

Physiology and Pharmacology Newsletter

December 2020

Welcome to the last newsletter of the year. And what a year it has been.

I want to start with a heartfelt thank you to everyone for your exceptional contributions this year. You stepped up to the plate when the University suddenly switched to online only teaching in March, and you keep stepping up daily as this situation and its implications for teaching and research are far from over. I will not single out individuals here since there are too many who excelled in the face of huge professional and personal challenges. As a whole, the department responded tremendously well to the challenges of this year, and I am proud to be your Chair.

The upcoming holidays will be different and for many of us they will be difficult. While I am sure everyone will suffer to some degree from the restrictions in place, I feel in particular for those trainees from other parts of Canada or from outside of Canada who might be stuck in London without close family. Please never hesitate to reach out if you need support or just a friendly ear. I will be here, as will many others, so please get in touch if you need to. Just in case you think you need professional help, we will make sure to distribute the appropriate contacts before the holidays – keep them handy.

For everyone, please take these holidays to rest and relax as much as you can (which might be less than many of you need). Because of the challenges of the pandemic, many of us are behind on all kinds of things. The next two weeks are not the time to catch up on these things. Please forget about work. Relax, read novels or poetry, spend time with (a few) loved ones, go outside and get some exercise, make puzzles, knit, or do whatever gives you pleasure (and even if reviewing or writing papers gives you pleasure – just DON'T). We might not be able to completely ignore Zoom but let's restrict its use for get-togethers with friends and family.

And please be safe! We all know the guidelines so I will not bore you with them. Please take them to heart. There is hope for 2021, but it will be a few more months

at least until most of us will receive the vaccines, and some more time until they protect us. Stay safe until then!

Looking forward to the new year, we can start planning for the future and tackling important issues beyond the pandemic. In this context, please plan to attend our Racism and EDI Workshop on January 21 from 1 pm to 4 pm. This workshop will feature a presentation by Dr. Nicole Kaniki, Special Advisor to President Alan Shepard on Anti-Racism, and EDI Specialist at BrainsCAN. Furthermore, we have scheduled a retreat to discuss our strategic plan for March 30th, 9:00 am to noon.

I will end on a personal note. You might remember that my year started with my own medical leave, which 'seamlessly' blended with the pandemic shutdown. My cancer journey is not over, but it made me learn, once again, what a fabulous department we have. Thank you all for your great support, many well wishes, words of encouragement, home-made meals, gifts, and everything else. I am very happy and grateful to have you all by my side.

Have the best possible Holidays and All the Best for the New Year. 2021, we are ready for you!

Frank

Congratulations!!!

To Poster Award Winners from our 2020 James A.F. Stevenson Research Day:

Cancer Biology

- Naomi Mishan – Supervisor: Lina Dagnino

Malcolm Arnold Presentation Award in Cardiovascular Sciences

- Kaiyuan Wang – Supervisor: Qingping Feng

Clinical and Basic Pharmacology

- Fang (Mandy) Wang – Supervisor: Peter Chidiac
- Brandon Baer – Supervisor: Ruud Veldhuizen

Cell Biology

- Megan Noble – Supervisor: Peter Stathopulos
- Jeffery Hutchinson – Supervisor: Cheryle Seguin

Developmental Biology

- Allyson Wood – Supervisor: Tim Regnault
- Fang Ye – Supervisor: Qingping Feng

Reproductive and Endocrine Biology

- Kendrick Lee – Supervisor: Dan Hardy / Qingping Feng

Neuroscience

- Tyler Dexter – Supervisor: Tim Bussey / Lisa Saksida
- Samuel Mestern – Supervisor: Wataru Inoue

New Students

- Xiaoyi (Jessie) Wang – Supervisor: Chris Pin
- Nazihah Rasiwala – Supervisor: David Hess
- Petra Samardzija – Supervisor: Chris Pin / Peter Stathopulos

To graduate students for winning the following awards:

- **George W. Stavraky Award** – Ermina Hadzic (Supervisor: Frank Beier)
- **Hari and Gudrun Sharma Award** – Rachel Wilson (Supervisor: Nica Borradaile)
- **Murray Fraser Award** – Matt Novello (Supervisor: Peter Stathopulos/Qingping Feng)
- **Esme Walker Award** – Melissa Fenech (Supervisor: Chris Pin)

- **Bill Bottom Award** – Jeff Levine (Supervisor: Michael Rieder)
- **Gordon J. Mogenson Award** – Shelby Oke (Supervisor: Dan Hardy)
- **Margaret Moffat Award** – Laura Russell (Supervisor: Richard Kim)
- **Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Student Council (PPGSC) Award** – Geoff Kerr (Supervisor: Cheryle Seguin)

To our graduate students for the completion of their degrees:

- Mathushan Subasri – MSc (Dean Betts/Andy Watson)
- Pierre Thibeault – PhD (Rithwik Ramachandran)
- Nidhi Kulkarni – MSc (Sean Gill)
- Gregory Robinson – MSc (Qingping Feng)

Calendar

- January 18, 2020 – Department Meeting (2:00 pm via Zoom)
- Upcoming Physiology and Pharmacology Seminars (3:00 pm via Zoom)
 - January 11 – Dr. Stephane Bourque, University of Alberta: *“Anemia in pregnancy: causes, challenges and long-term consequences”*
 - January 18 – Alexander Peidl, PhD Candidate: *“CCN3: A novel anti-fibrotic therapy that targets the activation of collagen-lineage fibroblasts in a murine model of scleroderma”*
 - January 25 – Olivia Samotus, PhD Candidate: *“Exploring the effects of spinal cord stimulation therapy for freezing of gait in parkinsonian patients”*
- Lunch and Learn (12:00 – 1:00 pm via Zoom):
 - March 11, 2021 – Lina Dagnino, Topic: *Cell Culture* (Host: Peter Stathopoulos)

The full list of seminars can be viewed at:

https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/about_us/seminar_schedule.html