

# Physiology and Pharmacology Newsletter

## March 2022

Hello everybody,

Welcome to Spring. At least according to the calendar. More certain than the arrival of warmer weather is the fact that we are approaching the end of another academic year. Another year that was affected by this pandemic but somewhat more 'normal' than the last one.

While Covid-19 clearly remains a threat, many of us have started to participate in in-person meetings and travel again. And I think it is time for us as a department to re-engage in mid to long term planning. There will be major challenges ahead, with large increases in our undergraduate enrollment in our 3<sup>rd</sup> year courses this coming Fall (and more in subsequent years) along with a reform of the BMSc curriculum. At the same time our research environment remains challenging, with low funding rates and for many of us still lingering effects of pandemic restrictions (for example for those who had to scale down their animal colonies). Nevertheless, with challenges come opportunities. For example, we will be able to adapt our curriculum to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and aim for a better integration of Physiology and Pharmacology, which has been one of my main objectives since I took on the role as Chair. Hopefully we will also be able to recruit additional faculty to complement our existing expertise in both teaching and research. Schulich and Western leadership have ambitious plans that will benefit us through a new building and better core facilities, for example. For all these reasons, we will return to our strategic planning process – stay tuned for updates. And as always, please send any feedback and thoughts to me.

On a minor note, I will be travelling April 4 to 16. Cheryle Séguin will be Acting Chair during this time.

Take care!

Frank

## **Congratulations!!!**

- To Richard Kim on his AHSC AFP Innovation Grant for the project “*Medication Determinants of Ascending Aortic Aneurysm Structural Risk*”
- To Dan Hardy on his Faculty Scholar Award
- To the successful CFI funding recipients: Tom Appleton and Samuel Asfaha
- To Jinming Li on his retirement from Western after 20 years of service
- To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:
  - Malina Barillaro - MSc (Rennian Wang)
  - Mckenzie Carter – MSc (Tom Appleton/Trevor Birmingham)

## **Undergraduate Studies Updates**

- The last day of classes is April 8<sup>th</sup>. The final exam schedule has been posted by the registrar, and exams are running from April 10<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. Please make sure to have your exams to Michele in good time, so that she can properly format these for printing. You should have your exams marked within 7 days of the exam time, and your grades calculated in OWL, but we don't usually release these grades to students until the end of the exam period. Students who need to write a makeup will be writing on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. This is our department's makeup exam day. Students who require a makeup will be scheduled to write either in the morning or afternoon, depending on the numbers of students per course. For permission to write makeup exams, students cannot use a self-reported absence (SRA) or use the self-isolation reporting tool (SIRT). They must go to academic counselling and provide a student medical certificate if it is for medical reasons or have approval from academic counselling if the request to write the makeup is for other reasons that they approve.
- With grading usually come appeals. If you have a student appealing a grade in your course, carefully consider the appeal and if you deny the appeal, please provide adequate details for the reason for your decline of the appeal and copy me on your denial. Students should be made aware of the steps of an appeal, which includes the ability to choose to escalate the appeal further to the Undergraduate Chair. The deadline for appeals for a course grade is June 30<sup>th</sup>. If a student appeals a grade in your course and you determine that it is a fair request, you do not need to copy me when you have the grade updated.
- Faculty members supervising fourth year thesis students will be asked to mark the student's final thesis. You will be contacted with the details for marking and

will also be assigned 1-2 other theses to evaluate as well. You can expect the marking assignments to be sent to you by April 11<sup>th</sup>. We also appreciate that this was a challenging year to incorporate fourth year students into labs as we returned to more in person events and experienced the return to online in January. Thank you for supporting your students through this time and providing continued training and mentorship.

## Graduate Studies Update

- With the transition to Summer Term coming, graduate students should be aware that the GTA portion of their stipend will end from May 1 through August 31, unless they hold an additional TA position through the summer term.
- Please see [here](#) the Schulich Communications feature highlighting Arine Pawakian, the inaugural winner of the Graduate Opportunity Scholarship Congratulations, Arine!
- The Opportunity Scholarship competition for 2022 is open now. Learn more at [https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/graduate/graduate\\_awards.html](https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/graduate/graduate_awards.html)

## Health and Safety Committee Updates

- COVID-19: Mask and vaccine requirements are still in place currently at Western, at least till the end of the term. For teaching, this still means ASTM level 3 masks. Campus eateries and libraries are now operating at full capacity. In person meetings can be scheduled with capacity limits and masking in place.
- Central Health and Safety has a student, Lynda, who is coming around to reconcile our Hechmet Chemical Inventory Management System. She is currently working in MSB/DSB buildings. If she hasn't already been to your lab, you will be receiving an email about that from Christie in the next week or so.
- Reminders: Biohazard waste for autoclave should only contain items that have been in contact with biohazards. No liquids or chemicals, empty chemical bottles, sharps, glass or tissues can be disposed of in a biohazard waste bag. Thank you!

## Research Update

- The next Virtual Lunch and Learn will take place in the Summer Term. Our speaker will be Kathleen Hill (Departments of Biology and Computer Science). The topic presentation will be on Machine Learning in Biomedical Research. Stay tuned for more details.

- If you have any suggestions for future Lunch and Learn presentations, please forward them to Peter Stathopoulos or Penny Sim.
- Faculty biographies on the Department website continue to be updated with the help of Tiffany Zhao (Undergraduate Student). If you would like to have your bio updated please let Peter Stathopoulos know and he will have Tiffany Zhao contact you.

## Calendar

- Upcoming Physiology and Pharmacology Seminars (3:00 pm via Zoom):
  - April 4 – Dr. Miguel Skirzewski, Western University: *“Disentangling Striatal Neuromodulatory Circuitry Mechanisms Underlying Reward Motivated Behaviours”*
  - April 11– Rachel Wilson, PhD Candidate: *“Investigating the role of eukaryotic elongation factor 1A1 in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and lipid metabolism”*
  - April 25 – Dr. Elena Verdu, McMaster University: *“Microbes as cofactors in celiac disease development”*.

A full list of the Winter/Spring seminars can be found at:

[https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/about\\_us/seminar\\_schedule.html](https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/about_us/seminar_schedule.html)