

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

# PHYSIOLOGY and PHARMACOLOGY

## Message from the Chair

Happy New Year and a warm welcome back to campus!

As we get ready to tackle 2026 and all it will bring, I encourage us all to take a moment to reflect on all that was accomplished in 2025 while looking ahead to the opportunities of the semester to come. As always, this newsletter highlights important updates from the Department, including faculty and student achievements, upcoming events, and initiatives that will shape our work in the months ahead.

In addition to the start of the new academic term, 2026 will bring some key Departmental activities, including external review of our graduate program (February 4-5) and undergraduate program (April 9-10) - please note and hold these dates to contribute to these important events.

As the semester gets underway, I am grateful to our faculty, staff, and students for the dedication, engagement, and hard work. Wishing everyone a year filled with collaboration, learning, discovery, joy, and success!

*Cheryle*

## This issue:

Welcome

Congratulations

Tribute

Committee Updates:

Undergraduate

Graduate

Research

EDID

Graduate Student Council

Social

Upcoming Events:

Graduate Program IQAP

Review Site Visit:

Feb 4 & 5 2026

Undergraduate Program

IQAP Review Site Visit:

Apr 9 & 10 2026

Upcoming Seminars:

Mon, Jan 19

Mon, Jan 26

Mon, Feb 2



## WELCOME

**ANAMIKA DUTTA** – Research Technician with Dr. Lina Dagnino

**REEBAL RAFEH** – Post Doctoral Associate with Dr. Taylor Schmitz

**JING ZHOU** – Post Doctoral Associate with Dr. Taylor Schmitz

## CONGRATULATIONS

**To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:**

SAHAR MOUAWAD – MSc (Marlys Koschinsky/  
Michael Boffa)

EMILY WHITE – MSc (Frank Beier/Matthew Grol)

**Welcome to all new graduate students:**

AMNA FARHAD – MSc (Matthew Grol)

JOCELYN LI – MSc (Peter Chidiac)

FABBIHA SHAFIQ – MSc (Oana Birceanu)

**Promoted Faculty:**

On Wed, Nov 19<sup>th</sup>, the Office of the Dean had a celebration honouring the faculty members who received promotions in the 2024-25 academic year. Dr. Cheryle Séguin congratulated Dr. John Di Guglielmo's promotion to Professor and Dr. Nicole Campbell was granted Continuing Status as Associate Professor.



Logos and medals for  
upcoming Olympic and  
Paralympic Games



Congratulations to Drs.  
Di Guglielmo and Campbell on  
their promotions in the 2024-25  
academic year





**Congratulations** to Dr. Faraj Haddad on his recent marriage to Salonee Patel on December 28<sup>th</sup> in Cambridge. Best wishes to the happy couple!



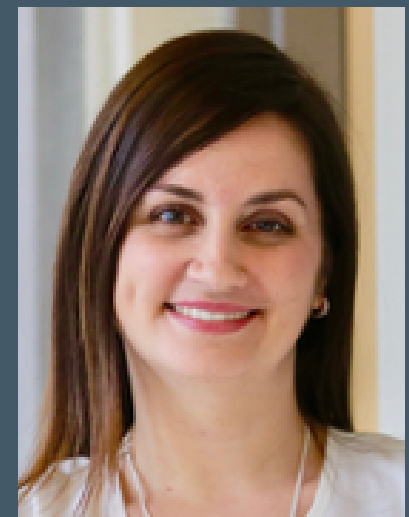
**A Tribute** to Dr. Frank Beier was written by Drs. Séguin and Appleton for the Journal of Osteoarthritis and Cartilage.  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)



## IN THE NEWS



Drs. Cheryle Séguin and Lauren Flynn were highlighted in Western News for their work that may lead to the repair of spinal joints  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)



Dr. Christine Bell's work was highlighted in a Western News article about feedback  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)

# Undergraduate Studies Update

Welcome back and happy 2026!

Semester 1 is behind us. For those involved in semester 1 teaching, thanks for a great fall semester. Everything went according to plan, final exams are completed, grades submitted, and we are now onto Semester 2. A huge thank you to Michele Grigg for all the coordination of our undergraduate activities, especially during the hectic seasons of midterms and final exams.

We want to welcome our new Teaching Assistants who might be a TA for the very first time. We hope you enjoy the experience and perhaps catch the “teaching bug” like many of our faculty members did when we were graduate students.

A huge congratulations to our undergraduate lab team for securing funding through the Science Student Donation Allocation, led by Dr. Oana Birceanu and Dr. Christie Vanderboor, to purchase a ChemSolo Auto Imager. This allows us to run exceptional, innovative Phys/Pharm 3000E labs. Great job team!

A reminder to our Semester 2 course managers that Reading Week is February 14 to February 22. No assessments can be scheduled during those dates. Please remember to quickly check and approve or deny academic considerations (medical, compassionate, varsity, etc.) for your course in the student absence portal (SAP instructor) on Extranet. You will get an email notification when there is a submission. If you are unsure when to deny a consideration, feel free to reach out to me ([abeye2@uwo.ca](mailto:abeye2@uwo.ca)), and we can review your syllabus.

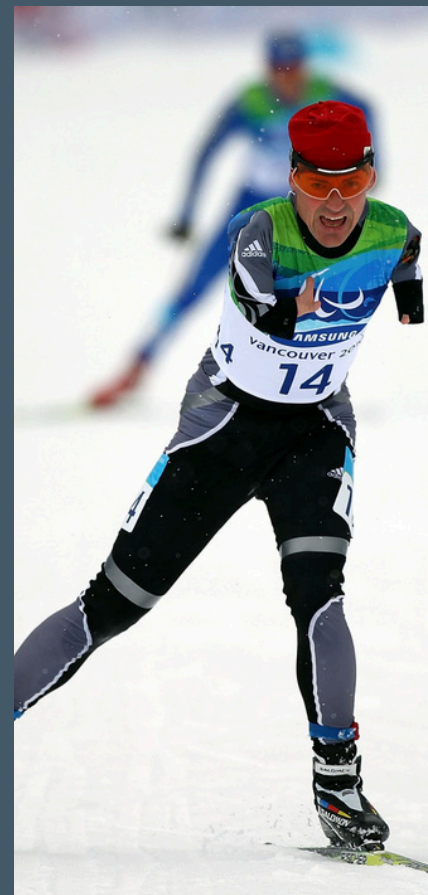
Looking ahead, our undergraduate IQAP review will be held on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, so please mark your calendars. Dr. Rosa Da Silva (McMaster) and Dr. Andrew Horne (UBC) will be our external reviewers, and we look forward to their visit.

Lastly, we have some new initiatives on the horizon. We will be launching a new Career Series called “Phys/Pharm careers you may not know about (but should)”. Our first session will be on Monday, January 26 at 4:30 PM on Zoom. We will learn about a career as a Speech Language Pathologist, presented by Paula Beye, MCISc, who works at LHSC. Our next session will be on March 23, where we will explore another exciting career related to Physiology and Pharmacology. Please spread the word. All are welcome, and a Zoom link will be circulated. We will also be working on launching a new in-person Physiology 2130 course for 2026-2027 and making changes to Physiology 3140A.

Enjoy Semester 2!



Dr. Tom Appleton is presenting  
at Doc Talks: “From  
Misconception to Modern  
Insight: The New Story of  
Osteoarthritis”  
on Feb 4 from 7-8:30 am  
[LINK TO REGISTER](#)





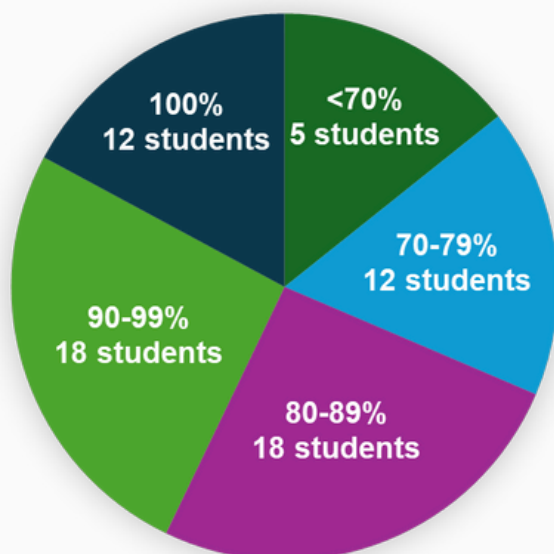


## Graduate Studies Update

### Departmental Seminars

We would like to acknowledge remarkable graduate student engagement at the departmental seminar series (please see graph below). We appreciate your attendance and participation, as it reflects a strong dedication to learning and professional development.

**Graduate Student Seminar Attendance Sept-Dec 2025**



### IQAP Review

The Graduate Program IQAP review is scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, and the External Reviewers are Dr. Rashmi Kothary (U Ottawa) and Dr. Elizabeth Cowley (Dalhousie U). Doodle polls will be sent out soon to Faculty, Graduate Students, etc. with available timeslots. Please keep your schedules open to meet with the review team. We encourage input from all department members.

### The Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS)/ QEII-GSST

are now open. The application timeline is as follows:

- January 30, 2026 – Final submission deadline. Application closes at 4:00 p.m. (EST).
- May 1, 2026 – Announcement of 2026-2027 OGS/QEII-GSST results.





To apply, please use the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) Application system ([https://grad.uwo.ca/finances/external\\_funding/ogs.html](https://grad.uwo.ca/finances/external_funding/ogs.html)). Graduate Students can use their Tri-Agency Scholarship Applications (CGRS D or CGRS M) OR submit a new application (for students who did not apply to the CGRS D or CGRS M competitions).

#### Eligibility:

- be a Canadian citizen, a Permanent Resident of Canada, a Protected Person [under subsection 95 (2) of the Immigration and Refugee Protections Act (Canada)], or an international student.
- be a current graduate student, or an applicant to, a research-based graduate program.
- have a minimum of 3 full-time terms remaining in their funding eligible period as of January 1
- have provided Western with a valid Social Insurance Number

Best of luck!

## Research Committee Update

Congratulation to Van Lu and team on their success in the recent Schulich Infrastructure Support grant competition. With this grant we will be able to add a bead mill homogenizer and NanoDrop Ultra spectrophotometer and fluorometer to our departmental core laboratory for rapid, high-throughput sample preparation for genomic, transcriptomic, and proteomic analysis.







## EDID Committee Update

### Podcast

Our first episode, "[Inclusive Learning by Design: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum with Dr. Nicole Campbell](https://sites.libsyn.com/604795/inclusive-learning-by-design-uncovering-the-hidden-curriculum-with-dr-nicole-campbell)", is available for listening. It is currently available at the Libsyn link attached and on Spotify, with other major platforms (e.g., Apple Music) to follow very shortly.

If the above hyperlink does not work, please paste the following URL in your web browser: <https://sites.libsyn.com/604795/inclusive-learning-by-design-uncovering-the-hidden-curriculum-with-dr-nicole-campbell>

We're looking forward to having you listen. In the show notes, you can find resources mentioned, key timestamps, and an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback for future episodes.

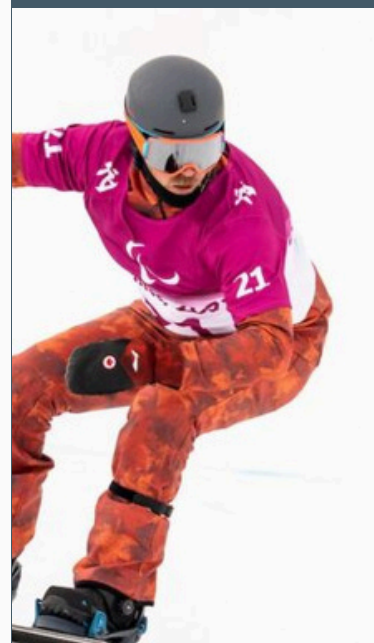
### Guest Speaker

We are excited to welcome Dr. Heidi Swanson as a guest speaker for the EDID-A focused seminar. Dr. Swanson will be on campus on April 13 2026, and she will speak on her recent work called "[Reflecting on the '10 calls to action to natural scientists' 5 years later: how do we keep moving forward on reconciliation?](#)". This work is based on a previous publication called "[Towards reconciliation: 10 calls to action to natural scientists working in Canada](#)".

## Graduate Student Council Update

Happy New Year from PPGSC!

The PPGSC social committee was happy to help host the Holiday Lunch on December 17th. We are so happy with the turnout and thank you to those who participated in the graduate student gift exchange and activities during the event! We will be taking feedback on the event so please reach out for suggestions on what you would like to see next year or how we could make the Holiday Lunch even more fun!





## Social Committee Update



### HOLIDAY PARTY - DEC 17 2025



The last social event of 2025 was, of course, the Holiday lunch party. It was also the most well-attended event with almost 100 people enjoying a delicious buffet lunch while socializing with colleagues and friends. Lunch was followed by, the now traditional, holiday Kahoot Quiz set up by Dr. Anita Woods. Subsequent entertainment included the a photobooth, a gingerbread-person decorating contest as well as other games. Special thanks goes out to the Olga, Michele, Jane, Hailey, Alycia, and others for organizing, decorating DSB 2000, cleaning-up, etc. Also, thank you to everyone who donated to the foodbank as part of this year's celebration.

The social committee wishes everyone a happy and social 2026 and look forward to seeing you at some/all of our events in the upcoming year.

All photos from the event are now on our Flickr page:  
[LINK TO PHOTOS](#)





# Upcoming Seminars

## The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology 2026 Winter/Spring Series

All lectures held at 3:00 p.m. in MSB 384 and on Zoom (link available upon request)



**Date:** Monday, January 19  
**Speaker:** Ermina Hadzic, PhD candidate  
Western University

"Exploring pathways driving Osteoarthritis"

Host: Cheryle Séguin



**Date:** Monday, January 26  
**Speaker:** Andrew Pruszyński, PhD  
Western University

"Sensory expectations shape neural population dynamics in motor circuits"

Host: Julio Martinez-Trujillo



**Date:** Monday, February 2  
**Speaker:** Christine Bell, PhD  
Western University

"Supporting Student Engagement through Feedback Literacy and Agency"

Host: Van Lu

We love celebrating our accomplishments, in and out of the lab.  
Please share your stories, pictures and newsworthy items for  
upcoming editions! Send emails to [jjacob62@uwo.ca](mailto:jjacob62@uwo.ca).