

MONTHLY UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

February 2016

Happy New Year everyone, to both 2016 and the Year of the Monkey.

The year is now well underway but I hope everyone had an enjoyable break from work over the holiday period.

We have a hugely busy year ahead of us and I am very happy that Sally McCormick has agreed to be Deputy HOD and share the workload. The builders on the second floor are nearly finished, and we start moving back into the shiny new labs from the teaching labs. This process has to be completed well before the undergrad students arrive for their first labs in three weeks, so things will be hectic. A big thank you to all the contractors and staff from the department who have worked hard to ensure the renovation is finished on schedule.

As you will see over the page, there are a number of new arrivals in the Department, and more to come with two new staff (Amirah Mohamad and Lisa Denny) starting this week in the prep room (photos to come). Arriving in a new job during the chaos at the beginning of semester is bound to be a bit overwhelming, so please go out of your way to make the new staff welcome.

On the subject of students, I would like to thank Sigurd and Julian for shouldering the vast majority of the course advising burden for the Department. This is an ongoing process but Biochem numbers look good for the upcoming year which bodes well for the future of the department.

We have three IPLs ahead of us this year, and the dates have just been announced. Sally McCormick has hers first, on the 28th June, then Peter Dearden on 11th October, and finally Tony Merriman on 29th November. Put these dates in your diaries now so we can have a good show of support for our three new professors.

As always, staff and students have been busy doing or writing about research over the summer; I know I have signed off on many grant applications. Although luck plays a role, the success of these grants relies on publications and preliminary/pilot data so hope that experiments have been going well.

Best wishes for a successful year.

Catherine



Conferences

Recent attendance

Harold Bernhardt, The International Chemical Congress of Pacific Basin Societies 2015, Honolulu 15-20 December 2015.

Peter Mace, American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Special Conference: Kinases and pseudokinases: Spines, scaffolds and molecular switches – San Diego, CA, 5-8 December 2015

Monica Gerth, Gordon Research Conference: Sensory Transduction in Microorganisms, Ventura, California, 17-22 January 2016

PhD/MSc completions:

Congratulations to Jarrod Moors, who recently completed the requirements for her MSc.

Health & Safety

Property Services are on schedule with the second floor renovation and are finishing up this week, ready for lab groups to move in next week.

Work is scheduled to begin shortly on the ground floor walk-in freezer upgrade. There is an IBSC audit some time in February.

Building & Equipment

We now have a “crystal hotel” downstairs in the crystallography suite. This crystal growth and imaging facility, a ‘Rock Imager’ from Formulatrix, allows us to simultaneously keep 190 plates in a temperature controlled environment, and automatically capture images of every experiment on any fixed schedule. See Peter Mace, Kurt Krause, or Sigurd Wilbanks if interested in using it - or just to have a look.



Room numbering changes

Second floor east room numbers have changed subsequent to the alterations. New phone numbers will be advised ASAP.

231: Seminar room (**most important**)

207: New small meeting room (booking system for reservations)

212: ex 208 meeting room (booking system for reservations)

205: IT support

211: Catherine Day lab office

216: Hughes lab write-up room

218 Day lab write-up room

229: Day-Brown-Lamont-Sowerby lab space

219: Procedure room

225: Stephen Sowerby office

226: Chris Brown office

228: Iain Lamont office

223: Post-grad write-up room

224: Lamont lab write-up room

227: Brown lab write-up room

230: Dept office

234: Bronwyn Carlisle

Purchasing

John Morris are offering 25% and 10% trade-ins on Gilson L and M pipettes respectively. Any old pipette can be traded in, working or not.

Medi'ray are having a summer sale, of 25% off many of their enzymes.

New arrivals

Abhishek Kumar is now an ARF in the CPR Unit.

Abbey Burgess is now an ARF working for Peter Mace.



Mr Schara Safarian (Max-Planck-Institute of Biophysics) visiting appointment with Kurt Krause until April 2016



Professor Yonggang Shao (College of Animal Science, Xinjiang Agricultural University) visiting appointment with Alan Carne until February 2017



David Turner, new Publicity and Administration Manager for Genetics Otago