

# MONTHLY UPDATE

## DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

July 2018

It is Semester Two already, and I have to apologise for missing last month's newsletter deadline! June all too quickly turned into July, as it was a busy time for me writing a Marsden application, making plans for semester two and working through changes to support in the Department as Shared Services (the new support structure at the University) is progressively rolled out. In June exams also dominated, but now they have been sat and marked, and the grades returned, we are ready for semester two, with particularly big classes in first and second year.

Sadly for us, but happily for him, Tony Zaharic has a new role in the University as Assessment Convenor for Early Learning in Medicine at the Medical School. This is a great opportunity for Tony and we wish him all the best in his new position. As Tony's departure coincided with the start of BIOC 192 for another year we are extremely thankful that Annika has taken on the role of coordinating BIOC 192. She will do an excellent job, and I know everyone will be doing their best to ensure BIOC 192 runs well. In that regard we are particularly lucky that Dr Nicole Power has returned to take a lead role in the running of 192, and Ben Peters (PhD soon...) has also taken up a 192 teaching role.

At the end of May we also farewelled Robyn and Murray Hamilton. Most of you will have been at Robyn's afternoon tea and heard my comments but again, I am very thankful that she has agreed to return for July and August. It is not going to be easy running the department without all the institutional knowledge that resides in Robyn's head!

For Murray Hamilton's farewell we combined with Microbiology as Murray has looked after the north campus buildings, including ours, since the 1970s. It's thanks to Murray that our infrastructure upgrades have happened in a timely manner, and he has always managed to squeeze the last bit of value from every dollar spent on our building. We can be certain that whoever replaces him will need years to become as familiar with the building as Murray is. Speaking of buildings, before leaving Murray managed to complete the third floor redevelopment for the Gardner and Merriman groups. They are in the process of moving in and some of you will have noticed that Edwin is now in Paul's old second floor office.

In amongst these farewells we also squeezed in a celebration of teaching and research success. Best of all, we had "good news" in the form of big HRC grants for Sally and Peter Mace, good course appraisals for BIOC 221 and 351, and excellent individual evaluations for many, but particularly excellent evaluations for Annika, Liz, and Kurt. This was a welcome break last month, and I was able to sneak in a few words of farewell to Tony Zaharic. Tony wished his official "leaving function" to be a low key affair at the staff club, and this was held at the end of June – Sigurd gave an excellent account of the many ways in which we will miss Tony.

We also welcome several new staff to research labs, as well as Ben Te Aika to the Genomics Aotearoa office on the first floor, bringing the GA team up to three. It's great to see that Genomics Aotearoa has a logo - Ben very carefully posed himself beside it for his photograph on the back page!

Finally, many thanks to the volunteers who helped make last weekend's Science Fair the great success it always is. Keep warm,

*Catherine*



*Tony's farewell at the Staff Club*

## New arrivals



Ben Te Aika (Genomics Aotearoa), Vision Maturanga Co-ordinator



Indranil Basak is a new post-doc in Steph Hughes's lab



Ben Bolton is a new ARF in Steph Hughes's lab



Matthias Fellner has returned to the Department as a post-doc for Peter Mace.



Annika's BIOC 192 team, Nicole Power and Ben Peters



## PhD/MSc completions:

Congratulations to the following people, who are no longer students.

Tom Handley (PhD, Poulter Lab). Tom is currently exploring Nepal and surrounding areas with his wife.

Jade Yip (MSc, Hughes lab) Jade is now working for Sally as an ARF.

Jack Curry (MSc, Mace lab) has a fixed term ARF position with Catherine

Sarah Parackal (MSc, Guilford lab) is continuing to work with Parry for a while.

## Health, Safety and Compliance

Annual lab audits are underway in the department, and although this looks at health, safety and compliance within your labs, I am also hoping to use the opportunity to catch up with you and check that all is going well. I look forward to seeing you soon.

As always, if you have any questions please come and see me in Room 220.

Jackie



*Murray Hamilton at his joint Biochemistry/Microbiology leaving morning tea.*

Remember that Darren is only working for Biochemistry 50% at present. We are hoping to get a new IT person in the near future, but in the mean time please be considerate in your expectations of our IT team.