

Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

We have now completed the interviews for the two Eukaryotic Genomics positions within the School. As you may recall, six quality candidates were interviewed from a total of 55 applicants. Applications for these positions came from all corners of the globe and are a ringing endorsement of the growing recognition of BABS and UNSW internationally.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of the panel that included Hazel Mitchell, Bill Sherwin and Mark Tanaka. I also wish to thank all of those individuals who provided feedback to the selection panel (including students). These comments were invaluable to the panel and certainly informed our lengthy discussions.

The feedback I have had is that the process was transparent and all candidates felt they were treated with respect. Treating candidates with respect is an important part of the process because all candidates should enjoy the experience and take away a positive image of the School, the Faculty and the University. I thank Michele Potter for coordinating the processes with skill and diplomacy.

The selection panel met last week and we were united in our decision to make multiple offers. Over the past week I have spoken with Dean Crossley and the School Executive about the candidates and they have endorsed the decisions of the panel.

On Wednesday of this week I contacted the candidates the selection panel endorsed, and the unsuccessful individuals. The negotiation process with the endorsed candidates has now begun and is sure to last several months. I will keep you updated on the process, and any progress.

In regard to academic recruitment, a reminder that Kevin Morris will be joining BABS from the Scripps Institute in June this year, and he is certain to add to the vibrancy and productivity of the School.

Best
Bill

RAT News

Research

- The GMO's Grant Application Lodgement Form (GALF) has been replaced by an online process. The HOS now receives electronic notification of all grants submitted through BABS. As a consequence of this process change, if the CI is not a BABS lab owner, they will be requested to provide details in writing of any expectations of space or equipment to be provided by the School in the event the grant is funded.
- Prof Ian Dawes has prepared a report on Excellence in BABS for submission as part of the ARC's 2012 ERA exercise.

Teaching

- Deputy HOS Noel Whitaker is finalising the new BABS majors and course descriptions to be submitted for inclusion in the 2013 handbook. The proposed new structure will be presented at the next BABS teaching meeting on Tuesday 3 April.
- The BABS Prizegiving ceremony for awards to students for results in 2011 will be held on Tuesday 10 April in The Rountree Room at 1pm. Lunch will be provided in the Samuels Tearoom for staff, students and visitors at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Admin

- A new UNSW Travel Management System will go live on 7 May 2012. From that date, the hard copy TR1 forms will no longer be used. In order to be covered by UNSW travel insurance, all travel must be approved by the HOS via the new online system.
- The School's new Health & Safety Manager, Dr Helder Marcal, has commenced. He is located in Office 140 in the link wing, extension 51578.
- The School Office has had a fresh coat of paint and much-needed improvements to the decor and



layout of workstations. Thanks to Liz Daly for her design advice and expertise.

Staff achievements

- ✎ Marc Wilkins has been awarded the 2012 ASBMB Beckman Coulter Discovery Science Award. This prize is awarded for distinguished contributions to the field of biochemistry and molecular biology. The award was announced in *The Australian Biochemist*, and will be presented at the 2012 ComBio Conference in Adelaide in September, where Marc has been invited to present a symposium talk. The award includes an honorarium to fund a Travelling Lectureship to enable Marc to present his work at centres around Australia and New Zealand.
- ✎ A paper on the results of a study carried out by BABS researchers Michal Janitz, Marc Wilkins and Natalie Twine on genetic research into Alzheimer's disease was highlighted in an article featuring a related study at Washington University's School of Medicine. The article was published online in [Genome Web Clinical Sequencing News](#), with Michal being quoted extensively.

- ✎ John Foster has been elected a Member of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery, the world's leading organisation dedicated to medical laser application and techniques development. The ASMLS Professional Development Institute is the premier source for laser and related technology education. Membership is based on qualifications in laser operations, safety and track record. The society promotes excellence in patient care by advancing biomedical application of lasers and other related technologies worldwide.
- ✎ Ruiting Lan and his team received extensive media coverage on their work into the resurgence of Whooping Cough. Ruiting and BABS are quoted in most of the news items, including ABC radio's AM program: <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2012/s3459882.htm> and the US website Top news: <http://topnews.us/content/247035-new-whooping-cough-strain-detected>

Student achievements

Three BABS PhD students were finalists at the Australian Society for Microbiology NSW-ACT Branch BD student awards held recently at UTS. Connie Lam from A/Prof Ruiting Lan's lab was awarded first prize on the night, and will attend the 2012 ASM conference to be held in Brisbane in July. The two other BABS finalists were Auda Eltahlia from A/Prof Peter White's lab and Gee Ling from Prof Staffan Kjelleberg's lab.

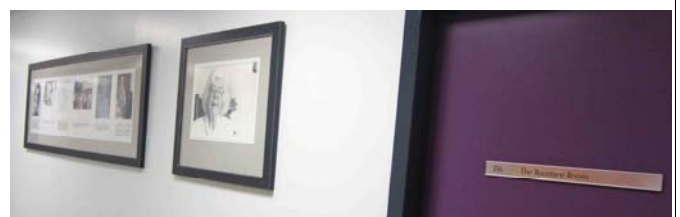


GSA announces Alan Wilton Award

The Genetics Society of AustralAsia has established an Award to honour the late Associate Professor Alan Wilton. The Alan Wilton Award will recognise outstanding contributions to the field of genetics research by Australasian scientists early in their career. The award is intended to assist the recipient in advancement of their career and will be awarded for work completed within five years of graduating as a PhD. The award will be announced during the annual meeting of the Genetics Society of AustralAsia.

Dr Phyllis Rountree's storyboard rejuvenated

The historical photos and storyboard of Dr Rountree's achievements located on the wall outside the Rountree Room were showing some wear and tear. They have been given a respectful update and reframed in sympathetic tones and materials. The entry area to the Rountree Room has been given a fresh coat of paint, including a 'BABS purple' door.



Phyllis Margaret Rountree (1911-1994) was a leading Australian microbiologist and international authority on the typing of bacteriophages, particularly Golden Staph. She graduated with a MSc from the University of Melbourne in 1931, and after further study in London, worked as a Research Bacteriologist at RPA Hospital. Her career included research into soil salination, botulism in WWII, trachoma among Central Australian Aborigines, wound infections and antibiotic resistance. From 1971, she held a position as Honorary Research Associate in Medical Microbiology at UNSW.



Vice-Chancellor's visit to BABS

The Dean of Science, Prof Merlin Crossley, arranged for Professor Fred Hilmer to attend a research presentation by BABS academics on 21 March. A number of researchers presented summaries of some of the health and environment research currently being undertaken in the School. The Vice-Chancellor was seeking information on such research so that it may be showcased at UNSW Foundation events to highlight the relevance of such work to the wider community.

Second new teaching lab comes online ...

Before ...



BABS now boasts a second renovated teaching space, Lab 101 located at the eastern end of the Biological Sciences Building, which was completed just in time for the commencement of Semester 1 classes.

This is the second teaching lab to be renovated on Level 1, in line with the plan for the whole of this floor to ultimately be redeveloped as cutting-edge teaching space.



After ...



... and will feature in TV show

After an approach to the Faculty Office by a production company working for the ABC wanting to do some filming on location in a Science environment, Lab 101 will feature in an episode of a TV show called Stay Tuned, a music show advising teens on the workings of the music industry <http://staytuned.abc.net.au/>. The show will screen on the Qantas Inflight service, and is set to go to air on ABC3 on Friday nights (repeating Saturday and Sunday afternoons) from May until November 2012. BABS will be listed in the episode credits.

Pitter patter of little scientists ...

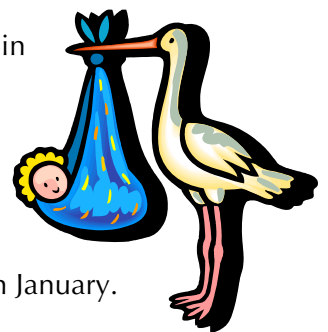
Congratulations #1 to Ruby Lin on the arrival of new son James Yi Lin Maclatchy in December.

and

Congratulations #2 to Brendan Burns on new son Lachlan, born in January.

but wait, there's more!

Congratulations #3 to Belinda Ferrari for her second daughter, Grace, also born in January.



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