

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

PHYSIOLOGY and PHARMACOLOGY

Message from the Chair

Hello all,

Welcome to the new academic year! While the calm of summer is certainly enjoyable on campus, the buzz and excitement of the new school year provide a welcome change. Unless you are trying to leave campus by car at 4:30pm.....

And it is a busy September for many of us, with new teaching starting, CIHR deadlines, new trainees joining the labs, and a new cycle of meetings after meetings for some of us. Let's make sure we do not overcommit and let's keep some of the balance that we hopefully found this summer. But please make time to attend our Welcome Reception on Sept 6 at 3 pm (Thames Hall Atrium).

Lots of changeover in our departmental committees for this year. We celebrated them already, but thank you once again to our outgoing chairs Anita Woods, Peter Stathopoulos, Lina Dagnino, Dan Hardy, Van Lu, and Marlys Koschinsky. At the same time, welcome to the new chairs Angela Beye (Undergrad), Rithwik Ramachandran (Research), Oana Birceanu (EDID), Peter Chidiac (Health and Safety), Van Lu (Seminars), and Ruud Veldhuizen (Social). Do not hesitate to contact them if you have any suggestions or questions. The Department could not function without the dedicated service of our committees, so these time commitments are highly appreciated. Of course, thanks are also extended to our continuing committee chairs and all members!

A reminder to faculty to save the date for our retreat on October 17. This retreat will facilitate planning for the external review of our undergraduate and graduate programs over the next year. These reviews are essential parts of the academic cycle, so please attend and provide input.

Have a wonderful fall everyone and remember that my door is (almost) always open to hear from you!

Frank

This issue:

Welcome

Congratulations

New Grad Program Launch

Committee Updates:

Undergraduate
Graduate
Research
EDID
Social

Graduate Student Council

Upcoming Events:

Department Meeting
Mon, Sept 16th

Upcoming Seminars:

Mon, Sept 16
Mon, Sept 23
Mon, Sept 30

Stay Connected



@westernuPandP



PhysPharm

WELCOME

KARNIG KAZAZIAN – Research Technician with Dr. Adrian Owen

JAMES LIM – Research Technician with Dr. Brad Urquhart

RACHEL WILSON – Research Technician with Drs. Nica Borradaile & Rennian Wang

To all our new graduate students:

ABINACI BAHRA (MSc) – Brad Urquhart

ALICE BALLUKA (MSc) – Janine Hutson & Facundo Garcia-Bournissen

EISHA BAQAI (MSc) – Sean Gill & Ruud Veldhuizen

BALA BASKARAN (MSc) – Flory Muanda

RYAN FALCONER (MSc) – Emily Day

CAITLIN GIANNIS (MSc) – Mark Chandy

KATHLEEN GLAVIN (MSc) – Richard Kim

GENEVA HEROLD (MSc) – Tom Appleton

ABBEY KIRKWOOD (MSc) – Van Lu

LOUISA LEWICKI (MSc) – Dean Betts

NICHOLAS LUKAS (MSc) – Peter Stathopoulos

HAYLEY MURRAY (MSc) – Matt Grol

MARIA NICA (MSc) – Chris Pin & John Di Guglielmo

WESLEY TRAN (MSc) – Matt Grol

ALLISON TSE (MSc) – Dean Betts

JOHN WANG (MSc) – Lakshman Gunaratnam

CONGRATULATIONS

To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:

SERGIU LUCACIU – PhD (Dale Laird)

MEHREEN TUFAIL – MSc (Qingping Feng)

FANG CHI WANG – MSc (Cheryle Séguin)

YURI KIM – MSc (Frank Beier)

MAGDALENE ZABEK – MSc (Janine Hutson & Facundo Garcia-Bournissen)



The medical condition discovered by Western neuroscientist Adrian Owen in 2006 officially gets a name: 'cognitive motor dissociation,' nearly two decades after the landmark finding.



Drs. Christie Vanderboor
& Dean Betts
SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN LEADERSHIP



NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM LAUNCH

The Department is thrilled to support the launch of a new 1 yr MSc program in Drug Safety and Pharmacovigilance, co-led by Drs. Michael Rieder and Abdelbaset Elzagallaai.

With its inaugural cohort of students, this interdisciplinary program will bring together experts from the fields of medicine, pharmacology, epidemiology and biostatistics, public health, and law to teach rich and up-to-date curricula covering all aspects of drug safety and pharmacovigilance and provide students exposure to research and clinical placements.

Undergraduate Studies Update

Welcome to the New Academic Year!

The 2024-2025 academic year is right around the corner, with classes starting on Thursday, September 5th. We're excited to welcome 75 new Phys/Pharm 4980 students to our research programs and nearly 3,700 students across our 31 undergraduate courses. While enrollment is down this year, we're closely monitoring the situation. In the weeks to come, I will learn more about enrolment trends across the entire BMSc program.

A huge thank you to Anita Woods, Oana Birceanu and Michele Grigg for their outstanding efforts in coordinating the hiring of our 82 graduate student teaching assistants for the year. Your hard work did not go unnoticed.

Transition to OWL Brightspace: We've successfully transitioned fall courses to the new Learning Management System, OWL Brightspace, and this was no small task for every course manager. Thanks to everyone's efforts, we're all set for a smooth start. I am grateful for how everyone worked to meet department deadlines and incorporated any feedback we provided. The new sites look fantastic; great work, everyone! Michele Grigg deserves a round of applause for coordinating the launch of our sites, along with uploading assessment dates, and so many other tasks.

Shout out to our Teaching Team: Congratulations to our teaching-intensive team for their incredible work over the summer! They pulled off the impossible by creating our reimagined online Physiology 2130 and Physiology 1020 courses, with beautiful interactive content for this September's launch. The team also developed the first five weeks of content for our newly designed nursing-focused online Pharmacology 2060 course.

Drug Safety and
Pharmacovigilance Class
of 2024/25



Special thanks to our digital media interns, Emily Yatsynovich and Victoria Chharawala, for their contributions to course graphics, sharing their informative student perspective, and creating beautiful banners for many of our department's Brightspace sites.

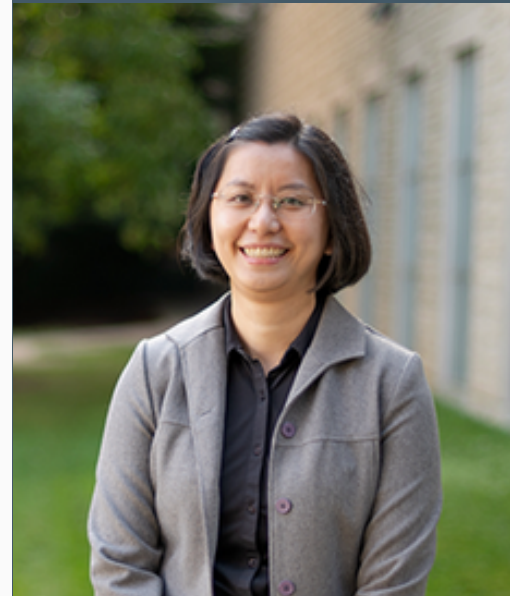
Looking Ahead: Our next major project is the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) undergraduate program review, which we'll submit next summer. We've gathered a wealth of data from alumni, third- and fourth-year undergraduates, and we'll continue building on this as we head into the fall. A special thank you to Keito Hyde, our summer undergraduate work study student, for his incredible efforts compiling alumni data, and to Christine Bell for supervising his work this summer.

Lastly, please remember that Anita Woods has passed her undergraduate chair hat (or secret superpowers cape? or maybe a thousand policy files) over to me. I think we can all agree that she was an exceptional leader, demonstrating almost superhuman abilities as we navigated the last 5 years of countless pivots. I'm hoping for less excitement during my term. If you have any questions about undergraduate-related matters, please feel free to reach out to me anytime (abeye2@uwo.ca). Wishing everyone an inspiring, seamless, and rewarding teaching year!

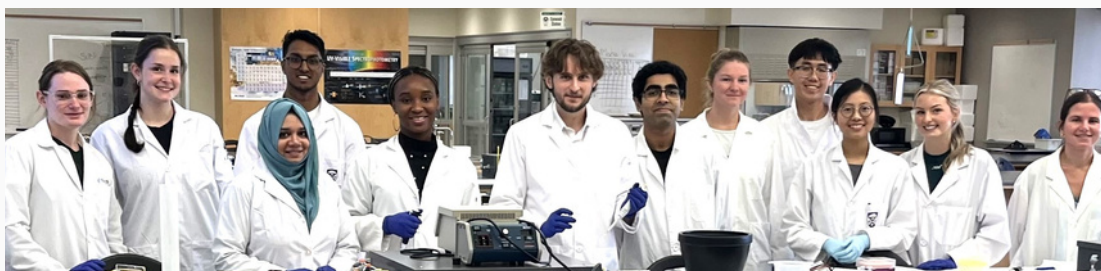
Graduate Studies Update

The new changes to Graduate Fellowship payments have started to roll out in Fall 2024. Information emails were sent to Graduate Students and Supervisors. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to john.diguglielmo@schulich.uwo.ca

Our New Student Orientation will be held on Thursday, September 26, at 11:30 AM in MSB 212A/B (just after the first CCT class). New supervisors are also welcome to attend all or part of the Orientation, as we will provide an overview of program expectations.



Drs. Van Lu & Chris Pin
featured in Schulich's
'Rapport' magazine
"MINI ORGANS. MAJOR
BREAKTHROUGHS"



Molecular Techniques Course 2024

Molecular Techniques 9550 ran smoothly from August 19th to 30th. This year's cohort included 12 new PhysPharm Graduate students, who enjoyed two weeks of experimentation and data analysis. Thank you to Peter Stathopoulos and everyone who supported 9550 this year.

Research Committee Update

BIOGRAPHIES

Our work study student Zarrah Ling will be available to assist with updating faculty biographies. Please reach out to Rithwik Ramachandran if you would like to be put in touch with Zarrah. If you have finalized text, please send directly to Christie Vanderboor for posting on the Department website.



[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)

STEVENSON'S DISTINGUISHED LECTURE AND RESEARCH DAY

Mark your calendars! Our 2024 Distinguished Lecture and Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Research Day will take place on Thursday, November 7th, 2024. Dr. Stanley Nattel (Montreal Heart Institute), renowned world leader in research on atrial fibrillation will be our keynote speaker. Dr. Taylor Schmitz will be our departmental faculty speaker.

NSERC RESEARCH TOOLS & INSTRUMENTS GRANTS PROGRAM

The NSERC RTI grant sponsor deadline is October 25th, 2024. If you are eligible, please consider applying. Please reach out to Rithwik Ramachandran if you would like the research committee to assist you with preparing an application or if you have suggestions for departmental core equipment that could be funded through an RTI.

EDID Committee Update

We are making progress on the BrainsCAN grant that we received in the spring. Under Dr. Anita Woods' guidance, the grant will support an undergraduate PhysPharm thesis student and a Clinical Anatomy M.Sc. student in the upcoming academic year.

If you are considering incorporating elements from the Indigenous Learning Bundles in your course, please note from Maatookiying gaa-miinigoowiziying (Sharing Our Gifts)/Indigenous learning bundles project. Unfortunately, the bundles will not be available for integration into your coursework this September. They do, however, anticipate they will be available starting in January 2025. The group is working hard to put the people and processes in place to support this goal.

If you were planning on using the bundles in your coursework this fall (2024), and need support integrating alternative Indigenous content into your curriculum, please contact Sara Mai Chitty (saramai.chitty@uwo.ca) to book a curriculum consultation.

As we embark on a new academic year, the EDID committee wants to extend our best wishes for everyone's well-being and success. Let's continue fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. Please let new and rerunning students know about the EDI resources in our departmental website.

[Link to Western EDID webpage](#)

Health and Safety Committee Update

A friendly reminder as the new school year starts, new students must have all their health and safety training before starting work in the lab. It's a good idea for everyone to check that their training is up to date. You can access health and safety topics including training here:

<https://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/topics/index.html>.



“Equipped with his five senses, man explores the universe around him and calls the adventure Science.”
— Edwin Hubble

Social Committee Update

To celebrate (or mourn?) the end of the summer season, the social committee hosted another signature Ice Cream Fundraiser. Back with more Shaw's ice cream, 8 different flavors, and two simultaneous ice cream booths in the MSB lobby and at Victoria Hospital, we managed to raise \$540.10 for the London Food Bank. Congratulations to Erin Holt for winning the raffle prize, which was a \$10 Hospitality Services gift card!

The social committee has a lot in store for the fall term! In September, we will be organizing an ice breaker for the annual departmental Fall Welcome Event. We are also currently working on hosting an indoor pickle ball tournament in late October/early November.

If you have any suggestions for future events or would like to join the committee, feel free to reach out to the committee's co-chairs, Faraj (fhaddad2@uwo.ca) or Ruud (rveldhui@uwo.ca)

Graduate Student Council Update

The health and wellness representatives recently hosted a successful Sip, Snack, and Socialize event, giving grad students a much-needed break to relax, recharge, and connect with peers. The event fostered community and provided a casual space to unwind.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Mandy Wang, Amin Manji, and Serge Lucaciu 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: Kelly Zhou as Chair, Karly Masse as Vice-Chair, and Ye Shen as Secretary. Furthermore, we are thrilled to welcome Aswin Sureshkumar, who will be taking on the role of Sports Representative for 2024-2025. We look forward to another year of fostering student engagement and support under this new leadership.

Welcome to all the new graduate students joining the Physiology and Pharmacology Department! We are thrilled to have you as part of our academic community, where you will engage in cutting-edge research and collaborate with leading experts. We encourage you to get involved with the PhysPharm Graduate Student Council. We'll be having our first meeting in September, where elections will be held for council positions. We invite you to take full advantage of the resources and support available, and we look forward to your contributions. Welcome aboard, and here's to a great year ahead!



PHYSPHARM ICE CREAM
SOCIAL 2024
RAISING \$540.10 FOR
THE FOOD BANK



Upcoming Seminars

The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology 2024 Fall/Winter Series

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



Date: Monday, September 16

Speaker: Nataliya Melnyk-Lamont, PhD

Field Medical Affairs Team Lead for Primary Care, Pfizer Canada

"Value of the Biopharmaceutical Industry and an Overview of Scientific Careers in the Industry"

Host: Oana Birceanu

Additional Panel members from Pfizer (l to r):

Anthony Cannavici , Irina Shevel, Lewis Liu



Date: Monday, Sept 23

Speaker: Robert Grant, MD PhD

Assistant Professor, University of Toronto

"TBA"

Host: Chris Pin



Date: Monday, September 30

Speaker: Adrianna Tsang, PhD Candidate

Western University

"Investigating the link between lysosomal exocytosis and lysosomal dysfunction in Alzheimer's disease"

Host: Steve Pasternak

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.