Present: Prof Melissa Brown (in the chair up to and including Item 4), Miss Jessica Bilyj, Mr Ben Cristofori-Armstrong, Mr Navin Chandasekaran (from Item 4), Mr Ashwin Giddam (from Item 7), Dr Lisbeth Grondahl, Mr Mark Starkey (minutes), Ms Katie Nicholls, Miss Kate Ormerod, Ms Rochelle Soo, Miss Elsa Tsu-Hsuan Wang, Mr Tim Khang-HsuWu.

Apology: Miss Cara Nethercott (due to a confirmation meeting).

Welcome: New members were welcomed to the committee and continuing members welcomed back. Each member introduced themselves.

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, indicating that the committee provided a voice for research students and a consultative mechanism for the School.

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, Kate Ormerod was elected.

Mark Starkey would provide secretarial support to the committee.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 29 November 2012:

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

4. School review:

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

The review committee wishes to meet informally with a group of undergraduate and postgraduate students as part of its visit. It is an opportunity for students to relate their experiences in-confidence. Volunteers will 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) will be during the afternoon of Monday 29 April for an hour or so.

RSCC members present expressed interest in being involved in the meeting.

5. Honours and RHD applications and enrolments 2013:

Members noted that at 31 March 2013 (first semester census date) there were 46 BSc Honours students enrolled (13 Chemistry, 17 Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, 16 Microbiology & Parasitology). This included students who commenced in second semester 2012. This compared with 31 students at 31 March 2012 (8 CHEM, 8 BMB, 15 MICR/PARA). It was noted that practically all students enrolled in the fourth year of the BBiotech complete Honours.

At 31 March 2013 there were 159 RHD students enrolled in SCMB, compared to 171 at the same date in 2012 and 204 in 2011. Members noted that the enrolment decline was likely due to low Honours enrolments in 2012 and a larger number of PhD completions in recent years, as the University encouraged a greater number of timely completions.
6. **RHD Forums:**

Lisbeth Grondahl invited discussion on the holding of RHD student forums in the School. Topics in the past have included:

- How to apply for jobs/grants.
- Where to from here – speakers from industry, academia, government sectors.
- Experiences of SCMB RHD students as a postdoc and as a student visiting overseas laboratories.

In 2012 a forum run specifically for RHD students by the Careers Unit in UQ Student Services had dealt with resume and application writing, interview skills and the writing of abstracts. Participant feedback was that the resume and application writing section was fairly generic in nature, and although likely to have been useful to a student who had not heard the tips before, could have been improved with illustrations of ‘dos and don’ts’. The abstract writing section had been seen to be very helpful.

Lisbeth explained that she had tasked one of her Co-Directors of RHD Studies with organising the forums, but she would be a conduit for suggestions made by students at the RSCC. She said that workshops had tended in the past to be held in the second half of the year.

Melissa Brown mentioned that Professor Murray Stewart, a colleague of Professor Bostjan Kobe, would be visiting the School later in 2013 and might be interested in conducting a workshop with students.

Members were invited to think of forum/workshop ideas for the next meeting.

7. **Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:**

Mark Starkey advised that the date tentatively set by the School for the 2013 symposium is Thursday 21 November, noting that the School’s examiner’s meeting will be held Wednesday 20 November. This date is equivalent to the same date in the academic year as symposia of recent years – ie, after exam marking but before staff start to depart for conferences and leave. However the date could be changed if the committee wished and the change was able to be accommodated in the School’s calendar of activities.

It was recommended that an organising committee be formed as soon as possible to commence planning for the event. In recent years, the student members of the RSCC have formed the core organising committee. They have been assisted by other RHD students and were able to call on staff members of the RSCC and Jill Sheridan, the School’s Research &Research Training Administrative Coordinator, for advice.

It was suggested that the 2013 organisers refer to the minutes of meetings of the RSCC in 2012 for organising hints, including the final meeting of 2012 which includes a comprehensive review of the 2012 symposium and makes suggestions for the 2013 Committee. Resources, in the form of documents from student organisers of previous years’ symposia, are available on a School file share directory, to which all members had been given access.

As a starting point, members considered a preparations list and Gantt chart used by the 2012 committee for overview planning. The documents had been developed and updated for each meeting by the 2012 chairperson.

Members felt that the 2012 symposium had been well organised, except that the space in which posters had been displayed had been a little tight.

It was suggested to members that items needing early attention for the 2013 symposium were to think of plenary speaker options, organise a venue and start contacting sponsors.
7. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium: (cont’d)

Following discussion, the following tasks were assigned:

- Venue – Katie Nicholls
- Finance and sponsorship – Kate Ormerod and Katie Nicholls
- Plenary speaker – all members to think of possibilities
- Advertising/promotion – Navin Chandrasekaran
- Sourcing of judges – Jessica Bilyj and Ben Cristofori-Armstrong
- Catering – Elsa Wang
- Booklet production – Rochelle Soo

Other tasks yet to be assigned would be considered at the next meeting.

It was agreed that a Blackboard community be established for the committee, to facilitate online discussion.

Mark

8. Social event for Science RHD students:

Members were referred to the minutes of the last two meetings for the background to this item. In summary, RSCC 2012 member, Lena Daumann had been approached by a fellow student suggesting that the RHD student committees of Science Faculty Schools and the UQ Institutes consider combining to organise a social event.

At the RSCC’s November 2012 meeting, a visit to the Schonell Pizza Caffe and a movie had been suggested. It had been proposed that funds left over from the symposium might be used to subsidise the event. However, Mark Starkey reported there are not actually any funds left over from the event. In 2012, expenditure on the symposium (excluding booklet production which was paid for by the School) had been $8,088, offset by $6,300 of sponsorship income raised by the organising committee. Therefore the School’s subsidy had been just under $2,000, excluding photocopying. The School had budgeted to underwrite the event by up to $7,000 should insufficient sponsorship occur. As the School is not permitted by the University to carry forward unspent operational funds from one year to the next, the unspent portion of the budget was allocated to other spending late in 2012.

Mark Starkey confirmed that the School had budgeted to underwrite the 2013 symposium by up to $8,000.

Members were invited to start thinking about a social event that might be held after the symposium if funds permitted.

Student members

9. Next meeting:

It was agreed that the next meeting be held in approximately a month’s time, in mid-May. Mark would advise members of the date and venue.

Mark