



Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

Well, 2015 for BABS has certainly roared into life firing on all cylinders, primed by the new VC's visit to the School in February. I think that all of you who saw Professor Jacobs speak and chatted with him afterwards would agree that he brings genuine enthusiasm, and a refreshing and personable style to UNSW. I'm sure that the wave of positive energy generated in the School by his visit will carry through well into the year.

Feedback from Professor Jacobs on his visit to BABS was that it was great to tour the labs, see some of the high quality core facilities, meet the iGEM students, talk with staff, get an understanding of the new build plans and see some of the teaching setup. He left with a strong sense of a talented, productive, collegiate and ambitious team of academics, supported by excellent professional staff – a sentiment I can only echo.

As emailed out last week, the contribution from BABS to the VC's 2015-25 Strategy exercise reiterates three points raised during the School's presentation to the VC and/or brought up at staff meetings. These are:

1. Increasing Research Quality (including recruiting a Professor of Bioinformatics, the search for whom is already underway);
2. Teaching better (e.g. integrating research and blended learning initiatives);
3. Building a better home for BABS (the new build and planning now what happens to our existing Building, D26). The demolition of the Biomed lecture theatres (which I know was disruptive to quite a few of us) reveals the ugly backside of D26, and emphasises why we need a new building.

Semester 1 teaching is well underway, with grant and fellowship applications now mostly submitted. To date, a total of 29 ARC applications (8 Fellowships, 20 Discovery Projects, 1 Linkage) and 28 NHMRC applications (6 Fellowships and 22 Project Grants) have been submitted through BABS.

I realise that a substantial amount of blood, sweat and tears have been poured into these applications. And although (unfortunately), grant success is not proportional to the volume of bodily fluids sacrificed, hopefully BABS will be duly rewarded this year. We have some time yet to gaze out the window of optimism...

Our latest recruit, Senior Lecturer Dr Jai Tree, arrived this week. Jai is located in the Samuels Building, taking over the office and lab previously occupied by Paul Waters, who has moved into Ian Dawes' office and lab in D26 (Ian has moved to a smaller office in the Samuels G14 area). I'm sure that you'll all go out of your way to make Jai feel very welcome.

Best wishes,
Andrew

RAT

Research

- The annual HERDC process of reporting research income and publication information to the Department of Education is underway. The HERDC process is a key contributor to the government's performance-based funding allocation to universities. Our Outreach librarian will present to our April staff meeting on the importance of ensuring all School publications are correct in ROS.

Admin

- Applications have now closed for a new L3 Technical Assistant to support the School's infrastructure team, with interviews to be scheduled shortly. In the interim, Alvin Alfonsus will continue to work on SciQuest and assist with WHS and other infrastructure tasks.

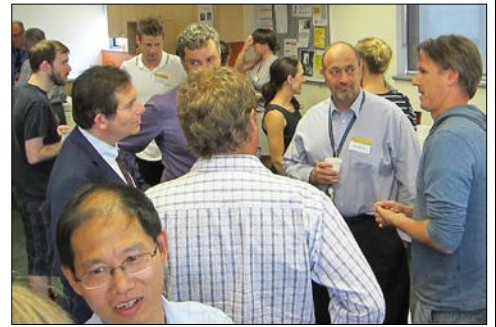
Teaching

- Moodle Drop-in Sessions for teaching staff will continue throughout Semester 1. Staff can receive one-to-one assistance with course Moodle sites, including tool selection, tool set-up to achieve particular outcomes, or managing course activities. Location: LG29 Seminar Room, Goodsell Building

New UNSW President/Vice-Chancellor's Engagement Session in BABS



Professor Ian Jacobs visited BABS on 19 February as part of a series of visits to each School in the University to familiarise himself with the organisation, infrastructure and activities and gain a sense of the ethos and culture of UNSW.



Everyone was very impressed with the VC's congenial leadership style, and very much enjoyed meeting him.

BABS staff in the news

- Andrew Brown and Ruben Meerman (aka the Surfing Scientist) attracted broad media attention locally and internationally following the publication of their BMJ article 'When somebody loses weight, where does the fat go?'
- Peter White had two articles published in The Conversation; one on whether Ebola will mutate faster than treatments can be developed; the other on the recent issue of Hepatitis A being linked to imported frozen berries.
- Andrew Brown was quoted in an article in The Australian Higher Ed on 21 February regarding new draft dietary guidelines issued by the US Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion that removed a warning that people should limit the amount of cholesterol they eat.

BABS Outreach

In December, Michael Janitz, Chris Marquis and Rebecca LeBard were again involved in the Year 10 Science Project at Willoughby Girls High School. The students were asked to design and complete a project that was judged by the School's principal and science teachers, a meteorologist from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology as well as the BABS academics (pictured).

Members of the winning team were presented with UNSW Faculty of Science certificates signed by Dean Merlin Crossley and books on scientific writing. During the visit, a presentation was made to the Year 10 students about opportunities to study science at UNSW. The initiative was very well received and will be continued next year, perhaps in other schools as well. This outreach event was performed under the umbrella of the CSIRO program Scientists in Schools.



2014 Peter Farrell Cup



The 2014 Peter Farrell Cup, which has been running at UNSW for 14 years, included 6 finalist teams comprised of BABS3091 students, with BABS team Pathozap judged the overall winner. This victory continues previous years' successes under the mentorship of Dr Wallace Bridge. Hosted by the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the School of Management at the UNSW Business School, teams begin with a synopsis of an idea, develop it through the aid of workshops and industry mentors, and then pitch to potential investors.

Brrrr – research on the coldest continent



As part of Professor Rick Cavicchioli's expedition team, BABS research assistants Sarah Payne and Alyce Hancock recently completed a 17-month posting to Antarctica to study changes in the microbial communities living in the

lakes near Davis station. Sarah wrote a great article about the project and her reflections on this third trip to Antarctica, which was published on the [Australian Antarctic Division's website](#).



2014 JAMS Symposium

The 4th Annual JAMS (Joint Academic Microbiology Seminars) Symposium was held at the at the



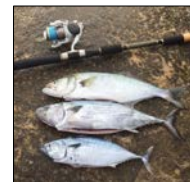
Australian Museum in February, with a great line-up of speakers and number of attendees. As part of the event, a 2-day tutorial on Omics Analysis aimed at postgrad students and early career postdocs provided hands-on experience for a range of analytical tools. The JAMS initiative receives support from BABS.

The ones that didn't get away



When not working in his lab, teaching, or writing grants, recent arrival Senior Lecturer Dr Kyle Hoehn loves to indulge his passion for fishing.

As you can see, he is quite the expert at catching biggies. Kyle hopes he will be just as successful in snaring a biggie in the next grant announcements!



BABS Facebook

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

The School's fb site is continuing to attract likes and visits from many fb users. Total page likes now total 516 (last quarter 436).

New BABS baby

School Office stalwart Kylie Jones has a new son, Brooklyn Julian Jamie Ash, born on 23 December 2014. Kylie advises that she and partner Chris are "deliriously happy".



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