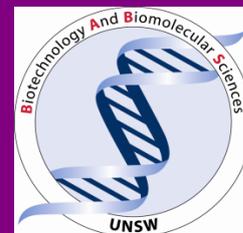


BABS Quarterly

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Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

I attended the ASBMB Head of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Discipline meeting at the ANU on Tuesday 13 December. This one-day meeting was aimed at discussing Science Faculty with Education Specialties (SFES) and the role of biochemistry and molecular biology in the curriculum. In this context, the word “faculty” is American speak for what we would call an academic in Australia.

Nancy Pelaez who is now at Purdue University gave the opening address. Nancy reviewed her 2008 Science paper entitled “The pipeline, Science faculty with education specialties”. In this paper the authors identified two subpopulations. Those specifically hired as SFES and those who transitioned into SFES roles. Of interest to me was the clear distinction that Nancy made between Science Educators and Teachers. In her opinion, Science Education was a discipline where researchers aimed to publish in peer reviewed journals. In contrast, good teachers aimed to give students the best possible learning experience.

Next, Janet Macaulay gave a talk on teaching-focused appointments at Monash, and Frances Shannon on balancing teaching and research at Canberra University. Susan Howitt gave an interesting overview of the teaching restructure at ANU and their consolidation of 9 majors to one with a multitude of minors. Included in the revision were two new second-year courses “Big Questions in Biology” and “Experimental Design and Analysis”. These courses were specifically designed to address perceived weaknesses in graduating students. Perhaps courses like these should be considered as we review our own undergraduate program.

Finally, we had a tour through the two new biology buildings at ANU. One was designed for research and the other for teaching. Certainly the facilities, space, design and concepts were impressive.

Best wishes for the holidays,

Bill

RAT News

Research

- The tally for the School in Category 1 grants for 2011 was \$4.516M, comprised of 4 NHMRC grants (\$2,153M); 3 ARC DPs (\$755k); 3 Round 2 Linkages (\$1.358M) and one LIEF (\$250k).

Teaching

- A reminder to teaching academics to complete and submit their student course and teaching evaluation reports for Semester 2 via the [CATEI Portal Login](#).
- Congratulations to Daniel Vieites for doing a great job in keeping the [BABSOC facebook page](#) up to date, posting notices of BABSOC events and other student-related news.

Admin

- In case you're wondering about the latest building work being carried out in the Michael Birt Gardens between Lowy and Biosciences, Facilities is installing new tables and benches for the use of staff and students. To enable people to work on laptops outdoors, access to power is being built in, and shade structures and landscaping are part of the scope of works. The work should be completed and the area ready for use by mid-January 2012.



Renovations to Samuels Meeting Room



Meeting Room s129 has had a much-needed facelift. New glass has been installed in the external windows and doors to replace the old crazed panels, and the tiles on the terrace



cleaned with a high pressure hose. New blinds, carpet and chairs were purchased, and the meeting table has been sanded and re-varnished. Blinds have also been added to the glass wall of the adjoining lab for extra privacy during meetings, and new audio visual equipment has been installed. We can now be proud to welcome visitors to a well-appointed meeting room that will

reflect well on the School. Bookings for the room can be made via your Outlook calendar.

Thanks to Penny Hamilton, Liz Daly and Jeff Welch for doing a great job in coordinating all the work, and to Mick Malone FM for organising contractors at short notice.

Our famous GEEK

(Julian Stevenson, PhD student in Andrew Brown's Lab)

After several years of encouragement from colleagues and friends, I applied and was accepted as a contestant for the reality television show, *Beauty and the Geek Australia* on Channel 7. It pairs up ignorant and pretty girls with highly intelligent but socially awkward guys who compete in a series of challenges to win money and gain skills and confidence.



I am not shy or lacking in confidence myself, but was so geeky the producers had to have me. Instead, I helped the girls and other 'geeks' gain confidence. Virtually everyone in the cast was exceptionally sweet and the geeks remarkably funny and talented. I had the time of my life performing in the weird games and being cheeky with the TV people. Although I was commonly a sarcastic and subversive terror, the editing portrays me as the sweetest in the entire cast, which isn't too bad. I am now deluged with attention from tween fangirls.



My teammate Jordan Finlayson was lovely, extremely talented and a real star. We became great friends and still keep in regular contact. She absorbed nearly all of the information I taught her and performed with brilliant flair, such as impressively teaching school children about volcanology. I approached everything with enthusiasm and without fear, doing quite well. Together we effectively dominated the game and came within a whisker of winning the entire competition.

I was very happy to see our *Cell Metabolism* cover coming up in one of the questions for the \$100,000 (Jordan got it right), so BABS had free publicity with 1.3 million viewers. I had an amazing experience, but I'm happy to be back to science to continue my PhD work.

Melbourne Cup



The first Tuesday in November saw the Samuels tearoom packed to the rafters, with the closest finish in the Cup for many years – less than a proverbial nose between first and



second.

Christmas Cruise



After a bleak week weather-wise, Sydney turned on sparkling afternoon for the BABS Christmas party. Around 150 staff, students and their guests enjoyed our beautiful harbour, delicious food, and a little conga line dancing later in the evening.



Wedding Bells

Congratulations and best wishes to two staff who recently enjoyed very different styles of wedding. Rohan Singh-Panwar and wife Catherine participated in some colourful Indian rituals, while Deputy HOS Noel Whitaker and his wife Carolyn tied the knot with more traditional nuptials.



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