



PHARM CIRCLE

Connecting stories from Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals Program

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Happy Happenings


Contacts:

 mun.ca/pharmacy

 709-864-8421

 @schoolofpharmacy

 @mun_pharmacy

 @schoolofpharm



From the Dean's Desk

Dr. Shawn Bugden

As another year draws to a close, I share the fifth issue of the Pharm Circle newsletter.

We welcomed a new cohort of students in the working professionals program in September. On the other end, we were also pleased to congratulate six more students who received their PharmD degree in October. This brings the total number of graduates to 17, with six more students expected to complete the program this December.

This fall we established two student awards to support their experiential rotations. The David J. Collins Legacy Award for Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacists and the Travel Award for Working Professionals in Pharmacy were presented to Brittany Shea and Mohamed Zainulabideen, respectfully, at the November 2021 Scholarships and Awards Ceremony. It was our first in-person event since the beginning of the pandemic.

Inside this issue, we profile Dr. Shelita Dattani who teaches advocacy and therapeutic blocks in several courses of the program. We also share some student experiences in the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) courses. And our student spotlight section highlights students from each of the now four cohorts, with two of those spotlights highlighting students who are spouses and now classmates. Like most things in life, the key to thriving is to find balance and our students work hard to achieve their academic and career goals while finding ways to balance other life priorities.

While we may not be post-pandemic yet, we hope you still find our stories inspirational. Thank you for checking in. We'll meet up again in our June 2022 issue.



We have a diverse group of faculty, external content authors, and instructional designers who work together to make this program a success. We will share their profiles in every issue. Keep an eye out to learn more about our growing pharmily!

Instructor Spotlight

Dr. Shelita Dattani



Dr. Shelita (Sheli) Dattani became a pharmacist over two decades ago. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Northeastern University and with her Doctor of Pharmacy from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Sheli has practiced in hospital pharmacy, community pharmacy, the pharmaceutical industry and in group purchasing organizations. She also volunteers with provincial and national advocacy associations. For the past five years, she has committed her days to serving the profession and sector full-time as a passionate pharmacy advocate. In 2016, she joined the Canadian Pharmacists Association as Director of Professional Affairs. This past February, she accepted the opportunity to further develop a national role in advocacy, government relations, and thought leadership as the vice president of pharmacy affairs at the Neighbourhood Pharmacy Association of Canada.

Sheli is a dynamic, evidence-informed, and patient-centred leader and still practices one day a week at a primary care-based family health team in the Ottawa Area. Her work to serve patients grounds her and she often shares stories from her own practice with government leaders, elected officials, and media. Her love of teaching is also a core component of the “whole Sheli” and she continues to be an active contributor to pharmacist's professional development. Sheli also enjoys educating pharmacists and pharmacy students in her role as an instructor in the PharmD programs at Memorial University's School of Pharmacy where she teaches in the areas of applied learning/advocacy and pharmacotherapy. Sheli also lectures at the University of Waterloo's School of Pharmacy and precepts pharmacy and PharmD students at the University of Waterloo and University of Alberta.

In her commitment to evidence-based care and the health and wellness of Canadians, Sheli also serves as a director on the board of Hypertension Canada.

Sheli loves all things pharmacy and is a self-professed and highly energetic pharmacy “nerd” and tireless advocate. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, travelling, and spending time with her husband Andrew, their three children (Niam, Maala and Saia), and miniature golden doodle. Her wanderlust is stronger than ever, and Sheli is excited to start re-exploring the planet as we return to a safe world after the most profound public health crisis of our times.

Sheli has never been more proud to be part of the pharmacy profession. She says, “the dedication of pharmacy teams to serve their communities in new and innovative ways over the past two years continues to fuel me in my work to advocate for the profession and the sector as integral health partners in communities all over Canada.”

Students in the Working Professional PharmD program certainly benefit from Sheli's vast experience and her receptive and engaging teaching style. She is an asset to the program and brings such a wealth of experience to the online classroom.

APPEs: Experiential Learning Provides Catalyst for Growth

What does the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) mean for a working professional PharmD student? The meaning may vary from student to student, but for most an APPE is not just a valuable learning experience. It's also a chance for great professional and personal growth and can set the stage for the next phase of their career post-PharmD.

Students complete two APPEs in the program: one in ambulatory care and the other in inpatient care. Each placement is six weeks in duration and is completed towards the end of the program.

Lisa Little is the experiential learning pharmacy practice coordinator with the program. Part of her role is to help students navigate the placement process. She says, "It has been my pleasure, and my privilege, to read the reflections that APPE students submit after their placements. They demonstrate, so beautifully, how rewarding, inspiring, and impactful their experiences have been."

Ms. Little says the APPE experience often leads to increased motivation and confidence in students and is also transformative for many. To illustrate how valuable student placements are, Ms. Little shares some of their reflections:

- "One of the biggest takeaways from this rotation for me is a renewed motivation to know more, critically assess each therapeutic option, and practice pharmacy to a higher standard to improve patient care."
- "In addition to the knowledge I gained ... I also gained confidence in my knowledge, enhanced my leadership skills, gained more experience in interdisciplinary collaboration and patient communication and realized the importance of advocacy for our profession."
- "This has been such a memorable and educational experience, I will take the skills I have learned into my future work and always be grateful for the six weeks I have been able to dedicate to this area of study!"
- "There have been times when I have struggled with my confidence in carrying out my responsibilities. However, after my positive leadership experience during my APPE, I am now more willing to put forth and implement my own ideas in my own practice."
- "The most significant contribution that this APPE had to my professional development was it reminded me how rewarding it felt to be an integral part of an inter-professional team ... I saw how each treatment plan involved the opinions and expertise of many individuals who were all working towards a common goal."

APPE students have also completed some very practical and worthwhile projects at their placement sites, and have gained invaluable knowledge to help improve their own practice. For instance, one student realized there were gaps in care and the APPE experience provided new ideas and strategies for improvement. They said, "Going forward I also have ideas on how to facilitate the transition of my diabetic patients going from inpatient to outpatient care ..."

In another placement, a preceptor assigned the student to construct a one-page reference sheet about the increased QTc prolonging risks of some chemotherapy medications. Using some creativity and innovation,

the student then created a tool (based on primary literature) that allows pharmacists at the site to estimate the risk to their patients.

Another student, who was placed in a relatively new clinical pharmacy service, created an on-site referral form and scoring tool to help unit staff decide which patients required pharmacists referral for discharge.

When planning a rotation, it's helpful for students to learn more about their practice site and prepare for their placement well in advance. It might be extra work, but it does pay off. This was certainly the case for one student who not only achieved their goals but had a really amazing and rewarding experience too. The student spent considerable time preparing and researching for the rotation. This prep time only helped the student be more intentional with their time—allowing them to feel more in control, alleviating stress, and preventing burnout as a result.

The student was really glad to be so well prepared and said it "allowed me to take on other tasks and projects that I originally hadn't thought of as they cropped up in the rotation, as I was steadily achieving 'inch pebbles' that led to the eventual milestones of the rotation."

Ms. Little works hard behind the scenes to support the students in their pursuit of finding placements and completing their APPEs. It isn't always smooth sailing navigating the APPE waters, but it definitely allows students to apply what they have learned in the program and enables them to return to their careers with a new-found focus. She hopes sharing these student experiences is inspirational and provides insight for planning. She believes every placement can be a catalyst for further growth and hopes each student's APPE experience is as meaningful and transformative as those mentioned here.



Students in the Spotlight

We like to celebrate our students and let our readers know a little more about the people in our neighbourhood. We share student profiles in every issue.

2018 Cohort Rasha Ahmed



Rasha has spent most of her life in the Greater Toronto Area but she was born abroad in Saudi Arabia where her family lived for many years. When she was about one-year-old, her family moved to Montreal where she spent her toddler years. Then her family moved to Mississauga (20 minutes outside of Toronto) where she still lives today.

Having graduated from the University of Toronto's Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy in 2011, Rasha went on to work in community pharmacy for a short while before moving into the homecare IV infusion pharmacy space. In this setting she learned all about IV infusions, TPN and palliative care. This was initially an intimidating experience for Rasha because it was a novel and unknown practice setting to her. But she learned a lot there and gained some very unique clinical experiences.

After a few years working in that area, she moved into a drug information role at AstraZeneca where she focused on cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, and then later immuno-oncology and lung cancer. And her most recent position has allowed her to learn more about severe and uncontrolled asthma.

Rasha's desire for continuous learning, as is exemplified by her willingness to take on new and different roles as a pharmacist, led her to Memorial University's PharmD for Working Professionals program. She says, "I wanted to expand my clinical knowledge and open opportunities to further grow in my career."

She is a part of the very first cohort admitted to the program in 2018, and her life has been very busy over the last three years. A month after starting the program, she gave birth to her first child, Gabriel. Twenty-two months later her second son, Mikael, was born. And, in addition to becoming a part-time student and a mother, she also started a new role at work and moved houses. Thankfully, the part-time and flexible workload options of Memorial's PharmD program made it possible for her to balance all the aspects of her busy life.

Rasha just completed her final Advance Practice Pharmacy Experience (APPE) in November 2021 and will graduate in the February 2022 in-absentia convocation.

After graduation, Rasha plans to continue to take on new opportunities as a pharmacist and hopes to move into leadership and management positions down the road.

In her spare time, she likes to work on DIY home renovation projects and interior design, explore the great outdoors, and spend time with her kids, husband, family and friends.

With the program soon behind her, she hopes she will have even more time to spend with family, and on home projects and leisure pursuits.





2019 Cohort

Hayley Freeman

Because she was a new graduate when she began the program, she had not yet seen the effect of pushing the boundaries of pharmacy practice. Her patients were almost as excited as she was when she was able to implement her travel health clinic early in the program.

She felt that the program gave her the push needed to put her ideas for clinical services into action. One of the most rewarding aspects of the services she offered was developing relationships with her patients and building their trust as their healthcare provider.

Hayley is completing the final components of the program this fall 2021 semester and hopes to graduate in February 2022. So far, she's one of a handful of students finishing the program in two years plus one semester.

As she nears the end of her PharmD, she believes the program has enriched her life in more ways than just professionally. "My family and friends have even commented that I seem more confident," she said. She has recently accepted a full-time position at a community pharmacy in St. John's and is excited for the opportunity to apply her knowledge to this practice site and beyond.

When Hayley is not working or completing courses, she enjoys travelling, playing the piano, weight training, and spending time with her family.

Hayley was born and raised in Newfoundland. She graduated from Memorial University in May 2019 with her BSc in Pharmacy and started practising at an independent community and compounding pharmacy in rural Newfoundland. It was at this compounding pharmacy where she honed her skills as a pharmacist.

When Hayley graduated with her BSc, she knew she would pursue her PharmD at some point. She always had a passion for learning so when she heard about Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals program, she knew it was something she had to do.

The PharmD program offered here at Memorial was the best fit for her because it would provide the flexibility needed to juggle various aspects of her life. And when she reviewed the curriculum, she knew it would fill in her gaps in knowledge.

She started the program in the fall of 2019 but never expected the learning opportunities it would offer. For Hayley, the program was very hands-on and involved implementing new systems and services into her current practice site. She said, "I was able to see first hand the impact on my patients."



For future applicants

Next application
deadline date
February 1, 2022

For current students

PHAR 4900 Clinical Skills I
Anticipated onsite: end of August/early
September 2022

PHAR 6900 Clinical Skills II
Anticipated onsite: April 29 - May 1, 2022

2020 Cohort

Liam & Sara Walsh

In September 2020, in the middle of a pandemic, Liam and Sarah Walsh became students in the Working Professionals' PharmD program.

Sara was born and raised in Grand Falls-Windsor, NL. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy (BSc Pharmacy) degree from Memorial University in 2013. Early in her studies, she had an interest in community pharmacy. So she began working for Sobeys pharmacy in her first-year of pharmacy school and has worked at the same location since graduation. She is passionate about developing and maintaining a trusting patient-pharmacist relationship and enjoys going to work every day where she knows her patients by name.

After a few years, Sara wanted to incorporate something new into her practice so she obtained a Certificate in Travel Health from the International Society in Travel Medicine. This expanded Sara's clinical service offerings, where she now sees patients prior to travelling to ensure they are optimally immunized and have prophylactic medication and travel advice to stay healthy while abroad. Her desire to expand her practice also led her back to Memorial to complete her PharmD.

Liam was born and raised in Logy Bay, NL. He graduated from Memorial University with his BSc (Pharmacy) in 2012, a year before Sara. He then accepted a position in the emergency department of the Saint John Regional Hospital in Saint John, NB.

While completing his initial pharmacy program, he was a volunteer firefighter. So emergency medicine was a natural fit for Liam. With a high degree of uncertainty, variety, and a fast-paced environment, he finds his current practice setting a continuous challenge and a never-ending learning opportunity.

Liam always had a passion for learning new things. So pursuing a PharmD was just a natural next step for him. "I had an excellent experience my first time around, and that's why I chose Memorial for my PharmD," he said.



He feels the quality of education and the inspiring faculty greatly influenced his career to date and was eager to continue to learn in that kind of environment again.

During Liam's first pharmacy degree, his favourite course was clinical toxicology (taught by Dr. Jason Kielly). He has carried that interest through to this current practice and is heavily involved in the treatment of poisoned patients and managing of antidotes in New Brunswick. When he completes his PharmD, he plans to pursue his board certification in clinical toxicology from the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology.

So far, Sara and Liam enjoy the program and being classmates for the first time. "One of the best parts," they say, "is interacting with pharmacists from different backgrounds and practice settings and learning from their experiences."

Liam and Sara are busy part-time students and full-time pharmacists. They are also parents to a two-year-old daughter named Lauren and a brand new baby girl, Katherine Adele, who was born on December 2, 2021 (10 days before her anticipated arrival!).

They don't have as much downtime these days. But when they can, they like to be outside—hiking and camping in the summer or skiing in the winter. It may not always be easy, but finding balance helps them juggle the responsibilities of work, study, and family.



2021 Cohort

Bree Besaw & Ian Aucoin

Bree Besaw was a first-year BSc (Pharmacy) student when she met Ian Aucoin, a pharmacist working

at the site of her first Structured Practice Experience placement. Several years later, the newlyweds are now living and practicing in Stephenville, NL. Both are graduates from Memorial University's School of Pharmacy.

After graduating in 2012, Ian worked at an independent pharmacy outside Fredericton, NB, for a couple of years before moving back home to the west coast of Newfoundland. He currently works for Walmart as a staff pharmacist.

When Bree graduated in 2019, she accepted a pharmacy position at Shoppers Drug Mart.

Although they work for competing corporations, they knew they wanted to pursue their Doctor of Pharmacy together.

The pandemic was the catalyst for their decision to pursue their PharmD at this particular point in their lives. It gave them time to think about their future

within their community and the profession. It also helped that they could do the program together and could support each other along the way.

When they researched PharmD programs, Memorial was the obvious choice for them. Being alumni of Memorial's School of Pharmacy, they knew the quality of teaching would be excellent, as they had previously been taught by some of the course instructors who now teach in the working professional program. As well, they felt the affordability and flexibility of the program would allow them to continue working full-time while learning at their own pace.

Since beginning the program in September 2021, Ian and Bree are kept busy. Both will admit that they are still learning to find the balance between school, work, and home life. However, they are enjoying the program so far and say they have already learned so much.



When not working or studying, Ian and Bree try to spend as much time as possible outside. Hiking, fishing and camping are some of their favourite activities, and they are always joined by Whiskey, their Australian Shepherd dog.

The School of Pharmacy celebrates the six newest graduates from the PharmD for Working Professionals program. These students completed their program requirements during the spring term and graduated in October 2021.

Congratulations to

Erin Bereford
Jessica Biggin

Kathleen King
Kaitlin Mitchelmore

Heather Slaney
Cara Wirachowsky

Happy Happenings



CONGRATULATIONS!

Brittany Shea received the David J. Collins Legacy Award for Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacists. Brittany is a student in the 2019 Cohort.



SALUTE!

Heesa Zainulabideen received the Travel Award for Working Professionals in Pharmacy. Heesa is a student from the 2019 cohort.



KUDOS!

Michael Hatt (from the 2020 Cohort) was one of 20 Nova Scotians who received the 2021 Dr. Robert Strong Community Hero Award--an award that recognizes Nova Scotians who worked hard during the pandemic to keep fellow citizens happy and healthy.

Michael was also presented the 2021 Licensee of the Year Award and the Innovation Award by Medicine Shoppe Canada for his mobile vaccination clinic--a clinic that was inspired by a course project.



WELL DONE!

Kristen Walsh, a student in the 2020 cohort, published an article about her experience living with polycystic kidney disease (PKD) in the PKD Foundation of Canada e-News. Her article raises awareness for PKD and inspires others to carry on despite hardships.

Her article can be found here:
<https://www.endpkd.ca/kristen2021>

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY COMMITTEES (2020-2022)

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Jonathan Stevens

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Jeremy MacDonald

Recruitment
Vanessa Bennett

Undergraduate Student Admissions
Bradley Adams

Undergraduate Studies
Mikaela Whelan