

# PHARM CIRCLE

*Connecting stories from Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals Program*

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**Advance your practice,  
Lead your profession**

*Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)  
for Working Professionals*

## From the Dean's Desk Dr. Shawn Bugden

This is the seventh issue of the Pharm Circle newsletter.

In September, the program welcomed its fifth cohort of students. For the first time since the pandemic hit, students completed their first clinical skills course in person and on campus. And as we warmly welcomed a new group, we also bid farewell to eight students who graduated in October. This marks a total of 48 students who graduated from the program and continue to make their mark in the pharmacy profession.

The School of Pharmacy held its annual awards ceremony in October. Once again this year, the School presented two student awards and, for the first time, two preceptor-of-the-year awards in both ambulatory and inpatient care.

Inside this issue, we feature Dr. Catherine Orr who teaches in one of the pharmaceutical care courses. We also reflect on the clinical skills courses and the role they play in the program. The student spotlight section profiles several students who are at various stages of the program. Their hard work and dedication to their profession continue to inspire.

Thank you taking the time to read about our program and students. We hope you continue to find our stories informative and inspirational.

Until next time.



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. Catherine Orr



After graduating from Memorial University's School of Pharmacy in 2013, Catherine completed a 13-month hospital pharmacy residency at London Health Sciences Centre in London, Ontario. At the end of the residency, she continued working there as the inpatient paediatric haematology-oncology pharmacist. During that time, she also began working with PEBCs as an OSCE assessor and, more recently, as a content expert for standard setting. While working in London, Catherine was a guest lecturer at Western University and the University of Waterloo. She also marked assignments for the University of Waterloo's PharmD bridging program and was a preceptor for both pharmacy students and residents during their paediatric rotations. This exposure to academic work sparked an interest in teaching. She decided to further advance her clinical knowledge and returned to school in 2015 to obtain her PharmD through the University of Florida. She completed the program at the end of 2017.

She moved to Montreal in 2018 and began working relief in the community pharmacy setting and with Correctional Services of Canada. She gained practical experience managing drug shortages as well as clinical experience monitoring patient anti-coagulation. She also gained valuable insight into the challenges involved in the medical management of inmates.

Her involvement with the PharmD for Working Professionals program began in 2020 when she was asked to help develop and teach some of the course material for the GI module in one of the pharmaceutical care courses (PHAR 5902). She enjoys the challenges that come with teaching students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences and adapting her teaching strategies from year to year to make the material applicable to their practice.

During the pandemic in 2021, she earned her certification for administering injectable medications and was hired as a pharmacist to work in a mass vaccination centre. She managed the preparation and administration of vaccines to help flatten the curve.

Currently she has a mixed practice as a part-time inpatient pharmacist in an acute health care setting and as a part-time clinical pharmacist in a long term care facility. She finds it very rewarding to help simplify patient profiles and promote patient safety and comfort by allowing patients to remain on as few medications as possible.

Aside from her professional career, Catherine is a lucky mom to four wonderful little boys who keep her entertained and on her toes. Her oldest was born when she was half way through her PharmD program. So she is extremely empathetic towards her students because she has firsthand experience being a working mom and student and understands the daily challenges of juggling work, family and studies.

During her free time, she enjoys playing with her children outside, doing logic puzzles, and watching true crime documentaries.

As a busy mom, pharmacist, and educator, Catherine leads by example and shows that what might sometimes seem impossible can be possible. Students experience her wisdom, energy, and passion for the pharmacy profession in year two of the program.

# Clinical Skills

## for the pharmacist student

As the scope of pharmacy practice continues to evolve, pharmacist roles and responsibilities are more patient-focused than ever. They communicate more and more with others within the health care system and promote two-way communication between patients and health care professionals. Physical assessment is also becoming an integral part of their scope and, in the long term, may help alleviate the burden placed on the health care system as demographics shift and patient expectations evolve.

Clinical skills has not traditionally been needed in pharmacy practice and not typically covered in bachelor of pharmacy curriculums across the country. But as the scope of practice evolves, these skills are becoming important for various patient-care activities. Having hands-on exposure to the clinical skills learning environment prepares pharmacists to further embrace full-scope practice, aiding to establish a sense of comfort with numerous aspects of patient assessment.

In the PharmD for Working Professionals program, students complete their degree in a predominantly online format. They visit campus twice to complete courses in clinical skills. Each course is three days in length and gives students the opportunity to meet team members and fellow classmates in a face-to-face environment.

### Clinical Skills I

The first clinical skills course takes place at the beginning of the program and sets the stage for the students' PharmD journey. They engage in activities involving pharmacist prescribing, point-of-care (POC) testing, social justice, and drug information. They also demonstrate communication and physical assessment skills. Since its first offering in 2018, the course also explored topics like informatics and other patient assessment activities. Students perform a review of systems, order and interpret labs, and learn motivational interviewing techniques (which, in some cases, has an immediate and beneficial impact on their current practice).

What students enjoy most about this course is learning about patient assessment, motivational interviewing, and the hands-on exposure to POC and manual blood pressure testing. But they equally enjoyed meeting each other in a relaxed environment and learning in an interactive, hands-on way.



### Clinical Skills II

The second clinical skills course happens at the end of year two and serves as an introduction to the program's advanced pharmacy practice experience component. It focuses on topics that enable students to practice to their full scope while being active learners in the process. Students continue to demonstrate skills in communication, patient assessment, and documentation. They learn more about advanced-level physical assessments skills for pharmacists, like an in-depth assessment of skin, cardiovascular, peripheral, and respiratory systems.

Students enjoy learning about physical assessment in more depth and the opportunity to practice various techniques, like auscultation in cardiorespiratory assessment. They value hearing from other pharmacists who use physical assessment in their practice and enjoy the interactive nature and classroom discussions around pharmacist's scope of practice--all of which facilitates a rich learning experience for them.

It may take time and additional practice before students feel confident incorporating these skills in their day-to-day practice, and not all pharmacist may need to implement the skills in their practice right away. However, it can be a valuable skill for pharmacists given demands on the healthcare system, especially in areas where healthcare services are limited. Acquiring foundational knowledge to aid in growth and adaptability is important and contributes to global learning.

The hands-on, participatory nature of the clinical skills courses help students to acquire and further refine practical techniques for patient assessment, prescribing, as well as identifying when to refer patients to other health care professionals. It also explores concepts that facilitate optimal communication with patients and providers. This adds important skills to their repertoire. And, within their scope of practice, it helps to optimize patient safety and quality of care, while respecting the roles that other healthcare professionals play in the circle of care.



# 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 Atsushi Kawano

Atsushi was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Waterloo in 2013 and spent two years practicing community pharmacy. His time in community practice taught him how pharmacists can facilitate positive change within the healthcare system.

In 2015, he began a new position as an inpatient pharmacist at Peterborough Regional Health Centre (which is about 100 km northeast of Toronto) where he still works today. Although transitioning from community practice was challenging, he took advantage of new opportunities to improve patient care. In this position, he collaborates with prescribers to optimize medication therapy, coordinates care plans with community pharmacies, and reviews policies for the medication safety committee.

More recently, he revised the entire hospital IV manual and integrated new large volume infusion devices with an updated drug library. He is fortunate to work for a hospital that embraces active pharmacist involvement in inter-professional initiatives and corporate projects. These positive workplace experiences combined with his love for pharmacy inspired him to pursue his Doctor of Pharmacy degree.

When he heard about Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals program, he immediately applied and was accepted in the very first cohort. It was the perfect program for him because it provided a comprehensive curriculum and offered a flexible schedule. He appreciated having relevant topics taught using innovative approaches. More importantly, as the online structure allowed him to continue his full-time work, he consistently applied new therapeutic knowledge into his daily practice. Aside from the academic benefits, the program finally gave him an excuse to visit Newfoundland and Labrador!

Over the last four years, he was fortunate to learn advanced therapeutics from some of the brightest minds in the



profession and share clinical experiences with PharmD students from across Canada. COVID-19 highlighted the important role pharmacists play in providing unbiased trial appraisals, addressing public concerns related to vaccines, and managing endless drug-interactions.

Atsushi is enrolled in his final course (fall 2022) and will soon graduate. He intends to leverage his PharmD to make meaningful differences within a dynamic healthcare landscape that now expects more cognitive services from pharmacists.

During his downtime, he enjoys watching sports, travelling, and pretending to be a handyman. He hopes to visit Newfoundland and Labrador again; this time, to celebrate the end of his PharmD journey with family and friends. He would love to experience the province's traditional "screech-in" and visit Jimmy Kimmel's favourite Canadian town.

Atsushi currently lives in Peterborough, Ontario, with his lovely wife, Linh, and their adorable 14-year-old Bichon dog named Wasabi. Now that he has more free time, they hope to travel more and enjoy life with a bit less studying.

## 2019 Cohort

# Darshnee Ramnarain



Darshnee Ramnarain discovered her passion for pharmacy while completing a pharmacy technician diploma

program at Sheridan College in Ontario. Upon graduating, she moved to Australia to pursue post-graduate studies and enrolled in a four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy degree program. In the words of her husband, she moved to a country furthest from Canada.

In 2010, Darshnee graduated with her pharmacy degree from LaTrobe University, which is located in a small rural town in Australia. While the Australian weather and lifestyle was very enticing, she moved back to Ontario for her family and friends. She has been practicing as a Pharmacist for nine years.

In 2019, Darshnee decided to enroll in the PharmD program at Memorial University to expand her skillset, knowledge, and scope of practice. She chose Memorial for the its exceptional program and for the flexibility that allowed her to complete the program at her own pace. As a full-time pharmacist and mom to two boys, she found the program's flexibility aligned with her busy schedule. It also meant she did not have to miss important swimming competitions or soccer games.

Darshnee currently works as a community pharmacist at Shoppers Drug Mart, a clinical pharmacist at Headwaters Healthcare Centre, and as a professor for three pharmacy technician programs in Ontario.

In 2020, as Darshnee is known to say, the universe put a halt in her plans. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, everything changed that year. What began as a routine medical check-up quickly changed course. Darshnee was taken by surprise when she was unexpectedly diagnosed with cancer. She was urgently referred to Princess

Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto where expert oncologists performed life-saving surgery in a matter of weeks after diagnosis. She spent that year recovering from major surgery and attended frequent hospital visits and specialist appointments.

She is in remission now and looks back at 2020 as a remarkable year in which she has grown as a person. Her perspective on life has changed drastically too-- she now chooses to face life with joy and positivity. Darshnee thanks the School of Pharmacy for their support during the most difficult period of her life. Her instructors were nothing short of amazing and always understanding, motivating, and flexible.

Darshnee will complete the program this semester and is eligible to graduate in February 2023. Her time at Memorial University will leave a lasting footprint on her. She met numerous pharmacists from various practice settings and formed lifelong friendships. She enjoyed the lengthy discussions of the varying roles of pharmacists and their expanded scope of practice in different provinces and remains hopeful that Ontario will soon follow suit. This program offered Darshnee a wealth of knowledge that equips her with fundamental skills to expand her scope of practice in various settings and focus on patient-centered care.

It would not have been possible for Darshnee to complete this program without the continuous support from the faculty at Memorial and her family and friends. Her remarkable strength and perseverance certainly helped her during the difficult times and her passion for learning never waned.

Although Darshnee faced uncertainty many times during her academic journey, the past four years were still memorable. Eloquently stated and simply put, the people at Memorial University made this experience unique and heartwarming. She knows she made the right decision enrolling in Memorials' PharmD program and is excited to become an alumni.

## 2019 Cohort

# Heather Zhang

Heather immigrated to Canada in 2010 after graduating with her Bachelor of Pharmacy degree in China. She never had the chance to practice pharmacy there but dared to dream of being a pharmacist in Canada.

Easing herself into a pharmacy career in a new country, she first completed a pharmacy technician course at Winnipeg Technical College and then passed the pharmacy technician boarding exams. While working as a pharmacy assistant, a colleague encouraged her to pursue a pharmacy license in Canada. She subsequently passed the pharmacist evaluation exam in Winnipeg and travelled to the University of British Columbia to take the Canadian Pharmacy Practice Program in preparation for the qualifying exams. After a year of study, she passed both exams on her first attempt. She made her dream come to fruition when she became a licensed pharmacist in Canada.

She decided to settle in British Columbia and began working as a relief pharmacist at Pharmasave. She later moved to a full-time position at a Shoppers Drug Mart in Richmond. With three years of experience under her belt, she then moved to another location in Vancouver and began her journey as a pharmacy manager. She is currently a LEAD candidate and is interested in becoming an associate in the near future.

Heather decided to pursue a PharmD while working at Shoppers Drug Mart. Besides it being a competitive work environment, she was the only pharmacist there with a foreign pharmacy education background. So obtaining a Canadian pharmacy credential was always in the back of her mind. She researched programs and felt Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals program was the best fit and most affordable (especially considering she had recently purchased a townhouse).

Eight years after graduating with her first pharmacy degree, Heather returned to the classroom to study



pharmacy once again. She was excited to begin the program and found the courses had the right balance of theoretical knowledge and practice tips. She said “while the workload can be heavy, it is still manageable.”

In the summer of 2022 she completed her first rotation at the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg. She feels very fortunate for the experience that placement provided and found her preceptors extremely knowledgeable and kind. Overall, it was a memorable learning experience for her. Heather will complete her final rotation in out-patient care in 2023.

Outside her busy work schedule, Heather is learning to play the piano and recently mastered Fur Elise. The practice of piano can be very repetitive which somewhat resonates the practice of pharmacy for her. She may also consider joining a learn-to-ski program in the future, after experiencing the beauty of Whistler Mountain.

After graduation, Heather plans to follow the career path of an associate at Shoppers Drug Mart. Though she does sometime wonder what it would be like to work in a hospital setting. Either way, her future looks bright and she is in control of her destiny.



## 2020 Cohort Allison Pittman



up in one semester, but she was in a position to make that happen and looks forward to finishing the program earlier than anticipated.

She has certainly enjoyed the program and finds it very manageable for pharmacists working full time. The experience has allowed her to stay current on the latest recommendations, learn new clinical skills, meet pharmacists across the country, and have the knowledge to give the best care to patients.

Currently, Allison is completing her final six-week rotation in ambulatory care with Diabetes Services in Corner Brook. She has a special interest in diabetes education and plans to become a Certified Diabetes Educator. She is grateful to the amazing pharmacy mentors for the role they played in her PharmD journey. She hopes to become a preceptor some day so that she can help inspire pharmacy students. She recognizes the importance of teaching the next generation but also understands that pharmacists can learn from students too.

Allison enjoys exploring the “west coast best coast” and travelling to central Newfoundland to spend time with family when time allows. When she is not in the pharmacy or doing course work, she can always be found with her boyfriend and their dog crew: Reese, Bauer, and her parent’s dog Zoey. As their group photo shows, they are (patiently) resting up for their next big adventure.

Allison is from Massey Drive, Newfoundland & Labrador and works as a community pharmacist at the Medicine Shoppe in the nearby town of Corner Brook. She is proud that pharmacists are a very accessible health care provider for patients.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Memorial University in May 2020 and started the PharmD for Working Professional Program in the fall of that year. For her, it was the perfect time to continue with her education because, as a newly-minted graduate, she was still in student mode. So she found the transition between programs almost seamless.

Allison believes being a pharmacist means acquiring a life-long learning philosophy and she encourages other pharmacists who are considering doing their PharmD to go for it. She says “The PharmD for Working Professional Program is very flexible, the instructors are understanding, and it is never too late to go back to school!”

Allison is now in the final semester of her PharmD degree. The program normally takes three years to complete, but she is one of a few students able to go through the program in two years plus one semester. That’s because she decided to complete her two six-week advanced pharmacy practice experience rotations back-to-back while registered in her final 13-week pharmaceutical care course. It is a lot of work to double



## 2021 Cohort *Paige Ellis*

Paige grew up in a small town on the western end of beautiful Prince Edward Island (PEI). After high school, she obtained a Bachelor of Science in Biology (Hons) from the University of Prince Edward Island and a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia.

She was destined to be a pharmacist and follow in the footsteps of family members who had great respect for the profession. Her dad's sister is a recently retired long-time hospital pharmacist. And her dad's great-aunt was among the first female pharmacists in the area who apprenticed in the early 1920's and became certified much later. She remembers hearing stories about how different the pharmacist duties were back then. Manufactured medications were not readily available. The physician would order a prescription that required as many as eight or nine ingredients to be divided, weighed, and placed into individual packets. Filling prescriptions was a time consuming and exacting task.

After graduating with her pharmacy degree in 2016, Paige started her first pharmacist position at Shoppers Drug Mart in Charlottetown. In 2019, she excitedly accepted the pharmacist manager position at a brand new Shoppers Drug Mart in Stratford. Eager to expand her knowledge further, she worked casual hospital shifts with Health PEI.

Although it was hard to leave her position as manager, she recently accepted an exciting opportunity with Health PEI as a pharmacist in primary care. In this newly created role, Paige is tasked with helping to develop and implement the integration of pharmacists into primary care. She works within an interdisciplinary team that includes a physician, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, physiotherapist, dietitian, and social worker. They collaborate and draw upon each other's skills to provide exceptional, effective, and safe

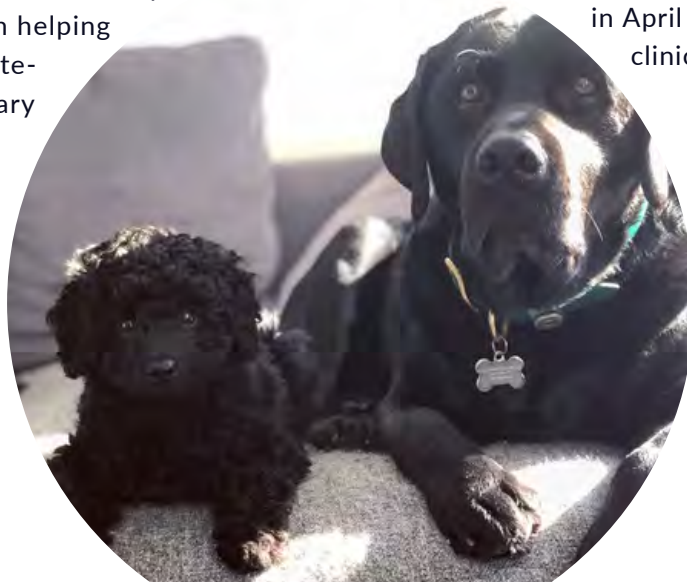


evidence-based care to patients. And this approach benefits patients as they gain support from more than one health care provider to reach their health goals and improve health outcomes.

She always enjoyed school and is a self-proclaimed lifelong learner. After her first pharmacy degree, she had a strong interest in pursuing a PharmD. She enrolled at Memorial University in 2021, becoming the first pharmacist from PEI to join the program. She says, "The program has given me invaluable and additional knowledge and clinical skills that is consequently providing support in my new primary care role." She is very grateful for the learning experience so far and looks forward to her remaining courses.

When not at work or studying, Paige enjoys travelling to different parts of the world. Ironically, she has never travelled to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. So she is excited to finally visit in April 2023 for the second onsite clinical skills course.

Paige also enjoys outdoor activities such as skiing, paddle boarding and walking with her two dogs: Norman (a black Labrador), and Smokey (a micro goldendoodle). It's safe to say this dog-duo enjoy those walks too.







## 2022 Cohort

# Jay Reaume

He was involved in a variety of projects over the years, including anticoagulation monitoring, medication reconciliation, diabetes management, deprescribing, and chronic pain management. Because of his interest in diabetes, he maintained his Certified Diabetes Educator designation since 2011. He is also one of the EMR gurus in his practice and is a huge advocate for leveraging technology to improve workflow and enhance patient care.

More recently, Jay completed a Master of Clinical Science in Interprofessional Pain Management at Western University. Building on his passion for chronic pain management, this program gave him a solid background in pain science, but even more, it helped him grow as a clinician and gain a better appreciation of individualized, patient-driven care. It also reinforced for him that team-based care is really the best care, especially for complex patients.

Jay was interested in pursuing his PharmD for many years, but it was completing his master's degree that sparked his love of learning again. He says, "After 13 years in practice, I was feeling like I was in a bit of a rut and I wanted to take on a new challenge." The PharmD for Working Professionals program at Memorial University was the perfect fit, offering the flexibility he needed to continue his education while balancing other priorities. He says, "I already feel reinvigorated after just a few months. I can't wait to learn with and from an amazing group of pharmacists from across the country."

When not working or studying, Jay enjoys spending time with his husband and five-year-old son. He can often be found in the kitchen cooking or baking, he loves to read and watch movies, and takes every chance he can get to visit beautiful, tropical destinations.

Jay grew up in London, Ontario, where he completed a Bachelor of Science in Biology at Western University in 2005 before completing a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy at the University of Toronto in 2009.

After graduation, he moved to Elliot Lake (a small retirement community in northern Ontario) and started his career as a pharmacist working for Shoppers Drug Mart. When a position at the local Family Health Team opened up, he jumped at the opportunity because a primary care rotation in pharmacy school left a major impression on him. He says, "I was really craving a chance to explore a more clinical pharmacy role and I was interested in seeing what a pharmacist embedded in a primary care team could do."

This opportunity gave Jay a chance to spend more time on direct patient care and clinical services while also acting as a consultant for the other health care professionals on his team. He says, "I love primary care because every day is different. It is also gratifying to be involved in prescribing decisions upstream, before a prescription is written."

For future applicants

Next application deadline: **February 1, 2023**  
*NOTE: The PharmD for Working Professionals is a limited life program designed for practicing pharmacists in Canada and may have limited admission cycles left*

For current students

PHAR 6900 Clinical Skills II  
 Anticipated onsite: **April 28 - 30, 2023**

Important  
Dates

# Happy Happenings



## CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Tiffany Lee, program director, received the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland & Labrador James C. Quick Award

Randa Ataya, a student from the 2021 cohort, recently began a new clinical pharmacy position with the Nova Scotia Health Authority



## STUDENT AWARDS

Allison Pittman, a student from the 2020 cohort, received the David J Collins Legacy Award for NL Pharmacists

Liam Walsh, a student from the 2020 cohort, received the Travel Award for Working Professionals in Pharmacy



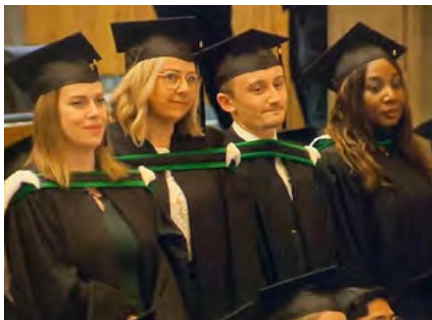
## PRECEPTOR AWARDS

Caeleigh Smith received the Inpatient Care Preceptor-of-the-Year award

Vicki Gomes received the Ambulatory Patient Care Preceptor-of-the-Year award

## HATS OFF TO OUR NEWEST GRADUATES!

Congratulations to the eight students who graduated during Fall 2022 Convocation:



Ann-Marie Barnett-Cameron  
Joanne Hawrish  
Melanie Hempel  
Imran Khan  
Jeremy MacDonald  
Keith Noseworthy  
Kaitlyn Touesnard  
Sara Wicks

## STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY COMMITTEES (2022-2024)

Academic Council  
**Nishi Gupta**

Professional Suitability  
**Holly Noftall**

Recruitment  
**Alishia Anstey**

Undergraduate Student Admissions  
**P. Garrett O'Leary**

Undergraduate Studies  
**Sarah Hyslop**