

# MONTHLY UPDATE

## DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

December 2017

Since the last newsletter many hundreds of (actually that should be 'several thousand') exam scripts have been marked, and we are preparing for graduation next weekend. Well done to everyone involved, it has been a very busy year with many large classes; the effort put in to ensure that classes run well and the students have a rewarding experience is appreciated. With the 2017 students completing their academic year we welcome all the summer students, once again a large number are in the Department and I hope you have a fun and rewarding summer discovering something new, but perhaps more importantly learning about the *process* of discovery. We hope to see most of them back next year for their fourth year of study.

On top of all the normal academic activities 2017 seems to have been a rush from start to finish, but the Department has achieved much this year –

- **Exceptional funding success in the HRC, MBIE and HRC rounds.** As a result I am confident that the Department will be a vibrant place in 2018. New research staff are starting to arrive and we look forward to both getting to know them and learning new skills and expertise from them.
- **We have had a record number of PhD students complete** with seven graduating at next week's ceremony – we wish them every success in the next phase of their careers. While a number of new PhD students have started in 2017, recruitment of additional PhD students is something the Department will focus on in 2018.
- **A year of building** and although the outside remains somewhat drab we are fortunate to have a large area of refurbished laboratories on the first floor, with, I hope, groups able to move back early in 2018. Next up on the refurbishment list is the Merriman offices and end of the OGBF lab, with a new suite of offices planned for the Merriman and Gardner groups. Along with all the minor upgrades (doors, carpet etc) it has been a very busy time and everyone's patience is appreciated.
- **The appointment of 3 new academic staff** is the highlight of 2017. Peter Mace is already here, but we welcome Sarah Diermeier and Paul Gardner at the start of January. We look forward to welcoming their research groups to the Department.

With the end of the year there have been many local research activities/symposia. I won't mention them all, but I do want to thank Parry for providing an excuse for the Department to get together and celebrate his Distinguished Research Medal Award. Also thank you to everyone (at least 100 biochemists!) for attending the joint Research Celebration with Microbiology on Friday, I am sure you will agree it was an excellent event and I want to thank the organisers (Jodi, Adam, Augustine and Andrew from Biochemistry, along with their colleagues from Micro) for making it a great day! I look forward to the next joint event.

I am certain the next few weeks will be busy, with the chaos of Christmas, but do hope everyone can join us to celebrate the years end at the Department Christmas function on Wednesday December 20th. Wishing everyone a relaxing and enjoyable break.



*Catherine*



**BIOCHEMISTRY**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**PARTY**

Alhambra-Union Rugby  
Football Club  
(541 Great King Street)  
Wednesday 20th December  
2.30pm-6pm

## PhD/MSc completions:

As Catherine mentioned in her introduction, we have had a large number of postgrad degree completions recently. This is the latest batch, well done everyone:

### PhD

**Danielle Maddock** (Patrick/Gerth Labs) Danni has started a postdoc with Prof. Ant Poole at the University of Auckland (and will be back for graduation next week).

**Rinky Parakra** (Ledgerwood Lab) Rinky is currently working on publications for her publication bursary and then will be here until June 2018 doing mass spec for Liz and for Prof Larry Chamley (Auckland).

**Abdul Aziz Bin Aiderus** (Dunbier Lab) Aziz is taking a short break at home in Singapore before heading to Florida for a Postdoctoral position in Dr Michael Mann's group at the Moffitt Cancer Center.

**Tahzeeb Fatimah** (Merriman Lab) Marilyn says she thinks Tahzeeb is planning a family.

**Tom Kelly** (Black/Guilford Lab) Tom is off to Japan to get married and find a post-doc.

**Harvinder Singh** (Eaton-Rye Lab) Harvinder is hoping to work in Sally's lab as an ARF for a few months.

### MSc

**Nick Lawson** (Tate Lab) As you know, Nick has been working with Tony in the BIOC 192 office and said at his farewell that he hopes to remain in Dunedin to do more teaching.

**Jonathan Casey** (Brownfield Lab) is now working for MediRay as the territory manager for the South Island, so he visits the Department regularly.

**Riku Takei** (Black Lab) Riku is working in the Pathology Dept as an ARF on a collaborative project with Mik and Tony.

**Madison Partridge** (Hughes Lab) is job-hunting.

We look forward to seeing all of our new graduates at the

**Department Graduation Function**  
**Saturday 16th December, 10am**

## Health & Safety

There will be an IBSC plant facility audit in December.

The IBSC December meeting is on the 19th December, submissions are due by noon on the 11th Dec.

And finally thanks for all your hard work on compliance issues this year. Have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

### IT

The IT office will be closing @ 5pm on the 21st of December and will reopen on the 8th of January. For emergencies over this time please contact Darren via e-mail or phone. Darren.hart@otago.ac.nz, 021991638. All normal biochemistry systems and services will be available over the break period.

## Purchasing

Life Technologies are in the process of updating the supply center. Contact Jason jason.lee@thermofisher.com with your requirements for instant access products. Ordering will also require an online sign in, information on this will be out shortly.

Sigma has an Oligo/Primer special of 30c per base for 25nmol desalted, no freight.

## New arrivals



**Dr Soledad Perez-Santangelo** is from Argentina, and has joined Richard Macknight's lab. She is also the first South American flag on our map!



**Dr Anna Erlandsson**, Uppsala University is a Matariki Visiting Fellow 7 Nov – 13 December 2017 working with Steph Hughes.

**Dr Maitrayee Bhattacharyya & Professor Himadri Pakrasi** are both from Washington University in St Louis, Missouri, working with Julian Eaton-Rye between November 17 and December 14.

## Introducing the 2017-2018 Summer Students



Back row: James Mesryanek, Oscar German, Anezka Hoskin, Bridget Thomas, Ruth Platt, Yasmin Nouri, Brandon Wright, Sven Tobias-Hunefeldt, Isaiah Fouldis, Cameron Reddington

Middle row: Tristan Lawrence, Stephanie Cho, Claudia Harding, Carlo Lee

Kneeling: Conor McGuiness, Janine Sharma, Martin Hannah, Sophie Mathieson, Alexander Woolrych

Absent: Caitlin Harris, Ella Williams, Ryan Powell

Apologies if there are misspellings.