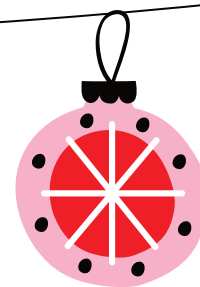
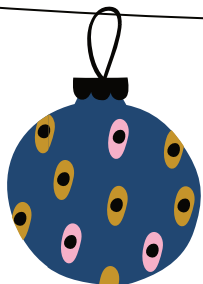


MONTHLY UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

15/12/2020



What a rough ride 2020 has been. We have made it through yet another COVID-disrupted semester, exams are done and dusted and 2021 enrolments are under way.

A big thank you to all of our teaching staff for managing semester two especially Nurit and the BIOC192 team who had to mount several extra lab streams with additional Health and Safety precautions.

Research is humming with a record 34 summer students spread throughout labs in the Department. Our facebook page has been buzzing with many research successes over the last few months. Several new research grants have been gained including a significant number of prestigious fellowships and awards to our young and early career researchers. These include a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship awarded to Dr Nathan Kenny to apply genetic technologies to understand the effect of climate change on kuku, an HRC Sir Charles Hercus Fellowship awarded to Dr Adam Middleton to study protein breakdown in cells particularly as it relates to neurodegenerative diseases and an HRC Emerging researcher award to Megan Leask for decoding GWAS studies of gout in Māori and Pacific people. Lynette Brownfield, Catherine Day and Iain Lamont all gained large research grants this year from the Marsden (Lynette) and HRC (to Catherine and to Iain). Significant funding was also gained in the form of two Neurological Foundation grants (Stephanie and Indranil) and the Cancer Research Trust (Anita Dunbier).

Some excellent achievements have been made by our Māori and Pacific students this year with Anezka Hoskin being awarded a Fulbright scholarship for her PhD studies at Stanford, Jordan Lima being awarded a highly competitive Māori HRC Career Development award to fund her PhD studies in the Department and Jaye Moors has been awarded an HRC Pacific Health Knowledge Translation Grant. It was another year of outstanding achievement by Jennifer Palmer who has won a prestigious Cambridge-Rutherford Memorial PhD Scholarship to support her studies at Cambridge. Recognition has also gone to our research support staff

with Robyn Lee and Rob Day being awarded the highly competitive BMS awards for the focused and distinguished research support respectively.

Richard Macknight delivered a stellar IPL to a decent crowd amidst a strong showing by the Department in mid November giving a fascinating overview of his efforts to study the control of flowering time in plants over the last 30 years.



The Department has been dabbling in a bit of science-based art recently. Check out the new artwork on the ground floor seminar room featuring a David Goodsell depiction of the Corona virus (displayed below). You might also ponder the display (mounted in a reasonably busy thoroughfare) featuring art work by Johanna Zellmer from the Dunedin School of Art utilising lab waste from the Otago Genomics facility.

Social events have made a comeback this semester with student information days, a happy hour, a summer student welcome and our Departmental Research Retreat all being held. The social event of the year though has to be the last minute mounting of a graduation celebration party for the Dec 9 graduates after their graduation was cancelled. This was very much appreciated by the students and their families. We look forward to a repeat performance (albeit planned and on a slightly larger scale) this Wednesday. Sadly we had to say goodbye to Professor Tony Merriman and Dr Andrew Cridge. Both gave very moving speeches of their time with us and of the strong connections they have with the Department and its people. Our final social event will of course be our Christmas party this Friday which will be a time to relax and unwind amongst colleagues over a glass of bubbly, strawberries and icecream. See you there.

S. P. A. M. Connors

Safety and Compliance

Wow, what a year! Thanks so much for all your help and support!!

Please note that by now you should have requested access from Teena to work over this period, and received an email with more detailed information.

The official lab compliance back-up during the Christmas/New Year period is Campus Watch – it is important to know that the H&S Office is also closed during this time, therefore, the use of equipment (e.g. autoclaves, cold rooms) should be minimised as there will be no DHSO or DLM available.

Go over a plan with your PI for working alone in a lab, and use a buddy system by letting your flatmates/family know you are coming into the department during this time. Please keep safe.

I will be back on Monday 11th January, but will periodically check emails.

Fire and Ambulance: 1-111 (meet on Loading Dock, or call Campus Watch for assistance)

Campus Watch, emergency: extn 5000 (or 0800 479 5000)

Campus Watch, general enquiries: extn 5001 (or 0800 479 5001)

****Please ensure the security doors close securely behind you when you are arriving or leaving and do not let any other people in with you.****

Have a happy and safe break.

Meri Kirihimete,

Jackie

Purchasing:

Delivery times from many of our suppliers are longer than normal, please factor that into your ordering.

At the moment there is a worldwide shortage of 1 ml filter tips.

The North Purchasing Hub will be back on 5th Jan for resumption of ordering – please email purchasing.north@otago.ac.nz as Lynn is not back until 13th Jan, Nigel is back on the 5th Jan.



Polytech jewellery lecturer Johanna Zellmer with her exhibition of artworks made from lab waste.



Staff outdid themselves organising the last minute graduation celebration. David Goodsell's coronavirus life cycle makes a bright splash of colour on the wall



Shannon raced down from the lab for a quick donning of academic regalia brought by her Mum.



Someone's Grandma turned out to be an old colleague of Catherine's

