

Physiology and Pharmacology

March – April 2023 Newsletter

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Hello everybody,

Welcome to the newest edition of our newsletter. The end of the term, and the academic school year, is quickly approaching, with its usual flurry of activities. I will take this opportunity to highlight three courses and thank those involved.

First, our 4th years Honors students are wrapping up their projects. While I was traveling at that time, I heard there was lots of buzz at the poster day last week. Congrats to all students on their great work this year, and thanks to Zach Easton for doing a fantastic job managing this demanding course!

Second, this year we had to expand our 3rd year lab course to include a third session, which of course meant a lot of extra work for everyone involved. Thank you so much for the course coordinator Oana Birceanu, our lab technicians Hailey and Baur, all instructors, and TAs for an outstanding job!

And third, this was the first year we ran our new combined 2nd year Physiology and Pharmacology course! This is a development I am very excited about as it furthers the integration of our two favorite disciplines. As expected, we learned a lot this first year and will make some adjustments, but overall this new course was a resounding success. Thank you so much to course coordinator Christine Bell and the entire team involved in the creation of this course – great job!

So, lots of excitement as we wrap up this academic year – and at the same time prepare for the next one. In this context, I will meet with all faculty members over the next few weeks to discuss workloads for the upcoming year. I know you are all sitting on the edge of your seat in anticipation! But in all seriousness, I welcome this opportunity to catch up with everyone, which we don't have enough opportunities for during the year.

As always, happy to hear from anybody with input and feedback. Enjoy the ever so slowly emerging spring and have a Happy Easter!

Frank

Welcome

- ✧ Michael Karkuszewski – Research Technician with Andrew Pruszyński
- ✧ Kazi Farida Akhter – Research Associate with Rennian Wang

Congratulations

- ✧ Anita Woods on her new Teaching Scholar appointment
- ✧ Brad Urquhart on his promotion to Full Professor
- ✧ To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:
 - Michael Dunphy – MSc (Marlys Koschinsky)
 - Kyra Keer – MSc (Michael Rider)
 - Jasika Bashal – MSc (Tom Appleton)
 - Hadir AlQot – PhD (Jane Rylett)

Undergraduate Studies Update

The end of the 2022-2023 academic year is closely approaching. There are several important dates and reminders regarding undergraduate courses.

The last day of classes will be held on Monday, April 10th, with a reminder that there are no classes set for Friday April 7th, due to the holiday. The exam period begins on April 13th and will end on April 30th. For students who receive approved accommodation for missing a final exam, our department has one makeup date set for Tuesday, May 9th. The time of day will be determined based on the number of students who require a makeup.



For the exam period to run smoothly, please make sure to get the copies of your exams to Michele by the requested time. Also, please make sure to prioritize marking exams with your teaching teams, so that the grades can be finalized within 7 days of your final exam. When grades have been finalized, grades can be released when they are completed, rather than waiting until the exam period is ended. However, the official posting of grades should only occur after they have been reviewed by the undergraduate chair.

Our fourth-year research project students will be submitting their final thesis shortly. As a supervisor, you will also be asked to provide a final grade for your students' lab performance, and as well to grade your student and other student theses assigned to you. You can expect to have these assigned to you by April 11th, with a final completion date of April 24th.

Our intent to register season was very active this year, and we are expecting a continued high demand for courses in our department, which will certainly include our third-year laboratory course. We will maintain three lab sections per week in the upcoming academic year, as we ran this year. Thank-you to the team of

Hailey, Baur, Christie, all the faculty rotation supervisors and Dr. Birceanu for achieving the transition to a three day/week lab offering. A special thank you also to our 36 Graduate Teaching Assistants in this course for supporting our students and taking on novel and challenging experiments, which helped make this year so successful.

Graduate Studies Update

Significant new information is now included in the pdf documents of approved applicants to our graduate programs. SGPS has incorporated a new series of voluntary equity questions into Western's graduate school application. These questions address sexual orientation, gender identity, Indigenous identity, racial identity, and accessibility. Accessibility information may include neurodivergence and mental health concerns. The goal of including this information, as stated by SGPS, is to enable a more holistic assessment of candidates applying to our program, by taking into consideration the characteristics of each applicant as a whole person. Faculty members with SGPS membership (graduate student supervisory privileges) were required to complete a confidentiality agreement in November 2022, as we are legally required to keep the information provided by applicants confidential. Only those who have signed the confidentiality agreement are able to view applications.

If you have concerns regarding the new information included in graduate applications, or have not completed the confidentiality agreement, please don't hesitate to contact Nica Borradaile or Olga Krougly.

Research Committee Update

The Research Committee Chairs of the seven basic science departments in Schulich continue to meet regularly. We aim to establish equipment, cell line, tissue, animal model and Schulich faculty expertise databases to promote synergy, communication and research collaborations across all Departments. We are also meeting regularly with Rob Bartha (Vice Dean, Research & Innovation) and David Litchfield (Director, Research Infrastructure) to advocate for these initiatives. Most recent updates from our meetings: (i) terms of reference have been drafted for a "Schulich Research Council" to promote the Schulich research mission and strategic planning; (ii) the MBL/HSA are no longer the proposed site of the Bioconvergence Centre; HSA/MBL will be separately renovated, and the Centre may be located near the Chemistry building; (iii) large core/mission-critical infrastructure are being targeted for the Bioconvergence Centre; (iv) the London Transgenic Facility is closing; researchers will need to outsource the storage of frozen embryos.

The 2023 Department of Physiology and Pharmacology **Gowdey Distinguished Lecture and Research Day will take place on Tuesday, November 7th, 2023.** Our Distinguished Lecturer 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.

Mark your calendars! Our next **Lunch and Learn presentation is 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. Note that this Lunch and Learn will take place in-person with a pizza lunch provided for attendees. As always, please send more Lunch and Learn topic suggestions to Peter Stathopoulos and Aysha Turgeon.

Tiffany Zhao is continuing her work updating Faculty biographies on the Departmental website this term. Please let Peter Stathopoulos know if you would like your biography updated.

Health and Safety Committee Updates

Western's Joint Health & Safety Committee met recently and have provided an important updated resource with respect to Electrical Safety:

https://www.uwo.ca/hr/form_doc/health_safety/doc/hazard_alerts/electrical_safety_advisory.pdf

Our caretaking staff have been instructed to keep regular and biohazard garbage bins separated in our labs. If you notice that your garbage bins have been moved, this is why. Please keep them separated.

There is a recent push at other universities (<https://www.colorado.edu/ecenter/greenlabs/lab-energy-efforts/freezers/70-0c-efforts>) for investigators to run their -80 freezers 'without biological consequences' at -70 C, which saves a lot of power (and therefore is good for the environment). Please discuss with your laboratory team and see if this might be an option for you – and your freezer.

EDID Committee Updates



The PhysPharm EDID committee is partnering with the BrainsCAN EDI committee to host an EDID-focused seminar by Professors Melissa Perrault and Ryan Gregory (U. Guelph), which will provide insight on the crucial subject of recruitment and retainment of Indigenous trainees in STEM. Their visit is April 20, 2023, and talk is 10:30AM-11:30AM (in person and Zoom), followed by a trainee lunch (12:00PM-1:00PM)

Please register for the event through this link [REGISTER](#)

Social Committee Updates

With warmer weather coming, hopefully soon, the Social Committee is planning a social event for early summer. Watch this space for details. If you'd like to help with organizing this event, please reach out to one of the committee chairs Matt Grol (mgrol2@uwo.ca) or Van Lu (vlu24@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	
	<p>Date: Monday, April 3 (MSB 384 and Zoom)</p> <p>Speaker: Rachel Miller</p> <p>Title: <i>"Identifying Targets for Osteoarthritis Pain"</i></p> <p>Host: Matthew Grol</p>
	<p>Date: Monday, April 17 (MSB 384 and Zoom)</p> <p>Speaker: Brian Gulbransen</p> <p>Title: <i>"Enteric glia in gut motor control and sensations"</i></p> <p>Host: Rithwik Ramachandran</p>
This Seminar Series is Sponsored by the Mogenson Trust. Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry	