

Message from the Head of School

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first BABS Quarterly for 2016. The year is well under way with teaching in full swing, and ARC and NHMRC grant and fellowship applications submitted. Two BABS staff received Heroic Effort Awards by submitting a dozen applications between them, which is a monumental achievement in itself. We wish them and all of you with skin in the game good luck – may the granting gods be with you.

You would have to be living under a rock to not know that we are flat-out preparing for this year's audit. (If you are living under a rock, please ensure that you have conducted a workplace inspection and assessed the risk!) I thought preparation for the last two audits in 2014 and 2015 was hectic, but now I know what "all-consuming" means. We are fortunate indeed to have a brilliant band of professionals working together towards the audit in an effective and collegial way that is unprecedented in BABS' 15-year history. Thanks to Theresa, Jeff, Geoff, Jani, Alvin, Elessa, Alta ... the list goes on and on. Thanks to all the lab and office managers across the School who are busy getting their workspaces up to scratch. Thanks to all the lab heads who have shown leadership in what is a time of substantial cultural change. Thanks to everyone for doing your bit! As Theresa declares in her email sign-off: "Safety is everyone's responsibility!"

There is no doubt that this preparation is painful - I've been in the thick of it in my own lab - but there will be gains from all this pain. By replacing bad habits with good habits, we will lift Health and Safety across the School, ensuring that we have better practices in place and our house in order before we move into the new building in 2017 (next year!), with the greater communal living that this will entail. In preparation for the move, Geoff has begun sending out emails to start the ball rolling; for example, encouraging us to dispose of unnecessary clutter, waste and surplus equipment. Please read and act on these emails and those from Theresa. There is much to do.

Speaking of seismic change, the 2025 Strategy for UNSW has now entered its implementation phase, with the call-out to recruit stellar researchers and educators to the University as a start. This bold and ambitious plan will increase UNSW's reach and ability to transform people's lives for the better, both locally and globally. In turn, the process will massively transform UNSW.

We've had a taste of rapid change in regard to Health and Safety in the School over the past year or two as we've moved from denial, through angst, to the eventual realisation that we will be a better place for it. But it is important to remember that the 2025 Strategy is a 10-year plan. The new Strategy Office will produce a roadmap to indicate when different parts of the strategy can be expected to be implemented, and clear communication and being open to change will be key to ensuring that we're all departing on this exciting journey on the same bus. Bags a window seat!

With best wishes,

Andrew

RAT

Research

- 19 x ARC Discovery Projects and 24 x NHMRC Project Grant applications have been submitted by BABS staff in the current rounds.

Administration

- Congratulations to School member and former Dean of Science Professor Merlin Crossley, who has 'moved up the hill', being appointed DVC-Education from 29 February 2016.
- A/Professor Mark Tanaka was confirmed as the School's Deputy Head of School (Research), taking up the role on 1 January 2016. A/Professor Louise Lutze-Mann remains as Deputy Head of School (Teaching).

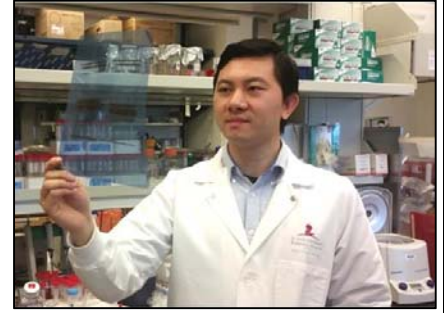
Teaching

- The School has launched a new \$1,000 Honours scholarship open to students commencing in Semester 1 2016. Candidates must have a 3rd year Science WAM of 85% or above and not hold any other Honours Scholarship. Applications close 31 March 2016.

BABS staff in the news

- Congratulations to NHMRC/RG Menzies Fellow Dr Si Ming Man (PhD supervisor Professor Hazel Mitchell) on receiving a 2016 AAI-Thermo Fisher Trainee Achievement Award from the American Association of Immunologists (AAI), the largest and most prestigious association of immunologists in the world, with over 7,700 members from 69 countries.

The award recognizes up to 6 promising trainees in the field of immunology, with selection based on career promise and presentation of an outstanding first-author abstract selected for a Block Symposium. Si Ming will be presented with the award at the AAI's Annual Meeting 'Immunology 2016' being held from 13-17 May in Seattle. He has also been invited to co-chair a Block Symposium on 'Inflammasomes'. Full details are available at <http://www.aai.org/Awards/Recipients.html>



- Professor Merlin Crossley is part of an international research team that has discovered an important new genetic target for the development of possible treatments for common inherited blood diseases. The research identified a gene that switches off the body's natural production of foetal haemoglobin soon after birth; deactivating this gene could provide much-needed cures for sickle cell anaemia and thalassaemia.

The study was published in *Science*, with other members of the team including past and present BABS researchers Dr Alistair Funnell, Dr Laura Norton and PhD student Gabriella Martyn.



Willoughby Girls High School Annual Science Project

For the last three years, academics from BABS have participated in the Year 10 Science competition held at WGHS. In late 2015, Drs Michael Janitz, Christopher Marquis and Rebecca LeBard acted as judges in the most recent competition, judging the final top seven projects developed by the students over a 3-week period. The winning group received a signed achievement certificate from the Dean of Science and a book prize, with Principal Elizabeth Diprose hoping many of these young researchers will go on to pursue a career in Science.

This schools' outreach event not only provides students with the opportunity to apply their scientific knowledge and skills to explore how science plays a role in their everyday lives, but also provides the BABS academics with a forum to present their research. The event was given media coverage in the [North Shore Times on 15 January](#).



BABS Facebook

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

A big jump in 'likes' for our fb site this quarter – 795 vs. 701 in December, a net increase of 94 new followers.



Pitter patter of little (female) scientists ...

Our best wishes go to Dr Iggy Pang (postdoc in Wilkins lab) on the birth of his beautiful daughter Frances on 26 February.

Congratulations also to Senior Lecturer Dr Rich Edwards and Catriona Murray (Ramaciotti Centre) on the safe arrival of Róisín Alice on 4 March – seen here with her BABS teddy bear ☺

