RESEARCH SCHOOL OF BIOLOGY

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 15 | 19 MARCH 2010

NEWS

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to:

Owen Atkin, PS, who has been promoted to Professor, in recognition of his award last year of a Level 3 Future Fellowship.

Spencer Whitney, PS, who has been promoted to Associate Professor, in recognition of his award last year of a Level 2 Future Fellowship.

PAPER HIGHLIGHTED

A paper published in *Biology Letters* last year by members of EEG was selected by the journal's Editor-in-Chief as being one of the highlights of 2009. The paper entitled 'Positive Darwinian selection results in resistance to cardioactive toxins in true toads (Anura: Bufonidae)', was by: Moore, D. J., Halliday, D. C. T., Rowell, D. M., Robinson, A. J. & Keogh, J. S.

BIOLOGY TEACHING & LEARNING CENTRE

The Biology Teaching & Learning Centre administration office is now fully staffed and providing support to academic staff and students across all Biology programs (including undergraduate and postgraduate coursework and research programs). Each member of the administration team plays a key role in centre operations and is the first point of contact for their individual portfolios and areas of expertise. See overleaf for further details.

ROBERTSON BUILDING FRONT FOYER EXTENSION

An extension to the front foyer area in the R.N. Robertson building should be approved by National Capital Authority this week and Circol has already been appointed to undertake the works. This will involve moving the front glass windows out to the building line, repositioning the glass doors into the middle for access to the front garden area, altering lighting, providing new tiles to the ceiling area and patching the floor tiles.
This will allow us more room for whole of School gatherings and social events. The garden area at the front will be re-established once work is complete.

EEG LUNCH

The Division of Evolution, Ecology and Genetics held a lunch this week, under the trees in front of the Banks Building. The event was brilliantly organised and catered for by Pat Backwell and her team of helpers. Thanks to all involved.

NOTICES

BAYESIAN PHYLOGENETIC ANALYSIS USING BEAST

30 and 31 March, EEG
Free to all RSB members
Program and slides
http://www.tempoandmode.com/
Contact: Simon.Ho@anu.edu.au

HAPPY HOUR

Friday 19 March, 4.30pm
Bldg 41 Tea Room/Courtyard
Steak with red wine marinade: $2. Beer: $2-3

PLANT BIOLOGY SEMINAR SERIES

24 March, 1pm Plant Industry Lecture Theatre, CSIRO
Phenotypic plasticity and it's importance in a changing climate.
Dr Adrienne Nicotra, EEG.

This newsletter is distributed fortnightly by email and hard-copy, and is archived at http://biology.anu.edu.au/Newsletter. Contact Diane Whitehead to be added to the mailing list, and to submit material for future issues.

The next newsletter issue will be April 9 2010.

CONGRATULATIONS

PhD student **Muhammad Fahim,** PS, was awarded a scholarship from the Society of *In vitro* Biology to attend the 12th World Congress of the International Association of Plant Biotechnology in Saint Louis, Missouri. Fahim also filed his first US provisional patent in September last year with Ayala-Navarrete L., Millar A.A., and Larkin P.J. on *Wheat plants with immunity to Wheat Streak Mosaic Virus.*

WELCOME

The Fulton lab, EEG, welcomes a number of new PhD students. **Danswell Starrs** will investigate the larval ecology of freshwater fishes using trans-generational tagging techniques. Dan aims to determine how reproductive strategy influences the larval dispersal pathways, survivorship and recruitment patterns of Australian native freshwater fishes. **Dominique Roche** will start his PhD on predator-prey relationships in coral reef fish communities. Dom has come from MacGill University in Quebec, Canada and his research is being funded by the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies. **Sandra Binning** will begin her PhD on the phenotypic plasticity of locomotion in coral reef fishes, funded by the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies. She has come from MacGill University in Quebec, Canada.

Xavier Goldie has joined the Evolutionary Phyloinformatics groups, EEG, supervised by Lindell Bromham, with an ANU Vice-Chancellor's scholarship. Xavier did a research Masters at the University of Auckland on investigating the effect of ecosystem productivity on rates of molecular evolution, focussing on

BIOLOGY TEACHING & LEARNING CENTRE (BTLC)

INTRODUCING THE STUDENT ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Marie McNamara
Team Leader

Marie supervises and co-ordinates the activities of the student administration team in addition to providing executive support to the Head, and Deputy Head, of the BTLC. Marie manages the BTLC budget, provides advice to potential coursework Master students, promotes RSB academic programs, maintains the BTLC website, and represents the BTLC on internal and external committees.

Madeleine Haag
HDR Administrator

Madeleine is the first point of contact for RSB's higher degree research students and their supervisors. Biology Teaching & Learning Centre HDR student support activities include providing policy advice and assistance with arranging scholarships and program extensions, program leave, milestone reporting and induction processes. Madeleine also provides secretariat support to the RSB HDR committee and Director of the RSB Graduate Program and represents the BTLC on the CMBE HDR Functional Group.

Peter Francis
Assistant HDR Administrator

Peter provides administrative support for the RSB HDR program and is the first point of contact for HDR students who wish to access their RSB Conference Travel Grants, complete and lodge a Conference Grant travel request and book related travel. Peter is also the first point of contact for the 2010/2011 Summer Scholars and National Youth Science Forum programs.

Patricia Seddon
Coursework Administrator

Patti co-ordinates undergraduate and postgraduate coursework activities for all RSB BIOLOGY courses and the BMB and EEG Honours programs. As the RSB BTLC Coursework Student Administrator, Patti takes responsibility for providing policy advice and information to coursework students and provides administrative support for academic staff engaged in coursework teaching activities. These activities include class enrolments, timetabling, handbook preparation and examinations, and coursework budget monitoring. Patti represents the RSB BTLC on the CMBE Coursework Functional Group.

Susan Pike - Reception & Assistant Coursework Administrator

Susan provides general information to students and administrative support to academic staff engaged in coursework teaching activities. Susan assists with assignment collection/return, printing of handouts, processing of casual/sessional timesheets and catering for student functions.

INTRODUCING THE TEACHING – TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM

The BTLC Teaching Technical Support Team supports students and academic staff in the set-up and delivery of teaching laboratory practical sessions for the majority of undergraduate and post-graduate Biology coursework students. The team also provides organizational and logistical support for the fieldwork components of several of the School's ecology courses and outreach programs for the National Youth Science Forum and ANU Secondary College.

Kathy Smith – Team Leader, Teaching Laboratory and Coursework Programs Fieldwork Support

Melanie Trinick – Technical Officer, Undergraduate & Master's Lab Practical Preparation

Peta Moisis – Technical Officer, Undergraduate Lab Practical Preparation

Tammy Gommersall – Technical Officer, Undergraduate & Master's Lab Practical Preparation

Fiona Roxborough – Technical Officer, Undergraduate lab Practical Preparation.

Australian plants. For his PhD he will be looking at environmental and evolutionary influences on the rate of DNA evolution.

Jussi Lehtonen, University of Helsinki, will be here from late March to mid-June working on the evolution of anisogamy with Hanna Kokko and Michael Jennions, EEG. Aside from being a biologist, Jussi made it to the final short list of ten candidates for new astronauts being recruited by the European Space Agency.

Torsten Juelich has joined the Bröer lab, BSB, to work as a research officer on nutrient regulation of epithelial cell function. Torsten has previously worked at JCSMR and complements the German workforce in the School. Torsten is known for his skills as an experimenter in the lab and in the kitchen, both of which are much appreciated by the BSB group.

James Molinari has started as an IT Client Services Officer. He comes to us from DoI where he has spent a number of years providing IT support within their Systems and Desktop Services team.

The Behm lab, BSB, welcomes **Dr Haylee Weaver,** a parasitologist who was previously employed at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, managing the Adaptation Research Network - Human Health. Haylee will be working on molecular genetics of *C. elegans* in BSB.

FAREWELL

Simon Ho, EEG, will be leaving RSB at Easter. His last official 'work' day will be 1 April. He joined RSB as an Australian Postdoctoral Fellow in January 2008, and will return to his alma mater, the University of Sydney, as a Senior Lecturer.

PAPERS ACCEPTED

Agius C., Eamens A.L., Millar A.A., Wang M-B. Regulatory giants join forces. *Frontiers in Biology.*

Barrero J.M., Millar A.A., Griffiths J., Czechowski T., Scheible W.R., Udvardi M., Reid J.B., Ross J.J., Jacobsen J.V., Gubler F. Gene expression profiling identifies two regulatory genes controlling dormancy and ABA sensitivity in *Arabidopsis* seeds. *The Plant Journal.*

Bröer S., Chesney Russell W. Iminoglycinuria: The Online Metabolic and Molecular Basis of Inherited Disease. *OMMBID.*

Edwards R.D., Craven L.A., Crisp M.D., Cook L.G. cpDNA data confirm that *Melaleuca* L. (Myrtaceae) is not monophyletic. *Taxon.*

Fahim M., Ayala-Navarrete L., Millar A.A., Larkin P.J. Hairpin RNA derived from viral *Nla* gene confers immunity to wheat streak mosaic virus infection in transgenic wheat plants. *Plant Biotechnology Journal.*

Kokko H., Jennions M.D. Behavioral ecology: the natural history of evolutionary theory. *In:* Bell M.A., Eanes W.F., Futuyma D.J., Levinton J.S. (Eds) Evolution After Darwin: the First 150 Years. *Sinaeur Publishing.*

Loveys B.R., Egerton J.J.G., Bruhn D., Ball M.C. Disturbance is required for CO_2-dependent promotion of woody plant growth in grasslands. *Functional Plant Biology.*

New S.T.D., Peters, R.A. A framework for quantifying properties of 3-dimensional movement-based signals. *Current Zoology.*

Zhou Y., Stuart-Williams H., Farquhar G.D, Hocart C.H.. The use of natural abundance stable isotopic ratios to indicate the presence of oxygen-containing chemical linkages between cellulose and lignin in plant cell walls. *Phytochemistry.*

Zhu Y., Valter K., Stone J. Environmental damage to the retina and preconditioning: contrasting effects of light and hyperoxic stress. *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science.*

Zhu Y., Natoli R., Valter K., Stone J. Differential gene expression in mouse retina related to regional differences in vulnerability to hyperoxia. *Molec. Vis.*

Editing: Kiaran Kirk, Diane Whitehead & Sharyn Wragg. Design & layout: Sharyn Wragg. Banner: Autofluorescence in legume root. Angela Morris