



NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

PHYSIOLOGY and PHARMACOLOGY

RAFAEL - STUDIES OF THE TWO APOSTLES

Message from the Chair

As we make our way through the midterm rush, the flurry of exams and assignments is matched only by the flurries outside! Our first snowfall has arrived to remind us that winter is just around the corner.

A huge congratulations to all faculty, staff and students who have also survived the fall grant and scholarship submission period. Thank you to all who contributed to writing, editing, or generating those exciting new pieces of data. Your collective efforts are driving ambitious ideas forward and are what keep research thriving in the Department.

This fall we continue to have many accomplishments to celebrate, including a tremendously successful Research Day. I would like to extend a message of thanks to our Research committee and administrative staff for their remarkable efforts. The quality of presentations and the exciting discussions throughout the poster hall reflected the depth, innovation, and collegiality that define our research community. Thank you to all who participated and supported this event.

There is a palpable sense of progress and purpose across the Department, let's keep moving forward together toward big goals.

Cheryle

This issue:

Welcome

Congratulations

Committee Updates:

Undergraduate
Research
Graduate
Health & Safety
Social

Graduate Student Council

Upcoming Events:

Department Meeting
Mon, Nov 24

Holiday Party
Wed, Dec 17

Upcoming Seminars:

Mon, Nov 17
Mon, Nov 24
Mon, Dec 1



WELCOME

HAILEY DRURY – Welcome back to our Department Technician, we missed you during your parental leave!

CONGRATULATIONS

VAN LU – was accepted to the TRIANGLE training program – a CIHR/Canadian Association of Gastroenterology funded program supporting Early Career Researchers in the liver and GI research space

DON WELSH – was the recipient of the Eugene M. Landis Award from the Microcirculatory Society.

EMILY DAY – was awarded Canadian Foundation of Innovation (CFI) funding for “Investigating the impact of cellular stress response pathways on whole-body metabolism”

GEOFFREY PICKERING – has been re-appointed as the Neil McKenzie Chair in Cardiac Care in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:

MEG SCHUURMAN – PhD (Rennian Wang/Nica Borradaile)

SEPIDEH TAGHIZADEH – MSc (Frank Beier/Lina Dagnino)

To Graduate Student Award Winners:

David Armstrong Award – **Bavina Thirunavukarasu**

Robert Tsushima Award – **Robert Wong**

Hari and Gudrun Sharma Award – **Danielle Colussi**

Gordon Mogenson Award – **Kelly Zhou**

Esme Walker Award – **Tom Lin**

Margaret Moffat – **Mandy Wang**

Murray Fraser Award – **Anamika Dutta**

Bill Bottom – **Andrea Kocsis**

George W. Stavaky Teaching Award – **Emily White**

PPGSC Leadership Award – **Garth Blackler**

DA VINCI - ANATOMICAL STUDY OF THE ARM



Dr. Anita Woods was featured in The Pulse for her free and diverse scientific illustration project
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)



Dr. Adrian Owen was interviewed in a Daily Mail article about dementia
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)

25 YEAR CELEBRATION EVENT

On Mon, October 20th, Western recognized exceptional service with the 25 Year Service Awards. Three of the recipients were PhysPharm's own Chris Pin, Sue-Ann Becker, and Stefan Everling. Congrats!



[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)

Undergraduate Studies Update

I hope everyone's teaching term is going well. Midterm season is behind us, and so it is time to look ahead to final exams. The final exam schedule was posted a few weeks ago in Extranet; please mark your calendars accordingly if you are managing a course this semester. The last day of classes is Tuesday, Dec 9th with final exams starting on Thursday, Dec 11th until Monday, Dec 22nd. Please ensure that you coordinate your exam submission with Michele Grigg well in advance to meet printing deadlines. For those supervising Phys/Pharm 4985E students, please allow students to reduce their lab hours during this time so they can focus more on studying.

The drop date for Semester 1 half (0.5 credit) courses is December 1st, so you may still see movement out of your courses. Classes resume on Monday, January 5th, and our makeup exam date for students missing final exams will tentatively be that week. We will follow up with course managers soon.

Just a few weeks to go, everyone. We've got this!

Angela



Dr. Don Welsh is the recipient of the 2025 Eugene M. Landis Award from the Microcirculatory Society
[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)



Dr. Emily Day received a CFI award along with 14 other Western researchers
[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)



Dr. Andrew Pruszyński was featured in The Pulse for his new study in Nature.
[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)

Research Committee Update

The 2025 Gowdey Distinguished Lecture and Research Day was held on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025, and was a great success. We were delighted to welcome Dr. Hans Clevers from Utrecht University as this year's distinguished lecturer. Dr. Clevers presented an engaging lecture on his ground-breaking work developing and using organoids to study human biology. Dr. Clevers also spent time interacting with faculty and trainees in the department.

Research day also featured the Junior Faculty lecture that was delivered by Flory Muanda and Danielle Colussi presented the trainee lecture. Both talks were excellent and showcased the breadth of research activity in our department.

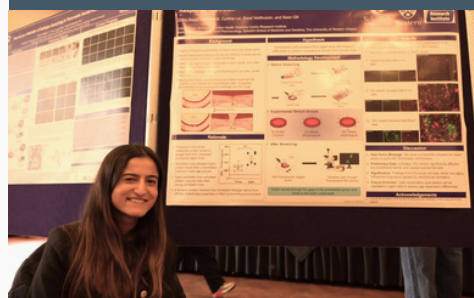
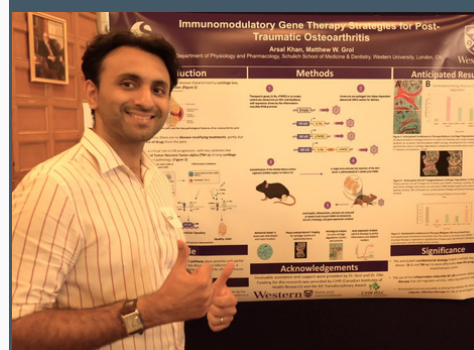
Further highlighting the excellent science in the department, we also welcomed 61 outstanding poster presentations from trainees in the department. A big thank you to all the judges who volunteered to evaluate the posters and select winners of the poster prizes.



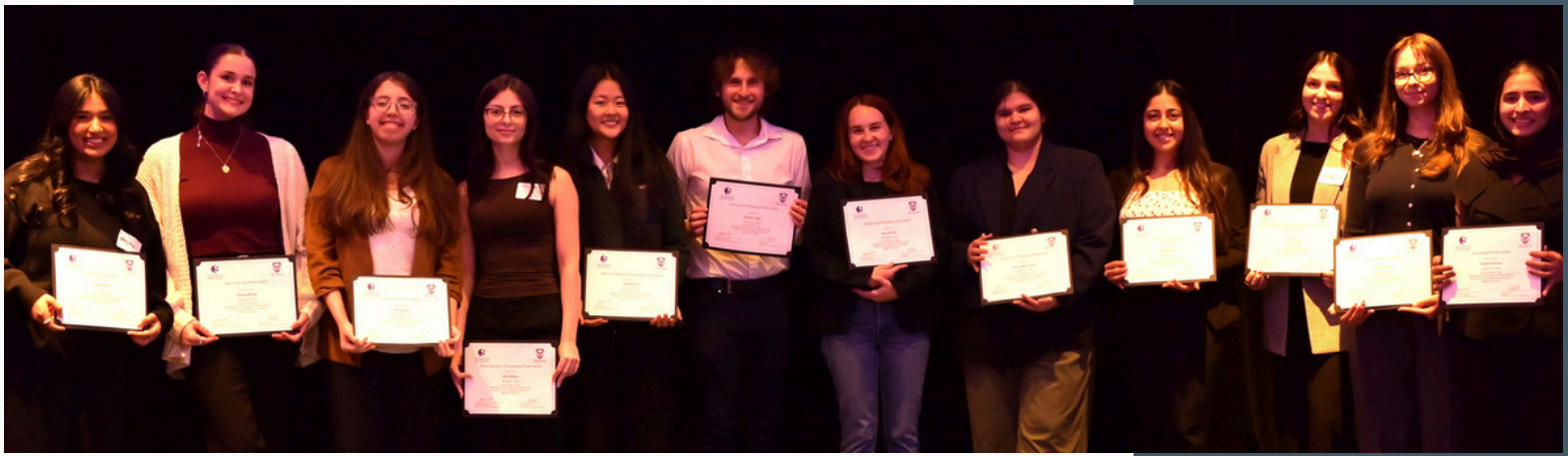
PhysPharm PhD student Nouran Al-Banaa was featured in The Pulse about her work with stem cells
[LINK TO WEBSITE](#)



Dr. Hans Clevers presented certificates to all Graduate Poster Award Winners



Research Day speakers Danielle Colussi, Dr. Flory Muanda and Dr. Hans Clevers



Our Research Day Poster Winners!

Cancer and Cell Biology

Joana Ribeiro Pinto (Pin)
Zoya Lehman (Stathopoulos)
Nicholas Lukas (Stathopoulos)

Clinical and Basic Pharmacology

Elizabeth Cui (Kim/Richard)
Alice Balluku (Hutson/Garcia-Bournissen)

Cardiovascular Sciences

Ryan Falconer (Day)
Sahar Mouawad (Kochinsky)
Caitlin Giannis (Chandy)
Emma Graham (Veldhuizen)

Reproductive Biology, Endocrinology, and Metabolism

Karly Masse (Lu)

Neuroscience

Yara Azzawi (Bai)

Bone & Joint

Hayley Murray (Grol)
Qinli Guo (Appleton/Pickering)

New Student

Wajiha Imran (Tirona)
Alesia Mano (Pin)
Tehreem Fatima (Séguin/Flynn)

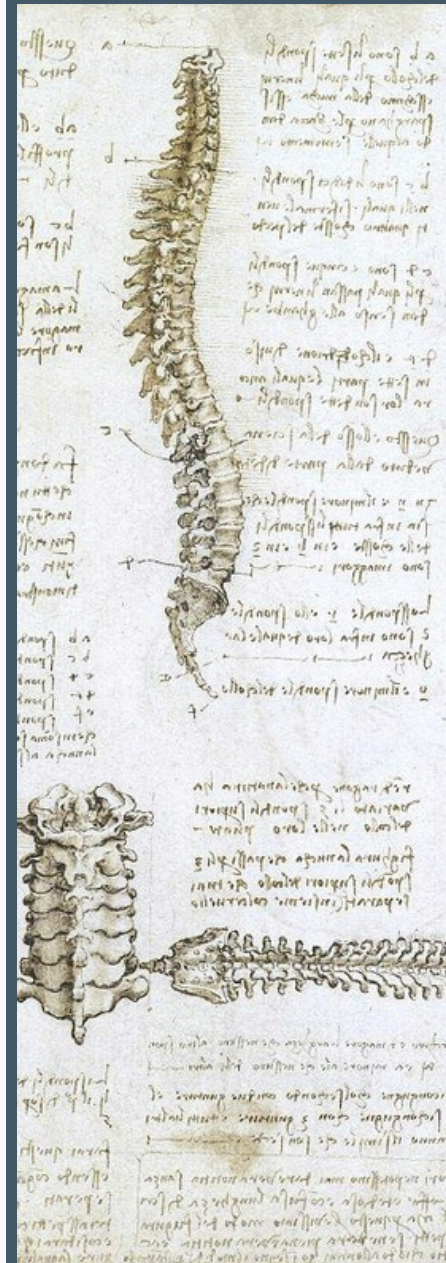
Lunch and Learn

We are always happy to hear suggestions for topics to cover in future Lunch and Learn sessions. Please send suggestions by email to Rithwik (rramach@uwo.ca) or Alycia (amorga7@uwo.ca).

Faculty Biographies

Our work study student, Zainab Al-Attwani, is available to help update faculty biographies. Zainab will be reaching out to schedule interviews and update biographies on the Department Website. If you would like your update expedited, please contact Zainab (zalattwa@uwo.ca) and Rithwik (rramach@uwo.ca) to set up a meeting.

Please also let us know if you would like to highlight any research related stories on the department website news feed and Zainab can assist with putting this together.

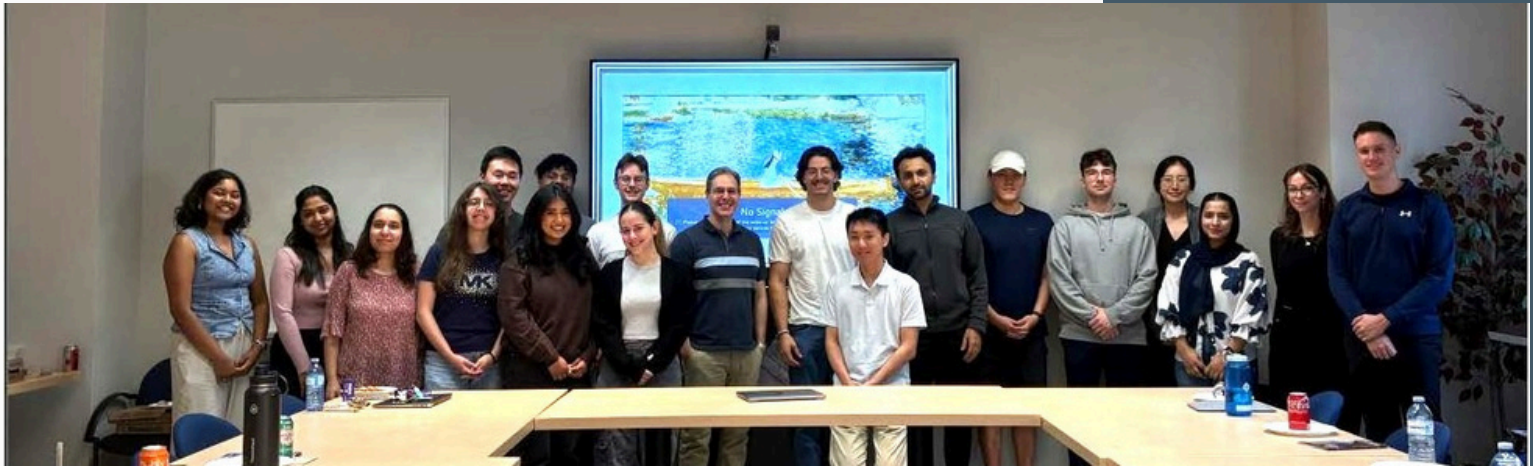


DA VINCI - THE SPINE

Graduate Studies Update

- The Graduate Program welcomed 19 new students on Graduate Student orientation day on September 18, 2025.
- Congratulations to all the recipients of the 2025 Mogenson Trust Scholarships, the David T. Armstrong award, and the PPGSC Leadership Award listed above
- A gentle reminder that the Tri-Agency Master's Scholarships Awards deadline is coming up. Timeline for applications:
 - December 1: Application deadline (before 8:00 p.m. EST).
 - December 2: March 31: Award adjudication.
 - April 1: SGPS posts results to the Research Portal.

GRAD STUDENT ORIENTATION



PHYS/PHARM 3000E LABS

Some exciting news from one of our students in last year's PhysPharm3000E labs! Every year, students across the globe submit their undergraduate research work for evaluation by an independent committee as part of the Global Undergraduate Awards. The organization recognizes top undergraduate work, shares it globally and creates a network for students across disciplines.

In 2025, one of the students in our lab course was recognized for the long report that they submitted as part of Rotation 3. Shayan Rakhshan received the 2025 Highly Commended award in the Medical Sciences discipline for their long report, titled "Investigating the Combined Impact of Corticosteroids and PI3K Inhibitors on Bone Growth and Development in Murine Models". Shayan did exceptional on the report and in the course. This experiment was supervised by Dr. Matt Grol, with teaching assistants Hayley Murray (Grol lab) and Jesutofunmi Adesuyi (McGuire lab). Shayan is a current student in our HSP Physiology and Pharmacology program. We look forward to guiding our students through the lab course this upcoming year!



DA VINCI - THE MUSCLES AND TENDONS OF THE LOWER LEG AND FOOT



Social Committee Update

Not unlike the annual Phys/Pharm research day a few days later, the departmental Halloween door decorating contest was a display of creativity and excitement. Submissions ranged from zombification, academic horrors, and other scary doors. Our Friday afternoon “voting room” included lemonade with eyeballs, Halloween snacks, and ultimately the selection of the winner: Room DSB 2011, submitted by Abinaci Bahra, Nathaniel Woolvett, and Jessica Ankrah. Thanks everyone for participating and stay tuned for upcoming social events.



DA VINCI - STUDIES OF THE FOOT



The winning door -
DSB 2011



SAVE THE DATE

The PhysPharm Holiday Party will be on
Wednesday, December 17th



DA VINCI - THE MUSCLES OF THE SHOULDER

Health and Safety Committee Update

Recently, Campus Safety & Emergency Services have introduced an initiative to enhance emergency response. You may have noticed the new 911 signage in your building. These signs, located in elevator lobbies, main entrance(s), and exterior signage at emergency response locations, display the building name and Emergency Response Number from our Emergency Response Map. When calling 911, occupants should provide the building name and Emergency Response Number to help Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance, Fire) locate the correct building quickly. Please take note of your building number and incorporate it into your lab's fire escape plan.



Christie Vanderboor, part of Western's HAZMAT team

Graduate Student Council Update

We recently held our first Phys/Pharm Graduate Council Meeting for the fall term and completed elections! Elections were anonymous and candidates were voted into PPGSC based on majority rulings. With that being said, we are happy to announce the results of this year's election and welcome our new members of PPGSC! [LINK TO 2025-26 GRAD COUNCIL LIST](#)



Upcoming Seminars

DA VINCI - STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF LEDA

The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology 2025 Winter/Spring Series

All lectures held at 3:00 p.m. in MSB 384 and on Zoom unless otherwise noted



Date: Monday, November 17

Speaker: Lisa Porter, PhD

University of Windsor

"Atypical cell cycle regulation over stem cell fate in the developing brain reveals novel strategies in the treatment of aggressive brain cancers"

Host: Chris Pin



Date: Monday, November 24

Speaker: Robert Wong, PhD candidate

Western University

"Connecting the Connexins: Structural Determinants of Gap Junction Channel Formation"

Host: Donglin Bai



Date: Monday, December 1

Speaker: Phil Karpowicz, PhD

University of Windsor

"Circadian rhythms in the gastrointestinal tract during colitis and regeneration"

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.