

Meeting 1/13

27 March 2013

For general publication

- Present:** Prof Melissa Brown (in the chair up to and including Item 4), Mr Chris Read (in the chair from Item 4), Miss Melinda Ashcroft, Mr Alex Booy (from part-way through Item 5), Miss Paige Erpf, Mr James Hill, Ms Mariska Marnane, Assoc Prof Joe Rothnagel, Mr Mark Starkey (minutes), Miss Rose Trappes, Mr Vincent Were, Mr Alan Zhang.
- Apology:** Alex Booy was able to attend only part of the meeting due to a clash with an in-class exam.
- Welcome:** New members were welcomed to the committee and continuing members welcomed back. Each member introduced themselves.

ACTION

1. Terms of Reference and Membership:

Members were referred to the terms of reference and mode of operation of the committee and its membership for 2013, as set out in the agenda papers (and viewable on the School's website). Melissa Brown spoke to the value she places in the School's student consultative committees and that the business from the meetings is taken seriously, as evidenced in the record of previous meetings. She encouraged members to participate actively.

2. Election of Chairperson and Provision of Secretarial Support:

It had been foreshadowed in the agenda papers, circulated ahead of the meeting, that the committee's chairperson be elected from the student members. Following a call for nominations in the meeting, the sole candidate, Christopher Read was elected.

Mark Starkey would provide secretarial support to the committee.

3. Feedback from a former member of the committee:

Members noted the text of an email from Nicole Silajew, who had served on the committee for three years until graduation. Addressing the committee, Nicole said that she and her peers had found the quality of demonstrators in chemistry practical classes very high and the student-tutor ratio appropriate. Equipment available for the pracs had been of high quality. She also spoke highly of the SCMB student camp held at North Stradbroke Island and encouraged the School to continue this initiative. Nicole had enjoyed being an active student representative and congratulated the School on the administrative support provided to the committee.

4. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 8 October 2012:

The minutes, having been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed by those who had been present at the meeting.

5. Business arising out of the minutes:

5.1 SCMB BSc majors and Honours camp

The two-day camp had been held at Stradbroke Island at the end of the second semester 2012 exam period and all reports from staff and students were that it was a success. There had been 54 attendees, including six staff, 10-11 Honours students, one PhD student and students from first, second and third year of the BSc.

Organiser Susan Rowlands had reported that the Honours students had spoken well during the Honours Q&A session and been great role models to the other students attending the camp. Chris Read endorsed that it had been good for him as a third year student to ask Honours and PhD students what their program was like. He had also enjoyed the free time at the camp and had met new friends.

Susan had advised that the camp would be held at the same time this year with advertising to commence at the end of semester one.

A Facebook page had been created to promote the camp and it continued to be active, being administered by Rose Trappes. Various social events are arranged via the page.

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5. Business arising out of the minutes: (cont'd)

5.2 Prizes

Following a suggestion made by last year's Postgraduate Molecular Biology representative, Chris Weir, the School had established a \$500 prize for the most-proficient MMolBiol or MBioinf student.

Members were informed also that an alumnus of the School had donated \$1,000 per year for a new prize for the most proficient MBiotech student and an industry partner has donated \$1,000 for a new prize the most-proficient BBiotech student.

The three new prizes joined 15 existing prizes awarded annually to SCMB undergraduate and Honours students. Details of the prizes are available on the web at scmb.uq.edu.au/scholarships-prizes.

Joe Rothnagel reported that he had spoken to the Australian Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (ASBMB) about sponsoring a prize. They did so at other universities, but students had to be members of the society to be eligible for the prize. Student membership was free for the first year, but then \$37 per annum. Joe felt there might be scope to negotiate with the ASBMB.

Joe

5.3 SCMB T-Shirt

Last year's committee had overseen a competition for SCMB students to design a logo to go on a School T-shirt. A winning design had been chosen and shirts produced. Approximately 280 shirts had been sold at cost price or given away as souvenirs (eg, to school teachers attending training courses in the School), and a stock of ~100 remained. Promotion of the availability of the shirt was ongoing and when students were emailed about the availability of the minutes of this meeting, they would be advised of the availability of the T-shirts and how to get one. Some women's sizes had sold out, but there were plenty of men's, especially medium size. More shirts would be ordered if demand was evident.

Mark

5.4 Molecular Design contest

Based on a suggestion from last year's Postgraduate Molecular Biology representative, Chris Weir, a molecular design contest was being held amongst molecular biology and biotechnology students. Students enrolled in BIOC2000/3000/6001/7004 had been invited to make their designs with a caption, and entries would be voted on by staff structural biologists. The winning design needed to be of a publishable standard.

CSCC Meeting 4/12 had resolved that the winner receive a certificate, T-shirt and a movie ticket sponsored by the School. Since then, Chris had indicated that the executive of the UQ Molecular Biotechnology Students Club, of which he remained Vice-President this year, would award an additional prize of \$50 to the best design as judged by the Club's executive.

Members noted the text of an email that had been sent to students enrolled in the above courses. Posts had also been made by the School to the SCMB webpage and the SCMB and BIOC2000 Facebook pages. Melinda Ashcroft, administrator for the Molecular Biotechnology Students' Club said that a post had also been placed on the Club's Facebook page. Rose Trappes said she would post to the BIOC300 FB page. Paige Erpf, who is a UQ Science ambassador, would also promote the competition.

Rose,
Paige

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5. Business arising out of the minutes: (cont'd)

5.5 Graduate mentor program

Mark Starkey reported that promotion of this student-initiated and administered program was occurring via the relevant School webpages and the postgraduate coursework program handbooks this year.

Members asked Melinda Ashcroft about the program. She said it aimed to match existing MBiotech, MMolBiol and MBioinf students with new students to help them settle into the program and to give them advice about how to find a project and supervisor for the research component of the program. Many of the students were new internationals. Representative of the Molecular Biotechnology Students' Club had attended the School's postgraduate coursework student orientation session to talk about the program. The scheme was now in its second semester with eight mentees and six mentors.

Chris Read suggested that a get-together function of students and potential supervisors might be held to help facilitate connections and Melinda agreed this could be useful. Mark Starkey undertook to put the suggestion to the directors of the postgraduate coursework programs.

Mark

5. School Review:

Melissa Brown explained that, as part of the University's quality assurance mechanisms, UQ Schools are externally-reviewed every seven years. SCMB is being reviewed at the end of April 2013.

The review committee would typically meet informally with a group of undergraduate and postgraduate students as part of its visit. This was an opportunity for students to relate their experiences in-confidence. Volunteers would be provided with relevant contextual information ahead of the meeting, such as the terms of reference of the review. The likely meeting time (to be confirmed) would be during the afternoon of Monday 29 April for an hour or so. Refreshments are normally provided.

All student members indicated that they were interested in participating. Former members who were still available, such as Nicole Silajew, would also be invited. Mark would be in contact when further details were available.

Mark

6. UQ Science opportunities for students:

Paige Erpf asked members if she could send them information she had as a UQ Science ambassador on Honours opportunities in the Institute for Molecular Bioscience and about the UQ Science Undergraduate Research Journal (UQSURJ), so that they could on-promote to their contacts, Facebook pages, etc. Members agreed. It was also agreed that Paige send Alex Booy information about the UQ Abroad student exchange program so that he could promote it on first year course Facebook pages and via the Advanced Study Program in Science (ASPinS), of which he was a member.

Paige

Paige mentioned that she was going on exchange to Queen's University, Canada in second semester. Mark would arrange for a replacement representative for that period.

Mark

7. BIOC2000 practical classes and ALLURE:

Paige Erpf mentioned that she was taking BIOC2000, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, this semester and was in the ALLURE stream, which provides for an undergraduate research experience. She said that the practical classes so far had been valuable and that the course is well organised.

8. BIOC3000 practical classes:

Rose Trappes had done BIOC2000 ALLURE in 2012 and agreed that it had been a good course. She was now taking BIOC3000, Biomolecular Structure & Function, but was finding the pracs basic and relatively boring so far, which was disappointing for a capstone course. Melissa Brown welcomed the feedback. She mentioned that in response to previous feedback, the number of practical classes had been increased and contributions were now being made by staff of the IMB. She asked Rose to continue to provide feedback as the semester progressed.

Rose,
Melissa

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9. Summer vacation and work experience opportunities:

Mariska Marnane said that it would be useful for students to get information on undergraduate vacation scholarships and work experience opportunities. Joe Rothnagel said that the vacation scholarships scheme was administered and promoted by the Faculty of Science and that SCMB participated. (In the 2012-13 summer vacation, SCMB hosted 20 students.) Mark Starkey undertook to bring information about the scholarships and work experience opportunities, including when and how they are promoted to undergraduates, to the next meeting. (As a starting point, students are referred to the following webpages: scmb.uq.edu.au/undergraduate-research and scmb.uq.edu.au/programs-courses.)

Mark

10. UQ Careers Fair:

Chris Read reported that he had attended this year's UQ Career's Fair but had been disappointed that the employers present were only interested in business and engineering graduates. Some of the representatives present had not known the difference between a chemist and a chemical engineer. Mark Starkey explained that a lack of employers of science graduates had characterised the fair for some years. SCMB had sent a list of employers of its graduates to UQ Student Services, which arranged the fair, and Student Services had sent invitations to those employers to participate.

Melissa Brown said that the committee had discussed holding a School-based careers fair in 2010-11 but this had morphed into a majors information session based on student demand at the time and the limited capacity of the School to attract employers to an event in an already busy engagement calendar and given that they had not participated in UQ Careers Fairs. The event had been held in September at lunchtime and had attracted only about 40 first year students and it had been decided not to repeat it.

Some members felt that an event at 5.00pm would suit them better than lunchtime, but others disagreed.

Mark Starkey reported that deputy director of the Biotechnology Program, Vito Ferro, was working with Student Services and industry association AusBiotech to hold a biotechnology careers information panel discussion event at UQ in August 2013. It was observed that some of the potential employers of SCMB graduates are not based in Brisbane. Melinda Ashcroft mentioned that a national biotechnology conference would be held in Brisbane in November and employers attending might be approached by the School. Mark would pass this information on to Vito.

Mark

Mark added that arising from suggestions at previous meetings of the committee, a careers information webpage and flyer specifically for SCMB students had been produced and was in the process of being updated. The webpage is at scmb.uq.edu.au/employment-careers-advice. Additionally, the CHEM1010 coordinator had arranged for two SCMB chemistry graduates to present to an upcoming class this semester on their careers in science.

11. CHEM3001 assessment:

Chris Read said that he was taking CHEM3001, Advanced Organic Chemistry, this semester and had found the practicals well-run, with students learning to manage their time while undertaking the experiments. Students are required to submit four prac reports, two of which are detailed. Chris said that he is taking three other CHEM3XXX courses this semester and observed that the workload is high. He said he had heard that consideration was being given to increasing the number of detailed reports to be submitted. [Course Coordinator Ross McGearly subsequently replied to Mark Starkey that consideration had been given at the start of 2013 to increasing the number of detailed prac reports, but there was no proposal to do so at present.]

12. Next meeting:

At least one more meeting would be held this semester, around Week 10 or 11, unless pressing business arose in the meantime. Mark would advise members of the date and venue.

Mark

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