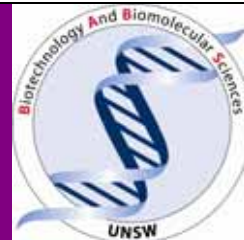


BABS Quarterly

June 2009 Issue 3



Message from HoS

Dear colleagues,

All staff should know by now that our OP001 accounts are running down. Wolf Nittel is working with the Faculty office to obtain an overdraft, but we need to make projections of our expenditure, and all those coordinating a course in S2 must provide a budget for their course (see Peter White for a spreadsheet). I know some academics in the School (including some on the executive) have blatantly said that they will not cut their teaching costs, but we must make every effort to keep the School financial in 2009. Unfortunately, I do not think 2010 will be much better but we must clearly document our expenses for future reference.

A major focus for the last quarter was grant submissions. BABS submitted 16 NHMRC applications with a total value of \$6,564,375 (~\$410,273/grant), and 16 ARC DP applications with total value of \$10,360,839 (~\$647,552/grant). In addition, one ARC LP project was submitted (\$271,829) and two ARC LIEF applications with a total value of \$1,558,382 (\$779,191/grant). Note that the funds for LP and LIEF are only those requested from ARC, and do not include partner contributions etc.

Meetings for the third-year teaching reinvigoration have been progressing at a steady pace but no definitive conclusions have been made at this stage. Currently, it seems likely that we will revise our majors within the next two months but continue the planning processes of populating the courses that will constitute each major in the second semester. One major innovation that appears to have universal support is the establishment of a general course in the first semester that provides a building block for all majors. Thanks to all involved in the process, but especially to Peter White and Louise Lutz-Mann for driving the process.

Planning for the approved renovations is also making steady progress. Initially, the Ramaciotti Centre (Geoff Kornfeld/Helen Speirs as point contacts) and Lab 247 (Volga Bulmus) will be renovated, with a goal of completing these jobs by the end of the year. The second project involves the construction of the PC2 teaching laboratory on the first floor (John Wilson/Kate Kennedy as contacts) and the refurbishment of the second floor teaching space into a laboratory (Brett Neilan as contact). With good planning and some luck, the new teaching laboratory will be online by Semester 1 2010. I expect that a draft project proposal for the teaching labs will be available for comment by the end of this month. Thanks to Marc Wilkins for facilitating this process.

As we approach the end of this semester I eagerly await the report of John Wilson and Kate Kennedy concerning the teaching support staff. A committee of academics headed by Andrew Collins will review the report and meet with all teaching staff in Semester 2. The committee will then write a short report to the HOS listing recommendations.

Finally, attached to this Quarterly is the revised composition of BABS school committees. Please have a look at this and ensure you are on the committee you expect (please email me if you are not). The goal of the committees is to give all staff a voice and to ensure we have buy-in into the strategic direction we take as a School.

Best, Bill

RAT News

Research

- Chris Marquis has secured 200K in funding over 2 years for the Recombinant Products Facility to support the appointment of an applied molecular biologist. The facility currently houses a range of fermentation and purification equipment and has three full-time technical staff: Edwin Huang, Scott Minns and Doris Suen.
- Hazel Mitchell and Li Zhang are part of a research group awarded a grant of US\$129,863 per year for two years from the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation in the US to further their research into Inflammatory Bowel Disease in adult populations.

Admin

- Updated BABS directory posters have now been installed in the corridor outside the HOS office.

Teaching

- The first 2009 postgraduate progressive seminars will be held on **Thursday 11** and **Friday 12 June**. All academics and research students are invited to attend and show support for our PG program. A prize will be awarded to the student considered to have given the best presentation. Friday's session will be followed by a BBQ at approximately 12pm.
- A virtual lab on the use of oxygen electrodes to explore the electron transport chain has been developed for use in an adaptive eLearning format by **Louise Lutz-Mann** and **Mike Edwards**, with Dror Ben-Naim from CSE. This format allows students to interact in a virtual lab with equipment and resources we can no longer afford to maintain, and thus provide them with an authentic experience. Students in BIOC2101 trialled it this session and were very impressed. BABS staff participation in this project can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Srsp88IQ3cU>

Staff achievements and news

👉 **John Foster** is one of two leading UNSW researchers to be awarded a 2009 Fulbright Scholarship. John will take SSP in Semester 2 2010 to undertake research at the McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh.

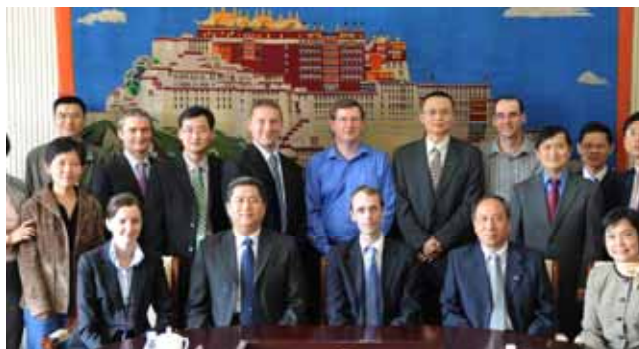
👉 The Bio/Polymer Research Group's innovative surgical bioadhesive Surgilux has received wide media coverage, including an article and photo of **John Foster** in The Australian on 8 April. <<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,25304890-23289,00.html>>

👉 The ongoing research of **Rick Cavicchioli** and the multinational team that made the recent expedition to Antarctica has received further May issue of *Microbiology Australia*. The work is also being featured on the website of the US Department of Energy's Office of Science, and posted on EurkAlert. Rick is quoted in the articles, and some of his great photographs are also featured. <http://www.jgi.doe.gov/News/news_09_05_18.html> <http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-05/dgi-img051809.php>



👉 **Nico Wanandy** has had his PhD thesis published following a commercial demand for his thesis. On checking with the UNSW library and the GRS Nico was advised that his is the first PhD thesis from UNSW that has ever been requested to be published as a book.

👉 **Rob Yang** visited China as one of eight Australian young scientists from April 15 to 30, during which he visited 4 cities, 3 research institutes and 6 universities.



Chinese officials from the Ministry of Science & Technology and Australian Embassy staff in Beijing (Rob is fifth from the right in the back row)

Student achievements and news

BABS 2009 Prizegiving

The annual BABS Prizegiving Ceremony was held in April. The awards covered the top achievements in 2008 and were presented by the Head of School in the Rountree Room, followed by a morning tea in Samuels tearoom. Congratulations to all the prizewinners.



👉 **Ai Fen Chai**, recipient of the 2008 Amgen Prize for Best Performance in Master of Science in Biopharmaceuticals Program was presented with her award by Chris Marquis at the May graduation ceremony.



👉 PhD student **Sarah Ongley**'s poster was chosen as part of a media release at the ASMR meeting held on 1 June in Sydney where she also presented the preliminary research findings. Sarah's project was picked up by the ABC Science Unit and is online at: <www.abc.net.au/science/> Sarah's supervisor is Louise Lutze-Mann.

👉 Congratulations to **Si Ming Man**, PhD student in Hazel Mitchell's lab, who has won the Australian Society for Microbiology NSW-ACT Branch's Travel Award to attend the 2009 Perth Conference.

Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

Congratulations and thanks to Sue Jackson for organising the BABS version of this well-known Cancer Council event on 3 June. The total amount raised was \$200.70, comprising \$140.70 from donations and \$60 from sale of the mugs. Thank you to all for supporting the event.

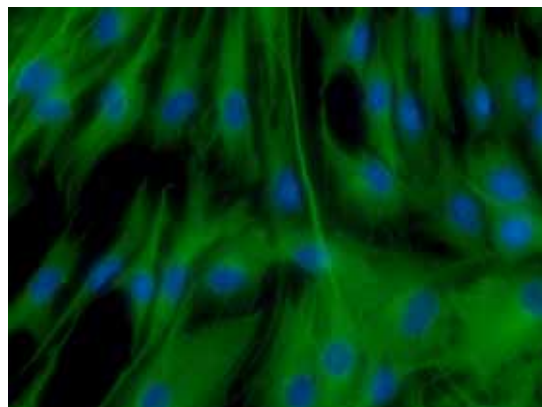
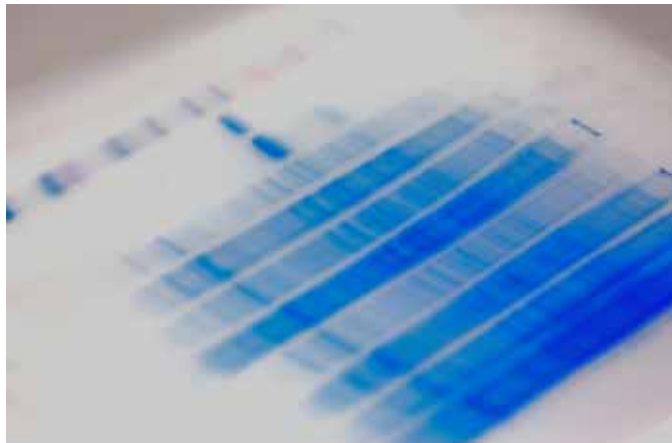


BABS photo competition winners

The winning photographs from the 2009 School photo competition are presented below. Thanks are extended to all who entered, and we hope for an even bigger response next year. The prize winners received a cash prize, and the winning entry is featured in the inaugural BABS Annual Report, being published this month.

1st PRIZE *Protein Gel*

Howard Lam, Digital Media student
(friend of Doris Suen)



2ND PRIZE *Human foetal fibroblasts
immuno-stained for marker beta-3-tubulin*
Henry Chung, PhD student, Stem Cell Lab

Mad Scientists Society

This newly formed BABS society meets every week to discuss a journal article drawn from biotechnology, biomolecular science and beyond. It's more than just a journal club, though: it's a forum for BABS academics, postgraduates and undergraduates to communicate and:

- broaden our exposure to other fields of research
- hone our skills in critiquing an article
- stimulate discussion with academics and learn from the best
- enable interdisciplinary collaboration
- enjoy (free!) wine and snacks in the late afternoon
- organise social events (movie nights? skydiving?!) beyond the classroom and the lab
- network and have fun!



Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 4pm in the Barrow Room (244). Details are posted on flyers around the building every week, on Facebook (search for Mad Scientists' Society), and sent to a mailing list.

Email Mad.Scientists.Society@gmail.com for info.

International flavour of BABS

Proving they're good cooks as well as great scientists, staff and students in the Ballard & Wilton labs enjoyed an International food lunch that doubled as a farewell for Olaf Bressel, a German student who has been working in the Ballard lab for a year. The menu included Columbian, Indian, Croatian, Greek, Chinese and Thai cuisines, as well as some Aussie favourites.



Pitter patter of little scientists ...

Our congratulations go to

- Belinda Ferrari on the birth of daughter Tyla Rose
- Leanne Pearson and Brett Neilan on the arrival of daughter Alice



If there is something you would like included in the next newsletter please email Michele at m.potter@unsw.edu.au