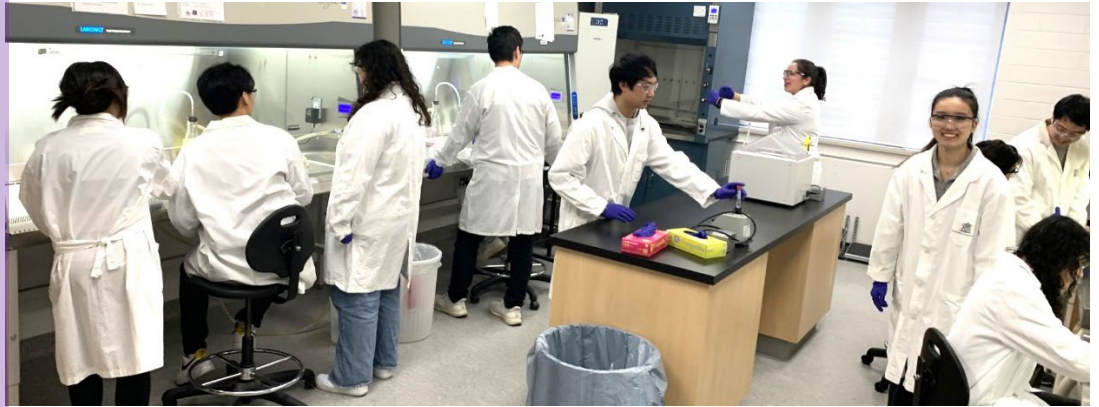


# Physiology and Pharmacology

## February 2024 Newsletter



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4980 Poster Day  
April 8, 2024  
Department Meeting

### Upcoming Seminars:

Monday, March 25  
Monday, April 8  
Monday, April 15

### Save the Date for New Faculty Seminars:

Friday, May 10  
Dr. Flory Muanda  
Dr. Oana Birceanu

### Stay Connected



[@westernuPandP](https://twitter.com/@westernuPandP)



[PhysPharm](https://www.facebook.com/PhysPharm)

The New Year is off to a great start for Physiology and Pharmacology! Thanks to the remarkable efforts of our Departmental staff, we have now officially moved into the new Undergraduate Cell Culture Teaching Facility (located in MSB 210B). Shared with the IMS program, this space has significantly expanded our ability to integrate live cell experimentation into our third-year labs, another great experiential learning opportunity for our students.

Over the last month we have also been extremely busy hosting candidates for our tenure track position in Inflammation. Thank you to all members of the Department who have engaged in this process – coming out to seminars, meeting with the candidates, and providing your honest feedback. The candidates have all commented on how engaged and welcoming our Department is. We will keep everyone informed as soon as our “next colleague” has been identified.

*Cheryle*

An update from the “real” Chair...

If you have enjoyed my silence over the last few months, I am sorry to disrupt it briefly. But I wanted to provide an update on my health.

As you might recall, I have been diagnosed with a rare cancer called Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma. Most recently, I have been on chemotherapy for lung metastasis from the primary tumour. Recent scans have made it clear that this chemotherapy is no longer working and the metastasis have started to grow again. Therefore, I will take a short holiday from chemo and start a different regimen in March. Based on the schedule and available information, I do not expect that these treatments will have an impact on my ability to chair the department starting July 1.

This is a slow growing cancer and I remain optimistic that we will get a handle on it. Any questions or concerns, please let me know.

All the best,

*Frank*

# Welcome

- ✧ Liliana German-Castelan – Post Doctoral Scholar with Drs. Taylor Schmitz and Marco Prado
- ✧ Shelby Oke – Research Associate with Dr. Matt Grol

## Congratulations

- ✧ **To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:**

Arine Pawakian for the completion of MSc degree (Supervisor: Peter Stathopoulos)

- ✧ **Recent grant funding success:**

**Taylor Schmitz** – CIHR Brain Health and Cognitive Impairment in Aging Research Initiative  
“Leveraging deep biology for brain resilience to AD pathology”

**Dean Betts** – CIHR 5 year Operating Grant “Detection of microRNAs in the conditioned culture medium as a non-invasive ‘miR-print’ of human preimplantation embryo competence”

**Oana Birceanu, Peter Stathopoulos et al.** – Schulich Infrastructure Support Grant “Real-time quantitative PCR instrument for the shared Department of Physiology and Pharmacology core facility”

- ✧ **Promotion:**

**Ute Schwarz** - promotion to Associate Professor as of July 1st, 2024.

**Dan Hardy** - promotion to Professor as of July 1st, 2024.

- ✧ **To Olga Krougly, Alycia Armstrong and Christie Vanderboor** for receiving their certificates in Western’s Operational Excellence program
- ✧ **To Sean Gill** on becoming a certified full Ski Patroller!



## In Memoriam



We would like to mark the passing of David Pomerantz on January 8th, 2024. David peacefully left this world at the age of 80, leaving behind a profound legacy of knowledge, community, and dedication.

Born in California, David settled in London where he spent 27 years at Western, dedicating himself to teaching and carrying out research in reproductive medicine. Remembered by Andy Watson as a “wonderful mentor with a sharp humor and as he would of said...a pithy insight into all things important.”

## Undergraduate Studies Update

Our semester is over half-way done and we are looking ahead to our final exam period. Please note that students now have access to the final exam schedule and can see the date assigned to your class by the registrar. We will be hosting a common makeup exam date in early May. Once approved, this information will be shared with all course managers.

Course managers should have received an email from WTS with regards to the new learning management system (LMS), **Brightspace**, which will replace OWL beginning in May. In this email (February 9<sup>th</sup>), you would have been invited to request a sandbox for you to navigate to start learning the new LMS. The ability to make that request is still live in the Qualtrics link that was provided in that email, so please respond to that survey link to have early access to Brightspace.

For anyone who teaches in any capacity, learning the new LMS is an essential part of your professional development this summer. Please make it a high priority to attend any workshops related to learning Brightspace as it navigates differently than OWL. Getting used to it now will make your teaching in the fall/winter terms more successful. The system is user friendly, but since it is different than OWL, there will be a learning curve. There will be some aspects of course delivery and evaluations that you will need to modify as some of the tools in OWL are not available in Brightspace. Our teaching faculty will be available for consultation later in the summer, but the primary learning needs to happen with you attending user workshops that are being created centrally for this purpose.

**Mark your Calendars:** 4980 Poster day - Monday March 25th

## Graduate Studies Update

The 2025-2026 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Fall 2024 Competition) were recently announced. New this year: Individual Faculties will set up mentoring committees for applicants (previously done by SGPS), and the application deadline is now August 1 (previously August 31). If you would like more information on the application process, please visit

<https://vanier.gc.ca/en/home-accueil.html>

Briefly, competitive candidates are international and domestic students who demonstrate extraordinary excellence in the following three categories:

*Leadership* – Engagement in leadership positions outside of academia. e.g., fostering others, spearheading change, overcoming obstacles, going above and beyond the expected norms of their position(s).

*Research Potential* – Undertaking impactful world-class research that demonstrates interest in discovery and its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in their field of study.

*Academic Excellence* – University academic transcripts demonstrating high academic talent supported by a record of merit-based scholarships and/or awards.

For a full list of examples, please visit [https://vanier.gc.ca/en/selection\\_committee\\_guide-comite\\_selection\\_lignes.html#b3.1](https://vanier.gc.ca/en/selection_committee_guide-comite_selection_lignes.html#b3.1) or contact Dr. John Di Guglielmo.

## Research Committee Update

### Lunch and Learn:

Many thanks to Dr. David Hess for kicking off 2024 with an outstanding Lunch and Learn focused on “Using Flow Cytometry to Advance the Translational Impact of your Research.” As always, please send suggestions for more Lunch and Learn topics to Peter Stathopoulos ([pstatho@uwo.ca](mailto:pstatho@uwo.ca)).

### X-LABS Reminder:

Last year, Schulich started a new outreach program called “X-LABS” (eXperiential Learning Academy in Biomedical Sciences). X-LABS identifies talented, committed high school students with interest in biomedical sciences that would benefit from enrichment experiences at SSMD. The program specifically focuses on students from low socioeconomic status environments that would otherwise have extreme difficulty capitalizing on opportunities to expand their skills and talents.

X-LABS 2023 was strongly supported by the Dean’s Office and included all Basic Science Departments. The highlight of the program was a two-week immersive experience in research laboratories/programs at SSMD in mid-July. This was enormously well received by the students, their families, the participating labs and our partners in the Thames Valley and Avon Maitland District School Boards.

X-LABS 2024 is back again this year, with some expansion. The previous cohort of 10 students will be invited back for “year 2” (they will now have completed 11th grade) and a new cohort of students will be invited that will have just completed the 10th grade. As such, we need to increase the number of research/laboratory opportunities.

If you are interested in participating this Summer (tentatively July 8<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024), please complete the Qualtrics Survey linked below, with a couple of sentences about the general experience you and your research team could provide. Alternatively, if you are not able to serve as a host for a two-week experience but would like to provide a demonstration laboratory experience or tour of a facility, this would also be appreciated – just make note of this in the survey.

[https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bfSro6ptNyDYAjs](https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bfSro6ptNyDYAjs)

For more information or clarification, please contact Timothy Regnault ([tim.regnault@uwo.ca](mailto:tim.regnault@uwo.ca)).



## Faculty Biographies:

Zarrah Ling continues her work on updating Faculty biographies for the Department website. If you would like your biography update expedited, please contact Zarrah Ling ([zling29@uwo.ca](mailto:zling29@uwo.ca)) and Peter Stathopoulos ([pstatho@uwo.ca](mailto:pstatho@uwo.ca)) to set up a meeting.

## Health and Safety Committee Update

With the start of the New Year, we wish to remind 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 Courtney Voss ([cvoss2@uwo.ca](mailto:cvoss2@uwo.ca)). This includes 4<sup>th</sup> year students. Please email Courtney if you would like an electronic copy of the Emergency Response Refresher document.

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 Courtney Voss ([cvoss2@uwo.ca](mailto:cvoss2@uwo.ca)) with a list of your HQP and her 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 visit [https://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/topics/protective\\_equipment.html](https://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/topics/protective_equipment.html) or contact Courtney Voss ([cvoss2@uwo.ca](mailto:cvoss2@uwo.ca)) and you can order yours at Campus Vision at UCC.



## Social Committee Update

The Social Committee is thinking about planning a social event in March! If you have any ideas, please email Faraj Haddad ([fhaddad2@uwo.ca](mailto:fhaddad2@uwo.ca)) or Van Lu ([vlv24@uwo.ca](mailto:vlv24@uwo.ca)).

## Graduate Student Council Update

Science Rendezvous is coming back to Western on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024!

This is a nationwide science outreach festival aimed to inspire kids and make science accessible to everyone. Last year's edition saw over 4500 attendees! Our department is once again organizing a booth for this year's event. If you are interested in helping organize or volunteer to run the booth on May 11<sup>th</sup>, please reach out to Aswin ([asuresh6@uwo.ca](mailto:asuresh6@uwo.ca)). Also, if you are a fan of general trivia, the PPGSC Social Committee is looking to form a team for Trivia Nights at the Grad Club held weekly on Tuesdays from 7-10 PM! If interested, please fill out the form here: (<https://forms.gle/Dx5Pr9suWQ4ucNLGA>).

# Upcoming Seminars

The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology  
2024 Winter/Spring Series  
All lectures will be held at 3:00 p.m. in MSB 384 unless otherwise noted



Date: **Monday, March 25 (MSB 384 and Zoom)**

Speaker: Nadia Haghbin, PhD candidate

Title: *"GPCRs and the Genesis of Functional Bias in Arteries: Mechanisms-to-Application"*

Host: Don Welsh



Date: **Monday, April 8 (MSB 384 and Zoom)**

Speaker: Geoff Pickering, PhD

Cardiologist, London Health Science Centre

Professor, Department of Medicine, Biochemistry and Medical Biophysics

Title: *"Building molecular windows into aortic catastrophes"*

Host: Chris Pin



Date: **Monday, April 15 (MSB 384 and Zoom)**

Speaker: Anthony Nichols, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery and the  
Department of Oncology, LHSC

Host: Chris Pin

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