

BABS Quarterly

December 2014 Issue 24



Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

As the shadows lengthen on 2014 and the shutdown looms, it is timely to reflect on what the year has brought to BABS. First, the results from the School Management Survey reinforce the informal impression that this year has seen the School community brought closer together, but they also identified areas requiring further work. The sun shone on Coogee Surf Club as we worked our way through the BADO program geared towards improving our funding success from industry as well as through the usual (though increasingly more elusive) ARC and NHMRC sources. Louise Lutze-Mann showcased many of the innovative teaching reforms being worked on, including exposing our undergrad students to more of our research through programs like ALLURE, BURET (internships) and the Discovery Project. We are planning to incorporate more research into our undergrad teaching in 2015 through a freshly renovated third year course that Michael Janitz is leading. It was great to see decommissioned Lab 107 reborn as a lively BABS Interactive Breakout Space (BIBS). It's been well utilised since it opened in Semester 2, but I'm sure we can think of even more creative ways of making good use of it to provide more undergrad students with an attractive and stimulating home in BABS.

We are fortunate to have someone of Louise's calibre to direct our teaching, and I am pleased to see that this has been formally recognised this year with Louise being voted the most popular lecturer across the Faculty, as well as winning a prestigious national teaching award. Well done Louise and well deserved!

This year's BABS Symposium held at Randwick racecourse was even better than last year's event. Wallace and his BABSOC team ensured that we had accessible and highly polished presentations from our research students and postdocs alike, showcasing our rich diversity. For the second year running, ARC chose the day of our symposium to announce grant and fellowship outcomes. Of course, parallels cannot and should not be drawn between grant applicants and punters at a racecourse, because UNSW, Science and BABS all did well from the ARC, with many folk from BABS in the winner's circle.

From a field of some very strong candidates, we have appointed Dr Jai Tree as a new Senior Lecturer in infectious diseases. Jai is a graduate of UQ and has undertaken postdoctoral work with leaders in the field in Edinburgh. He is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Peter Doherty Institute at the University of Melbourne. Significantly, Jai has attracted NHMRC funding in his own right as a new investigator this year and has funding for another two years. His research is innovative and high impact – non-coding RNAs and regulation of virulence and antibiotic resistance. I'm sure we will all extend a very warm welcome to Jai when he joins us in March.

And that just leaves me to thank all of you for helping to make BABS a better place, and I wish you and your families a restful break in preparation for a BIG 2015, where we will see a new building beginning to rise from the rubble of the soon to be demolished Biomed Lecture Theatres. Speaking of 2015, please see Avril if you can help at Open Day, Tuesday 6 January. These events are important in attracting the students that we need for our continued prosperity.

And finally thanks to Michele for producing another quality edition of the BABS Quarterly!

With best wishes,
Andrew

RAT Research

2015 Grant Outcomes:

- NHMRC Project: Rob Yang \$737,660
- ARC DPs: Bill Ballard was awarded \$374,900; Mark Brown \$532,200; Rick Cavicchioli \$835,200; Merlin Crossley \$428,100
- ARC DECRA: Gene Hart-Smith \$352,000
- ARC LIEF: Marc Wilkins \$630,000
- Broad Foundation: Hazel Mitchell \$110k.
- Goldstars: Bill Ballard, Andrew Brown, Merlin Crossley, Ruiting Lan, Kevin Morris & Mark Tanaka.
- Faculty Silverstar: Marc Wilkins

Admin

- Avril Clarkson is filling Kylie Jones's role for 12 months while Kylie is on maternity leave.
- P3 will continue to operate on campus but all design work will be outsourced.

Teaching

- Info Day 2015 is Tuesday 6 January, 9am-4pm.
- Moodle workshops will be run in February/March.

BABS Director of Teaching Wins Australian Government teaching award



Louise Lutze-Mann's teaching expertise was recognised at the highest level this month, when she accepted the Award for Teaching Excellence for Biological Sciences, Health and Related Studies in the discipline of Biological Sciences as part of the 2014 Australian Government Awards for University Teaching.

The award was presented at Parliament House Canberra in December, and she also received in a congratulatory letter from the VC Professor Fred Hilmer.

In addition, in the Faculty of Science Excellence Awards for 2014, the Dean announced Louise as the winner of the Best Lecturer in Science as voted by the students.

Congratulations Louise!



New Faculty Associate Dean (International) from BABS

Associate Professor Noel Whitaker will be the Faculty of Science Associate Dean (International) commencing in January 2015 to coordinate the Faculty's efforts in international recruitment and engagement. The Dean announced this new position in December, noting Noel's ability to work across the University and his remarkable talents as a teacher.

US\$1.5M to Professor Rick Cavicchioli's Antarctic team

The US Joint Genome Institute has awarded a US\$1.5M grant to Professor Rick Cavicchioli and his team of Antarctic investigators for their project "Seasonal variation in Antarctic microbial communities: ecology, stability and susceptibility to ecosystem change". The grant will cover sequencing of samples collected during recent Antarctic expeditions. The project seeks to determine what aquatic microbes do season by season, and will reveal how microbial communities change throughout a complete annual cycle in three climate-sensitive, 3,000–5,000 year-old marine-derived Antarctic lakes (Ace Lake, Organic Lake and Deep Lake) and a near-shore marine site.

Ramaciotti Centre to partner with Kinghorn Centre in Whole Human Genome Sequencing Project

An alliance between the Ramaciotti Centre for Genomics and the Kinghorn Centre for Clinical Genomics will provide whole human genome sequencing to the research community using the Illumina HiSeq X Ten. It took 11 years and billions of dollars for the first complete human genome to be read back in 2001. Now it costs about \$10,000 to sequence a human genome. The industry has been trying to reach the \$1,000 for years as a way to make full sequencing more mainstream. The HiSeq X sequencer is designed to process 20,000 genomes a year at a cost of \$1,000 each.

Postdoc achievements

- Dr Frances Byrne, postdoc in Kyle Hoen's lab, has been awarded a 3-year Fellowship valued at \$177k from the Hope Funds for Cancer Research for the project "Reversing Warburg Metabolism to Treat Cancer".
- Hazel Mitchell will mentor Dr Si Ming Man, who was previously a student in BABS (Honours and MSc) who has been awarded an Early Career Fellowship for the project "The role on interferon regulatory factors in the host defence against bacterial infection", with funding of \$334,284. He will spend 2 years in his current lab at St Jude's in the US and 2 years at UNSW.

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

The School's fb site is continuing to attract many visitors, with these statistics for the week ending 14 December:

- Total page likes: 436 (last quarter 398)
- Weekly total reach: 782
- People engaged: 150

New BABS baby

Congratulations to **Helene Lebhar** from Chris Marquis's group on the birth of her daughter Chloe Deliat, in early November.

