

## Message from the Acting Head of School

Dear colleagues,

This is my first and last column for the Quarterly; the selected HOS will be taking over on 18 July. I wish to thank everybody for their support and cooperation during my short tenure as Acting HOS from April this year. It has been immensely rewarding.

This year, the School has spent its allocated \$172K on CAPEX on some pretty amazing equipment, including a 96-well PCR machine (Room 201) and a Muse Cell Analyser (Room 252 TC Room). Thank you to Vincent, Jeff and Geoff for coordinating these purchases.

Kevin finally moved into his newly renovated laboratory in Room 201, which has allowed Irina to relocate into her lab, which had been occupied by Kevin. Thank you to Geoff for coordinating this.

We have had many exciting SPF03 applicants (Lecturer/ Senior Lecturer level) and heard two fine research presentations. There are many more to consider. Thank you to Brett for coordinating this.

Planning for the new building is going ahead in leaps and bounds. While there are no guarantees, it really does look like this development will go ahead. The new building and Bioscience Precinct development will represent a major change/improvement in the way we operate in terms of logistical support for our research and teaching labs. Many of us have been involved in the planning, but thanks go especially to Ian Dawes for really driving this for BABS.

A number of PG students have initiated a PG student group within BABSOC. Wallace will mentor the group and they will have a substantial role in organising events with the School. Thank you to Josh and José for instigating this.

As part of increasing the opportunities for School interaction, I have managed to have lunch with most staff. These events have all been very collegial and a number of great ideas for the School have been identified. From this, I have immediately reinstated 50% support for publication costs (A/A\* journal level) and SAGE (Support Academics for Graduate Enrolments), with other initiatives to come. I am sick of sandwiches though.

With best wishes,

Noel

## RAT News

### Research

- Two School CIs were successful in the latest round of ARC Linkage grants announced last week. Congratulations go to Professor Brett Neilan (linkage with SE QLD Water and the Federal University of Rio De Janeiro) and A/Professor Mike Manefield (linkage with Orica Australia Pty Ltd).
- Two other School staff were co-researchers on linkage grants awarded through other UNSW Schools; congratulations to Professor Staffan Kjelleberg (awarded through BEES), and Dr Helder Marcal (awarded through School of Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering).
- 2014 VC's Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are now open; closing date for completed applications to reach the HOS is 23 August 2013.
- BABS staff are key organisers of the 2013 Genetics Society of AustralAsia conference, being held at UNSW from 14-17 July. The conference will be held in the Scientia Building, and will include an Alan Wilton Memorial Symposium.



### Teaching

- UNSW will upgrade to a new Student Information Management System (NextGen) in October 2013
- Semester 2 2013 census date is 26 September, the date being brought forward to avoid disruption from the NextGen cutover.
- Semester 1 2014 enrolments are planned to open on December 9.

### Admin

- The launch of ROS, the new UNSW publications database, has been delayed, and ResPubs has been re-activated. The new launch date will be advised when known.
- The School's 2012 Annual Report has been finalised and is now at the printers. Copies will be distributed to staff, and an electronic copy added to the website.

### BABS staff in the news

👉 A/Professor Mike Manefield and Honours student Liza Kretchmar were interviewed by ABC Radio National's Off Track presenter Joel Werner about their research on activated sludge, which is used to treat municipal and industrial wastewater: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/off-track/activated-sludge/4675220>



👉 Professor Peter White received renewed media coverage in the SMH, Herald Sun and Sky News and other online sites about the upcoming flu season and his lab's identification of the Sydney 2012 Norovirus.

👉 Dr Chris Marquis received media coverage in the Melbourne Age for the discovery that some bacteria have developed resistance to nano-silver, a common antimicrobial ingredient used in medical equipment. Study co-author Dr Cindy Gunawan completed her PhD in BABS in 2006.

### Student achievements

👉 PhD student David Vardeh, supervised by Brett Neilan, was awarded a grant of \$1198 from the William MacLeay Microbiology Research Fund, Linnean Society of NSW for fieldwork on stromatolites on Magnetic Island, and Yorke Peninsula and Coorong Lagoon region of SA.

👉 PhD candidate Auda Eltahla, supervised by Peter White, won the \$2,500 Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology Research Travel Award. It was presented at the group's 9th Annual Scientific meeting in Sydney's Blue Mountains in June.

### BABS DECRA Fellow captains landmark voyage



Dr Federico Lauro set sail in May to lead a multinational scientific expedition to sample the waters of the Indian Ocean. Expedition team members include researchers from UNSW, Macquarie University and the University of Technology, Sydney, as well as from the Desert Research Institute and the University of California in the US, and Copenhagen University and the Technical University of Denmark.

The first leg of the expedition is now complete, and Indigo V is moored in

Port Louis, Mauritius, until the start of the second leg in a couple of months. That voyage will pass through Chagos Archipelago, then on up to the Maldives. The expedition is receiving ongoing media coverage, with interviews including the national broadcasters, ABC Radio.

The voyage can be monitored on the Indigo V blog: <http://indigov.unsw.edu.au/>



### UNSW 85 Broads: Women in Science Event

85 Broads is a global network of 30,000 women founded by women who worked for Goldman Sachs at 85 Broad Street in New York. Membership of 85 Broads now includes women who are alumnae and students of the world's leading colleges, universities, and graduate schools. In late May, the UNSW 85 Broads group hosted a Q+A panel, comprised of female scientists from the Faculty of Science, including BABS academics Dr Anne Galea and Dr Irina Voineagu.



Last year the EU Commission declared science a "girl thing" in a bid to encourage young women to pursue careers in science and technology.

Hosted by Scientia Professor Veena Sahajwalla, this event was an opportunity for science students to gain a better understanding of science in the workforce and careers available, with panel members sharing their insight and experiences as women in science.

## BABS alumnus Professor David Sinclair invited speaker at 2013 Sydney TEDx



TED is a US based not-for-profit enterprise devoted to the propagation of Ideas Worth Spreading. David Sinclair was supervised for his PhD by Professor Ian Dawes, and is now a scientist and entrepreneur working on increasing human health, productivity, and lifespan. After co-discovering a molecular cause of aging at the MIT in Boston in the mid-1990s, David became a tenured Professor at Harvard Medical School. He is also a Professor at the Lowy Cancer Centre based at UNSW. His talk at TEDx in May presented his research on understanding why we grow old, and using this knowledge to prevent and treat both rare and common diseases. He is perhaps best known for identifying resveratrol from red wine as an anti-ageing molecule.

### Faculty of Science Visiting Research Fellowship

A/Professor Kevin Morris has been awarded a 2013 FoS Visiting Research Fellowship to host Dr Leonard Lipovich, Assistant Professor at the Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit.

Dr Lipovich will visit the School in October, and will present a research seminar to the School. His areas of interest include genomic complexity, primate comparative genomics, bioinformatics and functional genomics of long non-coding RNA transcripts, and computing the genomic basis of species phenotypic uniqueness.

### Deep time walk

In early June, Professor Malcolm Walter led a walk in The Rocks in Sydney as part of an ongoing research project that invites people to share scientific, philosophical and cultural ideas as part of a roving discussion and walk through 'deep' or geologic time, as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Electronic Art. The disciplines of astrophysics, geology, evolutionary biology, and the paleo sciences met with the creativity of the cultures of our time on a walk that that "stretched from the formation of Earth to today".

<http://www.thehouseofwonder.org/projects/a-walk-through-deep-time/>

If you would like something included in the next BABS Quarterly please email Michele at [m.potter@unsw.edu.au](mailto:m.potter@unsw.edu.au)