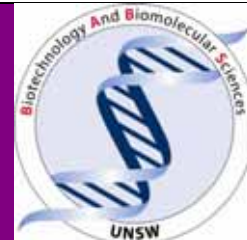


# BABS Quarterly

March 2010 Issue 6



## Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

I am optimistic that 2010 will be a proactive year for the School.

Three important metrics for BABS are up. First, a total of 26 ARC and NH&MRC grants will be submitted through the School in this round. Funding of 6 or more proposals will be a great result. Second, preliminary evidence suggests that the numbers of papers published by BABS personnel increased in 2009. This should help our budget next year *if* the funding formula remains relatively consistent. Third, it is my understanding that 2010 student enrolments in BABS1201 peaked at 996. With proactive management of this group, we expect that student numbers in second and third year subjects should increase in the forthcoming years. Let us hope that we can find the space necessary to teach these students ...

As for refurbishment, we finally have a green light for the renovation of the Samuels Tearoom. Although we saw this colour drift from green through to red in 2008, we now propose to include the services required for *Recombinant Bean*, a not-for-profit BABS student-run coffee club. The club will provide a collegiate environment for academics, students and staff, encouraging networking and delivering inexpensive, good quality espresso coffee.

Finally, I'm sure I'm speaking on behalf of all the School in wishing Alan Wilton a speedy recovery.

Bill

## Staff achievements

☞ Staffan Kjelleberg has been appointed Director-Designate of SCELSE, a new centre of excellence to be established at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU). The centre is expected to be in operation by January 2011 and aims to become one of the world's top research centres in microbial biofilms. It will receive government funding of S\$120 million over 10 years, with the NTU and the National University of Singapore providing additional contributions totalling S\$86M.

☞ A team of Australian scientists that includes Ruiting Lan has made a breakthrough in understanding the rising incidence of whooping cough in Australia. The work has shown that two of the most common strains of the bacteria have undergone significant genetic changes in recent years. The vaccine may need to be modified to give greater protection against the new strains so it does not lose effectiveness as the organism evolves.

## RAT News

### Research

- Peter White, Rowena Bull and colleagues were recently awarded grants totalling \$212k from the Australian Centre for HIV and Hepatitis Virology.
- John Foster and the Surgilux team won one of 17 NHMRC Development Grants for 2009, for \$213k.
- ResPubs is UNSW's new web-based database for registering your publications. It is also the source for collecting data for the ERA and HERDC schemes. As ResPubs is relatively easy to use, no formal training has been organised by the library. Login is staff ID and Unipass. Please contact Penny Hamilton if you need any assistance. Log in at: <https://respubs.online.unsw.edu.au/respubs/login.main>

### Admin

- 3 Schools Office: The proposed start date for the launch of the upper campus FOS student office is now scheduled to occur during April. In the interim, we have hired David Micallef to provide short-term assistance in the BABS student/teaching office.

### Teaching

- Deputy HoS Andrew Collins has developed a draft School policy for employing sessional teachers. The document is saved in the shared BABS folder on the Science server. Andrew would welcome your comments.
- The computers in CATS rooms are being moved to a Standard Operating Environment. As each PC is migrated, a sign will be placed on the lectern. For all assistance, call the Duty Technician on x54888.

☞ Louise Lutze-Mann was awarded a 2009 Faculty of Science Staff Award for Excellence in Teaching, which was announced at the Faculty's Christmas party. For many years, Louise has worked to maintain high standards of teaching within the School, and to nurture the next generation of scientists.

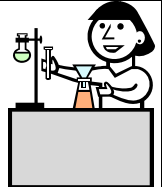
☞ Dr Carol Oliver from the Australian Centre for Astrobiology (ACA) is heading up a consortium that has been awarded \$987,574 as part of the new Australian Space Research Program. Other partners are the Australian Centre for Field Robotics at USYD, the Powerhouse Museum and Cisco Systems Aust. *Pathways to Space: Empowering the Internet Generation* is a collaborative, hands-on program that will enable high school students in Years 10-12 to plan space exploration projects using a living laboratory to simulate realistic scenarios. The grant will also provide funding for four new space-related doctorates.

## Student achievements

- 2009 BABS Honours student Elizabeth Blaber, supervised by Brendan Burns, has become the first Australian student to join the NASA Academy, where she will spend 10 weeks developing her research into the effects of space travel on the human body.
- 2009 Honours and 2010 PhD student Stuart Hamilton won a poster prize at the POW Tow Research Awards in November, the Australian Society for Microbiology NSW-ACT Branch 2009 Honours Student Prize, and was awarded the inaugural Stillbirth Foundation Australia PhD Scholarship.
- 2009 BABS Honours student Laura Cook was a co-recipient of the 2009 NSW Flow Cytometry Prize for her Honours project. Laura presented this work at the 39th Annual Meeting of the Australasian Society for Immunology, and this year is commencing her PhD in Medicine with APA funding.

## Starting them early

Noel Whitaker gave a group of Year 3 students from Coogee Boys Prep an introduction to Science in early February. As well as providing a guided tour of the lab (appropriate risk assessment had been carried out!) he gave a short talk about the cancer research being undertaken.



## Getting down & dirty

Not known for shying away from hard yakka, Alan Wilton, Bill Ballard and Jonci Wolff recently helped out at a working bee at the Dingo Sanctuary at Bargo. The sanctuary is a registered charity that maintains a colony of dingoes for public education as well as conservation. Visitors are able to meet and learn about dingoes in a natural setting, with volunteers providing guided tours.



## Suffering for her craft

Anne Galea proved her dedication to her chosen career at the end of the UNSW 2010 Open Day in January. Anne fainted (very gracefully we're told) and sustained a some lumps, bumps and a big cut to her head, due to low blood sugar as a result of being on duty all day and not partaking of sufficient food and drink. As you can see, at the end of the ordeal she was hungry enough to even enjoy the hospital food!

## Pitter patter of little scientists ...

Congratulations to Rebecca Lebard and family on the arrival of Matilda on Tuesday 19 January, shown here with older brother Oskar.



## Visit from Santa Xmas 2009 (ho ho ho)



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)