



Image designed by Dr. Sanna Abbasi

Dept. of Biochemistry Newsletter

Vol. 17, Issue 2, May-Aug 2026

Send contributions to: mweir24@uwo.ca

PEOPLE AND OTHER STUFF

- The Dr. Bishnu D. Sanwal Lecture took place in May as a memorial and tribute to Dr. Sanwal, a former Chair of the Biochemistry Dept. This event was made possible through a generous endowment from Dr. Sanwal's family to recognize his leadership, legacy, and impact on the Biochemistry community and beyond.
- The Dept. of Biochemistry sends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of Catherine Neelamkavil. She was a former staff member in Biochemistry for many years, and passed away on 11 June at the age of 71 ([obituary](#)).
- Congratulations to Dr. Bishop and partner for the birth of Niya on 5 Aug.



- Updates from Biochemistry's EDID Committee...
 - ✓ Check out this [reporting tool](#) to find out which resources to access at Western for reporting harassment, discrimination, gender-based and sexual violence, or other unprofessional behaviour.
 - ✓ The final workshop for the commitment phase for decolonizing teaching in the Dept. took place in May. We are now in the rebuilding phase where we will tap into the decolonial changes brought forward by the Biochemistry community. A working group has been formed to start this process.

CONGRATS TO...

- ★ Ben Rutledge and Emily Stuckless for successful PhD thesis defenses
- ★ Fatema Abdullatif for a poster award at the 2026 Oncology Research and Education Day
- ★ Dr. Tyler Browne for being featured in [Schulich News](#)
- ★ Sugitha Janarthanan for a Canada Graduate Research Scholarship–Doctoral Program (CGRS D)
- ★ Siyun Kuang for a travel award for and presentation at the Canadian Conference on Ovarian Cancer Research
- ★ Yan Yi Li for a poster award at the 2026 Annual Oncology Research and Education Day and for a Canada Graduate Research Scholarships–Doctoral Program (CGRS D)
- ★ Maria Mahmood for an Ontario Graduate Scholarship
- ★ Dr. Stead (Biochemistry alumnus) for being featured in [The Globe and Mail](#) for co-founding Specific Biologics, a Western University spinout
- ★ Nancy Sun for a Children's Health Research Institute Trainee Award
- ★ Alfredo Varela Vega for a Translational Breast Cancer Research Traineeship
- ★ Dr. Emma Walker for receiving the 2026 Collip Medal (for the most outstanding PhD student graduating from one of the basic science programs in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry)
- ★ Dr. Tugce Balci for the [Genetic and Genome Medicine Innovation Award](#) from the Canadian College of Medical Geneticists
- ★ Drs. Bishop, Hu, Litchfield, and Schild-Poulter for individual NSERC Discovery Grants
- ★ Dr. Han and co-workers for being featured in [CBC London](#) for Canada's first paediatric Olink lab, based at Children's Health Research Institute
- ★ Dr. Hegele for being inducted into the [Canadian Medical Hall of Fame](#)
- ★ Dr. Heinemann for the Olink Proteomics Award for Olink Reveal (sponsored by Olink, a part of Thermo Fisher Scientific). She receives a free analysis of 86 samples using the

Olink™ Reveal platform and support for project design and data analysis (worth ~\$10-15k)

- ★ Drs. Heinemann, O'Donoghue, and colleagues for an NSERC RTI Grant
- ★ Dr. Hu for mentoring a team of graduate students from Western University and the University of Toronto to a first-place win in the Case Studies in Data Analysis Competition ([post](#)). This event was held as part of the 2026 Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) Annual Meeting at McMaster University
- ★ Dr. Hu for the Canadian Bioinformatics Hub (CBH) Research and Innovation Award, which recognizes professionals with active, promising innovations: they make a difference, value diverse perspectives, and forge unexpected connections
- ★ Dr. Hu for becoming President-Elect of the [Data Science and Analytics Section](#) of the Statistical Society of Canada
- ★ Dr. Hu and colleagues for a CIHR Project Grant
- ★ Dr. Hu (PI), Dr. Zhou (co-PI), Dr. Lu (collaborator), and colleagues for a New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) Exploration Grant
- ★ Dr. O'Donoghue for appearing in Western and Schulich [News](#)
- ★ Dr. Possmayer for being featured in Western's '[the impact project](#)'
- ★ Dr. Rogan for his [accepted paper](#) for presentation at the 2026 American Society for Human Genetics meeting

PUBLICATIONS

- Dr. Andrews ([NOD2 in Zika virus infected CNS](#)) ([Spatial transcriptomics and SOX4 in biliary atresia](#)) ([CycleMix: Gaussian mixture modeling of cell cycle](#))
- Dr. Ball ([Regulation of tamavidin-biotin affinity](#))
- Dr. Balci ([Opt-out of actions from genome-sequencing results](#)) ([Epilepsy phenotype of ring chromosome 20](#))
- Drs. Boffa, Koschinsky ([Lipoprotein\(a\)](#))
- Drs. Choy, Duennwald ([STIP1/HOP and cytotoxic \$\alpha\$ -synuclein oligomers](#))
- Dr. Connaughton ([Autosomal dominant tubulo-interstitial kidney disease](#)) ([Living kidney donor follow-up in Canada](#)) ([Biallelic TMEM126B variants in kidney failure](#))
- Dr. Dimattia ([HDAC inhibition in OCCC spheroids](#))
- Dr. Duennwald ([Substrate specificity in arogenate vs. prephenate dehydratases](#)) ([Mitochondrial respiration, Hsf1, and heat shock response](#)) ([Cannabidiol and 6-OHDA toxicity](#)) ([Circular RNAs in ALS](#))
- Dr. Dumeaux ([Ire1 in morphogenesis in *C. albicans*](#))
- Dr. Edgell ([Modern-day homing endonucleases and reconstructed ancestors](#))

- Dr. Garnham ([Nanoparticle vaccines for non-typhoidal S. enterica](#)) ([Nanoparticle combination vaccine for Salmonella in poultry](#)) ([Ferritin as a nanoparticle scaffold for vaccines](#))
- Dr. Gebregiworgis ([Studies of epidermal growth factor receptor](#)) ([Rigor and reproducibility in NMR metabolomics](#))
- Drs. Gebregiworgis, Heinemann, O'Donoghue ([Therapeutic rescue of pathogenic asparaginyl-tRNA synthetase alleles](#))
- Drs. Han, Heinemann ([Transcriptome and miRNAome in hepatocellular hypoxia](#))
- Dr. Hegele ([Pathogenic variants in familial chylomicronemia syndrome genes](#)) ([Plazasiran use in hypertriglyceridemia](#)) ([Dyslipidemia in children](#)) ([Translating lipoprotein genetics into new therapies](#)) ([Homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia in Canada](#)) ([Monogenic ALB variants and severe hypercholesterolemia](#)) ([NANGPTL3 as a therapeutic target of cholesterol levels](#)) ([VESALIUS-CV patients](#)) ([Multivessel coronary artery disease and genetic dyslipidemia](#))
- Drs. Hegele, Pickering ([Microfibril denudation and aortic vulnerability in SMAD3 variant carriers](#))
- Dr. Heinemann ([Human aminoacyl-tRNA synthetase \(ARS\) gene nomenclature](#)) ([Tyrosine supplementation in YARS1 associated with CMT-DI](#))
- Drs. Heinemann, O'Donoghue ([From patient advocacy to patient-driven research](#))
- Dr. Heinemann, Rupar ([Histidine supplementation in HARS1-related autosomal recessive disorder](#))
- Dr. Hu ([Translating cancer dependency maps](#)) ([Mutation in KPNA7 causes autosomal dominant otosclerosis](#)) ([Mesenchymal stromal cell extracellular vesicles and cystic fibrosis bronchoalveolar fluid](#)) ([Scaling-aware adapter for structure-grounded LLM reasoning](#)) ([Data scarcity in pediatric rare disease recognition](#)) ([Towards imbalanced molecular property regression](#))
- Dr. Konermann ([Atomistic insights into operation of electrospray ionization emitter](#)) ([Gaseous protein ions from aqueous ammonium acetate droplets during native electrospray](#)) ([Thermal protein aggregation and lys acetylation](#))
- Dr. Koschinsky ([Lipoprotein\(a\) testing](#)) ([Lipoprotein\(a\) and women's cardiovascular health](#))
- Dr. Lajoie ([Islet regenerative proteins of multipotent stromal cells](#)) ([Isolation of extracellular vesicles from ascites fluid](#))
- Dr. Ling ([Shu complex and RAD51 filaments in DNA damage response](#))
- Dr. Turley ([Hyaluronan in keloid and hypertrophic scars](#))