

Meeting 4/13

8 October 2013

For general publication

**Present:** Mr Chris Read (in the chair), Miss Melinda Ashcroft, Mr Alex Booy, Prof Melissa Brown, Mr Nick Deerain, Mr James Hill, Ms Mariska Marnane, Assoc Prof Joe Rothnagel, Mr Mark Starkey (for Ms Tammie Fair, minutes), Miss Rose Trappes, Mr Alan Zhang.

**ACTION**

**Apology:** Ms Tammie Fair (on leave), Mr Vincent Were (sick).

**Welcome:** Nick Deerain was welcomed as Paige Erpf's replacement while Paige is on exchange overseas.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the meeting held 9 August 2013, having been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed with the following amendment:

Item 4, Mentor scheme for new postgraduate coursework students:

In the second sentence of the second paragraph, the reference to first semester 2013 intake should read 'second semester 2013 intake'.

**1. Business Arising out of the minutes:**

**1.1 Committee name change and secretarial support**

The external review of the School had recommended a streamlining of the committee structure and a greater involvement of a wider range of staff. Accordingly, a number of committees had been renamed as working groups or advisory groups, to distinguish them from the standard higher-level formal committees typical in UQ school governance.

The Coursework Students Consultative Committee would now be known as the Coursework Students Advisory Group (CSAG). It would report to the Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC). Tammie Fair is secretary of the TLC and would provide support to the CSAG. Mark Starkey would provide back-up.

**1.2 Molecular Design contest**

The action item from the August meeting had been to develop a poster, screen slide and web news item of the winning entry, mentioning the prizes won and calling for students to watch out for a possible similar competition in 2014.

The three items had been published. Members noted the artwork for the poster in their meeting papers.

As agreed at the August meeting, the competition would not be run again without testing its viability – a matter for consideration at the first CSAG meeting of 2014. It was suggested that in addition to email and poster/slide promotion of any competition, it be spoken about in lectures.

Tammie

**1.3 Biotechnology students careers event**

The event had been scheduled to be held Friday 25 October, but staff, particularly the Director of Biotechnology, had been hard pressed to find time to organise the event and had felt that the logistical work for a Q&A panel event could not be completed before the semester ended. They preferred to delay the event until staff are less rushed, so that it is done properly.

**1.4 Amount of continuous assessment**

At the August meeting, Joe Rothnagel had advised that he would take suggestions from members to the School's Teaching & Learning Committee.

Joe reported that course coordinators had been advised to review the due dates for assessment, with the Discipline Chief Examiners to check for this with administrative assistance, as set out in the minutes of the August meeting.

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**1. Business Arising out of the minutes: (cont'd)**

**1.4 Amount of continuous assessment (cont'd)**

Joe reiterated that the Faculty of Science Associate Dean (Academic), Peter Adams, would oversee a review of the amount of assessment in Science courses in 2014.

Members discussed the value of multiple low-percentage assessment items. A favoured approach was that taken in BIOL2202, Genetics, where 20% of the assessment came from the best two of three 10% assignments. Students could choose to make two instead of three submissions.

Joe

**1.5 Student Club → Undergraduate discipline mixer events**

At the August meeting, two suggestions had been made that required action:

1. That follow-up get-togethers from the BSc majors/Honours and Biotechnology Stradbroke Island camps be encouraged, perhaps via Facebook pages created by students for each camp. Mark Starkey had passed the suggestion on to Susan Rowland (for the BSc camp) and Ross Barnard (for the Biotech camp).

Susan had responded that in addition to an 'official' Facebook site that she had established, there is a Facebook site that had been set up by the students so that they could post photos. Susan had said that students used it regularly to invite one another to follow-up get-togethers – search for 'SCMB – Stradbroke Island Nov 2012'.

Ross had responded that photos of the Biotech Straddie camp are posted to the FB page 'The Biotechnology Program at the University of Queensland'. They are also on the Molecular Biotechnology Students Club FB site.

2. Catered, informal lunch-time events be held on the Podium each second semester for discipline-specific cohorts of undergraduates to get to know other students in their major or program, as well as the teaching staff, opportunities for undergraduate research experience, work experience/career information, Stradbroke Island camp information and lab tours.

Mark Starkey reported that the School had scheduled three such events for Week 12 of this semester (would be earlier in the semester if repeated) and sent personalised email invitations to students who had nominated their BSc major on SI-Net (or were enrolled in the BBiotech). Staff had been invited to participate and the response rate had been good. All major convenors would be present, as would the Director and Deputy Directors of the Biotech program.

The events were to be held as follows (all 1-2pm on the Chemistry Podium):

- Monday 14 October – BBiotech.
- Tuesday 15 October – Chemistry major and Chemical Sciences dual major.
- Wednesday 16 October – Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Bioinformatics, Genetics, Microbiology majors.

Biophysics major students had been invited to both the 15 and 16 October events because the major spans both discipline groups. The major convenor would be at both events.

In order to increase the student attendance rate, it was suggested that a slide be sent to course coordinators, asking them to put it up in their lectures. (This was done immediately after the meeting. The slide was also put to the Podium screen and posters were put up.)

**1.6 Mentor scheme for new postgraduate coursework students**

The action item from the August meeting had been for the School to send an email to the PGCW students who commenced in second semester this year, advising of the availability of the scheme and explaining what mentoring is.

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**1. Business Arising out of the minutes: (cont'd)**

**1.6 Mentor scheme for new postgraduate coursework students (cont'd)**

Mark Starkey and Melinda Ashcroft had drafted the email (a copy of which members noted), which had been sent to the relevant students from the Head of School's account in late August.

Additionally, a web news story (a copy of which was noted by members) on Arvey Oliveros, as the winner of the molecular design contest and as a mentor and mentee in the Molecular Biotechnology Students Club scheme, had been published on the School website.

Melinda Ashcroft reported that one extra mentee had since come forward and that the scheme had 10 mentors and 10 mentees this semester.

**2. First year chemistry:**

Alex Booy asked if curriculum changes to first year chemistry were planned for 2014, as he was thinking of applying to be a PASS Leader.

Melissa Brown responded that the content was not changing but that the sequencing of the content was being improved. Following a review of PASS by the Teaching & Learning Committee in 2013, PASS Leaders would receive more formal training, have more interaction with and guidance from course coordinators, and receive feedback on their performance (in the same way that SCMB tutors/demonstrators have for several years now).

**3. NMR and mass spectrometry training for biochemistry students:**

Rose Trappes asked how biochemistry students were introduced to NMR and mass spec techniques, as she knew some advanced-level undergraduates who had no experience with the techniques. She said that BIOC3005 this semester included some NMR workshops late in the semester. Rose felt that learning the techniques only in third year was not ideal, when the focus should be on the understanding the biology, including by applying the techniques.

Melissa Brown and Joe Rothnagel agreed, with Joe suggesting that the techniques could be introduced in second year. Melissa reported that the School was considering introducing a 'methods in molecular biosciences' course.

It was noted that BIOL3006 had a methods module at its start. BIOC3005 would have a new coordinator in 2014 and consideration might be given to more workshops on techniques earlier in the course. BIOC3000 was being redesigned and consideration should be given to ensuring duplication of methods instruction did not occur across courses.

Melissa expressed appreciation for the feedback.

**4. BIOT2002, Introduction to Biotechnology:**

James Hill and Mariska Marnane said that they and other students were struggling with aspects of the 35% Plasmid assignment in BIOT2002, which required deconstruction of the intellectual property (patents) in a plasmid. They felt that they lacked the background to do the patent deconstruction. The course had no assumed knowledge prerequisite. They suggested that lecturers might be more mindful that students typically lack knowledge of patents as they apply to plasmids.

Melinda Ashcroft agreed, having done the postgraduate version of BIOT2002, namely BIOT6006. She said that MBIotech students had also struggled with the patents component.

Following discussion, it was resolved to recommend –  
that a tutorial/workshop on patents be offered to  
BIOT2002/6006 students, in the way a drug design and  
development workshop had been offered.

Joe,  
Melissa

Mark, for  
Biotech  
Advisory  
Board

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**5. Membership of Group 2014:**

As this was expected to be the final meeting of the group for 2013, the chairperson thanked retiring members for their contributions and asked if other members were happy to continue their membership, provided they remained eligible as they moved on in their programs.

Melinda Ashcroft, Chris Read, Joe Rothnagel and Mark Starkey indicated that they would be retiring from the group, as would be Vincent Were. Rose Trappes would be continuing her studies in 2014 as a dual degree student and asked if she could be considered for one of the MBS majors representative roles, noting that Paige Erpf also wished to continue. Mark Starkey indicated that because it is desirable to retain some continuity of membership in the group, it was possible that this could be accommodated.

Tammie,  
Mark

Chris and Melinda thanked the School for the opportunity to serve on the group.

Mark Starkey was thanked for his support to the group over the five years since its inception.

Tammie Fair would make contact with willing and eligible continuing members prior to the start of the 2014 academic year, and call for nominations for vacancies from eligible students once the first semester enrolment due dates had been reached.

Tammie

**6. Next meeting:**

The next meeting was expected to be held by approximately Week 4 of first semester 2014.

Tammie

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