

MONTHLY UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

November 2019

What a busy end of semester two we have had in the Department. Most recently we celebrated the success of those who have secured significant research funding. Congratulations Warren, and again to our Marsden recipients, and also to those who were awarded MBIE, HRC and other grants in 2019; we really have had a wonderful year funding-wise. It has also been a busy time for others writing grants, with full HRC applications submitted this week and MBIE applications for 2020 due by the end of the month.

Exam marking is nearly finished although I know those with Genetics exams to mark might still be busy as the exams were only sat this weekend. Examiners' meetings are also underway, it is always a good time to reflect on the successes of all the students and how much they have achieved in the relatively short time since the academic year started.

Over the last two weeks we have also welcomed more than 20 summer students to the Department, they have all completed their safety induction and are busy starting their projects. It is bound to a busy time as everyone finds their way around the Department. There is a photograph of [most of] them elsewhere in this update, so familiarise yourself with the faces and names and be prepared to help when needed – especially if you see someone looking uncertain about how to use a piece of equipment!

Next week is the Microbiology & Immunology/Biochemistry Research Celebration at the Town Hall, and you have until Friday 15th November (today!) to register, and email Debina with your poster or three minute talk entry. We would like to see a good showing of enthusiastic biochemists at this event, so I encourage everyone to attend.

This summer we don't have any laboratories being refitted, although the builders are back. They have started on the new ground floor seminar room and have promised that it will be ready for semester 1 next year – and with any luck it will be finished early in the new year. The second floor staff room and seminar room is also in for a makeover, with the builders keen to make a start on that before Christmas. While the construction happens the Department will have a temporary tea room in room 317 (Stephs old lab) although we should all have fingers crossed for a sunny summer! So while we head into a period of disruption I am sure the new spaces will be a fabulous resource for the Department. We will keep you posted as details are finalised.

For many November is the time we review the year that has passed and make plans for the year ahead. A key part of this is staff reviews – whether it be PDR or Academic Reviews. We now have more than 70 research staff in the Department and it was great to see so many attend the session last week that was run by Dan Wilson from Human Resources.

In amongst all this research activity there is also a need to plan for the 2020 academic year. I know several courses have lab upgrades/changes planned and there will also be some changes in lecturers in a few papers. Sally and I have been working on this together and hope to have the timetables for next year finalised by Christmas.

Meanwhile I hope that after this week everyone will be finished with exams etc. and there will be a period when research can be the focus – it will soon be Christmas. The Christmas party will be at Ahlamra on December 18th - please put the date in your diaries!



He tangata he tangata he tangata

Six members of staff from Biochemistry are featured in the *He tangata he tangata he tangata* photo exhibition of 150 current university staff, that you may have read about in Thursday's ODT. This exhibition is at the east entry to the Link - go along and see if you can find Warren, Parry, Bronwyn, Craig, Catherine, and Peter Dearden.



Purchasing

IMPORTANT: Please use the new role based email address purchasing.north@otago.ac.nz for both Lynn & Nigel. This is for all orders/quotes or anything for the store. This replaces the [biochem.orders](mailto:biochem.orders@otago.ac.nz) & personal email addresses for work related requests.

Several suppliers are running end of the year promotions, see their web sites for details.

Summer Students



A big welcome to this year's Summer Student cohort. From left: Kieran Redpath, Jordan Lima, Gareth Jones, Alex Bohles, Michael (we think) Pudjihartano, Aaron Roydhouse, Brittany Wyatt, Nicholas (we think) Pudjihartano, Owen Peng, Kaitlyn Tippet, Ivana Rinklake, Moizle Ocariza, Janneke Zwager, Selena Gilmer, Nicole Guise, Maria Larsen, Alex Gibbon, Jennifer Palmer, Yinghua Chen. Absent: Harrison Dolan, Xavier Harnett, Milly Morice, Chandra Rodriguez, Joshua Scadden

Congratulations

... to Megan Leask and family on the birth of their baby Isla Elizabeth Blakie on 4 October.

... to Linda McNeill and her fiancée Aaron on their recent engagement.

Graduation function

The tea room will be closed for the day of December 11th for setting up, holding, and clearing up after, the December graduation function.



Postgraduate completions:

Congratulations to the following students who have now completed all the requirements for their degrees:

Anubrita Das (PhD) from the Day Lab is still in the Day Lab working for Catherine for another year.

Tom Wiggins (PhD) with Monica Gerth/Iain Lamont is working with Peter Fineran and Greg Cook in Microbiology & Immunology and will be moving to the lab of one of their collaborators in the USA later on.

Jack Forsman (PhD) in the Eaton-Rye Lab, is continuing to work for Julian for a time, while deciding where to go next.

Pavel Filipčík (PhD) with Peter Mace, has a Post Doc with Peter, working out a new EM technique.

Maximilian Ehrhardt (PhD) with Monica Gerth/Craig Marshall is in Wellington finishing off experiments for a paper.

Hakimeh Azimi (MSc), from the Merriman Lab, is looking at furthering her education with a PhD elsewhere.

Victor Zong (MSc) from the Eaton-Rye Lab is working for MPI.