

Physiology and Pharmacology

September 2023 Newsletter

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Hello everybody,

A warm welcome to the new academic year! There is a quite a buzz on campus as we get ready to welcome back our undergraduate students and prepare for the start of a new term. This year we as a Department will embrace the 'new' – an Acting Departmental Chair, Acting Graduate Chair, new teaching and research opportunities, and even a new Western mascot that has already befriended our Assistant Chair! Thank you to all that have stepped up to facilitate changes to teaching and service in the Department, enabling us to maintain our exceptional programming.



I would like to extend a particular warm welcome to our new PhysPharm 4980 students, graduate students, and staff. We look forward to a productive year ahead. A reminder to everyone to join us on **Thursday September 21st** between **3-5 PM** in the **Physics and Astronomy Atrium** for our Welcome Reception to kick off the new year.

This Fall brings with it many exciting events in the Department. A reminder that we are currently recruiting a tenure-track faculty position in the area of inflammation – the Appointments committee will begin evaluating applications in October, so please help us by sharing the posting to get the word out. Our Seminars and Research committees have put together an exceptional line up of seminars and workshops – I look forward to seeing a strong turnout throughout the year.

Wishing everyone a great start to the term! Please feel free to pop by or reach out with any questions or comments.

Cheryle

Welcome

- ✧ Alycia Armstrong – Finance Administrator, PhysPharm Admin Office
- ✧ Niaz Chalabiano – Post Doc Associate with Flory Muanda
- ✧ Alex Xue – Research Technician with Adrian Owen
- ✧ Zulieka Leung – Research Technician with Dean Betts

To all our new graduate students:

- ✧ Jesutofunmi Adesuyi (MSc) – John McGuire
- ✧ Nouran Al-Banaa (MSc) – David Hess
- ✧ Ryan Armstrong (MSc) – Matthew Grol
- ✧ Enis Cela (MSc) – Douglas Fraser/Gediminas Cepinskas
- ✧ Elizabeth Cui (MSc) – Richard Kim
- ✧ Changsheng (Jay) Ding (MSc) – Qingping Feng
- ✧ Lujain Ez eddin (MSc) – Flory Muanda
- ✧ Alireza Halabian (PhD) – Vania Prado
- ✧ Oneeb Hassan (MSc) – Chris Pin
- ✧ Chen Bei (Betty)Hu (MSc) – Ute Schwarz
- ✧ HanYu (Darren) Jiang (MSc) – Tom Appleton
- ✧ Andrea Kocsis (MSc) – Dan Hardy
- ✧ Zoya Lehman (MSc) – Peter Stathopoulos
- ✧ Yuxin Mei (MSc) – Wei Yang Lu
- ✧ Robert Menzies (MSc) – Rithwik Ramachandran
- ✧ Sahar Mouawad (MSc) – Marlys Koschinsky
- ✧ Krittika Narasimhan (MSc) – Van Lu
- ✧ Jonathan Nguyen (MSc) – Ute Schwarz/Brad Urquhart
- ✧ Mithchell Pallister (MSc) – Samuel Asfaha
- ✧ Alex Rico (MSc) – Cheryle Seguin
- ✧ Ye Shen (MSc) – Chris Pin
- ✧ Bavina Thirunavukarasu (MSc) – David Hill
- ✧ Yina Tian (MSc) – David Hess
- ✧ Alexandra Troitskaya (MSc) – Sean Gill/Ruud Veldhuizen
- ✧ Alejandra Varela (MSc) – Lina Dagnino
- ✧ Stephanie Viola (MSc) – John McGuire
- ✧ Michelle Wong (MSc) – Richard Kim

Congratulations

To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:

- ✧ Akasham Rajagopaul - MSc (Barbara de Vrijer/ Tim Regnault)
- ✧ Virginia Wolfe – MSc (Andrew Watson/Dean Betts)
- ✧ Xin Yue (Sharon) Xie – MSc (David Hess)
- ✧ Taylor Shelton – MSc (Cheryle Seguin)
- ✧ Nicholas Tonial – PhD (Brad Urquhart)
- ✧ Chen Jun Gao – MSc (Rithwik Ramachandran/Liena Zhao)

- ✧ To Alexandra Troitskaya for being this year's recipient of the Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Opportunity Scholarship

Undergraduate Studies Updates

The start to a new term can bring with it both excitement and feelings of being overwhelmed. I feel these both right now. As I reflect on my own educational journey, I remember both the struggles and the successes. Our students will inevitably struggle this year, but they will also experience success. As with new year's resolutions, I like to set a goal for a new academic year. My personal goal is to provide a learning experience in my classroom that allows students to feel safe to struggle and to find that inner strength to persist when learning is hard.

My challenge to all of you is to think about what you want for the students who will join you in your classroom this year.

Our new academic year begins on Thursday, September 7th. With another large enrollment of over 4000 undergraduate students across all our department courses. We also have 82 graduate student teaching assistants which are working with our faculty in the 30 courses that we will be offering in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Some highlights to the beginning of our semester includes our 4980 interviews for research positions, which will begin on the 7th, the introduction of a new fourth year course led by Dr. Tim Regnault, and the start to our 3000E student labs on the week of Sept. 11th.

Lastly, thank you to Michele Grigg and our two summer digital media interns, Meghan Frampton and Victoria Chharawala, who were immensely helpful in assisting with the creation our course OWL sites.

Important Dates for Semester 1:

Sept 7, 2023 – classes begin

Sept 15, 2023 – Last day to add first-term and full-year courses

Sept 29, 2023 – National Truth and Reconciliation Day (non-instructional day)

Oct 9, 2023 – Thanksgiving (Holiday)

Oct 18, 2023 – Fall Convocation for Schulich (graduate and undergraduate degrees)

Oct 30 – Nov 5, 2023 – Fall study break

Nov 13, 2023 – Last day to withdraw from a first term half course without academic penalty

Nov 19, 2023 – Fall Preview Day

Nov 30, 2023 – Last day to drop full year course without academic penalty

Dec 8, 2023 – Last day of classes

Dec 9, 2023 – Study day

Dec 10 – Dec 22, 2023 – Mid-year exam period

Graduate Studies Updates

Our New Student Orientation will be held on Thursday, September 21, from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM in MSB 212A/B. New supervisors are also welcome to attend all or part of the Orientation, as we will provide a clear overview of program expectations.

Research Committee Updates

The Research Committee Chairs of the seven basic science departments in Schulich (B7) continued to meet regularly over the summer months. Most recent updates from our meetings: (i) Terms of Reference have been finalized for the B7 - the purpose of the Schulich B7 Research Group is to facilitate communication, research coordination and collaboration among the seven basic science departments,

represented by their Associate Chairs – Research or other research representative and to present discussion findings directly to the Vice-Dean (Research and Innovation) for Schulich; (ii) after meetings with the Vice-Dean (Research and Innovation), we are optimistic that the internal Schulich equipment grant competition will be reintroduced and revamped for the fall of 2023. The B7 are in the process of drafting details of the competition. Watch for information and deadlines regarding this internal competition, which will tentatively run concurrent with the Schulich Collaborative Research Seed Grant (deadline ~November, 2023).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: The 2023 Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Gowdey Distinguished Lecture and Research Day will take place on Monday, November 6th, 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 CALENDAR: Our next **Lunch and Learn** presentation will take place on Thursday, October 5th, 2023. Dr. Oana Birceanu will present a primer on using R for basic statistical analysis in the life sciences (Hosted by Peter Chidiac).

Please send additional Lunch and Learn topic and 2024 James A. F. Stevenson Distinguished speaker suggestions to Alycia Armstrong (amorga7@uwo.ca) and Peter Stathopoulos (pstatho@uwo.ca).

Health and Safety Committee Updates

New Chemical Inventory System: As of August 1st, 2023, Western has recently transitioned its chemical inventory from the former HECHMET (Higher Education Cooperative for Hazardous Materials and Equipment Tracking) to a new safety administrative platform, **WorkSafe at Western “WorkSafe”**, developed by Safety Stratus. This is the platform that was used in our last inspection and it will continue to be used in future. As a reminder, a university wide chemical inventory is necessary to keep track of potential hazards in a given lab and around campus. This platform provides Principal Investigators and their research teams direct access to data and reports to help ensure a safe working environment. – it is now integrated with the Laboratory, Radiation, Biosafety and Hazardous Waste Programs.

What you need to know:

- 1) All existing barcodes are valid and remain the same in the inventory.
- 2) A new format for barcodes is being used for additions on and after August 1, 2023.
- 3) Your designated receiver (Christie for MSB/DSB) will enter your new chemicals into the database and assign them a barcode.
- 4) Pls responsibility- within the system, the chemical will be assigned to the PI and their room, the PI will then need to accept the chemical.
- 5) All Principal Investigators will have access to their inventory automatically.
- 6) WorkSafe is accessed using the same Western user ID and password that individuals use for a variety of other administrative platforms.

Personal and Property Security Tips:

- ✧ Lock your room door whenever you leave, even if it is only for a few minutes. If your door has a deadbolt, use it when you leave at the end of the day.
- ✧ Do not leave building keys in your office. Keep them with you at all times.
- ✧ Do not bring valuable personal possessions from home as university insurance only covers items bought on a Western account.
- ✧ Use the services of the Western Foot Patrol (<http://www.uwo.ca/footpatrol/>) if you are working late.
- ✧ Call 911 from a campus phone for all situations which pose an immediate threat (fire, medical, suspicious or threatening persons). **Call 519-661-3300 to reach campus police from a cell phone.** In emergency situations on campus, it is very important not to call 911 directly from your cell phone as this can slow down the actual response.

Social Committee Updates

Our Summer Ice Cream Fundraiser was a great success! We raised \$504.76 for the London Food Bank. Thank you to everyone who came out to volunteer and generously donate.



Congratulations to **Julie Dumont** for winning our mystery raffle prize: a \$10 gift card **to Shaw's Ice Cream Shop.**

Our next social event: Welcome Reception, Sept 21st, 3-5PM, location: Physics & Astronomy Building Atrium. Drop by for some light refreshments while mingling with new students and faculty. Please **RSVP by September 14** through this [link](#) or QR code:




Hope to see everyone there!



EDID Committee Updates

We are delighted to have Dr. Imogen Coe <https://imogencoeconsulting.ca/about> speaking on September 25th, 3-4PM (in person with Zoom option) at our Department Seminar Series. Dr. Coe's is planning to spend the day on campus and Dr. Oana Birceanu is hosting her! If anyone would like to meet with Dr. Coe for the day, please reach out to Oana.

Upcoming Seminars

| The Department of Physiology and Pharmacology 2023 Fall/Winter Series All lectures will be held at 3:00 p.m. in MSB 384 unless otherwise noted | |
|--|--|
|  | <p>Date: Monday, September 25 (MSB 384 and Zoom)</p> <p>Speaker: Imogen Coe, PhD Professor, Diversity and Inclusion in SRC, NSERC Scholar in Residence, Toronto Metropolitan University</p> <p>Title: <i>"Facing Uncomfortable Truths and Driving Inclusive Excellence in Academic Scientific Research in Canada"</i></p> <p>Host: Oana Birceanu</p> |
|  | <p>Date: Monday, October 2 (MSB 384 and Zoom)</p> <p>Speaker: Mei Ding, PhD Research Associate, Lawson Research Institute, London Health Science Centre, Western University</p> <p>Title: "Explore the molecular mechanism of renal disease"</p> <p>Host: Cheryle Seguin</p> |
|  | <p>Date: Monday, October 16 (MSB 384 and Zoom)</p> <p>Speaker: Nicole Sidor, PhD Candidate</p> <p>Title: "Investigation of TMAP as a candidate biomarker of kidney function"</p> <p>Host: Brad Urquhart</p> |
| This Seminar Series is Sponsored by the Mogenson Trust. Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry | |