

# Physiology and Pharmacology

## Summer 2024 Newsletter

### In This Issue

Welcome  
Congratulations  
Undergraduate  
Update  
Graduate Update  
Research Update  
Health and Safety  
Update  
EDID Update  
Social Committee  
Update  
Graduate Student  
Council Update

### Upcoming Events:

Dept Meeting -  
Mon, Sept 16



Dear all,

Welcome to the new academic year! And with that you got me back as your department Chair, for better or worse. I for one am looking forward to working with all of you to make this Department as strong as possible!

I have to start by thanking Dr. Cheryle Séguin for an outstanding job as Acting Chair this past year. The year certainly had some major challenges, and the Department mastered them very well. Thank you, Cheryle!! Cheryle was supported by the ever superb Sue-Ann Becker and our great administrative team, along with Vice-Chair Dan Hardy, all committee chairs and many others. Thank you everyone!

One of the greatest pleasures of chairing a Department is to hire new faculty members, and with that I feel incredibly lucky to welcome Dr. Emily Day as our newest Assistant Professor on my first day back! Emily joins us from Trinity College in Dublin and will work on the intersection of metabolism and immunology. Please introduce yourself to Emily when you see her, we are very excited to have her here!

This new year will have a number of tasks to be accomplished. Most notably, we will have the periodic review of both our undergraduate and graduate programs. This is a lot of work but always gives us the chance for self-reflection and outside feedback. We are planning for a department retreat to get wide input on these processes, tentatively in the fall reading week. Stay posted for more updates. I promise we will also return to strategic planning for the mid to long term future for the Department, something that I had put on hold in my first term. And undoubtedly there will be more things coming along....

But first, let's enjoy these next two months of summer, relax a bit, spend time with family and friends, or catch up on whatever our heart desires. You all deserve a bit of a break. And if you feel like, stop by my office to chat, provide feedback, etc.

Happy Summer!

*Frank*

### Stay Connected

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

# Welcome

- ✧ **Emily Day** – Assistant Professor
- ✧ **Ariel Batallan Burrows** – Postdoctoral Associate with Drs. Marco Prado and Taylor Schmitz
- ✧ **To our new MSc students:**
  - Mohammad Ali Omrani – Supervisor: Dr. Flory Muanda
  - Andrei Glogov – Supervisor: Dr. John DiGuglielmo
- ✧ **To all of our summer research students and volunteers**

# Congratulations

- ✧ To graduate students for the completion of their degrees:
  - **Agnes Terek** for the completion of her MSc degree (Supervisors: David Hess and Lauren Flynn)
  - **Jasleen Grewal** for the completion of her MSc degree (Supervisor: Frank Beier)
- ✧ **Taylor Schmitz** – on his lab's recent high-profile paper in *Nature Medicine* reporting on outcomes of a phase 2a clinical trial for a new Alzheimer's treatment
- ✧ **Christine Bell** – on her recent appointment as a Teaching Scholar
- ✧ **Nicole Campbell** – named as one of the 2024 3M National Teaching Fellows, one of the nation's most prestigious honours for exceptional contributions to teaching and learning
- ✧ **Adrian Owen** – elected Fellow of the Royal Society. Recognized for their invaluable contributions to science, elected Fellows are leaders in their fields
- ✧ **Cheryle Séguin** - received the Robin Poole Investigator Award from the Canadian Connective Tissue Society in recognition of her outstanding work at the forefront of intervertebral disc and spine research
- ✧ **Alycia Armstrong** – completing Toronto and London half marathons!



# Undergraduate Studies Update

This report is brought to you by both Dr. Anita Woods and Angela Beye, the outgoing/incoming Undergraduate Chair. First, I (Angela) would like to thank Anita for her outstanding leadership over the past five years. What a rollercoaster. Her tireless dedication to undergraduate education and our Department's successes was remarkable. Thank you, Anita, for everything you did for us! For all future undergraduate matters, please contact me (abeye@uwo.ca). I ask everyone for your patience and grace as I transition into the role and learn the policies and procedures in the days ahead.

We want to congratulate all our graduates who convoked on June 13th. Dr. Brad Urquhart's heartfelt convocation address was a highlight of the celebration. A handful of our students were also recognized for their work in the afternoon's gold medal ceremony.

*Congratulations to:*

Kushvir Saini – J.A.F. Stevenson Gold Medal in Physiology

Rebecca Brunner – Susan Vitali-Lovell Gold Medal in Pharmacology

Nicholas Hamzea – Gold Medal in an HSP in Physiology and Pharmacology

Erin Gaynor – Gold Medal for a Major in Physiology

Katarina Djokanovic – Gold Medal for a Major in Pharmacology

Geneva Herold – Hugh B. Anderson Award in Physiology

For course managers, here are a few highlights before September rolls around. First, 4th-year course registration will occur between July 8 and July 12. Undoubtedly, students will contact you wanting special permission due to missing prerequisites or time conflicts. Please watch for an email from Angela with details on how to handle those.

As you know, Western is implementing a new absence policy this year, where students can report one absence per term per course without any documentation. We are working on some messaging that will help you plan your assessments and will have that sent out soon.

Hopefully, most of you have navigated our new Brightspace learning management system by now and started setting up your site if you have a first-semester course. We will set an internal deadline of **Tuesday, August 6th**, for you to complete your site to give us time to review and make sure all sites are functional for launch by August 30<sup>th</sup>.

The new course syllabus template has been sent out. Please use that template this year, as some significant changes have been implemented. If you manage a first-semester course, please send your completed course syllabus to Michele Grigg by **Tuesday, August 6th**, at the latest, for review.

For 4980 supervisors, please mark **Friday, September 6th from noon to 2 PM** in your calendar for Phys/Pharm 4980 interview day. A welcome reception will follow – stay tuned for details.

IQAP (Institutional Quality Assurance Process) review (undergrad): Work is ongoing for the IQAP review that will be submitted in October 2025. We have a work-study student who is currently collecting alumni information, focus groups with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students have been completed, and we are preparing to survey alumni from our program who have graduated in the past 8 years.

# Graduate Studies Update

We are now in the summer term, so a quick reminder for graduate students and supervisors to take into account wellness and vacation time, as mentioned in the Senate Policy from May 17, 2024:

Full-time graduate students in research-based programs are expected to be active in their program for all three terms of the university year, as specified in Section 2. While engaging in their program, we recognize that personal time (i.e. time away from studies) is beneficial for student health, well-being and academic achievement. It is acceptable and expected that Supervisors, Supervisory Committee Members and Graduate Chairs will discuss expectations around students' study and research schedules; they will mentor students and support their need for time off and their pursuit of work/life balance. Time away from studies must take into account the impact on timely progression and the impact on research and other responsibilities.

It is expected that students devote a reasonable number of hours each weekday to study and to research. It is acceptable for students to take days off. In making these time management decisions, it is expected that students will learn to discern when time away from studies supports academic productivity, and when it undermines timely progression.

In addition to the above, students are entitled to be away from their studies and research responsibilities during:

- the closing of the University from late December until early January
- statutory holidays when the University is closed
- religious holidays in accordance with University policy

Graduate students are also entitled to at least two weeks of vacation time from their studies per year.

# Research Committee Update

A big thank you to Dr. Peter Stathopoulos as he steps down as Chair of the Research Committee. Peter made exceptional contributions to the Research Committee during his term as Chair, expanding the lunch and learn sessions, obtaining external grant funding for the departmental core facility and leading several other initiatives that have enhanced research capacity in our department. Dr. Rithwik Ramachandran will take over as Research Committee Chair on July 1st, 2024.

Stevenson's Distinguished Lecture and Research Day:

Mark your calendars! Our 2024 Distinguished Lecture and Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Research Day will take place on **Thursday, November 7th, 2024**. **Dr. Stanley Nattel (Montreal Heart Institute)**, renowned world leader in research on atrial fibrillation will be our keynote speaker. Dr. Taylor Schmitz will be our departmental faculty speaker.

Biographies:

Zarrah Ling will not be updating biographies for July and August but updates to biographies can be made over these months by sending finalized text directly to Christie Vanderboor for posting on the Department website.



# Health and Safety Committee Update

The committee would like to thank Dan Hardy for his service and welcome Peter Chidiac as the Chair of the Health and Safety committee.

Inspections this spring and early summer went very well. Thank you all for keeping such safe labs! Something new, that has come into place is that each lab needs to keep records of annual training. This training should include; emergency exit location, use of eye wash and safety shower and how to use a spill kit. In addition to this, various protocols specific to your lab, should be revisited. This training needs to be documented with signatures. The Health and Safety Committee are working on a standardized form for each lab to use to help facilitate this new procedure.

Have a safe and fun summer!

# EDID Committee Update

The committee extends its gratitude to our inaugural co-chair, Lina Dagnino, for her invaluable contributions and welcomes Oana Birceanu as co-chair beginning July 1, 2024.

The committee is thrilled to begin contributing to the recently funded BrainScan grant:

Rethinking Representation: Tools to Address EDID Barriers in Undergraduate and Graduate Education  
Principal Investigator: Dr. Anita Woods  
Co-investigator: Dr. Oana Birceanu  
Co-applicants: Drs. Wataru Inoue, Lina Dagnino, Cheryle Seguin, John Di Guglielmo, Jessica Grahn, Brian Corneil; Hailey Hunter, Garth Blackler

# Social Committee Update



Thank you to Van Lu for all her work on the Social Committee, and welcome to Ruud Veldhuizen as new co-chair.

On Thursday June 20th, our department celebrated the many accomplishments and milestones of various members of the department and the changes in leadership across several departmental committees.

With the efforts of our departmental staff members of the social committee, this celebration featured freshly-made popcorn and a beautifully decorated snacks bar! To top of the afternoon, the social committee also hosted a London summer themed Kahoot where Dan Klapak was crowned the winner, earning a \$20 gift card to Haven's Creamery to fight off the summer heat.

The social committee's summer shenanigans are not over yet! We are currently planning another event for the month of August. We welcome all new ideas and all faculty members interested in helping make these events a reality.

# Graduate Student Council Update



Science Rendezvous took place on May 11th, and our Department's booth featured two interactive activities on DNA and motor adaptation. Despite the weather, we had a fantastic turnout. A big thank you to everyone who helped plan, coordinate, and run the booth!



Our PPGSC ultimate frisbee intramural team is in full swing—wish them luck in bringing back the purple shirt! Although registration for the summer has closed, keep an eye out for more teams this fall if you are interested in participating in intramurals!

## Special Congratulations to our 2024 Schulich Award Winners!



Continuous Excellence Individual Award – *Olga Krougly*

Research and Innovation (Clinical) – Mid-career – *Tom Appleton*

Schulich Excellence in Education Awards for Undergraduate Education – *Angela Beye*

Research and Innovation (Basic) – Senior career – *Marlys Koschinsky*

Research and Innovation (Basic) – Early career – *Taylor Schmitz*

We love celebrating our accomplishments, in and out of the lab.  
Please share your stories, pictures and newsworthy items for  
upcoming editions.

