Meeting 5/10 14 September 2010 For general publication

Present: Mr Daniel Westlake (in the chair), Assoc Prof Melissa Brown, Mr Simon Chen, Ms Eve Chow, Mr Pinus Jumaryatno, Mr Ivor Lee, Miss Bianca McCarthy, Assoc Prof Gary Schenk, Mr Xiang Setoh, Ms Jill Sheridan, Mr Mark Starkey (minutes), Ms Pegah Varamini, Miss Lucy Weaver.

Apology: Prof Alastair McEwan.

Absent: Dr Horst Schirra.

Minutes: Minutes of the meeting held 17 August 2010, having been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed, with the following amendment: Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium – Venue – ‘25 August’ should read ‘25 November’.

Business arising out of the minutes:

RHD Discussion Forums

Jill advised that the first forum would be held on Tuesday 28 September with Pavla Simerska and Fernanda Ely to discuss their experiences as a postdoc at UQ and a UQ student visiting overseas laboratories, respectively. Melissa mentioned that she thought the OzBio2010 conference was being held in Melbourne that week and a number of the School’s staff and students would be attending. Jill would investigate.

Gary had emailed Committee members 10 September asking that they think of the format for the discussion, so that the two speakers could prepare. He suggested that each speaker could present a few slides as they spoke of their experience, then a chairperson/host could lead questioning that developed into an open discussion. Members endorsed this format, with the following suggestions also made:

- The speakers might include something on the thought process that led them to their actions.
- Inclusion in presentations of images of relevant application forms had been found to be useful in last year’s forums, so could be repeated.

Following a random draw, Setoh was nominated as chairperson for the forum. Pegah, who would be unable to attend, volunteered to prepare some questions to pass to Setoh.

RHD Information Session

Jill reported that planning for a prospective RHD information session continued. Student members of the Committee were reminded that it had been suggested at Meeting 4-10 that they be involved in the information session.

Honours Information Session

Mark reported that Faculty of Science Honours Information Week had been held 30 August to 3 September. SCMB had held a pizza lunch session on 3 September which had been attended by ~85 students. An information seminar for Biotechnology students had also been held just prior to the lunch. At the lunch, Honours Directors Ross McGeary and Horst Schirra had spoken, along with Honours student representative Bianca. A number of academic staff had attended to speak to students about the program and potential projects. Copies of the honours projects 2011 booklets had been freely available. The School’s Marketing Officer, Ros Boulton, had observed that the lunch had been held during Ramadan when Muslims fasted during daylight hours, and that this might be taken into account in planning the timing of the event in future.
Meeting 5/10  14 September 2010  For general publication

Business arising out of the minutes: (cont’d)

Honours Information Session (cont’d)

Following the InformationWeek, students expecting to complete their BSc (or dual BSc) degree in second semester 2010, who are enrolled in SCMB-administered majors, and have a cumulative program GPA of 4.0 or better, were to be emailed a personalised message from the Head of School inviting them to consider Honours in 2011, pointing out the advantages of the program and referring them to the School’s Honours information webpage. The message was to be sent to 104 students using software that enables the School to get statistics on how many people open the message and subsequently click on the link for more information.

Scientific Writing Skills Course

Horst was not present to provide an update on this. Mark would follow up with him.

1. Honours Program:

Bianca reported that she had received some suggestions from current Honours students regarding the School’s Honours program in Chemistry:

- The Research Proposal had been due in early June for students who commenced in February. Some students regarded this as too late in the year. Molecular Biosciences students had been required to submit their proposal by 22 March.
- The marking criteria for the Research Proposal were seen to be too loose. (The course profiles for Molecular Biosciences Honours provided more detailed advice to students on what the proposal should contain than the equivalent Chemistry profile.)
- Students were concerned that examiners for the Research Proposal were not necessarily specialists in the student’s chosen field.

Melissa responded to the third point that, besides the feasibility problem of having enough specialist examiners available at the time proposals were presented in seminars, the particular science of a proposal was less important for this assessment piece than the quality of the literature review, communication of the hypothesis and quality of organisation/presentation.

A number of members expressed surprise that there were still differences in the structure of the Honours program in the School according to discipline, almost 10 years after the School had been formed.

Mark undertook to convey the comments to the Honours Directors and to the Chair of the Teaching & Learning Committee. (Subsequently, the matter was listed for discussion at the TLC meeting of 21 September.)

2. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:

Jill tabled feedback forms from those who had attended the 2009 symposium, which had been collected by Arti Singh. Members considered the forms briefly, noting that they were aware of the issues that had been raised.

Event Format and Program

Daniel suggested that this be revisited when the abstracts had been assessed and the number of registrations was clearer.

Venue

It was noted that the room venue bookings (including the Chemistry Podium) had been altered to include the afternoon of the 24th and the morning of the 26th for bump-in and bump-out. Lucy awaited confirmation of bookings for the Great Court and Radon Court and would chase up with Property & Facilities Division.
2. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium: (cont’d)

   Plenary Speaker

   Melissa observed that the Diamantina Institute had scheduled a grant readership workshop for 25 November. Daniel would check with Prof Frazer’s PA that there was no conflict. He would also canvass gift ideas with the PA.

   Catering

   Lucy reported that St Leo’s Catering had been booked. Further liaison with the caterers would occur when attendance numbers were known.

   Sponsorship

   Pegah reported that she had sent sponsorship requests to a number of new leads. Four had responded positively but only two had so far committed funds.

   Eve reported that there were now commitments from five of last year’s sponsors and she was awaiting responses from several others. A couple of last year’s sponsors had said they were unable to assist this year, but could be approached for next year. ‘Major’ sponsors were emerging as being those who contributed $500.

   Daniel undertook to make an application for Graduate School PACS funding. Suggestions for items to be paid for from the funding were: large format posters advertising the event; prize certificates; judges’ clipboards; stationery; speaker’s gift.

   Income and Expenditure

   Pegah and Eve had this in hand. A budget would need to be set out at some stage.

   Advertising / Promotion / Call for Abstracts

   Simon and Setoh had completed this. Jill reported that the pginfo@scmb email list was up-to-date. Jill would send a notice to the AIBN student email list.

   Registrations, including dietary requirements

   Setoh advised that student members of the Committee would be automatically registered and he would add sponsors (one representative name per sponsor) as Pegah and Eve notified him. Attending Heads of School and judges would also be added as they became known. Otherwise, only a couple of registrations had occurred via the website so far.

   Receipt of abstracts and determination of student presenters

   Setoh confirmed that the receipt of abstracts would be recorded in the same spreadsheet as registrations.

   Securing judges and determining judging criteria

   Pinus reported that judges were still to be sought for the posters as discussed at the last meeting. A number of judges were also required for the talks – in 2009 two had been present at each parallel session (ie, four at any one time) and 6-8 had been required in total. He would email academic staff and postdocs, seeking volunteers.

   Lucy reported that one postdoc from her lab had volunteered to be a judge. She would pass the details on to Pinus.
2. **Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:**  (cont’d)

    **Symposium Book**

Setoh will progress this when abstracts are received. The Committee would see a draft prior to printing.

    **Chairpersons for sessions and timekeeping; Master of Ceremonies**

Daniel said that these tasks did not have to be assigned yet, but student members should start thinking about the roles, given that all could expect to either chair or time keep at some point in the day.

    **Prizes**

This would be reviewed when a clearer picture of income and expenditure was available.

    **Venue Logistics**

Daniel would book a light truck from the University garage.

    Someone needed to be responsible for arranging stationery, etc for use on the day – to be determined by next meeting.

3. **Next Meeting:**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting in mid-October. The meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 19 October at 1.00 pm in 68-303.

* * * * *