

MONTHLY UPDATE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

May 2016

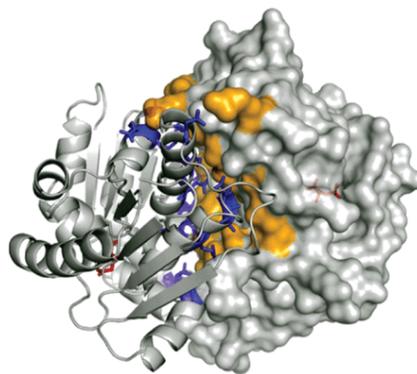
Semester 1 is well advanced and it is hard to believe that exams are just around the corner! As such, it is a very busy time for all involved in teaching and I recognise that many staff (and demonstrators) are doing an excellent job, going above and beyond what is expected to ensure that the students are well supported in their studies. Thank you.

There are many things I could profile this month but I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the increasing numbers of Masters students in the department. This increase has prompted the department to review our guidelines, expectations and processes to ensure timely completion. As we embed these over the next few years it will be important to monitor the impact, so if staff/students have suggestions please talk to Sally, Julian, Steph or me. Reflecting the importance of Masters students I also want to highlight a new Marjorie McCallum scholarship that has been awarded in 2016. This scholarship has come about as we recognise that increasingly Biochemistry students are completing Masters degrees but University of Otago Masters scholarships are difficult to obtain – with just one recipient in the Department this year. Recognising this gap, we have decided to award a scholarship to the 5F student who has the highest level of achievement at 400-level and is a passionate researcher, but was not awarded a University scholarship. I am pleased to announce that Ben Morgan in the McCormick lab is the inaugural recipient.

For all 400-level students I know semester 1 has been busy and you have literature reviews and mentored journal clubs on your plate as I write this, but I hope that once exams are finished, the break between semesters will provide an uninterrupted opportunity for you all to spend time in the laboratory. Research is fun!

Speaking of research, several staff had success in the recent Lottery Health and Bequest funding rounds (see below) and we have fingers crossed for the Marsden first round and hope that May/June will be a busy grant writing period!

Catherine



Recent PhD Sinothai Poen's cover picture from the latest issue of Biochem J. It's great to see student work featured like this.

Grant Funding Update:

Congratulations to the following for their success in the recent **Lotteries Health** round.

Liz Ledgerwood: Characterising NZ families with inherited thrombocytopenia to enhance diagnosis and treatment, \$88,800.

Sigurd Wilbanks: Chromatographic Purification System for Fluorescent and other Proteins, \$81,608.

Cushla McKinney: Elucidation of the role of iron homeostasis in gout susceptibility, \$51,000.

Stephanie Hughes: Developing a better model of Alzheimer's disease, \$26,000.

Also congratulations to those who were successful in their applications to the **OSMS Dean's Bequest Fund:** Stephanie Hughes, Sigurd Wilbanks, Chris Brown, Catherine Day, Russell Poulter, Warren Tate, Wayne Patrick, Torsten Kleffmann, Lynette Brownfield, Andrew Cridge, Kurt Krause, Tony Merriman, and Julian Eaton-Rye.

PhD/MSc completions:

We look forward to seeing all of our students who will be graduating next weekend, and I would especially like to congratulate the following students who have recently completed all the requirements of their PhDs:

Manda Savafi (PhD student supervised by Richard Macknight) Manda will be sticking around for a few months to get some papers written before heading off to parts unknown as yet.

Anna Gosling (GENE PhD student co-supervised by Tony Merriman) Anna will be back in the Department working with Tony for a while at least.

Stephen Clarke (PhD student supervised by Craig Marshall) Stephen is working at Westland Dairy in Hokitika doing product development.

Josh Wright (PhD student with Catherine Day). Josh is now in London doing a post-doc at The Francis Crick Institute

New arrivals



Peter Small - new Building and Plant Manager



Jawaira Munir - PhD student: McCormick Lab



Tom Finn - Postdoctoral Fellow with Wayne Patrick



Matthew Bixley -ARF with Tony Merriman



Bhavya Kapse - visiting student in the Tate Lab

Conferences

Recent

Russell Poulter “International Congress on Transposable Elements (ICTE) 2016” St Malo, France 16-19 April

Anita Dunbier “American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting” New Orleans, USA 16-20 April

Richard Macknight “Developing Crops of the Future” conference, Australia 19-21 April

Upcoming

Parry Guilford “Targeting Cancer Vulnerabilities” USA, 16-19 May

Sally McCormick “84th Congress of the European Atherosclerosis Society’s Congress and associated Lp(a) Satellite Meeting” Austria 27 May - 1 June

Tony Merriman “European League Against Rheumatology (EULAR)” London 8-11 June

Wayne Patrick “EMBO Conference on the Biochemistry and Chemistry of Biocatalysis: From Understanding to Design” Finland **and** “20th Swedish Conference on Protein Structure and Function” Sweden 12-15 and 17-20 June

IPLs

Sally McCormick, 28 June 5.30 pm, Archway 1 Lecture Theatre.

Peter Dearden, 6 December 5.30 pm, Archway 1 Lecture Theatre.

Tony Merriman - postponed to 2017

Scholarships



Congratulations to Jack Forsman, Johannes Weijman, and Rinky Parakra, winners of Marjorie McCallum TravelAwards, and Ben Morgan, inaugural recipient of the 5F Masters Scholarship.

Purchasing

Global have a clearance sale on numerous items – eg Corning, Falcon tubes, Hitrap protein purification columns, transfer pipettes, Labcon plastic ware, pH buffers.

There is a Lab Supply sale including Amicon Ultra filters & their new gloves.

See Lyn for details.

Building & Equipment

The following new communal equipment has been approved for purchase:

Replacement milliQ unit for 1st floor, replacement Nanodrop for 2nd floor, Ti45 (large volume) ultracentrifuge rotor, new Avanti centrifuge for 2nd floor with JA-14, JA-17 and J-LITE® JLA-8.1000 (6 x 1 L) rotors.