

Physiology and Pharmacology

January 2023 Newsletter

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Hello everybody,

Although it is already the end of January, all the best for 2023! The winter term is well under way, CIHR grant decisions are coming this week and (re-) submissions are due shortly after, and we made it halfway through winter. Maybe time to look ahead to the next months.

As you know, we underwent our external review in November and have just received the report. It was extremely positive – thanks to everyone who met with the reviewers and shared their feedback. Their recommendations are very much in line with the needs we have identified ourselves. I am currently working on the response to the report, and I think we should be able to share both document with the department.

These documents will also inform the next steps regarding the appointment of the next chair. My first term ends on June 30, so we will see what happens after that. I will keep you posted. The other major item on my list to finish before the end of June is the departmental strategic plan. You will hear more about this as well.

If you have any questions/comments about this or anything else, never hesitate to get in touch. I might have difficulties talking these days, but my grunts are getting more sophisticated all the time. All the best!

Frank

Welcome

- ✧ Michele Calder – Research Technician with Lina Dagnino
- ✧ Aristide Kognou – Post Doc Associate with Qingping Feng
- ✧ Taylor Lake – Research Technician with Peter Stathopoulos
- ✧ Flory Muanda – Assistant Professor
- ✧ To our new graduate students:
 - Garth Blackler (MSc) – Tom Appleton
 - Shymaa Khalil (PhD) – Rithwik Ramachandran
 - Jessica Twumasi (MSc) – Nica Borradaile

Congratulations

- ✧ To Jessica Twumasi for receiving the 2022 Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Opportunity Scholarship
- ✧ To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:
 - David Hawke – PhD (Andy Watson/Dean Betts)
 - Gurneet Jassal – MSc (Wei-Yang Lu)

Farewell

Best wishes to Penny Sim as she begins a new adventure in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology!

Undergraduate Studies Update

We've had a good start to semester #2, with 14 courses beginning in January. Thank you to our digital media intern, Meghan, for assisting with the creation of OWL sites and having these ready for our undergraduate students. Meghan is still with us for semester 2, so if you need assistance with your OWL sites, you can request her time.



Although we feel we just started, we are already turning our attention to upcoming midterm exams. Please make sure to have your exam ready to Michele when requested, so that there is enough time to print these, and to have the copies sent over to accessible education for your students who write with accommodations. The final exam schedule has not yet been released, but you will receive an email with these dates soon.

Remember that reading week begins on February 18th until February 26th. No assignments or makeup exams can occur during this time frame. If you have students who miss your midterm, and have permission to write a makeup exam, please coordinate the makeup date with Michele, so that we ensure that we don't accidentally set a date during the reading week.

Our 3rd year lab course, managed by Dr. Oana Birceanu, continues to be an exceptional learning experience for our students. It has been nice to see the busy space on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We'd like to thank faculty members who have already contributed to running an experiment in the lab course, and for those who will be starting experiments in the last rotation of the course. Also, we recognize that none of this would be possible without the tireless coordination and work of Hailey Hunter and Baur Negmetzhanov, with support from Christie Vanderboor. Our current lab rotation is particularly challenging technically, and this is the first year we have been able to run this section of the course in person since 2020. Great work team!

Lastly, please mark your calendars for our 4980 Poster presentation day. We are set to have students present their fourth-year thesis projects on Monday, March 27th. More details to follow.

Graduate Studies Update

Please note the upcoming deadline for Ontario Graduate Scholarship applications of February 1 at 4:00 PM. For questions regarding the submission process, please contact Erin Daley, Scholarship Coordinator edaley2@uwo.ca.

Research Committee Update

Mark your calendars! Our 2023 Gowdey Distinguished Lecture and Research Day will take place on Tuesday, November 7th, 2023. We are excited to announce that our Distinguished Lecturer for the event will be Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Dr. Lippincott-Schwartz uses cutting-edge fluorescence imaging based technologies to study cell polarization, motility, fusion, metabolism, organelle trafficking and other cellular processes to understand how cells communicate in the normal and diseased brain. Also, please watch for an upcoming email requesting more suggestions for future Distinguished Lecturers.

Many thanks to Dr. Tom Appleton for his very informative January 19th Lunch & Learn workshop on *Single Cell Sequencing and Spatial Transcriptomics*. Our next Lunch & Learn presentation is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 18th, 2023. Our speaker will be Dr. Hiroyuki Igarashi, who will talk to us about using *ImageJ and Cell Pose to Analyze Cell Imaging Data*. Stay tuned for more details, and as always, please send more Lunch & Learn topic suggestions to Peter Stathopoulos via email.

Thank you to those who sent lists of your laboratory equipment valued at \$50,000 or more, to be included in a future Schulich-wide equipment database. This database will promote inter- and intra-department collaboration and guide future infrastructure grant initiatives. Please note that there may also be maintenance support from Schulich for equipment/infrastructure listed in this database. If you would like to have your equipment listed in the database, please send your information (i.e. manufacturer, model, location, and funding source) to Peter Stathopoulos via email.

Our undergraduate student, Tiffany Zhao, is continuing her work updating Faculty biographies on the Departmental website this term. Please let Peter Stathopoulos know if you would like Tiffany to contact you about updating your biography.

Health and Safety Committee Updates

As of October 17th, masking guidelines were updated at Western,
<https://www.uwo.ca/coronavirus/updates/oct17-2022.html>.

The update indicates that medical-grade (ASTM level 3) masks will still be required indoors in instructional spaces such as classrooms, labs, and seminar rooms. *One change is that leaders of research labs may make their own decisions about masking based on their specific lab environments.*

Reminder: In the event of a workplace injury, an accident report form must be filled out within 24 hours. If you require minor medical attention including stitches, you can go to workplace health in the support services building during regular work hours. This is a newly available service at workplace health, set up to help relieve pressure on the emergency and urgent care units in London. A list of their services can be found on their website (below), but include Falls, Strains/sprains, Minor lacerations requiring dressing or sutures, Needle stick injuries, Burns, Chemical/laboratory exposures, and Blood pressure check:
https://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/well_being/workplace_health.html

Tony Hammoud wishes to remind us all of you that the 3 page “**Emergency Response Refresher**” needs to be completed **EVERY YEAR**, and signed by all HQP and then emailed to him (ahammoud@uwo.ca). This includes 4th year students. Paper copies are available in the Department office.

In addition, all HQP (including 4th years) and staff have completed a Hazard Communication Form (<https://webapps.uwo.ca/positionhazard>). If you don't know which of your trainees/staff have this completed (or not), you can email Tony Hammoud (ahammoud@uwo.ca) with a list of your HQP and his nurse can let you know who has completed it.

Please note that through Health and Occupational Safety, HQP are entitled to **free prescription safety glasses**. If interested, please contact Tony Hammoud (ahammoud@uwo.ca) and you can order yours at Campus Vision at UCC.

EDID Committee Updates

The PhysPharm EDID committee is partnering with the BrainScan EDID committee towards organizing an EDID-focused seminar by Professors Melissa Perrault and Ryan Gregory (U. Guelph). More details to follow soon.

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has formed an EDIAD (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Decolonization) Working Group focused on implementing and promoting and addressing EDIAD priorities among Western's graduate and post-doctoral trainees. More details will be shared with the Department as they become available.

Social Committee Updates

Happy New Year everyone! December was an exciting month for the Social Committee! We held several great events including:

A fundraising drive for local charities. We collected 188 pounds of non-perishable food items and \$33 in cash donations for the London Food Bank, and \$574 in cash, gift card and online donations for My Sister's Place. Thank you to everyone for their generous donations to help our community.

A Holiday Luncheon and ugly sweater contest. Congratulations Dr. Faraj Haddad and Dr. Dean Betts for their inspired fashion choices. We wanted to thank the Graduate students for organizing a photo booth at the Luncheon. Photos from the event can be viewed on the Department's Flickr account (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/uwophysiologyandpharmacology/albums>) or through this link: [Christmas photos 2022](#).

We will be planning a Spring Social event in the coming weeks. If you have suggestions for an activity or event, please send your suggestions to one of the committee co-chairs Matt Grol (mgrol2@uwo.ca) or Van Lu (vl24@uwo.ca).



Winter/Spring Seminar Series

The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology
2023 Winter/Spring Series
All lectures will be held at 3:00 p.m. in MSB 384 unless otherwise noted



Date: Monday, February 6 (MSB 384 and Zoom)

Speaker: Jean-Jacques Orban de Xivry, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Movement Sciences, KU Leuven, Belgium
Title: *“Does cerebellar motor function decline with aging?”*

Host: Andrew Pruszynski



Date: Monday, February 13 (MSB 384 and Zoom)

Speaker: Grace Parraga, PhD
Professor and Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, Department of Medical Biophysics, Division of Respiratory, Department of Medicine, Department of Oncology, School of Biomedical Engineering, Western University

Title: *“On the role of small airway and gas-exchange abnormalities in Long-COVID”*

Host: Rithwik Ramachandran



Date: Monday, February 27 (MSB 384 and Zoom)

Speaker: James Lim, PhD Candidate

Title: *“Identification of Metabolic Biomarkers for the Prediction and Early Diagnosis of Cisplatin Induced Acute Kidney Injury”*

Host: Brad Urquhart

This Seminar Series is Sponsored by the Mogenson Trust.
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry