



PHARM CIRCLE

Connecting stories from Memorial's PharmD for Working Professionals Program

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Contacts:

 mun.ca/pharmacy

 709-864-8421

 @schoolofpharmacy

 @mun_pharmacy



From the Dean's Desk

Dr. Shawn Bugden

The year 2025 is significant for the Working Professionals Program. We are wrapping up our final admission year for the program and the final cohort will begin in September. During February (in-absentia) and Spring convocations, 12 more students received their PharmD degree, bringing the total number of graduates (to date) to 100. This is a meaningful milestone and one that coincides with Memorial University's 100th anniversary year. Additionally, our very own Dr. Tiffany Lee (the program's director) received the 2024 President's Award for Distinguished Teaching—a deserving recognition of her enthusiasm, innovation, and collegiality in teaching, assessing, and supporting students.



In this 12th issue, Dr. Erin Davis is featured under the instructor profile. She has seen the program accept its very first cohort (and now its last) and supported the program's evolution in her role as the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies in the School. We also celebrate five more students in the student profile section whose stories and experiences are inspiring. They are at different stages of the program, but a common thread is their connection to classmates. We also catch up with another program alumnus, Dr. Heather Williams, who graduated two years ago. She is using her applied learning experience gained in the program to explore opportunities and expand services.

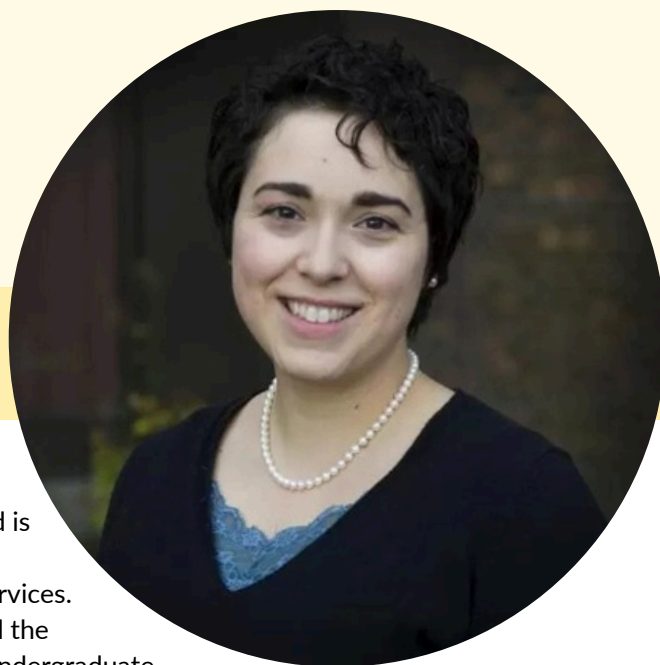
If you enjoy reading our stories, check back in December for our 13th issue, as we continue to celebrate the people who play such important roles in the program's success.

Have an enjoyable summer season.

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.

Instructor Spotlight

Dr. Erin Davis



Erin Davis is an Associate Professor with the School of Pharmacy and is also the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies for over six years. In this role she is responsible for teaching, research, and academic services. She also manages the PharmD Entry-to-Practice (EPPD) program and the PharmD for Working Professionals (WPP) program, and Chairs the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Erin grew up in New Brunswick and completed an International Baccalaureate (IB) degree at Pearson College on Vancouver Island before moving to Newfoundland to complete a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from Memorial University. After graduating with her pharmacy degree in 2009, she continued her education at the University of British Columbia and graduated with a post-graduate Doctor of Pharmacy in 2011. She then returned to Newfoundland to begin a tenure-track position with Memorial University's School of Pharmacy, taking a clinical position in family medicine.

Over the last 14 years with Memorial's School of Pharmacy, Erin has had the opportunity to teach in many areas of the former BSc pharmacy program and the EPPD program. She is passionate about topics like evidence-based medicine and interpretation of the literature, clinical topics ranging from pregnancy and breastfeeding to seizure disorders, and clinical supervision of students on their experiential rotations. She has also supervised several undergraduate students taking part in research and has co-supervised several graduate students. Her goal is to help students identify topics they're passionate about and help them develop the skills needed to grow in those areas, both during their pharmacy education and in their future careers.

When Erin began her first term as Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies in the spring of 2018, the Working Professionals program officially launched that September. From the beginning, she has been engaged in supporting the program's roll out and supporting changes to make the degree more flexible for pharmacists. She developed and delivered seizure disorder content and has coordinated a variety of pharmaceutical care courses. While Erin will take administrative leave during the upcoming academic year, she looks forward to returning to her role in 2026 and supporting the program in its sunset stage and ensuring students have the same high-quality experiences as those who came before.

Outside of pharmacy, Erin spends most of her time chasing around her three young children with her husband. It's rare to find her without a book in her hands, unless she's put it down to pick up her flute. Recently, at the request of her 8-year-old son, she learned how to solve a Rubik's cube. While that accomplishment might never make her CV, it is certainly an endless source of entertainment for her kids. Her multi-tasking and problem-solving skills are two traits that allow Erin to undertake multiple roles with ease and grace – traits that help her solve Rubik's cubes, raise a family, and oversee PharmD programs.



Catching up with program alumnus:

Dr. Heather Williams
(PharmD, 2023)

The stars didn't align for Heather right away. She started down a different career path. A random part-time job as a pharmacy assistant opened her eyes to the possibilities. They rest, as they say, is history.

The pathway to pharmacy

Heather completed a bachelor's degree in behavioral neuroscience, thinking a career in healthcare was her destiny. But she did not plan on becoming a pharmacist. While still a university student, she applied for a part-time job as a pharmacy assistant and learned about the profession. She surprisingly enjoyed it. She decided to switch her focus and set out to become a pharmacist. Five years later, she made it reality when she obtained her bachelor of pharmacy degree from Memorial University.

After graduation, she completed a one-year hospital residency program at Eastern Health. The experience helped her expand her clinical knowledge and gain experience in different areas of practice. She went straight into hospital practice working in outpatient oncology clinics before moving on to dialysis and medicine. She also maintained her community practice, working relief shifts with Shoppers Drug Mart.

Expanding her skillset

A dedicated pharmacist, Heather is always keen to learn more and expand her pharmacist toolkit. When Memorial University launched the Working Professionals Program,

she saw it as an opportunity to see different aspects of practice, even ones outside the clinical world. She also hoped having a PharmD would open some doors for her down the road, particularly since she was often drawn to teaching and helping educate aspiring pharmacists.

She began her PharmD journey in September 2020. She completed the program in less than three years, graduating in the spring of 2023.

She currently works at the Kidney Care Centre and the Health Sciences Centre, practicing in dialysis and internal medicine with Newfoundland & Labrador Health Services (NLHS) in St. John's. Her position is a bit unique because it allows her – along with her clinical partners – to work in different clinical areas as well as both acute and ambulatory care settings.

Impactful learning

While the courses helped Heather expand her knowledge, the advanced pharmacy practice experiences (APPEs) were the stars of the program. These six-week rotations provided the most impactful learning for her.

Practicing in the area of in-center hemodialysis, Heather used the placements as an opportunity to strengthen and

broaden her background in nephrology. Plus, she wanted to learn more about other practice areas. So, in consultation with the nephrologists and the School of Pharmacy, she was able to create two unique rotations that enabled her to work with patients of all stages of chronic kidney disease: one in acute care (inpatient nephrology consults); and one in ambulatory care (outpatient nephrology clinics).

Completing the APPEs gave her exposure and knowledge specific to the nephrology field. And, in turn, inspired her to share what she learned with other practitioners and learners – morphing from an impactful learning experience for her to an incredibly useful one within her practice setting.

Heather says “my applied learning experiences have opened my eyes to new opportunities in nephrology for clinical pharmacists”. She hopes one day that services beyond hemodialysis can be expanded and that pharmacists can work in the areas of home dialysis, transplant clinics, and pre-natal outpatient clinics.

Opening doors

Heather hoped obtaining a PharmD would help expand her horizons. And it is doing just that. Strengthening her background in nephrology – through those impactful APPE experiences – has opened a few doors for her already.

Her hope of teaching came to fruition in fall 2024 when she had the opportunity to teach nephrology lectures in the School of Pharmacy’s Entry-to-Practice PharmD Program. She covered topics like acute kidney injuries, chronic kidney disease, and pharmacokinetics in dialysis. She really enjoyed the experience and hopes to continue teaching in the future.

She also gave nephrology talks at several events in the past year, including the Pharmacists’ Association of Newfoundland & Labrador (PANL) conference and the NLHS Grand Rounds. Her PharmD has become symbolic of the gift (to herself) that keeps giving (to others).

Sage advice

Heather understands that returning to school while working full-time can be hard. She found it immensely helpful reaching out to her peers in the classroom. Understanding that others (students) are in the same boat provides some

level of comfort and camaraderie. She says “making connections and developing a strong network of pharmacists who work in different clinical areas is so beneficial as a learner and can be even more so in your practice setting down the road”.

A different path

Now that her student days are in the rearview mirror, Heather is forging her way down different paths more often than before. Like the paths found on Signal Hill and the East Coast Trail, where she loves to hike with her faithful sidekick, Zola (her five-year-old German Sheppard dog). While she will always have a heart for learning and her pharmacy profession, she will equally have a heart for exploring and time well spent in nature with Zola.



Heather and Zola, in their element, hiking on the East Coast Trail

Students in the Spotlight

We like to celebrate our students and will share student profiles in every issue.

2021 Cohort

Caley Cameron

Caley grew up in Truro, Nova Scotia, and was always interested in a profession in health care particularly because her mother was a registered nurse. She decided to pursue pharmacy after an inspiring pharmacy presentation when she was in Grade 11. In 2010, she completed a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy at Memorial University.

After graduation, Caley moved to Woodstock, New Brunswick, and began her career as a community pharmacist in a small border town (international). After two years she moved to Moncton where she continued to practice community pharmacy with several corporations and even took on a management role during some of that time.

In 2020, during COVID, Caley decided to make a change to hospital pharmacy. To help her prepare for a new role, she wanted to supplement her clinical knowledge so she researched PharmD programs. Flexibility was a key factor in choosing a program and university. She felt Memorial's Working Professionals Program offered just that. So, she decided to return to her alma mater and enrolled in Fall 2021, choosing to follow the four-year option.

In 2023, during her third year in the program, Caley accepted a staff pharmacist position at The Moncton Hospital. She attributes her success in obtaining a hospital position to the education she received from Memorial's PharmD program. In 2024, she accepted another position at the Tantramar Primary Health Care Centre (TPHCC) as a pharmacist in primary care in another small border town (provincial). She felt this aligned more with her previous community pharmacy practice knowledge while also integrating the clinical skills she gained from the PharmD program. At TPHCC she works with an interdisciplinary team consisting of a physician, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, dietitian, social worker, and respiratory therapist.



They collaborate and optimize each other's skills to provide improved patient healthcare and increase patient access to healthcare.

Caley received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at Spring 2025 convocation. She plans to continue working as a pharmacist in primary care while applying the knowledge and skills she obtained from the program. She hopes to continue contributing to the exciting advancement of pharmacy practice by advocating for increased pharmacist's scope of practice and further implementation of pharmacists into multidisciplinary teams to improve

patient health outcomes and patient care access.



In her spare time, Caley enjoys reading, travelling, and cross-stitching. Now that she is finished the program, she plans to spend her unoccupied time training her new silken windhound puppy, Doyle (pictured to the left).



2022 Cohort

Amy Damm

Amy Damm grew up in a town of 500 people in rural Saskatchewan. This small-town upbringing fostered a sense of community that she values in her current practice as a pharmacist. She has an interest in the sciences that stemmed from her childhood, so the pharmacy profession seemed like a perfect marriage of learning and community for her.

She graduated from the University of Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy and Nutrition in 2014 and began working as a pharmacist in smaller community pharmacies in rural Saskatchewan. When an opportunity to work closer to home presented itself in 2016, she became the only pharmacist in a newly opened pharmacy next to a medical clinic in Saskatoon.

Amy's passion for travel naturally led her to pursue a specialty in travel vaccinations and travel health care for patients. In 2018, after taking the exam in Spain, she received her certificate in travel health from the International Society of Travel Medicine. Only one year after receiving her training in travel health, the Saskatchewan Pharmacy Bylaws were updated to allow pharmacists with advanced training to prescribe and administer vaccines independently. As a result, her travel health practice expanded at her pharmacy site. One or two patients per month quickly turned into one or two

patients per day. Staffing expanded and grew, and the pharmacy became even more established. She continues to work there today as the manager.

In addition to working in the pharmacy, Amy works as a part-time lab instructor at the University of Saskatchewan. She really enjoys working with students. They have even inspired her to further her own education through their thoughtful questions, curiosity, and ability to challenge her. This, coupled with her love of learning and being pushed out of her comfort zone, led her to pursue a PharmD degree.

The Working Professionals' Program at Memorial was appealing in several ways. Amy liked that the program allowed her to continue working full-time while pursuing her studies. Most importantly, she greatly valued the opportunity to learn and receive feedback from experts in various areas of pharmacy practice. She will finish the program later this year and has found that it has dramatically enhanced her current knowledge, ultimately improving her patient care. The faculty, staff, and her classmates have been instrumental in facilitating her learning, and she will be forever grateful for the opportunity to participate in the program.

Amy plans to continue working as a travel health pharmacist in her community pharmacy but will work to incorporate more clinical pharmacy services into her practice. She is particularly interested in integrating a cognitive behavioural therapy service for insomnia, inspired by an experiential learning placement where she had the opportunity to provide this service to patients. Amy continues to enjoy where she practices but is always open to challenges and opportunities to further herself professionally and academically. She is excited to see what lies ahead.

2023 Cohort

Tad Collier

Hailing from St. Alban's, NL, Tad Collier, is a community pharmacist and the program lead for the pharmacy technician program at the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) in St. John's. He finds the greatest professional reward is in education and professional collaboration.

Prior to becoming a pharmacist, Tad completed a MSc in Medicine, developing a strong interest in molecular mechanisms of the human body, particularly how a single change in a signalling pathway can shift the balance between health and disease. Giving presentations sparked his passion for explaining complex ideas in ways that others could understand. This led to an interest in teaching, a pursuit of a post-secondary education degree, and a 17-plus-year career teaching post-secondary students. His earlier presentation experience continues to fuel Tad's enjoyment in teaching and in counselling patients since becoming a pharmacist.

During his time teaching abroad in Doha, Tad conversed with colleagues from the paramedicine and pharmacy technician programs who found it rewarding working with patients. This sparked his interest in health care. At the age of 34, he returned to school. He chose the pharmacy profession because he felt it offered a better work-life balance for his growing family and because of his interest in the molecular aspects of disease and how medications can be used to correct them.

After becoming licensed, Tad worked as a relief community pharmacist in central Newfoundland and as a program developer for hydrogen and wind technology related trades. While in community, he observed the willingness of doctors and nurses to work together to reconcile patient medications, respond to pharmacy inquiries, and seek recommendations regarding therapies based on the pharmacist's knowledge of the patient and medications. He sees far more value in this collaborative practice approach than in solo efforts.

He also immediately noticed the difference skilled pharmacy technicians and assistants made in navigating busy pharmacy workflows and improving patient care. At a time when clinical services were expanding, Tad deeply



appreciated how his team handled technical aspects of pharmacy practice, allowing him to spend more time with patients in the counselling room.

This sparked a desire to train pharmacy professionals. Serendipitously, CNA was in the early stages of developing a pharmacy technician program. Tad became the development lead and helped design a fully functioning training lab (photos below) that simulates real-world pharmacy practice and gives students hands-on experiential learning. The program was recently awarded accreditation by CCAPP.



Simultaneous to his involvement with the technician program, Tad wanted to strengthen his clinical knowledge to better care for patients and enhance his ability to educate students. He began the PharmD program in 2023. He says, "the program is highly engaging in that students have a lot to share regarding clinical experiences, which generates interesting discussions". After graduation, Tad hopes to continue training pharmacy technicians while still contributing to collaborative practice in community pharmacy.

A fan of travelling and music, Tad enjoys the hectic lifestyle of balancing two careers. He spends his downtime with his wife, Amy, and their children Ellie, Henry, and Abby.



2023 Cohort

Colleen MacInnis

Colleen MacInnis is a dedicated community pharmacist originally from Miramichi, New Brunswick. She brings nearly two decades of experience and a deep passion for primary care to her PharmD journey at Memorial University. A 2007 graduate of Dalhousie University's pharmacy program, she has practiced in Shelburne, Nova Scotia ever since. In 2013, Colleen and her husband took the leap into pharmacy ownership when they acquired TLC Pharmacy, where they continue to serve their community with heart and innovation.

Her professional focus has increasingly centered on advancing pharmacy services within the primary care space. Colleen has been actively involved in the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia's Community Pharmacy Primary Care Clinic (CPPCC) pilot since its inception in February 2023. She actually spends more than half of her practice time in this setting. She describes the experience as transformative, saying, "It has been an incredible program to be a part of and has truly displayed how pharmacists can make a direct and lasting impact on the health of their communities and the overall healthcare system when given the proper support and tools."

Colleen's decision to pursue a PharmD was fueled by her innate love of learning and her desire to be well-

prepared for the evolving landscape of the pharmacy profession. "I'm excited about the direction our profession is going," she says. "The Working Professionals Program has challenged both my time and my brain in the best ways. It has enriched my daily practice and given me added confidence in the care I provide."

Choosing Memorial University for her Doctor of Pharmacy degree was a decision rooted in a memorable experience. Two decades ago, she visited the university for the first time during the inaugural Atlantic Pharmacy Advancement Conference (APAC) in 2005. She was inspired by the sense of community and passion displayed by Memorial's students and faculty. That lasting impression stayed with Colleen, and, years later, she felt it was the right place to help her take the next step in her career.

Beyond her work in community and primary care pharmacy, Colleen is a dedicated volunteer. She participated in medical missions to Tanzania with Canada-Africa Community Health Alliance, a role that continues to shape her professional goals. Looking ahead, she hopes to continue volunteering in Africa and is also considering a future in teaching.

When she's not at the pharmacy or studying, Colleen finds balance in nature. She loves gardening, camping, and boating with family, and enjoys staying active by keeping up with her two kids (ages 11 and 14) as they bounce between sports and activities.

Colleen's journey is a testament to lifelong learning, the power of community, and the ever-growing role of pharmacists in today's healthcare system.

2024 Cohort

Allan Choi



A lifelong learner with a passion for pharmacy and technology, Allan Choi is a licensed pharmacist and a proud member of the last Bachelor of Pharmacy cohort at the University of Toronto. He graduated in 2014 just before the program transitioned to a PharmD. Before pursuing pharmacy, Allan completed a Bachelor's degree in Radiological Technology, where he first developed an interest in health care. His academic journey didn't stop there — he later earned a Graduate Diploma in Health Informatics from McMaster University and an MBA from Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson).

Allan's career has been just as diverse as his education. After graduating with his pharmacy degree, he worked in both community and hospital pharmacy settings, including Women's College Hospital and Mackenzie Health. He then spent five years at the Ontario Pharmacists Association as an Education Manager, developing continuing education programs for pharmacy professionals. During that time, he also worked part-time as a Health Informatics Pharmacist at Toronto Grace. Today, he works as a Senior Manager in Pharmacy Insights and Analytics at Shoppers Drug Mart's head office, where he leads strategic planning and forecasting for cognitive pharmacy services. His role blends clinical knowledge, business acumen, and technical skills in SQL, Python, and Power BI.

Although Allan admits he didn't enjoy studying pharmacy during his undergraduate years, his perspective changed when he entered practice. He began to see how the knowledge he once memorized now had real meaning in patient care. This realization reignited his passion for learning and led him to the PharmD program at Memorial. The program's flexible online format and short six-week rotations made it the ideal fit for a full-time (and busy) working professional.

Allan enjoys the PharmD program so far, especially the in-person course he completed in September 2024

where he connected with classmates and professors. Courses in research and pharmacokinetics have helped him revisit foundational concepts with a new appreciation and deeper understanding. He especially looks forward to his upcoming rotation and hopes to complete it in Newfoundland to order to experience something beyond his hometown of Toronto.

Looking ahead, Allan is interested in teaching or curriculum development at a pharmacy faculty. He hopes to equip future pharmacists with the skills they need to thrive in an evolving health care system — particularly in areas like AI, data analytics, and digital health. He is also tempted to pursue a Master's in Computer Science someday.

Outside of work, Allan enjoys spending time with his family, especially his two nephews who visit him weekly. He credits his father's passing two years ago with deepening his appreciation for family. He also once played competitive dodgeball and even competed in a national tournament in Barrie, ON — where he jokingly admits he was 'destroyed' by national-level players.

Fun fact: Allan's brother Alex is also a pharmacist. They began pharmacy school at the same time. Unlike Alex who completed two degrees, Allan earned four! [They enjoy a good-natured, brotherly rivalry.]

Happy Happenings



OUTSTANDING!

Dr. Tiffany Lee, Program Director, received the 2024 President's Award for Distinguished Teaching at Memorial University



CONGRATULATIONS!

Karina Arnold, course coordinator in the program, graduated with honours from Yorkville University with a Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology



AMAZING!

The Working Professionals Program celebrates 100 graduates, the same year that Memorial University celebrates its 100th anniversary

HATS OFF TO OUR NEWEST GRADUATES!

Twelve students conferred their degrees at the February (in-absentia) and Spring 2025 convocation ceremonies. Congratulations to:

Bree Besaw
Alishia Hammond
Caley Cameron
Nadia Chishti
Anas Elghatit
Kristie MacDonald

Kristen MacKinnon
Sarah Hyslop
Jane Ran
Jay Reaume
Emma-Jean Slobodesky
Rebecca Thiessen

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL OF PHARMACY COMMITTEES (2024-2026)

Academic Council
Samantha Sweetapple

Professional Suitability
Holly Noftall

Recruitment
Gail Wilson

Undergraduate Student Admissions
Allan Choi

Undergraduate Studies
TBD