DIRECTORS MESSAGE

I hope everyone is starting to get used to our new lives working from home. I know it’s a huge adjustment for many of you, it certainly is for me. But this is the way it is going to be for a while, so we have to make the best of it.

As much as possible, we want to try and keep up our normal activities via alternative means, and the Divisions are working hard to figure out how best to do that. These first few weeks will require some experimentation, but we’re good at that, we will figure it out. Our first full week of online teaching went well but I think many of us are relieved to have the teaching break upon us to continue with the development of our online materials for the second half of semester.

A number of RSB staff and students are working hard behind the scenes to contribute to the global COVID-19 research efforts and all three Divisions are represented. RSB always has a great deal to be proud of, but I’ve been amazed at the rapid scientific response. I look forward to telling you about it in detail when the time is right.

I want to encourage all our research groups to continue with lab meetings and social meetings through online platforms. I know many of you are doing this and, from what I hear, they have been a success. It is going to be very important for everyone to stay in touch as much as possible. Look after yourselves and your colleagues, families and friends. Scott Keogh, Interim Director.

NEWS

Thank you to our Bushfire Fighters and congratulations to our ACT Citizens of the Year.

Four of our in-house bushfire fighters were active volunteers this summer in Canberra and New South Wales: Corin Pennock (RSB technical services team), Tony Xu (EE, Mikheyev group), Matt Mortimer (PS, Pogson group), and Tim Butler (Compliance Services team). RSB would like to thank them for their collective effort and congratulate those in local ACT brigades who were honoured as ACT Citizens of the Year. The 2020 ACT Citizen of the Year Award is a significant honour in recognition of their outstanding efforts and cooperation in responding to the unprecedented conditions experienced during the summer of 2019-2020. Full story available here.

AWARDS

Congratulations of Xiangning (Christine) Liu (Saliba group) who was awarded the prestigious Janet Elspeth Crawford Prize. The prize is awarded to a female Honours student across the College of Science and the College of Health and Medicine who has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement.

PAPERS ACCEPTED


Bittencourt, Oliveira, Meir, Rowland (2020)
Amazonian trees have limited capacity to acclimate plant hydraulic properties in response to long-term drought. Global Change Biology (accepted).


Editors Choice:


CONFERENCES:

Dr Christina Spry won a Best Oral Presentation award at the prestigious Molecular Approaches to Malaria conference held recently in Lorne, Victoria (23-27 February, 2020).

ALUMNI NEWS

Find your inner entrepreneur: Qi Cheng (former PhD student, Broer Group) and her partner are setting up a lab in Shanghai, providing third-party pathology services to patients and also central laboratory tests for clinical trials, similar to services provided by Laverty in Australia. They have received an initial investment of 10 million dollars and will hire 30 employees to start the business. The analytical labs will be furnished with clinical laboratory equipment, RT-PCR, mass spectrometry and next generation sequencing systems. Based on their background, Qi and her partner will focus on the diagnosis of neurological and endocrinological diseases, following the idea of the ‘gut-brain axis’. They have received government approval and a place to run the business. The establishment of the lab and the initiation of the business is the first step. We wish Qi and her partner all the best for their future as entrepreneurs.

WEB RESOURCES

ANU updates on Covid-19

Mental health: While we are fortunate that some of us are able to work or study from home, remote working also poses challenges to our mental and physical health, regular routines, channels of communication and productivity. So please, if you need help, reach out. The ANU has also collected advice to help us out here.

NECTAR online meeting place for early career academics starts Tuesday 24 March – 10.30am Are you stuck at home? Would you like to connect with other ECAs? Find out what morning tea via Zoom feels like and join NECTAR’s weekly online meetings. Join via Zoom every Tuesday at 10.30am.

Kids STEM activities for Easter Dr Jennie Mallela and her students have compiled a series of online school age activities with a marine/environmental theme. Take a look if you want to keep the kids entertained this Easter.

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