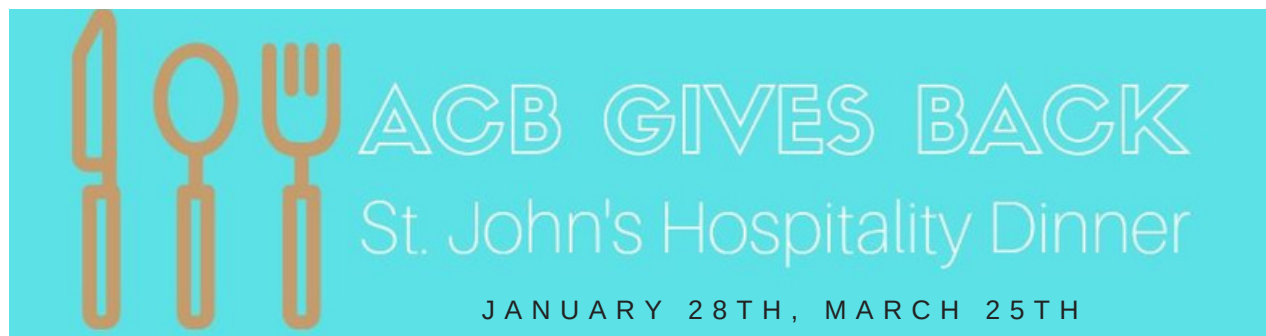
ACB PAST EVENTS CONT...

DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

Congratulations to this year's door decorating contest winners, The Renaud Lab for their "Pla-Santa Claus Door! Thank you to everyone who participated and made our halls a bit more festive!



ACB GIVES BACK



ST. JOHN'S HOSPITALITY DINNER

St. John's requires the ongoing support of Volunteers to help prepare and serve food at the community dinners. To register, please add your name to the volunteer sign up sheet by [clicking here](#)



HOLIDAY INITIATIVE

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Holiday Gift Card Drive. With your help, we were able to collect over 30 gift cards, totaling \$465, which will be distributed by 519Pursuit to those in need this holiday season.

SOGS FOOD BANK FUNDRAISER

With your support the department collected \$165 for the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) Food Bank at this year's Halloween Party. The SOGS Food Bank for Non-TA Members provides assistance to members who are experiencing extreme financial difficulty which significantly affects their budget for food.



SOCK DRIVE

This fall the department participated in the 519 Sock Drive and collected 420 pairs to support those facing homelessness in our community. Thank you to everyone who donated!

POP TAB FUNDRAISER

Your ACB Grad Council would like to send out this friendly reminder to please continue collecting all aluminum tabs from your drinks, canned foods, or pet food containers for our **Pop Tab Fundraiser** - in support of March of Dimes Canada! If you'd like to bring in the whole (clean and crushed) aluminum can, you are welcome to do so. As the holiday season approaches and you begin to gather with friends and family, try to gather up what aluminum you have to give back to your community. A collection bin exists outside of MSB 443 (the MSB Admin Office), however smaller containers are available if you would like one for your lab, office, or home! Please contact Vivienne, ACB Grad Council Treasurer, at vhang@uwo.ca for more information.

A hand holding a small, circular aluminum pop tab.

**ACB GRAD COUNCIL
WANTS YOUR CAN TABS!**

Tabs from aluminum cans are clean, small, and easy to collect! Done with your drink? Give your tab a few wiggles, recycle your can, and drop the tab off outside of MSB 443!

**1,267 TABS = 1 LB OF ALUMINUM = ~84¢
DONATION TO MARCH OF DIMES
CANADA @ END OF WINTER 2023 TERM!**

A square QR code.

SCAN TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT
THEIR POP CAN
TAB COLLECTION
PROGRAM.

A black wheelchair and a black walker.