Present:  Mr Mohammed Alaidarous, Mr Nabil Alikhan (in the chair), Prof Melissa Brown, Mr Jed Burns, Ms Lena Daumann, Mr Jacob Dulley, Mrs Chandhi Goonasekera, A/Prof Lisbeth Grondahl, Mr Hamish Kelly, Ms Rhiannon Mondav, Ms Katie Nichols, Miss Talia Pettigrew, Ms Sohinee Sarkar, Ms Jill Sheridan (minutes).

Apologies:  Miss Kylie Agnew-Francis, Mr Mark Starkey.

Welcome:  Nabil Alikhan welcomed MBS Honours representative Hamish Kelly to the Committee and farewelled Jacob Dulley. Hamish introduced himself to fellow members.

Minutes:  Minutes of the meeting held 8 June 2012, having been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.

Business arising out of the minutes (not elsewhere listed):

RHD Forums

Lisbeth Grondahl advised that she was continuing to consider ideas suggested at meetings 1-12 and 2-12 and would report to the next meeting:

- Seminars offered by UQ Student Services, if can be Science-specific, particularly ‘How to write a winning resume and cover letter for RHD students’, if it could include advice on how to perform in a selection interview.
- How to write abstracts for journals and conferences.
- How to write grant applications (similar to workshops offered by the School to early career researchers).
- Something along the lines of the AIBN-sponsored ‘how to get published’ seminar by Diana Faulds, tailored to SCMB.
- Career paths in academia.

As a lead-in to the Three-Minute Thesis competition, Prof Peter O’Donoghue would give a workshop on public speaking (Thursday 12 July, 2pm AIBN Seminar room) to which all RHD and honours students would be invited. Content was not specific to the competition and would be of value to anyone wanting to improve their skills and confidence in public speaking. Members offered to help promote the 3MT events to colleagues and Jill undertook to send members a copy of the poster.

Making Turnitin available to RHD and Honours students – creation of RHD student community in Blackboard

Lisbeth Grondahl reported that Tammie Fair had set up a Blackboard site through which RHD students could access Turnitin. This was expected to go live within the week.

Lisbeth had given an information session for provisional RHD candidates at which she had explained the new School requirement to submit confirmation reports through Turnitin to check the originality and referencing of their work. Only five students had attended, but Jed Burns noted that invitees in his lab who were familiar with Blackboard and Turnitin from their undergraduate studies had not felt the need to attend and that this was probably the case for others and would account for the low attendance.

Lena Daumann noted that UQ had purchased a 60-day trial licence for Grammarly, an automated grammar and plagiarism checker, which the UQ community was invited to test http://www.library.uq.edu.au/blogs/external/2012/06/22/try-grammarly-for-help-your-writing  (Note added after the meeting: test runs till July 10).
Business arising out of the minutes (cont’d):

Marking time allocations for tutors:

Melissa Brown advised that there had been no School staff meeting since the RSCC meeting on 8 June, but that she intended to raise the issue at the next School staff meeting and would report back to the Committee after that.

Advertising of events of relevance to RHD students:

Further to the discussion at Meeting 2-12, Mark Starkey had sent the following report:

- SCMB seminars were recorded on the UQ Events database, which provided for a reader to import the event into their calendar. The School’s seminar page was fed by the UQ Events database and provided an option to subscribe to the feed.
- Students based in SCMB but not enrolled through SCMB were not automatically added to the RHD mailing list, but could be added if they specifically asked. Most posts to the mailing list were relevant to SCMB students only, and students enrolled through other units were presumed to be on the mailing list of their home School and to receive essential information that way.
- Nabil Alikhan had pointed out to Mark that the School of Law had a very good database-driven events webpage that included a button to import the event into one’s calendar. Mark and staff from Science IT and Engagement had visited Law to learn about their system. The developer, a Law staff member, was available to be employed casually outside hours to write a similar application for SCMB. This was being seriously considered, but in the meantime, talks were underway with UQ ITS about a pilot program to move UQ’s web content management software from an in-house system to Drupal. ITS was interested in incorporating into the pilot program database-driven changes SCMB wished to make to its webpage, possibly including an events database.

Members confirmed that access to events information was important to them and that a comprehensive and clear system such as that used by the School of Law would be welcomed.

Melissa Brown noted that Mark had been progressing a number of related improvements to the SCMB website, for example staff listings.

Mark Starkey would provide an update at the next meeting.

1. RHD Student Support Fund:

Members noted the draft application form and guidelines for the new RHD Support Fund. Melissa Brown advised that practical details had been worked through and the scheme was almost ready to launch. Lisbeth Grondahl explained the application process and Melissa and Lisbeth answered questions and clarified several issues:

- An amount of $6K per PhD candidature ($3K for MPhil) would be made available to SCMB RHD students.
- Ongoing students would receive pro-rata funding, ie $4K for second year students, $2K for third year students.
- Eligibility would be determined by student status at 1 January 2012.
- Conference attendance was the primary focus of the scheme, but funds could be used for other things such as computer purchase or lab costs, by mutual agreement between student and supervisor.
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1. **RHD Student Support Fund:** (cont’d)

   - Travel for collaborative research could be supported, perhaps as an add-on to a conference visit, but as there were other schemes to support collaborative research travel (e.g. Graduate School International Travel Award, SCMB Chemistry Travel Awards) it was not the intention of the new scheme.
   - Similarly, professional development activities such as winter schools or other workshops could be supported if they were linked with conference attendance.
   - Students should present at the conference they were funded to attend.
   - Funds could be accessed at any time during candidature, subject to satisfactory progress.
   - The scheme would go live within the next week or two so students would be able to apply for funding to travel to conferences this year.

   In answer to Rhiannon’s question, Lisbeth confirmed that advisors knew about the scheme as it had been under discussion for quite some time.

   Members suggested posting Frequently Asked Questions on the School website and agreed that an information session to introduce the scheme would be helpful and should include information about travel grants in general.

2. **Engagement with secondary schools:**

   Melissa Brown tabled some information about the Ambassadors for Science schemes run by AIBN and IMB and asked members what they thought of adapting the idea for SCMB. Ambassadors represented their institute at external events and got involved in various activities; they received training in communication and a certificate of completion. The schemes provided good training and enhanced one’s CV. Members were enthusiastic and happy to participate. Mohammed Alaidarous preferred to opt out at this stage.

   Melissa then asked about the request from Indooroopilly State High School she had circulated by email in which she had called for volunteers to visit Indooroopilly to talk to students about science. Response to the email had been disappointing. Some members said they had not replied because the topic suggested was not in their area and the honours students had understood the call was for RHD students only. Melissa confirmed that honours students were welcome to participate and that the topics could be broadened. Rhiannon Mondav felt that more warning would be ideal in future and Jed Burns felt that a clear brief would be helpful.

   Rhiannon suggested it would be good to be involved with a range of schools from different socio-economic backgrounds and Melissa noted that SCMB had involvement with Durack State School, Centenary State High School, and Brisbane Boys’ College as well as offering professional development for teachers and organising activities that are attended by students from all over Brisbane.

   Rhiannon, Jed, Talia Pettigrew, Katie Nichols and Nabil Alikhan volunteered to visit Indooroopilly State High School. Chandhi Goonasekera would contact Melissa separately about a colleague who was willing to participate. Melissa confirmed that the volunteers could use either a School car or School-funded taxi to get to Indooroopilly and back.

   Lena Daumann undertook to send Melissa some information on the CSIRO Scientists in Schools program.
3. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:

Members noted an updated list of preparation actions prepared by Nabil Alikhan, along with a Gant chart showing timelines. Nabil invited feedback from members on the areas they had been working on:

**Finances and Sponsorship**

Sohinee Sarkar reported that all potential sponsors had been contacted by email and so far three positive responses had been received. Bruker had agreed to provide $750, specifying that it should be for prizes (which would be allocated for three prizes of $250 each, one for oral presentation and two poster prizes); RACI would provide a $100 bronze sponsorship and Gene Search would provide a gold sponsorship of $500. Only one company contacted had said they were unable to help this year. Letters would also be mailed to make sure that no potential sponsors missed the invitation.

Lena Daumann said she was updating the spreadsheet in the shared drive and was asking for a high-resolution logo from sponsors, which she also stored in the shared drive.

Sohinee, Nabil and Rhiannon Mondav said they would lobby for sponsorship at the upcoming ASM conference and get business cards with names and contact details for leads to follow.

**Venue**

Katie Nichols reported there was a good venue option in the Engineering complex: the extension to the ELC for Engineering and the room next to the ELC. Food could be served in this area but a $200 cleaning fee would be charged. Lena pointed out that it would be well worth paying the cleaning fee to secure the venue: not only was it better than the outdoor alternative, but, since the cost of hiring a marquee and tables was over $1000, it was also a lot cheaper.

Katie noted that the room’s capacity was just over a hundred, but that there was an adjacent overspill area that could also be used for the poster presentations. Nabil felt this would be a bonus as attendees could view the posters while eating their lunch. Attendance at last year’s symposium had been around 200 and numbers were not expected to be too different this year, so members felt the capacity would be adequate and that the venue was a good option.

Jed Burns contacted Kylie Agnew-Francis by phone during the meeting and confirmed that Kylie was in the process of booking the venue.

Katie would book the SCMB poster boards.

**Catering**

Lena had prepared a comparison of catering quotes for review. Most quotes were around $30 a head, though some quotes included such things as labour and drinks in this price, while others charged those as extra. Members agreed that the Colebard quote was competitive and that Colebard had done a good job catering last year’s symposium. It was agreed to book the catering through Colebard.

**Plenary Speaker**

Nabil asked members for their thoughts on a shortlist of keynote speakers supplied by last year’s Committee. Members discussed names. A speaker from one of the SCMB public lectures was a possibility. Melissa Brown reminded the Committee that a high-profile speaker was likely to be booked well ahead of time so it was important to make a decision as soon as possible. She added that it wasn’t essential to have a keynote speaker. Whoever was chosen should be able to bring something special to the event and a general topic might be more appealing than something too narrow. Everyone agreed with Nabil that, whether the talk was general or specific, it should be inspiring. Nabil asked members to consult their lab groups for suggestions and give the choice of speaker some thought before the next meeting.
4. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium: (cont’d)

Advertising/Promotion for Abstracts and Registration

Mohammed Alaidarous showed members last year’s abstract template and invited comments. Members discussed timing for submission of abstracts and agreed on a deadline of one month prior to the event for RHD students and a slightly later deadline (the end of October) for Honours and coursework masters students, who would be in the final stages of their examination process at that time.

Honours and coursework masters students would be invited to give poster presentations. Oral presentation spots would be reserved for RHD students. Members asked what selection criteria had been used in the past and Melissa advised that certain guidelines should to be borne in mind. For example, preference could be given to senior students required to present a final seminar and care should be taken not to select students from the same lab or students who had previously given a talk at the symposium. Jill Sheridan noted that in the past there had been some reluctance to submit abstracts and submissions had tended to be last-minute. Members agreed to put some energy into encouraging colleagues to submit an abstract. Honours students could be reassured their honours presentations could be translated into symposium presentations without much difficulty.

Mohammed and Kylie would organise advertising and posters as soon as possible, with date claimers and calls for submissions. Rhiannon suggested using the templates available from the UQ Office of Marketing and Communications website.

There was consensus that online submission of abstracts would be ideal and that time spent now for set up of an efficient system would pay off in the final stages. Mohammed would talk to James Fraser to investigate the feasibility of setting up online submission similar to the Google docs submission James set up for the second year Genetics course. Melissa advised that tight guidelines on formatting and word count would help with editing and compilation of the handbook.

It was agreed that a forum on ‘How to Write an Abstract’ should be organised in time for Symposium submissions.

5. Welcome to new students:

Jill Sheridan asked if the Committee would like to continue the welcome to new students begun by last year’s Committee. Lucy Weaver had sent a welcome email to new PhD students and attended RHD orientation sessions. Chandhi Goonasekera volunteered to take this on and would liaise with Lucy Weaver.

6. Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held on 27 July.

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