

BABS Quarterly



June 2014 Issue 22

Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

BABS is abuzz. It's fantastic to see the greater attendance and engagement at staff meetings and other School events. Some of the recent School seminars have been standing room only. And the Happy Hours that follow have been lively affairs (though of course always in moderation).

The School is also tracking well in terms of metrics, with the number of HERDC publications for 2013 stepping up from the previous year's tally. Moreover, student enrolments in our courses increased slightly in Semester 1 relative to last year, with encouraging early signs of healthy enrolments also for our Semester 2 courses.

BABS Director of Teaching **Louise Lutze-Mann** 'and co.' have exciting teaching initiatives planned for Semester 2. We're trialling research internships for our second year students, and seeking other ideas from our academics to bring more meaningful research experiences to our undergraduates. If you think you have some brilliant fresh ideas that the School should consider, whether it be to improve our teaching, research or administration, please email them to myself, Louise or Michele.

We look forward to the arrival of the latest addition to our BABS community in mid-July. **Kyle Hoehn** will occupy lab space in G17, and I thank the staff and students who are moving to accommodate him. We will need that sort of collegiality and understanding in spades as we move closer to the new build.

With best wishes,
Andrew

RAT News

Research

- The 2014 BABS Research Symposium will be held in the Grand Ballroom at Randwick Racecourse on Wednesday 5 November.

Admin

School office staffing changes:

- Best wishes go to School Office admin **Liz Gazzard**, who will commence 12 months maternity leave this month. Her role is being filled by **Jennifer Campbell**, who has had relevant experience at UNSW in the Environmental Biotechnology CRC.
- To ensure the introduction of **SciQuest** is adequately resourced in the School, we have appointed **Verlaine Timms** for six months on a part-time basis to be the point person for the implementation. Verlaine has recently submitted her PhD thesis; her supervisor was Brett Neilan. As a first step, she will be liaising with all labs to brief them on what is required to prepare their chemical inventories.

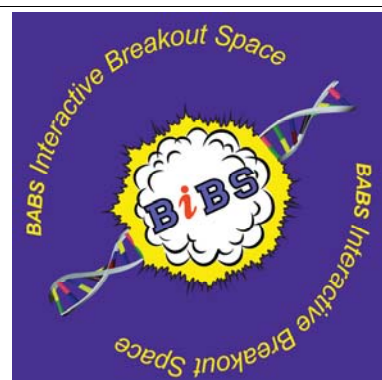
Teaching

- **Anne Galea** was joint primary applicant on a team of six academics from BABS and BEES who have been awarded \$202k from the newly created UNSW Strategic Educational Development Projects Fund. The fund totals \$3M for 2014 and will rise to \$6M in 2015 and \$9M in 2016. The purpose of the fund is to enhance the overall learning and teaching performance of UNSW. Other BABS staff on the grant are **Louise Lutze-Mann** and **Julian Cox**. The project's title is "The greatest show on earth: Engaging 1st year biology students through interactive on-line and practical content."
- **Michael Janitz** has been awarded a UNSW Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching.

New student breakout space

BiBS

Conversion of Lab 107 to a **BABS Interactive Breakout Space** is well under way. The aim is to provide an informal learning space for student activities, including tutoring, group work and pre-lab studies. Computers and wi-fi will be available, and a microwave and coffee and snack machines will be provided. Students have been encouraged to submit ideas and decoration suggestions for the space, with an official launch planned for Semester 2.



Plaudits for BABS staff

- 👉 **Rick Cavicchioli** completed another expedition to the Antarctic late last year. Some findings from this ongoing major research project were covered in an article in the [May/June issue of The Life Scientist](#)
- 👉 Noroviruses are the most common cause of acute gastroenteritis, globally, and have become increasingly notorious in recent years. **Peter White's** third paper on the emergence of Sydney 2012, identified and named by his group, has been published on the [Virology Highlights Blog](#). Published by Elsevier, the blog publishes papers that provide advances to the understanding of virus biology.
- 👉 **Brett Neilan's** group received First Prize in the Review category in the [2014 Marine Drugs Best Paper Award](#). The awards were introduced in 2013 to recognise outstanding papers published in the journal in the area of research, development and production of drugs from the sea, including marine natural product chemistry.



Visit by The Surfing Scientist

Staff and students alike enjoyed the recent seminar by the ABC's Surfing Scientist **Ruben Meerman**, "Weightloss 101". Ruben is a surfer with a physics degree and a passion for all things scientific. He appears on ABC Television's flagship science program, Catalyst – and was the first resident scientist on Play School. As you can see, his method of engaging with his audience is very colourful.



BABS Alumnus awarded 2014 ASMR Medal



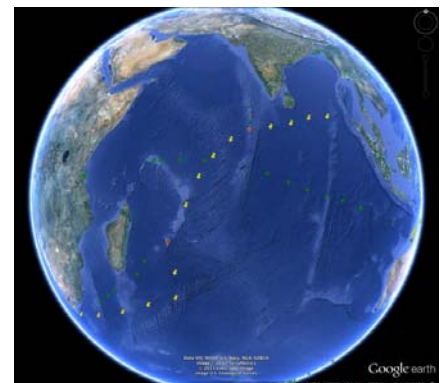
In addition to being named in Time Magazine's 2014 Top 100 Influential People, **Professor David Sinclair** is the 2014 Australian Society for Medical Research medallist. This annual award recognises a researcher's career contributions to medical research

David did Honours and then completed his PhD in BABS under the supervision of **Ian Dawes**, in whose lab he also met his future wife.

As part of the award, David was the keynote speaker at a series of Gala Dinners around Australia during ASMR Medical Research Week in June. The School booked a table at the Sydney dinner, which was held in The Star Room in the Imax Theatre Complex. During his presentation, David warmly praised the School and UNSW, and presented Ian with gift to show his appreciation.

Indigo V Expedition Finalist for ASM's Global Video Challenge

Watch this beautiful video highlighting the ocean's wonders observed during this scientific voyage led by BABS DECRA Fellow **Federico Lauro**.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uq1VDEYgVuc>



Schools Outreach

Under the umbrella of the CSIRO's Scientists in Schools program, **Michael Janitz** and **Chris Marquis** were involved in a Year 10 science project at Willoughby Girls High School. Students were asked to design and perform a scientific project, which was judged by the Principal, Head Science Teacher along with Michael and Chris. The winning team received UNSW Faculty of Science certificates signed by Dean Merlin Crossley, and books on scientific writing. Students were also provided with information about studying Science in BABS, and at UNSW. The initiative was very well received and will be continued next year perhaps also in other schools.



Winning team, Head Science Teacher and the Principal

Student achievements

Congratulations to our 2013 University medallists, who received their awards in the June graduation ceremony:

- UNSW University Medal in Biochemistry: **Alexander J Knights** (*supervisor Merlin Crossley*)
- UNSW University Medal in Molecular Biology 1: **Ivan E Lukmantara** (*supervisor Ruiting Lan*)
- UNSW University Medal in Molecular Biology 2: **Gabriella E Martyn** (*supervisor Merlin Crossley*)
- UNSW University Medal in Molecular Biology 3: **Scott E Youlten** (*supervisor Louise Lutze-Mann*)

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/UNSWBABS>

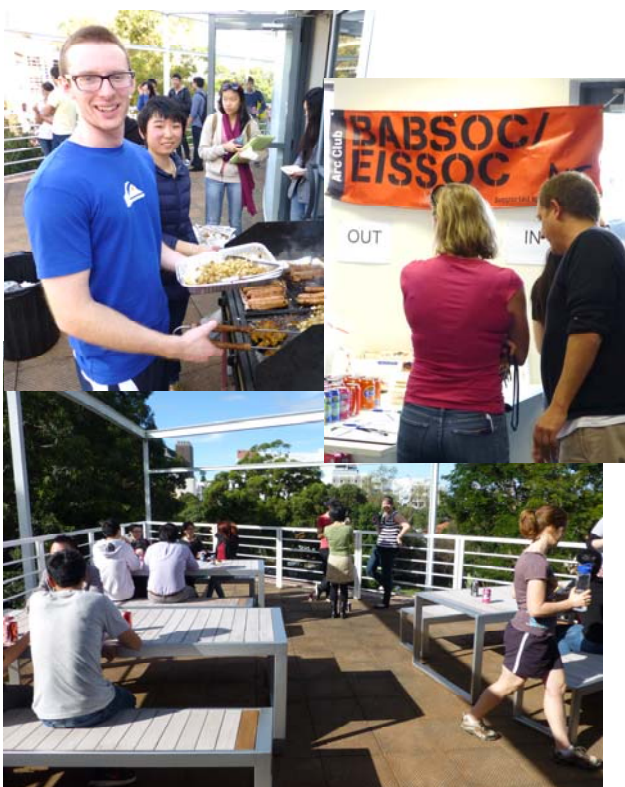
The School's fb site is continuing to attract many visitors, with these statistics for the week ending 8 June:

- Total page likes: 339
- Weekly total reach: 475
- People engaged: 85



BABSOC/EISSOC BBQ

Our student society, led by **Wallace Bridge**, hosted one of their welcome end of semester BBQs, with a very appreciative clientele making great use of the newly refurbished Wilton Terrace furniture.



New addition to the School

'Visiting Professor Possum' took up residence in the HOS compactus recently, having been evicted from the neighbouring office of Irina Voineagu a couple of days prior. Andrew suggested we might train PP to sign HOS documents to earn his keep!

(PP was safely returned to his natural environment via the trained hands of Dr Leanne Pearson from the Neilan lab.)



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