Present: Mr Mohammed Amdad Ali, Prof Paul Young (in the chair up to and including Item 2), Miss Jessica Bilyj, Miss Jessica Chitty (in the chair from item 3), Mr Oliver Creagh, Dr Abigail Downie (minutes), Miss Emily Hoedt, A/Prof Stuart Kellie, Miss Asha Roberts, Mr Chris Selleck, Ms Jill Sheridan Miss Caitlin Singleton, Mr Andrew Turner.

Apology: Mr Navin Chandrasekaran

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

2. Terms of reference and membership/introductions
   2.1. Terms of reference and membership:

   Members were referred to the terms of reference and mode of operation of the advisory group and its membership for 2014, as set out in the agenda papers (and viewable on the School’s website). Paul Young reiterated to students that one of the key roles of the advisory group was to facilitate two-way communication between staff and students. Paul elaborated that he would like to establish a cohesive culture in the school and would like to encourage members to bring any suggestions or concerns related to any aspect of the school to the RSAG meetings.

   2.2. 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 committee voted Jessica Chitty as chairperson and Andrew Turner as deputy chair. Both accepted their roles.

   Abigail Downie will provide secretarial support to the committee.

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held 30 October 2013:

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

4. Business arising out of the minutes

   Jessica Bilyj provided a brief overview of discussion items from 2013 as follows:

   - Symposium – Overall the 2013 Research Students Symposium had been successful. Members were advised that there was a lot of information, tips and hints in the shared folder which would be a useful starting point for planning the 2014 symposium.
   - T-shirt/Hoodie – The 2013 RSAG had discussed establishing a school hoodie (with a simple design/logo similar to other schools). Members had agreed that the concept could be more appealing than the current t-shirt and had conducted a survey to establish interest. Survey results had been promising but due to seasonality the idea had been postponed to 2014.
   - Transport between St Lucia, Ecosciences, PACE, TRI and MMRI – Jessica advised that the 2013 RSAG had been investigating the need for a dedicated mode of transport between St Lucia and external locations. The 2013 group had researched the viability of using the green bridge to facilitate transport but discovered this was not possible as it was council owned for busway use only. A member advised that the work that he does is contained to the laboratory and there is rarely a need to transport consumables between buildings. Another member responded that her lab group often has to transfer consumables between buildings at TRI and they have established collaboration with another research group to transfer consumables between labs via private vehicle. Members recommended conducting a survey to identify if interest exists before any further research into modes of transport is conducted.
   - Social events – two social events were held last year, a pizza night and a BBQ. Jessica advised that the majority of attendees were from Molecular Biosciences building and that overall attendance was not strong. Jessica advised that the 2013 activities had been located in the secret garden and members discussed whether this could have contributed to a lack of Chemistry building attendees. .
4. Business arising out of the minutes (cont’d)

Paul reiterated the importance of social activities and encouraged the group to collaborate with other committees and groups when organising upcoming activities. Members discussed the possibility of running future events on the podium. Jessica advised that there were issues with podium use last year, potentially due to licensing issues. Jill recommended that a member of the RSAG speak with Belinda Schmerl in the school’s finance office for advice on hospitality guidelines/restrictions etc.

5. Honours and RHD applications and enrolments 2013:

Members noted that 2014 saw a significant increase in honours students due to the increased recruitment and advertising programs. At 31 March 2014 (first semester census date) there were 72 BSc Honours students enrolled (16 Chemistry, 21 Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, 35 Microbiology & Parasitology). This included students who commenced in second semester 2013. This compared with 46 students at 31 March 2013 (13 CHEM, 17 BMB, 16 MICR/PARA).

At 31 March 2014 there were 151 RHD students enrolled in SCMB, compared to 159 at the same date in 2013 and 171 in 2012.

6. RHD Forums:

Stuart advised that he aims to run informal sessions covering topics of general interest to RHD students. In 2013 the forum topic was how to get a post-doc position overseas. In 2014, Stuart would like to run a series of fora covering alternative career pathways including speakers who are now working for CSIRO, patent attorneys and sales representatives. Paul suggested that Stuart approach Greg Hafner who is the chief operating officer for Diamantina Institute.

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

7. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium:

Abigail Downie advised that the date tentatively set by the school for the 2014 symposium is Thursday 27th November, nothing that the School’s examiner’s meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th November. This date is equivalent to the same date in the academic calendar as symposia of recent years – i.e. after exam marking but before staff start to depart for conferences and leave. Members queried whether the proposed dates would clash with honours deadlines and the G20 summit. After confirming that it would not, the group advised that they were happy with the proposed date.

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 RSAG had formed the core organising committee. They have been assisted by other RHD students and were able to call on staff members of the RSAG and Jill Sheridan, the School’s Research Administrative Coordinator, for advice.

It was suggested that members refer to the minutes of meetings of the RSAG in previous years for organising hints, including the final meeting of each year which included a comprehensive review of the symposium including making suggestions for future years. Jessica provided a brief summary of the 2013 symposia and would report in more detail at the next meeting. Resources, in the form of documents from student organisers of previous years’ symposia, were 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. Members also referred to a table of symposium tasks included in the minutes of meeting 7/2013. Following discussion, the following tasks were assigned:

- Venue – Asha, Emily
- Finance and sponsorship – Jessica C., Chris
- Plenary speaker – Oliver (all members are invited to suggest names)
- Opening and closing speakers – Andrew
- Advertising/promotion – Navin and Ali
- Sourcing of judges – Jessica B.
- Catering – Emily and Asha
- Booklet production – Caitlin
7. Annual SCMB Research Students Symposium (cont’d)

- Receipt of abstracts, speaker selection – Andrew, Oliver
- General event logistics – Chris, Ali
- Collecting feedback on event – Jessica B.
- Presentations – develop selection criteria, contact selected speakers – Andrew, Oliver
- Prizes and Awards certificates - TBA

Jill advised members that they should finalise and book a location for the symposium as soon as possible. Members discussed the suitability of Hawken building (last year’s event) for the 2014 event. Members discussed the location, layout and size of the facilities. Jessica C. commented that given the increase in honours students members size will be an important deciding factor. Members were invited to research and suggest alternative locations in the coming days. Oliver queried how to find information regarding facilities and Jill suggested consulting the P&F website. Jill also advised members that a staff member will be able to assist when booking the venue.

8. Social event for Science RHD students:

Members considered ways to improve attendance at social activities, including improved advertising, collaboration and consideration of the timing of events. Jessica C mentioned that the 2013 events clashed with honours commitments and other School activities. Jill advised that staff can provide dates for honours commitments. Jessica C. advised that it might be nice to time the next social activity with the start of the mid-year honours year (exact timing to be 2-3 weeks after the start of the program). Paul advised that the RSAG could consider liaising with the Early Career Researchers to run a collaborative event. Jess C. undertook to speak with Simon Williams regarding timing of social activities.

Members were referred to the minutes of meeting 7/2013 for organisational information for the 2013 social activities. Following discussion, the following tasks were assigned:

- Venue – Asha
- Security approval – Chris
- Advertising – Oliver
- Budget – Jess C and Emily
- Purchasing of food and drink – Caitlin

9. SCMB Student ambassadors

In 2013, a number of members of the RSAG volunteered to become student ambassadors, becoming involved with engagement events such as:

- Requests from high schools to supply students for short presentations and/or to participate in Q&A panels. (HoS has confirmed that the volunteers could use either a School car or School-funded taxi to get to venues such as high schools and back.)
- Help answer questions from prospective students, teachers and parents at events such as the Titration competition (admin person usually present as well).
- Providing a statement of one’s experience as a student for promotional publication.

Student members were asked to consider volunteering to be SCMB student Ambassadors. Names would be passed on to the School Manager, who would contact volunteers about upcoming events. Jessica B. and Oliver advised that they would like to be considered. The remaining members would consider the proposal and respond at the next meeting.

10. Next meeting:

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

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