

# BABS Quarterly

September 2015 Issue 27



## Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

Well, with summer already breathing down our necks, spring has well and truly sprung, with Session 2 teaching now in full swing. Sydney put on a perfect spring Saturday for Open Day. Thanks to everyone in BABS who helped to make the day such a massive success. I would like to especially thank those who gave lectures, worked on the advisory desk, assisted in the activity tent and attended on the day – not forgetting the organisational brains and brawn behind the operation (Avril, Jani, Matt, Violet, Nirmani and Louise). Everyone who was there remarked that there was a real buzz in the air, and we were fortunate that the VC himself visited our tent.

Also in September, we shook up the Honours night format, reducing the formal content, giving more time to networking, and introducing a current and recent student to give the BABS Honours student perspective. Jon Berengut and An Gobler were both terrific in this role. Thanks to Michele for putting together a very professional looking Honours booklet, and to Violet and team for all the preparatory work and the setting up and smooth running on the night. We've hopefully demonstrated to prospective students that there is no more fun and rewarding place to do Honours than BABS.

Something that shouldn't have escaped your attention over the past many months is the School's hectic preparation for the WHS Audit. So I was very pleased that after not quite hitting the target last year, BABS received 96% for the audit this year. Many thanks to Theresa and her team for all their hard work in 'steadying the BABS WHS ship'. Of course, WHS never stops, and in the coming year we will tap more into Theresa's expertise to help streamline some of the WHS tasks to be done in each of the research labs across the School.

Finally, it's been a long time coming ... my Deputy Head of School and our Director of Teaching will be ditching her 'Dr' for an 'A/Prof'. Long overdue and well deserved Associate Professor Louise Lutze-Mann!

Best wishes,  
Andrew

## RAT Research

- **Brett Neilan** was awarded an ARC Linkage Grant for \$275,000 with DSM Food Specialties Australia P/L to advance fundamental knowledge of microbial metabolism and provide natural anti-microbial molecules to the Australian food industry.
- **Irina Voineagu** was corresponding author on a [paper published in Nature Neuroscience](#) (IF 16.10) reporting on her lab's discovered link between autism and genetic changes in some segments of DNA.
- **Bill Ballard** was interviewed on ABC PM radio about new genetic research indicating that the Dingo and its origins may provide clues to Australia's history pre-European colonisation.
- **Wallace Bridge** was awarded New Colombo Plan 2016 mobility project funding 'Learning from Singapore's A\*Star and Biopolis initiatives': \$132,000.
- **Brendan Burns** played an important role in July's global Ocean Sampling Day, a campaign to simultaneously collect water samples to gain insights into fundamental rules describing microbial diversity. He also took this stunning photograph, which featured on the fb page of organisers, Micro B3.



## Teaching

- Professor Ian Jacobs will be the keynote speaker at a UNSW L&T Forum on Blended Learning to be held on 16 October in the Scientia Building.

## Administration

- Ensure these two important dates are in your diary:
  - Ø **Wednesday 4 November** – Research Symposium Randwick Racecourse
  - Ø **Friday 20 November** – BADO Coogee Surf Club

### Promotion of Deputy HOS & Director of Teaching

The whole BABS School community was delighted and proud to hear that Dr Louise Lutze-Mann has been promoted to Associate Professor, effective 1 January 2016.

Louise's research investigates new treatments for cancer, her service to the School includes appointments as Deputy Head and Director of Teaching, and her sustained excellence in teaching is well recognised within UNSW and externally. It is gratifying to see her many efforts acknowledged with this well-deserved promotion. We are indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated academic as Associate Professor Lutze-Mann!

While Louise's official office door sign can't be updated until 1 January, a colleague came up with an interim version that was very eye-catching!



### Honours Information Evening



The annual BABS Honours Information Night was held on 16 September. This event is marketed as a networking opportunity for intending Honours students to meet with a range of potential supervisors, with presentations this year from the Head of School and Honours Coordinator,

a current Honours student and a recent graduate. A poster display in the foyer showcased a range of research projects, with representatives from labs in attendance to answer questions and to help promote their lab.



### BABS iGEM team was going for Gold ... and achieved it!



The global iGEM competition aims to encourage student researchers to work in teams and solve real-world challenges. The 2015 competition was held in Boston in late September, with 259 multidisciplinary teams participating in what was the largest synthetic biology event ever held.

The UNSW ENDOsynBIO team was totally comprised of BABS undergrad students, ably led by BABS Senior Lecturer Dr Chris Marquis and PhD student Daniel Winter.

Their project aim was to expand the premise of the core concepts of chassis and genetic construct with a new core domain built around symbiogenesis and the use of chassis as synthetic organelles, creating a novel mechanism for in vivo expression of synthetic proteins.

The team did an amazing job, being awarded a Gold medal, which is a fantastic achievement. They received email congratulations from the HOS as well as UNSW President and VC Professor Ian Jacobs.

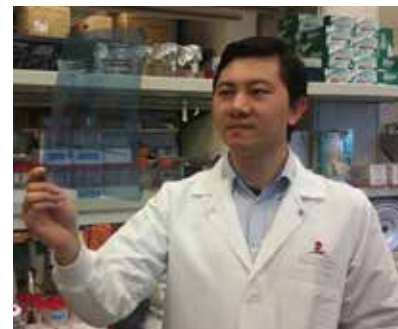


Before the big day, the team advised they bonded over a local meal that included cornbread and alligator!



### Special Achievement for NHMRC Fellow

Dr Si Ming Man has been awarded the 2015 Frank Fenner Early Career Fellowship, to add to his current NHMRC Early Career Fellowship and RG Menzies Fellowship that he took up at the beginning of this year. Si Ming is based at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Massachusetts for the first two years of his fellowships, and will return to UNSW for the final two years.



Si Ming completed his PhD in BABS under the supervision of Hazel Mitchell. His current research seeks to identify the role of interferons, and the proteins that regulate their production, in immune responses against the food-borne bacteria salmonella and listeria with the aim of uncovering new treatments and ways to prevent these bacterial infections.

### New BioSciences Building Update



During August, the UNSW Council provided final project approval for our new building, the Finance Committee of Council approved the Business Case and the balance of project funding, the Dept of Planning and Environment granted development approval, and the Vice Chancellor approved the construction contract with Brookfield Multiplex. Construction commenced in September and estimated completion is mid-2017.

Approval is currently being sought to commence the feasibility study for Stage 2 of the project – the complete refurbishment of the existing D26 Biological Science Building.

View progress via the webcam: [http://129.94.82.82/view/viewer\\_index.shtml?id=87](http://129.94.82.82/view/viewer_index.shtml?id=87)

### School events since the last Quarterly



Tech Staff appreciation lunch



Open Day 5 September

### BABS Facebook

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

Our facebook site is continuing to engage lots of users – we now have 660 page likes; last quarter it was 516.



### A new BABS baby

Congratulations to Melissa Erce from the Wilkins lab on the arrival of son Michael. Mel has been with BABS as an HDR student and then a postdoc for over 10 years.



If you would like something included in the next BABS Quarterly please email Michele at [m.potter@unsw.edu.au](mailto:m.potter@unsw.edu.au)