



FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER

PHYSIOLOGY and PHARMACOLOGY

Message from the Chair

Well, it must be the start of another fall term... the leaves are beginning to turn, students have returned to campus, and it is once again almost impossible to get to or from campus!

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new graduate students in both our research program and the Drug Safety program, the newest cohort of PhysPharm 4985 students, as well as our new postdoctoral fellows and staff members. We are also thrilled to welcome our newest faculty member, Dr. Lauren Kelly, who was recruited jointly with the Department of Pediatrics. Lauren's research program in drug safety and clinical trials methodology will be based at the Children's Health Research Institute, where she will also lead the Children's Health and Therapeutics Division.

As always, the fall term brings with it a wealth of new opportunities and a renewed sense of energy across our Department. Our Seminars and Research Committees have assembled an outstanding lineup of seminars, workshops, and professional development opportunities. Please ensure you save the date for two noteworthy events, the Inaugural Frank Beier Memorial Lecture on October 15th, and the Department Research Day/Stevenson Lectureship on November 2nd. I encourage everyone to take advantage of all these events to learn something new, connect with colleagues, and strengthen the vibrant research and educational community that makes our Department such a rewarding place to work and study.

Wishing you all a productive, successful, and fulfilling term in the labs, classrooms, clinics, and offices. I look forward to celebrating your achievements and discoveries in the months ahead.

Cheryle

This issue:

Welcome
Congratulations
Committee Updates:

Undergraduate
Research
Graduate
Health & Safety
Social
Graduate Student
Council

Upcoming Events:
Grad Orientation
Thurs, Sept 17

Department meeting
Mon, Sept 21

National Day for Truth
and Reconciliation
Wed, Sept 30

Frank Beier Memorial
Lecture
Thurs, Oct 15

Upcoming Seminars:
Mon, Sept 21
Mon, Sept 28
Mon, Oct 5



WELCOME

LAUREN KELLY – Associate Professor, joint appointment with Dept of Pediatrics

GABRIELA N.M. LIBRAIS – Research Associate with Dr. Nica Borradaile

ALYCIA CROOKS – Post Doctoral Associate with Dr. Taylor Schmitz

New PhysPharm Graduate students:

NATALIA BARCZAK – MSc (Brad Urquhart)

TATIANA BOZOVIC – MSc (Dean Betts)

FELIX CAI – MSc (Richard Kim)

CEDRIC CUMMINGS – MSc (Brad Urquhart)

MATEA DERGIC – MSc (Janine Hutson/Facundo Garcia-Bournissen)

GILLIS HASKELL – MSc (Donald Welsh)

OLIVIA KELLENDONK – MSc (Rithwik Ramachandran)

SHAHAB MORADI HAGHGHAT – PhD (Lauren Kelly)

TISA SHAH – MSc (Rithwik Ramachandran)

MESUM SYED – MSc (Rommel Tirona)

SAI TATIPALLI – MSc (John Di Guglielmo)

DOMINIQUE VAESSEN – MSc (Dean Betts)

VARA VACIRCA – MSc (Mark Chandy)

KELLY WU – MSc (Peter Stathopoulos)

New students in the MSc Drug Safety and Pharmacovigilance program:

ODAFE ARUBAYI

MAAME ASANTE

SARAH BRULE

IRENE CAO

GUANHAO CHEN

MEGAN COOME

ASHWINI GANESH

SAMANTHA HADDEN

HELIA JAVADI

JANA RAMMAL

REYHANEH SALEHI

GUANHAN YAO

IN THE NEWS



Dr. Adrian Owen was featured in the Globe and Mail about his new book, “Think Before you Think: Understanding and Mastering Executive Function”

[LINK](#) to article

He also joined BBC’s podcast as part of the “Titans of Science” series.

[LINK](#) to podcast

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Fabiana Crowley, who won the **CSPT** (Canadian Society of Pharmacology and Therapeutics) 2024/2025 Distinguished Service and Education Award.

Graduate students for the completion of their degrees:

KATHLEEN GLAVIN - MSc (Richard Kim)
LUKAS NICHOLAS - MSc (Peter Stathopoulos)
SHELLY NG - PhD (Peter Chidiac)
BALA BASKARAN - MSc (Flory Muanda)
RYAN FALCONER - MSc (Emily Day)
MARIA NICA - MSc (Christopher Pin)

Ontario Graduate Scholarship:

NOURAN AL-BANAA - PhD (David Hess)
ELIZABETH CUI - PhD (Richard Kim)
EMMA GRAHAM - PhD (Ruud Veldhuizen)
VANIA MARZBANRAD - MSc (Janine Hutson)
HAYLEY MURRAY - PhD (Matt Grol)
ALEX RICO - PhD (Cheryle Séguin)

Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science and Technology:

LUJAIN EZ EDDIN - PhD (Flory Muanda)
ANDREI GLOGOV - PhD (John Di Guglielmo)
ONEEB HASSAN - PhD (Chris Pin)
ZOYA LEHMAN - PhD (Peter Stathopoulos)
ANDREI MATUSA - PhD (Douglas Fraser)
JONATHAN NGUYEN - PhD (Ute Schwarz/Brad Urquhart)

CIHR Canada Graduate Scholarships - Masters:

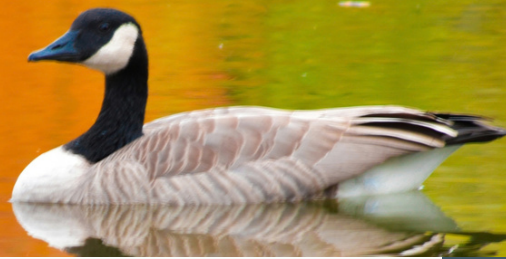
ERIC DING (Matthew Grol)
ARSAL KHAN (Matthew Grol)
SHREERAM PATKAR (Adrian Owen)
GAVIN ZHANG (Emily Day)



Dr. Julio Martinez-Trujillo was featured in The Pulse about his study that shows the brain's building blocks are highly specialized
[LINK](#) to article



Dr. Van Lu was profiled in Western News along with Drs. Dean Betts and Julio Martinez-Trujillo about new CFI funding.
[LINK](#) to article



CIHR Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral:

ALI OMRANI (Flory Muanda)

NSERC Canada Graduate Scholarship:

DEEKSHANA SUBRAMANIAN – MSc (Sean Cregan)

JESSICA TWUMASI – PhD (Nica Borradaile)

A Special congratulations to the recipient of the inaugural Frank Beier Opportunity Scholarship:

VARA VACIRCA – MSc (Mark Chandy)



“I’m Vara, an MSc student in Physiology & Pharmacology, studying how genistein may influence inflammation and vascular health in people living with HIV. I’ve always been drawn to research that connects what we learn in the lab to real-world patient care, and I’m excited to keep exploring that connection throughout my graduate studies!”

NSERC DISCOVERY GRANTS:

DONGLIN BAI
BRIAN CORNEIL
QINGPING FENG
DAVID HILL
TAYLOR SCHMITZ
PETER STATHOPULOS
CHERYLE SÉGUIN
BRAD URQUHART

CIHR PROJECT GRANTS:

SAMUEL ASFAHA
VAN LU
ANDREW PRUSZYNSKI
PETER STATHOPULOS
CHERYLE SÉGUIN
DON WELSH

CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION (CFI) FUNDING:

VAN LU, DEAN BETTS, JULIO MARTINEZ-TRUJILLO



The Pulse featured Dr. Wataru Inoue’s research on how the brain shifts into ‘stress mode’.

[LINK](#) to article



FALL WELCOME RECEPTION

On September 11th, the PhysPharm Department hosted a Welcome Reception for all Department members. Dr. Beye welcomed the Undergrads, Dr. Di Guglielmo addressed to the Graduate students and our Acting Chair, Dr. Séguin, welcomed all.

The Passport game was a great ice breaker to interact with all attendees. An excellent kickoff for our new school year!



Undergraduate Studies Update

Welcome to the New Academic Year

Happy September everyone! We want to extend a warm welcome our 65 incoming Year 4 HSP students, as well as other undergraduate students taking courses in our Department. It has been nice to experience the buzz of students on campus after a quiet summer. Our first exciting event, PhysPharm 4985E interview day on Sept 11, was a great success. We want to thank Dr. Stathopoulos, Dr. Bell and our PhysPharm Department office team for all the coordination that took place to make it happen.

Our undergraduate program would not be a success without the support of our 83 graduate student teaching assistants this year. A huge thank you to Michele Grigg and Dr. Birceanu for the outstanding efforts in coordinating the hiring of our TA's. Your hard work did not go unnoticed.

Here are a few important upcoming dates to mark your calendars.

Sept 17, 2026: Add/drop date for first term or full year course

Sept 30, 2026: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (non-instructional day)

October 10-18, 2026: Fall reading week

Dec 9, 2026: Last day of classes-Fall Term

Dec 11-22, 2026: December examination period

Wishing everyone an incredible academic year!

Research Committee Update

Please save the date for the upcoming James A.F. Stevenson Distinguished Lecture and Research Day on Monday, November 2. Look out for a call for abstracts soon.





JAMES A.F. STEVENSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AND RESEARCH DAY

Featuring :

LOTTE BJERRE KNUDSEN, DMSc
Professor
Life Science Innovator and Keynote Speaker

 **November 2, 2026**

 **2:00 pm**

 **McKellar Room,
UCC 290**

Join us at 9:30 am in the Great Hall, Somerville House for Student Poster Presentations and at 2:00 pm for the 2026 James A.F. Stevenson Distinguished Lecture. Details to follow.

SAVE THE DATE

Physiology and Pharmacology

 **Schulich**
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Graduate Studies Update

Welcome new and continuing graduate students to the new academic year!

New students: Please plan to attend our New Graduate Student Orientation on Thursday, September 17, 2026, 11:30 AM in MSB 212 A/B. This session will provide important information about the program. The orientation session will be followed by a GradBuddy mixer. Pizza will be provided.

Seminar Series: The Physiology and Pharmacology Seminar Committee has put together an exciting line-up of speakers for this upcoming year, and the first seminar will be on Monday, Sept 21. Graduate students (including those in collaborative specializations) are expected to attend at least 70% of departmental seminars in person. Attendance will be monitored using sign-up sheets located in the seminar room, and the remote seminar viewing room for those faculty and students located at the south end of the city. At the end of these talks, graduate students will be given priority to ask questions. We encourage all graduate students to attend and actively participate in these events to round out their professional education. To recognize student enthusiasm, the department will have a draw at the end of the seminar series for students that have perfect attendance.

Finally, a gentle reminder that the deadline for Canadian Graduate Research Scholarship-Doctoral (CGS-D) applications is Friday, September 18, by 4:00 pm. Best of luck to all the applicants!

Health & Safety Committee Update

The JOHSC inspection of the department in July went well. Please make sure to take any Corrective Actions indicated in the report for your lab, which can be found at the WorkSafe at Western website.

Labs in our department fortunately were minimally affected by the massive power failure in August. This widespread and long-lasting outage resulted from a disruption at a power substation on campus. If the power ever goes off in your lab, it's best to call Facilities Management at 519-661-3304 for help. Calls after hours will be redirected to Campus Police.

Social Committee Update

The social committee was excited to contribute to the Fall Welcome event for our new honours and graduate students. A new social Passport Challenge, with fun prizes to be won, allowed everyone to mingle and chat about anything from research topics to karaoke.

As this is a new year, the social committee is looking forward to organizing the usual events such as the holiday party, but also create a few new events. Rumour has it that there might be a Halloween scavenger hunt, so stay tuned for updates. Feel free to send additional suggestions to Ruud (rveldhui@uwo.ca), or better yet, join the committee to get involved!





Graduate Student Council Update

Thank you to everyone who attended our Paint and Q&A event hosted by the Social and Health & Wellness Committee! We look forward to hosting more exciting events as we enter into the fall!

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Kelly Zhou, Karly Masse, and Yara Azzawi for their outstanding contributions and commitment in their roles as Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary of the PPGSC. Their hard work and dedication have greatly impacted the graduate student community, and we wish them the best in their future endeavors.

As we look ahead to the new term, we are excited to announce the election of new members to these positions: Nouran Al-Banaa as Chair, Lori Cirillo as Vice-Chair, and Jonathan Nguyen as Secretary. Furthermore, we are thrilled to welcome Gillis Haskell, who will be taking on the role of Sports Representative for 2026-2027.

Welcome to all the new graduate students joining the Physiology and Pharmacology Department! We encourage everyone to join the Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Student Council (PPGSC). This is an excellent opportunity to get involved, connect with peers, and build your CV! Our first meeting will be held in September and will include elections for council positions, so we invite all students to attend and consider applying! Details about available positions and their responsibilities will be shared soon. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Nouran (nalbanaa@uwo.ca) or Lori (lcirillo@uwo.ca).





FRANK BEIER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Please save the date to attend the Inaugural Dr. Frank Beier Memorial Lecture, on Thurs, October 15th at 1:30 pm. Dr. Richard Loeser will be presenting.



INAUGURAL DR. FRANK BEIER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Featuring:

Dr. Richard Loeser
Joseph P. Archie, Jr. Eminent Professor of Medicine
Director, UNC Thurston Arthritis Research Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

 **October 15, 2026**

 **1:30pm-4:00pm**

 **Schmeichel Bldg,
Western University**

Join researchers, trainees, patients, and community partners as we honour the legacy of Dr. Frank Beier and celebrate research excellence.

Full program details coming soon.

 **Western**
Bone and Joint Institute

SAVE THE DATE

Physiology and Pharmacology

 **Schulich**
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

NDTR 2026 WESTERN DEANS EVENT



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

*Transforming Insight into Impact: Advancing
Indigenous Health Equity*

 **SEPTEMBER 30, 2026**

 **1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

 **SEI 1110**

For more information, visit this [LINK](#)

Upcoming Seminars

The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology 2026 Fall/Winter Series

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

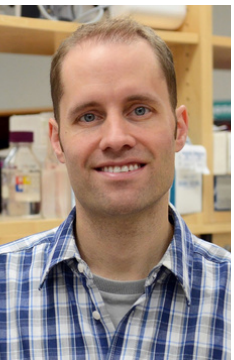


Date: Monday, September 21

Speaker: Charys Martin
Western University

"The Bodies We Teach: Rethinking Language, Representation, and Belonging"

Host: Christine Bell



Date: Monday, September 28

Speaker: Stephen Renaud
Western University

"The Placenta at the Interface of Development and Stress"

Host: Van Lu



Date: Monday, October 5

Speaker: Mark Daley
Chief AI Officer, Western University

Host: Marlys Koschinsky

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.