

# Congratulations 2023 Biochemistry Award Winners and Graduates!

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## Gold Medal Winners



### HSP Biochemistry – Erin Olivia Jacob

Erin is from London and feels fortunate that a great university was right in her hometown so that she could stay near family and friends. She is also grateful for the strong collaborative support network she developed with her peers in the program. Erin spent a couple of years in the research group of Dr. Rob Hegele, which she found a great learning experience. Dr. Hegele commented that Erin was the best student he has had in his 25 years of supervising honours theses, and she will be a co-author on several publications. Erin will attend medical school at McMaster this fall.



### HSP Biochemistry & Cell Biology – Tian Gao

One of the reasons that Jenny came to Western was because the idea of a fourth-year thesis project intrigued her, and sure enough she just finished a project in the Prado lab at Robarts Research Institute. Jenny reports fond memories of late-night studying sessions with friends at the library, followed by taking the exam shuttle home. She has now enrolled in the Master of Biotechnology program at the University of Toronto, in the Biopharmaceutical stream, and she is starting an internship in a pharma in January.



### **HSP Biochemistry of Infection and Immunity – Leon Baronijan**

Originally from Toronto, Leon was drawn to Western by the vibrant campus and by the research opportunities available in the BMSc program. While at Western he became involved in the tennis club, which he now considers a family. He found support and motivation to succeed from his group of friends, and feels it's important to balance academic work with fun activities. Leon discovered a passion for research in the lab of Dr. Michael Boffa and went on to complete a fourth-year project with Dr. Rodney DeKoter of Microbiology & Immunology. These experiences have inspired him to enter the PhD program in Immunology at the University of Toronto, where he will investigate the mechanisms that generate antibody diversity.



### **HSP Biochemistry & Cancer Biology – Corey Fan**

Corey completed his thesis project with Dr. Trevor Shepherd, who reports that he did an amazing job on it, contributing greatly to an exciting new project on developing new therapeutics for ovarian cancer. Not only did he excel in academics in this demanding program, but his energy and cheery attitude was and continues to be a welcome addition at the laboratory bench. This award is certainly well-deserved, and the Shepherd lab wishes you the best in your future endeavours! Corey's ambition is to be a physician and work with Doctors Without Borders.



### **HSP Biochemistry & Pathology of Human Disease – Daniel Kawa**

Daniel not only completed his Honours Specialization in Biochemistry and Pathology of Human Disease, but he also completed a Major in French, and in fact this opportunity for a multidisciplinary undergraduate experience is what drew him to Western. In his fourth year he pursued not one but two research projects, one in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine under the supervision of Dr. Patti Kiser, and one in the Department of French with Dr. François Poiré. One of Daniel's secrets to success is to enjoy what you are learning...to look at even relatively unexciting subjects as an opportunity for learning, rather than a mere obligation. Daniel was born and raised right here in London, and he is staying at Western for a Master's in Pathology, with medical school as his goal after that.



### **HSP Medical Biophysics and Biochemistry – Robert Policelli**

Robert is from Oakville and chose Western because of the opportunities to do research and because of the welcoming environment. He has really enjoyed the atmosphere of the research lab, conducting his own work and connecting with his peers about their research. He says working hard and setting a schedule are important keys to success. His thesis supervisor, Dr. Aaron Ward, praised Robert's enthusiasm, and it's no surprise that he will be starting his MSc in Medical Biophysics at Western this fall.



### **HSP Computational Biochemistry – Remi Sampaleanu**

Remi came to Western from Toronto, attracted by the modular system and subject areas in the BMSc program. He feels he learned a lot about himself while at Western, and learned how to balance academic responsibilities and more fun pursuits. Remi worked on a variety of computational research projects in the labs of Dr. Stella Conostas and Dr. Michael Hallett, and these successful experiences informed his decision to pursue a Master's degree in Biomedical Informatics at the University of Chicago.



### **HSP in Synthetic Biology – Amy Heathcote**

Amy is from Vancouver, and coming all this way to Western was part of her plan to challenge herself, and learn more about herself and her passions and interests. Amy has a background in competitive dance, and this artistic flair and passion led her to some very rewarding extracurriculars including putting on the Spur Fashion Show. One of her secrets to success is being part of a supportive group of friends and study buddies that motivate and help each other. She is off to the University of Toronto, where she will be doing a Master of Applied Science in Chemical Engineering. Her research will involve studying CRISPR antimicrobial resistance diagnostics.





## **HSP in Biochemistry and Chemistry- Morgan Tamminga**

Morgan is a second-generation Mustang, as both of her parents attended Western. Not only that, Morgan's dad was on the varsity basketball team, and Morgan herself played varsity basketball. One has to admire student-athletes, especially ones in tough programs like the HSP Biochemistry & Chemistry. Not only do they have a huge time commitment outside of class, but the mental and physical energy involved in playing at such a high level really makes this a challenge. For her next challenge, Morgan is doing her Bachelor of Education here at Western starting in the Fall, with the goal of teaching high school chemistry.



## **HSP in Genetics and Biochemistry- Alyssa Vander Zee**

Originally from Markham, Alyssa found Western a welcoming environment where she learned to step out of her comfort zone, which really helped her self-confidence. She values the important friendships she formed through non-academic pursuits such as the Western Dance Force. She says maintaining a balance between academics and other pursuits, and the support of like-minded people, contributed a lot to her success. Alyssa will pursue an MSc in Biochemistry at the University of Toronto starting this fall.



## **Major in Biochemistry – Andrew Youssef**

Andrew was attracted to the MedSci program by the variety of possible specializations possible – and thankfully he picked Biochemistry. He was a student-athlete, who played on the Western water polo team. Andrew is originally from Courtice Ontario, just on the other side of Toronto, and he'll be a little closer to home next year since he is joining the master's program at the University of Toronto's Institute of Medical Science. His project will involve the study of resistance to radiotherapy of brain metastases.

## Biochemistry Course Award Winners

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### **Litchfield Award – Biochemistry 3381A & 3382A – Britney Ding**

These third-year courses cover general topics in the study of the structure and function of proteins and nucleic acids, including a protein inquiry project and an introduction to synthetic biology. Dr. David W. Litchfield was Chair of Biochemistry at Western from 2007 to 2017 and is currently Vice Dean, Research and Innovation at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry. Dr. Litchfield's research is directed toward elucidation of the biochemical mechanisms that control the growth and survival of mammalian cells since defects in these mechanisms underlie many human diseases including cancer, atherosclerosis, neurological disorders and immune dysfunction.



### **Kaney Ebisuzaki Award for Biochemistry 4410A – Lian Gai**

Fundamental techniques in molecular biology and genomics are illustrated using examples from classic and current literature.



### **Biochemistry 4415B – Daniel Kawa**

The course explores how drugs can be discovered and produced through chemical genetic screening methods and metabolic engineering in microorganisms.



### **Biochemistry 4420A – Ryan Hunter**

The course is focused on the detailed physics and chemistry of protein molecules, and how these molecules contribute to biological function.



### **Biochemistry 4425B – Yu Kang Huang**

Students learn about applications of modern analytical and biophysical techniques in proteomics and related analyses, and structural analysis of DNA repair processes.



### **Biochemistry 4450A – Madison Dusick**

The course addresses the mechanisms of tumour development and investigates cancer models and molecular therapies related to the hallmarks of cancer.





### **Rossiter Award For Fourth-Year Project Courses – Erin Olivia Jacob**

Students complete an independent research project, and communicate their findings in written and oral formats. Dr. Roger J. Rossiter was Head of Biochemistry at Western from 1947 to 1965. Professor Rossiter's research led to knowledge regarding the chemistry and metabolism of the myelin of nerves, with particular reference to the lipid components and the processes of both myelination and pathologic states of demyelination in the nervous system.



### **Biochemistry 4999E – Sarah Wilhelm**

This laboratory course, restricted to students who have already completed a fourth-year research project, consists of further independent research and is intended for students interested in pursuing graduate-level research.

# Congratulations to all Biochemistry Graduates!

## We wish you all the best as you embark on your future!

### 2022-2023 Biochemistry MSc Graduates

Hasan, Farah  
Hall, Peter  
Kovacevic, Michael  
Messam, Britney  
Qiu, Yi (Tina)  
Zhang, Pengcheng

### 2022-2023 Biochemistry PhD Graduates

Brumwell, Stephanie  
Grainger, Ryan  
Joris, Benjamin  
Karunatileke, Nadun  
Kim, Seung (Joon)

### 2023 Biochemistry BMSc and BSc Graduates

Abdullatif, Fatema  
Albert, Matthew Neil  
Bainbridge, Nicholas Alexander  
Balarajah, Mathanke  
Baronijan, Leon Hovsep  
Boyko, Xenia  
Breckenridge, Seonae Caprice  
Campbell, Jaclyn Clair  
Chan, Alexis  
Cheng, Jia Hao  
Cheng, Sylvia Lin  
Dawe, Aimee Maria  
Deng, Isabel Xinyu  
DiMambro, Luke Emanuel  
Doktor, Aleksandra  
Donaldson, Colton Chas Clegg  
Dowling, Michaela Lillian  
Dusick, Madison  
Fan, Corey  
Fitzpatrick, Ella Kate  
Gai, Lian Sijia  
Gao, Tian Jian  
Gebreyes, Blane  
Ghantous, Dominic Joseph  
Gong, Catherine Yuqing  
Goodbrand, Elissa Ashley  
Heathcote, Amy Carol Anne  
Hiscox, Emma Renee Victoria  
Hoveyda, Sahar  
Huang, Yu Kang  
Hunter, Ryan Alexander  
Jacob, Erin Olivia  
Jung, Mingyeong  
Kalman, Benjamin

Kan, Kelly Rachel  
Kaneshan, Ayagiysan  
Kasule, Anisha Nakayizza  
Kawa, Daniel Tomasz  
Kim, Minseo  
Lament, Warren  
Lau, Rachel Michelle  
Leu, Kristine-Trinh Tu  
Lo, Yu Hung  
Lord, Emma  
Lorimer, Lucas  
Mahendran, Agetha  
Mahmoudpour, Mahmoud  
Mendes, Michael William  
Moradi, Nicki  
Nemtsov, Lidia Angel  
Ng, Cody Chak-Hin  
Pang, Sunny  
Patel, Margi  
Moradi, Nicki  
Patel, Margi  
Pemberton, Rachel Spence  
Penney, Rachel  
Persaud, Rovel Rakesh  
Piccolo, Olivia  
Pimenta, Viveka  
Policelli, Robert Daniel  
Pourtousi, Ava  
Quach, Quan  
Rania, Neha  
Rumple, Anastasia Elisabeth  
Saita, Ibrahim Mohammad  
Salmini, Emily Linda

Sampaleanu, Remi Dorian  
Samuels, Tristan Nicholas  
Shah, Romanch Alpakhai  
Shen, Ye  
Sheng, Emily  
Sivacumar, Raagul  
Sivapragasam, Keithan  
Smith, Renee  
Socransky, Jacob Irvine  
Sreekumar, Abhinav  
Sundararaman, Shruthi  
Sutherland, Frances Sophie  
Swankie, Emma Xiao  
Tahsin, Nusaibah  
Tammaing, Morgan Talo  
Thibault, Ashley Victoria  
Tran, Binh Dang  
Trim, Madeleine Elizabeth  
Vander Zee, Alyssa Cristina  
Verriet, Ivey Elizabeth  
Viola, Lauren Marie  
Walls, Nesya  
Wang, Ruoshui  
Warner, Victoria Marie  
Wilhelm, Sarah Diane Patricia  
Wolochacz, Agata  
Wu, Yixuan  
Xiao, Mark  
Yang, Fan  
Youssef, Andrew Nazih  
Zemingui, Angela  
Zhang, Xinyi  
Zhu, Binhang