

# Head of School Newsletter - April 2010

Head of School email address - In keeping with the new University of Sydney branding, the Head of School's email is now [physics.hos@sydney.edu.au](mailto:physics.hos@sydney.edu.au). The Science Foundation for Physics email is now [physics.fndn@sydney.edu.au](mailto:physics.fndn@sydney.edu.au).

School Reception/Front Office - Most members of staff will have noticed that the School now has a new Reception, Front Office and Mail Room. The Reception will be manned during normal business hours by Jean Pierre Cheaib. This has meant a change in role for JP and he will no longer be undertaking the specific role of Executive Assistant to the Head of School. He is thanked for serving in this role over recent years. JP's future duties will include responding to enquires from staff, students and visitors; managing the school postal system and managing the School Vehicle fleet.

Recent Successes - Congratulations to David Reilly and Stephen Bartlett in obtaining a \$3.7M grant from IARPA in the USA for their quantum science research project on multi spin qubits.

Super Science funding for postdoctoral researchers has been obtained by Bryan Gaensler, Elaine Sadler, Geraint Lewis, Scott Croom, Tara Murphy, Joss Bland-Hawthorne and Iver Cairns. Congratulations to all.

Four international students (out of a total of 9 in the Faculty) have been awarded IRS and IFS scholarships to be supervised by Zdenka Kuncic, Cathy Stampfl, Geraint Lewis and Serdar Kuyucak. A good outcome for the School.

Commendation - Dr Maryanne Large has been highly commended by the Vice-Chancellor's Committee for Excellence for her outstanding contribution to supervision and ability to engage and motivate her students.

News - Members of the School will have noticed that more news items are now appearing on the School's home web page. Staff are encouraged to submit news items to Alison Muir for inclusion. We have much to tell people about our many activities and successes.

A new world record - Michael Biercuk, the School's new Senior Lecturer has reported that he and his collaborators at NIST in the USA have measured a force of 174 yoctonewtons (yN). This is reported to be the smallest force ever detected, by some three orders of magnitude and a world record. Details have been reported in 'The Economist' this week:

[http://www.economist.com/science-technology/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=159490](http://www.economist.com/science-technology/displaystory.cfm?story_id=159490)

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Centres of Excellence and Future Fellowships - A number of School staff have been involved in submissions for ARC Centres of Excellence (CoE) or nodes of CoE's to be based in the School. We look forward to their success. Six individuals within the School have applied for ARC Future Fellowships. We also wish them the very best of success.

Denison Funding - I mentioned in my previous newsletter to the School that it was possible that Denison funds might not be made available for travel this year due to financial constraints imposed by the global financial crisis. I am able to confirm that this is now the case that no Denison travel funds will be available in 2010. This decision, which has not been taken lightly, is partly due to the increase in the number of Denison student scholarships that have been funded this year. Similarly, there will be no Denison funds awarded this year to postgraduate research students.

Scholarships, Prizes and Awards, and Graduation Lunch - On Friday 28 May from 12noon to 12.45pm the School's Scholarships, Prizes and Awards ceremony will be held in the Slade Lecture Theatre followed by the School's graduation lunch being held in The Glass Foyer, Sydney Law School.

Messel Tribute Event - All School staff are encouraged to attend 'Honouring Excellence - A Tribute to Emeritus Professor Harry Messel' to be held in the Great Hall on Thursday 20 May 6-8pm. From 1952 to 1987 as Head of the School of Physics, Harry founded the Science Foundation for Physics in 1954 to raise

funds for innovative physics research including SILLIAC - the first Australian-built automatic computer, the Mills Cross radio telescope, radio telemetry, nuclear science and solar research. Please let Alison Muir know that you will be attending.

The Australian Institute of Physics - The Australian Institute of Physics exists to support professional physicists and to promote all aspects of physics to the wider community. The NSW branch aims to support physicists in education and research and promote all aspects of physics to the wider community in NSW. This is achieved through numerous activities including a series of scientific meetings and lectures including the Youth and Women in Physics lecture series and Physics in Industry day, organization of and participation in physics conferences in NSW, education and outreach activities at all three educational levels and for the general community and assisting in the development of state and federal government science policy. A/Prof Mike Wheatland has been the University of Sydney AIP representative for some time now and has expressed a desire in handing over this role to another keen individual. Interested individuals should contact Mike.

Green Paper - The Green Paper consultation process has now been completed. Including the School's response, there were in total 311 responses, 99 from groups and 212 from individuals.

School Party - We held a successful School Party last Friday evening. These types of events are important to help in building up a sense of community within the School.

SRE Staff Time-Use Surveys - All those members of the School's academic staff who completed time-use surveys as part of the government's Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) initiative are thanked. The Federal Government required all Australian universities to undertake this in order to access substantial additional funding for research. The University achieved a response rate of 76% which exceeded the target set by the federal Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. Over the next 4 years, new funding under the SRE program will become progressively available and by 2013 the University of Sydney expects to receive \$35-40 million pa in new funding. SRE funds are to support research and their use is less restricted than RIBG funds. Thus, these funds are very important to our research endeavours.

Administration of scholarships in the University - A new Scholarships Office has been established in the University to better align support functions and provide an improved student experience. The new Scholarships Office will consolidate the University undergraduate Scholarships and Prizes Office and the University postgraduate research scholarships team. This was originally part of the Research Office under the DVC (Research) but the new Scholarships Office will come under the DVC (Education) to endeavour to support a strong and vital research training program for the University.

NSW Young Tall Poppy Science Award - There are only two days left to nominate a bright young researcher for a 2010 NSW Young Tall Poppy Science Award. Nominations close Sunday 2nd May. Nominations are accepted from all fields of Science and Technology. Nominees will be up to 35 years of age with between 2 and ten years post-doctoral research experience and who are either permanent residents or citizens of Australia. For further details see: <http://www.aips.net.au>.

AusAID Australian Leadership Award Fellowships - Round 8 of the AusAID Australian Leadership Award Fellowships (ALAF) programme is opening on 17th May and closing on 25th June 2010. The Australian Leadership Award Fellowships are a component of a regional program that aims to develop leadership and build partnerships and linkages with the Asia-Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean and Palestinian territories and now Africa. They are awards intended for those who are already leaders or have the potential to assume leadership roles that can influence social and economic policy reform and development outcomes. For further details see: <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar/alafellow.cfm>.

Wentworth Medal - The Wentworth Medal, worth \$12,500 is one of the University of Sydney's most prestigious essay competitions. Open to all currently enrolled students at Sydney, except for previous recipients.

Topic: "Does Australia need universities?" Length: 3000 words. Closes: 5pm, 29 July 2010.