Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year

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HOD’s Message

Dear Colleagues,

As 2016 is coming to its end I would like to thank all of you for your contributions. There are many achievements from individual members who have raised the profile of the Department by securing grants, publishing research and education papers, receiving awards, or starting new exciting initiatives.

I’d like to briefly reflect on overarching changes that we have introduced throughout 2016. Together we have updated and adjusted various elements of the organizational structures and committees within the Department. The main aim of this exercise is to develop visible administrative structures and procedures; an important step towards collectively agreed strategies. I believe we have increasingly more defined roles and deliverables for individual members of the Department at all levels of responsibilities. These developments will help create stronger sense of ownership. Clearly a good start and we shall continue this path in 2017.

A second major element of change has been arising from the main recommendation by Visiting Committees to various departments at NUS Medicine, including Biochemistry: enhanced communication and collaboration among basic science and clinical departments, a process in which Biochemistry as a field, and, specifically as an established Department within NUS Medicine can play a central role and indeed should do so.

In an effort to create additional opportunities for casual feedback and to enhance communication and coordination, I am offering to meet each member of the Department for a chat, one-on-one, and once a year. We’ve just started and I trust this will be well received by many. Personally, I look forward to hearing your views and expectations for the Department.

I wish you and your families all the best for the festive season and a good start into 2017!

Thank you once again and best wishes,

Markus
Staff Awards

Congratulations

Chairman of the Biomedical Research Council (BMRC)
Prof Barry Halliwell has been appointed as Chairman of the Biomedical Research Council (BMRC), with effect from 1 January 2017.

Provost’s Chair
Prof Markus Wenk was appointed as Provost’s Chair in NUS Medicine in recognition of his outstanding and impactful scholarly accomplishments, which are internationally acknowledged.

Excellence in Teaching Award 2016
Dr Long Yun Chau was presented with the Faculty of Dentistry Excellence in Teaching Award for AY2015/2016.

Young Investigator Award 2016
Dr Nguyen Nam Long was presented with the Young Investigator Award 2016.

NUS Quality Service Award 2016
Mr Chow Kean Pang and Mr Mohammad Aslam Khan received the NUS Quality Service Award (QSA) 2016 (Advocate Level).
Most Promising Startup Award 2016

Congratulations

A/P Too Heng-Phon, founder of Mirxes, was given the Most Promising Startup Award 2016 at the Emerging Awards Ceremony at St Regis Hotel. The event was held on Friday, 16 September 2016. Mirxes is a life science company focused on detection kits for the early identification and management of cancer cases.


(From left) Mirxes founder Too Heng-Phon, Business Times editor Alvin Tay, Minister of State (National Development and Trade and Industry) Koh Poh Koon, Benjamin Barker managing director Nelson Yap, Ecommerce Enablers CEO Henry Chan, Innovfusion project director Gabriel Tan, OCBC Bank global commercial banking head Linus Goh and Cravefx creative director Joshua Tan at the Emerging Enterprise Awards ceremony.

PHOTO: OCBC BANK
SINERGY Launch

A/P Matthew Chang and the team at SynCTI programme for the launch of SINERGY. The Singapore Consortium for Synthetic Biology (SINERGY) was launched by Deputy Prime Minister Mr Teo Chee Hean, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Chairman of NRF Singapore on 20 September 2016 at the opening of the inaugural Singapore Week of Innovation & Technology (SWITCH). The consortium will organise activities to promote collaboration between researchers and industry including annual meetings for biofoundry users certification courses, networking events and strategic workshops.


Mr Teo Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister and Co-ordinating Minister for National Security, and Chairman of National Research Foundation speaking during the Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology. ST Photo: Geraldine Goh.

Associate Professor Matthew Chang, Lead Principal Investigator for the Singapore Consortium for Synthetic Biology (left), and Professor Abhik Roychoudhury, Lead Principal Investigator for the Singapore Cybersecurity Consortium. Photo: National Research Foundation Singapore.
NUHS Values-In-Action Award

Congratulations

Biochemistry LSM Level 2000 Team has been awarded the NUHS Values-In-Action Award (VIA).

Awardees have demonstrated extraordinary efforts and exhibited NUHS TRICE values in their course of work.

Good Job!
Grant Awards

Department Grant Awards
April 2016 - November 2016

AcRF Tier 1 FRC (Apr 16 call)
Targeting E3 ubiquitin ligase EDD1/UBR5 for treatment of virus-induced cancers
Dr Sudhakar Jha
$179,953

Understand cells’ state equilibrium in the Basal-like breast cancer subtype
A/P Marie-Veronique Clement
$90,000

Mitochondrial function in the galactose induced ageing model
A/P Thilo Hagen
$90,000

MoE Tertiary Education Research Fund (TRF)
Solving Ill Structured Problems : Role of Scaffolding and Feedback
A/P Yeong Foong May
$110,625
Alisha Ramos, whose 3-minute research video presentation won the 1st prize at the NUS level, has been selected as one of the 16 finalists for the McDonnell International Scholars Academy 6th International Symposium. She is also the sole representative from NUS in the finals of Asia Pacific 3MT competition. Alisha will compete live at the respective symposiums in Brisbane on September 23rd and 30th 2016.

NUS 3MT, organized by The Graduate Students’ Society (GSS) in NUS, aims to select the best candidate to represent NUS at the international competitions. This 3MT Competition in NUS is a franchise of the University of Queensland developed academic competition for research graduate students. To qualify for this competition, competitors have to send in a self-recorded video explaining their research topic to a general audience in three minutes.

The videos are categorized into 4 themes and judged by a judging panel of esteemed professors from NUS and senior research students from NUS GSS. Alisha’s entry was categorized under Populations Aging and Global Health theme. It described her PhD project, under the supervision of Dr Lim Yoon Pin at the Department of Biochemistry, which investigates the regulation and molecular mechanism of WBP2 in oncogenesis.
New Students

August 2016 Student Intake

Chia Ren Hui Derrick
Main Supervisor: A/P Tang Bor Luen
Co-Supervisor: Prof Kanaga Sabapathy

Diogo Gonclaves Barardo
Main Supervisor: Dr Jan Gruber
Co-Supervisor: A/P Thilo Hagen

Lam Hiu Yan
Main Supervisor: Prof Vinay Tergaonkar
Co-Supervisor: A/P Reshma Taneja

Ngai Tsz Wai
Main Supervisor: Dr Cheok Chit Fang
Co-Supervisor: A/P Ho Han Kiat

Luca Pignata
Main Supervisor: A/P Ernesto Guccione
Co-Supervisor: A/P Reshma Taneja
Student Conferment

Congratulations

Biochemistry Post Graduate Commencement 2016

Akshamal Mihiranga Gamage, PhD
Supervisor: A/P Gan Yunn Hwen
Conferred Date: 30.04.2016

Lam Yuk Man, PhD
Supervisor: Prof Barry Halliwell
Conferred Date: 30.06.2016

Christine Hu Zhi Wen, PhD
Supervisor: A/P Thilo Hagen
Conferred Date: 30.04.2016

Goh Kah Yee, PhD
Supervisor: Dr Takao Inoue
Conferred Date: 31.05.2016

Zhou Yi, PhD
Supervisor: Prof Fu Xin-Yuan
Conferred Date: 30.04.2016

Beryl Augustine, PhD
Supervisor: A/P Yeong Foong May
Conferred Date: 31.05.2016

Gokhan Cildir, PhD
Supervisor: Prof Vinay Tergaonkar
Conferred Date: 30.04.2016

Silambarasan Maskomani, PhD
Supervisor: Prof Jeyaseelan Kandiah
Conferred Date: 31.05.2016

Lim Kim Kiat, PhD
Supervisor: Dr Chen Ee Sin
Conferred Date: 30.04.2016

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Research Publications


Lim, Y P, D K G Maybelle and W S Yew*, “Exploiting the Biosynthetic Potential of Type III Polyketide Synthases”. Molecules, 21, no. 6 (2016): E806. (Switzerland).


Patmanathan, SN, SP Johnson, SL Lai, S Panja Bernam, V Lopes, W Wei, MH Ibrahim, T T FEDERICO, N PRADEEP, M R WENK, R H DERON, PG Murry, LF Yap and IC Paterson*, “Aberrant expression of the S1P regulating enzymes, SPHK1 and SGPL1, contributes to a migratory phenotype in OSCC mediated through S1PR2”. Scientific Reports, 6 (2016). (United Kingdom).


**Research Publications**


VANITHA, K S, Y ZHANG*, D RAJAGOPALAN, L B A NURRUL, N YEO SHU LING, V Tomaic, L Banks, MP Myers, K C EDWARD and **S Jha***, “E3 ligase EDD1/UBR5 is utilized by the HPV E6 oncogene to destabilize tumor suppressor TIP60.”. *Oncogene*, 35, no. 16 (2016): 2062-74. (United Kingdom). (Asia) (Singapore)


Yeong, F M, “Office Hours with EdComm - Helping Undergraduates Approach Research Articles”. ASCB Newsletters, 26 - 27. USA: *American Society for Cell Biology*, 2016. (This is my contribution as an Associate member of the Education Committee that is part of the American Society for Cell Biology). (Asia) (Singapore).
Events

Safety Tea

12th August 2016 @ MD6, LT35

The second Safety Tea for 2016 was held on 12th August 2016 at LT35 in MD6. A new highlight of the Safety Tea was the use of the tap-card reader to record attendance of participants instead of the previous hardcopy sign-in attendance which was time-consuming and tedious.

During the Safety Tea, the Safety Committee shared accidents and incidents that occurred in 2016 as well as the findings from the OSHE Unannounced Inspection in June. Some environmentally sustainability tips and reminders were also shared.

Dr Vernon Seow, our NUSMed Faculty Safety & Health Officer from OSHE, was invited to speak on the new EHS 360 Safety System and he also shared the new AIMS (Accident & Incident Management System) with everyone. He ended the talk by telling everyone,

“It takes time & practise to ‘AIMS’ properly”.

More than 180 staff and students attended the Safety Tea, and this was followed by a delightful afternoon tea.
Events

Safety Tea
The inaugural NUS Medicine Safety Day was held on 6th September 2016 in the Multi-Purpose Hall in MD1 with the theme of “Think Safety; Act Safely”. There were more than 300 participants. Through this event, the school aims to inculcate a committed safety culture among the staff and students through a fun-filled safety exhibition, games and forum. Departments from the School of Medicine were invited to set up display and game booths to showcase their safety practices and culture.

Department of Biochemistry participated in the NUS Medicine Safety Day event and the theme of the Biochemistry booth was “Safety Begins With Me”. The participating Team consisted of Aslam, Luxmi, Safia, Si Hui, Wee Chiew, Yu Song, Jia Xing, Hui Ling and Lai Lai also took part in the poster and video competition. The safety video won the Outstanding Video Prize and the poster won the Commendable Prize. The safety booth also won the Most Innovative Prize for the interactive game to spot the lab hazards.

A student playing the “Biochemistry safety lab game” during the event.
Events

NUS Medicine Safety Day
Events

Visiting Committee

21st September 2016 @ Biochemistry Department

A panel of Visiting Committee consisted of Professor Kimberly Topp from the University of California, San Francisco, Professor Mark Sansom from the University of Oxford and Professor Gordon Lynch from the University of Melbourne visited the Department on 21 September 2016. They were invited by the University to review the Department’s teaching, research and outreach. Overall, they were impressed with the high standards of the Department and thanked the Department for the efforts in preparing for the Visit.
Events

Student Symposium
23rd September 2016 @ CeLS Auditorium

On 23rd September 2016 the 8th Biochemistry Postgraduate Student Symposium was held in the CeLS Auditorium. This year’s event was organized by Associate Professor Thilo Hagen with great help from our enthusiastic administrative staff Grace, Amanda, Luxmi and Safia. This year’s theme was “Sharing our experience”. Dr. Bill Burkholder from IMCB, A*Star, shared his experiences and lessons from his research (and non-research) career in his opening talk. One lesson learned: ‘Do not be afraid of change’. A change opens up new opportunities, almost never closes doors but usually opens new doors that one did not imagine.

Subsequently, some of our current and former students - including Shainan Hira, Linh Nguyen, Ng Mei Ying, Akshamal Gamage and Tesfahun Admasu - shared their experiences on how to overcome difficulties in research and stay motivated, how to manage a healthy work-life balance, what are the lessons learned during an academic exchange and what is it like staying in one student’s home country of Ethiopia. In-between the oral presentations, there were two lively poster sessions. PIs and students visited the 32 posters which were presented by fellow students. The symposium ended with an exciting quiz where 17 groups of three students competed for attractive cash prizes.
Events

Student Symposium
Welcome to the Family

Aparna Jain
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan
Date Joined: 01-06-2016

Kumar Jaspal Kaur
Research Fellow
Supervisor: Prof Markus Wenk
Date Joined: 01-05-2016

Cheah Wai Yuen
Research Fellow
Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan
Date Joined: 08-10-2016

Lim Jie Han Kevin
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan
Date Joined: 01-06-2016

Goh Kah Yee
Research Assistant
Supervisor: Dr Takao Inoue
Date Joined: 18-04-2016

Otto Fong Yong Chin
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Matthew Chang
Date Joined: 28-03-2016
Welcome to the Family

Tan Yi Han
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Gan Yunn Hwen
Date Joined: 01-08-2016

Wang Zilong
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Yew Wen Shan
Date Joined: 04-08-2016

Tay Song Buck, Terence
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Matthew Chang
Date Joined: 01-09-2016

Wong Wai Yen
Research Assistant
Supervisor: A/P Theresa Tan
Date Joined: 01-07-2016

Vidhi Kanaiyalal Patel
Research Fellow
Supervisor: Dr Takao Inoue
Date Joined: 27-06-2016

Yu Sue
Research Assistant
Supervisor: Dr Wu Qiang
Date Joined: 01-08-2016
Welcome to the Family

Guan Jye Swei
Laboratory Technologist
Supervisor: A/P Maxey Chung
Date Joined: 19-09-2016

Loh Jian Yun
Laboratory Technologist
Supervisor: Dr Chen Ee Sin
Date Joined: 19-10-2016

Ng Xiao Wei, Joey
Laboratory Executive
Supervisor: A/P Matthew Chang
Date Joined: 14-11-2016
Farewell

We are sad to see you leave ...

Li Yingying
Seah Kwi Shan
Suresh Selvarasu
Tan Weng Siong Hayden
Teo Wei Suong, Simon
Liyana Binte Jamal

Good luck in your future endeavours