



SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

# PHYSIOLOGY and PHARMACOLOGY

## Message from the Chair

As we get ready to begin the new academic year this September, the buzz and excitement of our campus and classrooms is balanced by reflection on the loss we all experienced this summer. Frank Beier's passing has left a profound absence in our Department. Frank's unique blend of leadership, empathy, and sharp wit shaped not only our academic programs but also the spirit of collegiality and community that defines us. As I step into the role of Acting Chair, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity that I had to work so closely with Frank over the years, for the legacy he left behind, and a commitment to carrying forward the values he embodied.

As he instructed, we move forward and do good work!

To that end, this new year brings with it many exciting events and opportunities for the Department. Please take note of the updates provided here and start inputting the dates for seminars, research day, and events into your calendars to ensure you can join us.

I would like to extend a particularly warm Western welcome to our new PhysPharm 4985E students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and staff. We look forward to a fun and productive year ahead. A reminder to everyone to join us on Friday September 5th at 3PM in the Thames Hall Atrium for our Department wide Fall Welcome Reception to kick off the new year.

Wishing everyone a great start to the term.

And a reminder that the door to the Chair's office is open – please drop by or reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or creative ideas.

*Cheryle*

## This issue:

Welcome

Congratulations

Committee Updates:

Undergraduate  
Graduate  
Research  
Social

Graduate Student Council

Upcoming Events:

Department Fall Welcome  
Fri, September 5

Department Meeting  
Mon, September 15

Upcoming Seminars:

Mon, September 8  
Mon, September 15  
Mon, September 22



## WELCOME

**QINGMING DING** – Research Associate with Dr. Qingping Feng

**ANDROU ABDALMALAK** – Research Associate with Dr. Adrian Owen

**M. DANELLE CZINK** – Research Technician with Dr. Adrian Owen

**ANNA FERREIRA** – Post Doctoral Associate with Dr. Emily Day

**KENTO HIRAYAMA** – Post Doctoral Associate with Drs. Brian Corneil and Mel Goodale

## CONGRATULATIONS

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

ZINA ZEIN ABDIN – MSc (Mark Chandy)

ANDREA KOCSIS – MSc (Daniel Hardy)

HAN YU (DARREN) JIANG – MSc (Tom Appleton)

YINA TIAN – MSc (David Hess)

YUXIN MEI – MSc (Wei-Yang Lu)

MICHELLE WONG – MSc (Richard Kim)

CHEN BEI (Betty) HU – MSc (Ute Schwarz)

MITCHELL PALLISTER – MSc (Samuel Asfaha)

MICKENZIE MARTIN – PhD (Christopher Pin)

RYAN ARMSTRONG – MSc (Matthew Grol)

YE SHEN – MSc (Christopher Pin)

FATEMEH MOUSAVI – PhD (Christopher Pin)

JESUTOFUNMI ADESUYI – MSc (John McGuire)

LUJAIN EZEDDIN – MSc (Flory Muanda)

STEPHANIE VIOLA – MSc (John McGuire)

FANG I (Mandy) WANG – PhD (Peter Chidiac)

### Welcome to all new graduate students:

LORI CIRIELLO – MSc (Qingping Feng)

ERIC DING – MSc (Matthew Grol)

NAFISA DIYA – MSc (Peter Stathopoulos)

LUJAIN EZEDDIN – PhD (Flory Muanda)

TEHREEM FATIMA – MSc (Cheryle Séguin/Lauren Flynn)



Welcome and congratulations to Christina Ji, recipient of the 2025 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)



GAVIN GOEBEL - MSc (Christopher Pin)  
WAJIHA IMRAN - MSc (Rommel Tirona)  
CHEN FAN (Christina) JI - PhD (Cheryle Séguin)  
HANYU (Darren) JIANG - PhD (Tom Appleton)  
ARSAL KHAN - MSc (Matthew Grol)  
ALESIA MANO - MSc (Christopher Pin)  
ZAHRA MARZBANRAD - MSc (Janine Hutson)  
ANDREI MATUSA - PhD (Douglas Fraser)  
CHRISTIAN NATALE - MSc (Daniel Hardy)  
SHREERAM PATKAR - MSc (Adrian Owen)  
DEEKSHANA SUBRAMANIAN - MSc (Sean Cregan)  
LOGAN VAN NYNATTEN - MSc (Douglas Fraser)  
NATHANIEL WOOLVETT - MSc (Nica Borradaile)  
ZE YU ZHANG - MSc (Emily Day)

**Dr. Robert Gros:**

Received the King Charles III Coronation Medal for contributions to Heart and Stroke research & leadership and commitment to heart and brain health in Canada

**Dr. Lisa Saksida:**

Received the Western Research Excellence Award - Hellmuth Prize for Achievement in Research

**Dr. Taylor Schmitz:**

Received the Western Research Excellence Award - Outstanding Emerging Scholar prize **and** was appointed Cecil and Linda Rorabeck Chair in Molecular Neuroscience and Vascular Biology

**GRANT SUCCESS**

**SSHRC:**

**Insight Development Grant** - Awarded to Dr. Christine Bell

**CIHR:**

**Project Grant** - Awarded to Dr. Stefan Everling

**Priority Announcement** - Awarded to Drs. Krishna Singh and David Hess



Dr. Frank Beier was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the CCTC. Dr. Matt Grol received it on Dr. Beier's behalf



Dr. Robert Gros received the King Charles III Coronation Medal

## **WESTERN'S EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD:**

SUE-ANN BECKER

## **SCHULICH AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE:**

### **EDUCATION: DISTINGUISHED LEADER AWARD -**

DR. NICOLE CAMPBELL

**DISTINGUISHED RESEARCHER AWARD - DR. MARCO PRADO**

**RESEARCH INNOVATION AWARD (MID-CAREER) - DR. PETER STATHOPOULOS**

**CONTINUOUS EXCELLENCE AWARD - DR. CHRISTIE VANDERBOOR**



Sue-Ann Becker was presented with the Excellence in Leadership Award



Louisa Lewicki, Masters student (Dr. Betts) finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the province in the Senior Women's Saber competition

**LOUISA LEWICKI, MSc (D. Betts) -** Louisa is a Varsity Fencing Team member and Women's Saber Captain at Western University, representing the Western Fencing Team for 4 years. She attended the Ontario Fencing Association's Provincial Championships in June and finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall in the Senior Women's Saber competition.





# THANK YOU DR. BEIER

A huge thank you to all who were able to attend and/or contribute cards for the Celebration of Thanks held in July for Dr. Beier. This event provided a wonderful opportunity for so many to express their gratitude and share with Frank the impact he had on the Department.



If you wish to donate to The Frank Beier Graduate Opportunity Scholarship, please click [HERE](#)







## Undergraduate Studies Update

Welcome to the New Academic Year!

The 2025-2026 academic year is right around the corner, with classes starting on Thursday, September 4th. We're excited to welcome 66 new Phys/Pharm 4985E students to our research programs and nearly 3,550 students across our 31 undergraduate courses.

A huge thank you to Michele Grigg (and team) for the outstanding efforts in coordinating the hiring of our 84 graduate student teaching assistants for the year. Your hard work did not go unnoticed. Welcome to our new TAs!

Our Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) undergraduate program review is nearly complete. Thank you for all your help in mapping courses you manage, for your feedback on our undergraduate program, and for submitting your CV. Reviewers will visit in early 2026 and we'll have more information on that in the coming months.

Here are a few important dates as we transition back into undergraduate teaching mode.

Sept 4, 2025: First day of classes

Sept 5, 2025: 4980 Interview day (1-3 PM) and Department Fall Welcome event (3-5 PM)

Sept 12, 2025: Last day to add a full-year or half-year course (Add/Drop date)

Sept 30, 2025: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (non-instructional day)

Nov 3-9, 2025: Fall reading week

Dec 1, 2025: Last day to withdraw from a full-year or half-year course without academic penalty

Dec 9, 2025: Fall term classes end

Dec 10, 2025: Study day

Dec 11-22, 2025: Fall term examination period

Jan 5, 2026: Classes resume

Wishing everyone an incredible and fulfilling teaching year!

Please join us at the [PhysPharm Department Fall Welcome Reception](#) on Friday, Sept 5 from 3-5 pm in the Thames Hall Atrium

Register using the QR code or this link:  
[https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_56B7caVjIA37ihE](https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_56B7caVjIA37ihE)



## IN THE NEWS



The Atlantic's article, 'The Mother who never stopped believing her son was still there' references Dr. Adrian Owen's work on Covert Awareness  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)



Dr. Michael Rieder's work was highlighted in The Pulse; a Canada-wide research initiative aimed at making medications safer for children  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)





## Graduate Studies Update

Welcome to new and continuing Graduate Students to the new Academic Year!

New this year for Graduate Students: The Physiology and Pharmacology Seminar Committee has put together an exciting line-up of speakers for this upcoming year. Although the Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Student Handbook states that graduate students "are required to attend Department Seminars during each academic year for the duration of their residency period", a mechanism has not been in place to implement this requirement. After consultation with the Department Executive Committee as well as Graduate Students and Graduate Student Council representatives, the following will be introduced.

Graduate students (including those in collaborative specializations) will be expected to attend at least 70% of Departmental seminars in person (weekly seminars, special seminars, Department Research Day, PhD public lectures, etc.).

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. Students who work at the Victoria campus can attend on the main campus or the seminar room at the south end (room locations to be included on the seminar poster).

A general Zoom link for the seminar will no longer be offered but can be provided upon request for special circumstances by contacting Jane Jacob.

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.

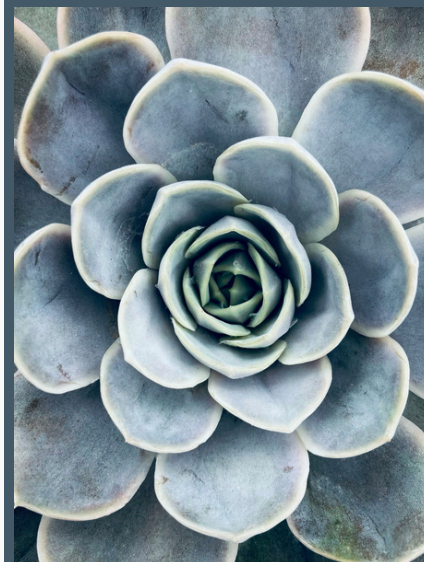
The Seminar Committee has also reached out to all faculty members to ask them to likewise prioritize their attendance in order to set a positive example, increase department interactions, and engage with visiting speakers.

Please also plan to attend our [New Graduate Student Orientation](#) on [Thurs, Sept 18](#) from 11:30-12:30 in MSB 212 A/B. This session will provide important information about your program. Pizza and drinks will be provided.

Thank you for your support!



Dr. Arthur Brown wrote an opinion piece for the Toronto Star on the importance of animal testing  
[LINK TO ARTICLE](#)







# COOKIE BAKE-OFF

This summer, the department hosted their first bake-off event, organized by the Social Committee. Faculty and postdocs baked, and everyone judged. Submissions were rated on taste, texture, visual appeal, and overall presentation. We had a total of 17 submissions from 13 bakers (some folks baked two types of cookies!!).

After much deliberation and consultation among the consumers of baked goods, one clear winner emerged: the brown butter chocolate chip with toffee and sea salt cookie, baked by Tim Regnault (with guidance from ChatGPT4.0).

The lowest score was achieved by cookies called “Do not hate me because I am delicious”, submitted by Oana Birceanu, who clearly did not use ChatGPT. Many thanks to Faraj Haddad and Anita Woods for registering attendance, coordinating submissions, and tabulating the results. Participants were eager to have another similar event, this time focused on pastries and squares! Keep an eye out for an email and come join us next time!

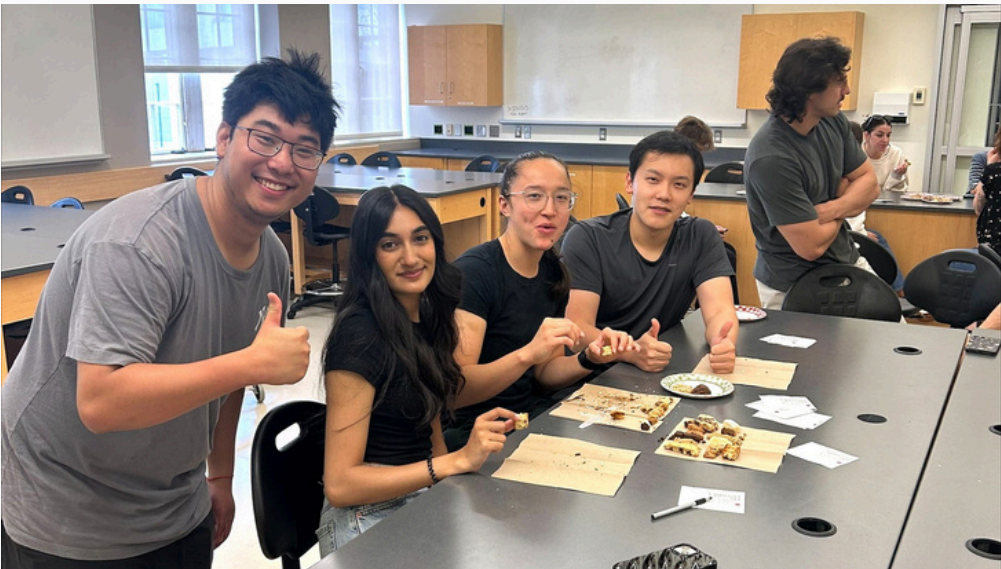
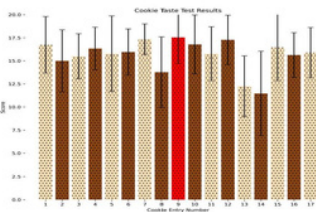
## Score Sheet



### Cookie Number

Each category out of 5  
(5 = Outstanding, 1 = Poor)

Taste	/5
Texture	/5
Visual Appeal	/5
Overall Impression	/5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/20</b>



Aliquoting of the cookies







## Research Committee Update

### Research Day

The 2025 Gowdey Distinguished Lecture and Research Day will take place on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Hans Clevers as this year's distinguished lecturer. Dr. Clevers is a Distinguished University Professor of Molecular Genetics at Utrecht University, Netherlands. He is internationally recognized for his groundbreaking work developing and applying organoids to study the molecular mechanisms of tissue and cancer development.

Additional research day information, including abstract submission instructions for trainees, will be shared soon.

Dr. Hans Clevers' lecture will also align with the Canadian Conference on Organoid Research being held in London on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

### Research infrastructure

The Research Committee invites input from the department regarding equipment and infrastructure needs that could strengthen our research programs. This information will help us prioritize applications to internal and external funding opportunities, including:

Schulich Infrastructure Support (SIS) Grant – Deadline: November 12, 2025  
NSERC Research Tools and Instruments (RTI) Grant – Deadline: October 27, 2025

Please email your suggestions to Rithwik ([rramach@uwo.ca](mailto:rramach@uwo.ca)) or Alycia ([amorga7@uwo.ca](mailto:amorga7@uwo.ca)).

Further details here:

[Schulich Internal Funding Programs](#)

[NSERC RTI Information](#)

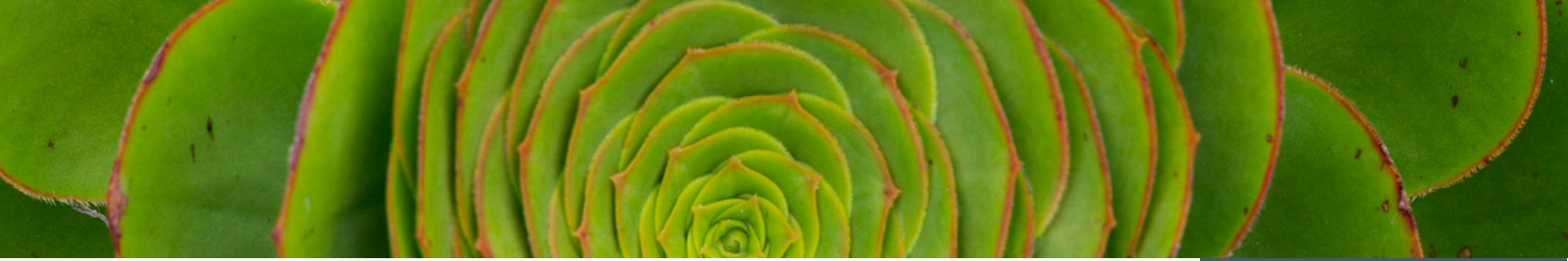
[Western Grant Repository \(examples of past NSERC-RTI awards\)](#)

## Social Committee Update

The social committee is looking forward to organizing a few fun events for the new academic year to continue to build our Physiology and Pharmacology community. Last year highlights included pickle ball, bowling, tubing, the cookie bake-off and a holiday lunch.

We are open for new, or repeat, suggestions for the upcoming year; just email or talk to Faraj Haddad ([fhaddad2@uwo.ca](mailto:fhaddad2@uwo.ca)) or Ruud Veldhuizen ([rveldhui@uwo.ca](mailto:rveldhui@uwo.ca)). The fun starts with the welcoming reception for our new 4<sup>th</sup> years on Friday September 5<sup>th</sup> in the Thames Hall Atrium.





## Graduate Student Council Update

We recently held a successful Health and Wellness event in July, where graduate students beat the heat with a sweet treat and enjoyed some ice cream while taking a well-deserved break. A big thank you to our Health and Wellness Reps for making this event possible!

We are also excited to welcome all the new graduate students to 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 Kelly ([xzhou377@uwo.ca](mailto:xzhou377@uwo.ca)) or Karly ([kmasse7@uwo.ca](mailto:kmasse7@uwo.ca)).

## FUTURE MUSTANGS



These high school students are being recruited to Western's Med Sci Program as well as Western's women's volleyball team. Dr. Dan Hardy was asked to speak to the students about the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology, and then led a ball throwing neurophysiology exercise.



# Upcoming Seminars

## The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology 2025 Fall/Winter Series

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

Students - please come early to sign in



**Date: Monday, September 8**

**Speaker: Moacyr Rego, PhD**

**Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil**

"Consortium for Medical-Pharmaceutical Innovation on Pancreatic and Biliary Tract Tumors (PanColangio Alliance): Prospection of new biomarkers and drug candidates"

Host: Chris Pin



**Date: Monday, September 15**

**Speaker: Ermina Hadzic, PhD candidate**

"Exploring pathways driving Osteoarthritis"

Host: Cheryle Séguin



**Date: Monday, September 22**

**Speaker: Andras Nagy, PhD**

**University of Toronto**

"Safe and Immune-Evasive Cell Transplants for Therapy and Biologic Delivery"

Host: Julio Martinez-Trujillo

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).