

MONTHLY UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

August 2017

It has been a while since we have had a regular Update as last month's was replaced with the Equipment Special, which I hope you found useful! The department has a broad range of equipment so be sure to talk to the Equipment Experts and consider trying a new experiment. We don't want the equipment gathering dust!

In the last few months we have finalised the appointment of new academic staff and as many of you know Peter Mace commenced as a senior lecturer in July. In January we will welcome Drs Paul Gardner and Sarah Diermeier, as senior lecturer and lecturer respectively. We are fortunate that they have both accepted positions in the Department and as they establish their research programmes here I am sure there will be opportunity for new collaborators and research initiatives.

It was most satisfying to have a celebratory afternoon tea to acknowledge July's successes. It's not often that one of our staff is recognised as Otago's Distinguished Researcher (Parry), an important research initiative like Genomics Aotearoa is funded (Peter Dearden), and three large HRC grants (Parry, Iain, and myself), all at the same time. I also know many staff have been busy writing grants, so hope that we will have further reason to celebrate in due course.

There are also some disruptive events going on at the moment. The Support Services Review is an ongoing source of stress to staff, particularly general staff, and if anyone has particular concerns they should come and see me, or other senior staff in the Department. The Department will be submitting a strong response to the Business Case. Refurbishments of the building and associated changes also continue – the new switch board will be disruptive (see below) but I hope you have all been and admired the new offices on the first floor – these are definitely a step forward! We have fingers crossed that by the middle of next year the presence of workmen in the building will be diminished.

On top of all these activities teaching continues and the second semester is well under way, BIOC192 has one of its largest classes ever and GENE numbers are also up, so I know demonstrators have been in high demand. The postgraduate students are also busy finalising key experiments as they prepare for their department presentations on August 24th. I also want to acknowledge staff who have gone the extra mile – there are many, but here I acknowledge Chris Brown who has now travelled to Samoa twice to help with development of Bioc/Gene curriculum for the Med School and Liz Ledgerwood who travelled to Auckland to meet with Auckland schools careers advisers. These are important examples of the wide range of activities members of staff are engaged with.

Lastly, it is conference season and less than a month until QMB week. I'm looking forward to seeing the posters our students will be presenting, but Queenstown also means snow - so opportunity for some fun!

Building

The main switchboard is being replaced this weekend

You need to have exited the building by **5:30pm Friday** because:

- there will be no lighting;
- the lifts won't work;
- the automatic doors will not open;
- the ventilation won't work;



Catherine

IT

Please make sure **ALL** of your computers and sensitive equipment that have not been plugged in to the emergency power supply are turned off and powered down on Friday afternoon.

READ and FOLLOW the detailed instructions in the daily email.

Health & Safety

There will be an IBSC audit during August and then an MPI audit in September. The September MPI audit will focus on the Plant Facility, Invertebrate facility and the usual microbiological work.

If you are exiting via the ground floor east corridor door please ensure it is closed behind you – we have had many insecurity notices recently about it being left open/ajar.

Conferences

Recent attendance

Warren Tate, Biomedical Research into ME (London), 31 May – 1 June

Julian Eaton-Rye, Gordon Research Conference on Photosynthesis (USA), 16-21 July

Upcoming

Peter Mace, Gordon Research Conference Posttranslational Modification Networks (Hong Kong), 13-18 August

Kurt Krause, International Union of Crystallography (Hyderabad, India), 21-29 August

Wayne Patrick, 254th American Chemical Society National Meeting and Exposition (Washington), 20-24 August

PhD/MSc completions

Congratulations to the following people who have recently completed all the requirements for their degrees:

Yida (Nina) Jiang, MSc with Iain Lamont. Nina is looking for a job.

Erin Ritchie, MSc with Richard Macknight. Erin is travelling for a year, last heard of in Amsterdam

Kimberley Dainty, MSc with Anita Dunbier

Nick Lawson, MSc with Warren Tate. Nick is now a PPF in BIOC 192

Danielle Maddock, PhD with Wayne Patrick. Danni is having a bit of a break and considering her options for the future.

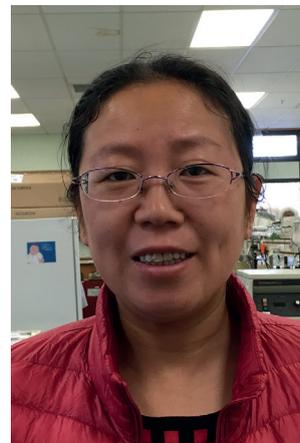
Roman Mortuza, PhD with Kurt Krause. Roman is working for Greg Cook in Microbiology for six months

New arrivals

Katelyn Powell, PDF – Dunbier lab – commencing 14 August



Bruce Hosking, IT Office



Dr Shulei Li, visiting the Cancer Genetics Lab until April 2018.



Nick Lawson, Professional Practice Fellow BIOC 192

New website

The new website is now up and running. Please see Bronwyn or Miriam if/when you find errors that need fixing.

All staff have a photo and contact details on the new “Our People” page. Please check yours to ensure the information is accurate. Especially check that phone numbers are still current and that email address links work correctly.

Research group leaders and other research-only academic staff also have personal profile pages linked from the “Our People” page, that are generated from the Health Sciences expertise database. They have received an email with instructions on how to get these updated.