Update from Clinical Associate Dean

Welcome to the third St George and Sutherland Clinical School newsletter for 2017. The year continues to be one that heralds significant changes. In the Clinical School, as in the wider University of NSW, the 2025 strategy has led to dramatic changes in the way administration is structured and managed. I hope you can bear with us as there are dramatic shifts in personnel and tasks, whether in the Clinical Teaching Units or looking after conjoint positions or grants.

On the topic of grants, the NHMRC has proposed dramatic changes to the way grants are structured, reviewed and awarded, starting with the 2019 application round for funding in 2020. I think many of these changes are for the better in places like clinical schools. The changes are numerous and too complex to outline here, but you can read further about changes thus far and access the current consultation paper on peer review.

The Microbiome Research Centre and St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation have now awarded a first round of microbiome-related research grants to a number of research groups at St George Hospital. This is an outstanding initiative: it assists us in meeting our strategic local research goals; it brings together novel research groups across very disparate specialty areas; and it engenders a real spirit of collaboration, which of course will be the hallmark of successful clinically-oriented research into the future.

Medical student exams are well underway, with final year exams already done and dusted (and many thanks to all of you who helped with these), and phase 2 and phase 1 exams soon upon us. It’s always a busy and interesting time of year and all of us in the Clinical School are extremely grateful for the assistance provided in examining. Joanna and Michael in the CTU at St George, and Justin at Sutherland, run a well-oiled machine with great skill, but that would be worth little without selfless contributions from the many conjoints who help out.

There are many other topics covered in the following pages. As always, contributors welcome direct contact from anybody who has questions. Happy reading!

Prof Michael Grimm
Clinical Associate Dean

Update from Professor of Medicine

The past four months have witnessed very exciting developments at our School.

Our Microbiome Research Centre is up and running. We are delighted to welcome Dr Fatima El-Assaad as the Senior Research Associate for the MRC. She has the crucial role of coordinating and developing the research strategy of the MRC and overseeing our collaborations with the various stakeholders and external collaborators. Her very successful trip to China recently will open up research collaborations and exchanges with three outstanding centres in Beijing, Xi’an and Hangzhou.

The MRC has received a tremendous research boost over the past month. Through the SSMRF, close to $1M has been disbursed for seed grant funding. Six new projects have been funded on microbiome related topics including maternal health, inflammatory bowel disease, head and neck cancer, SLE and anti-phospholipid syndrome, thrombotic diseases, and chemotherapy in colorectal cancer.

I am absolutely delighted to finally welcome my friend and colleague Georgina Hold, who started here as Professor on October 31st. Georgina’s husband (Craig) and two lovely children (Hannah and Sam) have quickly settled down though they are struggling to adjust to the nice weather in Sydney! Georgina brings with her world class expertise in microbiology, especially in the context of inflammatory bowel disease. Georgina will lead a collaborative programme studying the role of the microbiome in IBD. She will work with experts locally, nationally and internationally and I am hopeful this will translate into globally impactful research in the near future. We wish her and her family the best.

This is a very exciting time at St George & Sutherland Clinical School!

Prof Emad El-Omar
Professor of Medicine
Postgraduate Update

The St George & Sutherland Clinical School Postgraduate Student Program currently has 20 enrolled students (13 enrolled in a PhD and 7 in Masters).

We welcome the following new students in Semester 2, 2017:

- Xupeng BAI (Supervisor: Yong Li)  
  Research topic: *Breast cancer radioresistance (PhD)*

- Rhonda FARRELL (Supervisor: David Morris)  
  Research topic: *The current and future role of peritonectomy and heated intraperitoneal chemotherapy (HIPEC) for treatment of epithelial ovarian cancer in Australia (PhD)*

- Suzanne MA (Supervisor: Michael Talbot)  
  Research topic: *Revisional bariatrics: long term outcomes in laparoscopic gastric band to laparoscopic gastric sleeve (Masters)*

- Anes YANG (Supervisor: Dedee Murrell)  
  Research topic: *Investigations and outcome measures of uncommon dermatological conditions (Masters)*

Congratulations to the following students on the completion of their degree over the last 6 months:

- Frances BASS - Masters (Supervisor: John Myburgh)
- Vicki Ellen PATTON - PhD (Supervisor: Denis King)
- Teng ZHANG - PhD (Supervisor: Ian Cook)

Annual progress reviews are currently being held during November and December. We are currently scheduling reviews for 2018.

We are always looking for panel members to sit on each review. If you are a conjoint or academic staff member with a PhD who could spare 2 hours to sit on a panel, please keep an eye out for the email seeking panel members. You can also express your interest here.

Students are reminded to ensure their supervisors are available to attend the reviews.

Postgraduate Students - Dates for your diary

- Animal Care and Ethics Course - 15 - 16 November; Refresher course 28 November
- Thesis Writing Bootcamp Seminar - 25 - 26 November

See also the Graduate Research School newsletter.

Update from Clinical Teaching Unit

Both St George and Sutherland Clinical Teaching Unit have now completed the Phase 3 Year 6 Final Exams. A very big thank you to all staff who participated and contributed to the success of the exam process - we could not do this without your commitment and dedication.

We will again be asking for your help for the following examinations:

- Phase 2 (Years 3) ICE clinical examinations - Tuesday 21st & Wednesday 22nd November (both St George and Sutherland CTUs); and
- Phase 1 (Year 2) OSCE examinations - Tuesday 28th – Thursday 30th November (St George CTU)

Joanna and Justin have sent out emails asking for everyone’s availability. If you do meet a patient with an interesting history or good clinical signs who would be happy to be involved in the clinical exams please let us know (emails below).

The Year 6 students have commenced their PRINT (Preparation for Internship) term on 9th October before they go on to graduate later this year. Next year we will have a new set of interns.

Sadly, we will farewell Justin Joynes at the end of this year, and we thank him for 11 years service to the Sutherland CTU (with a total of 20 years at UNSW). We wish him all the best in the future. Recruitment for a replacement is currently underway.

Student Awards

Congratulations to the following students on receiving the following awards:

- Monica Majumder - 2017 David De Carle Prize for the best overall performance in the Integrated Clinical Examination of a phase 3 Medical Student
- Nadin Azzam - 2017 Ken Cox Price for Surgery for the best performance in Surgery of a Phase 3 Medical Student
- Theresa Thuy-Trang Nguyen - 2017 John Edmonds Prize for Medicine for the best performance in Medicine of a Phase 3 Medical Student

Joanna Tjojoatmodjo/Michael Davidson  
St George CTU  
djuniah@unsw.edu.au/michael.davidson1@unsw.edu.au  
x32709 / x32022  
Justin Joynes  
Sutherland CTU  
j.joynes@unsw.edu.au  x37946
Conjoint Appointments - General Principles

Below are some general principles in relation to conjoint appointments held at St George & Sutherland Clinical School.

Conjoint status refers to honorary appointments and does not include individuals who are employed by UNSW as paid tutors or in other paid roles. The Conjoint system is designed for individuals who make a significant contribution to UNSW Medicine, with the notional quantity being a minimum of 30 hours per year. Contributions can be in the form of teaching, research, participating in student examinations, service on Faculty committees or any other activity which is part of the business of UNSW Medicine. Appointments will be based on demonstrated performance rather than potential contributions.

Elibility Requirements & Hospital Appointment

In addition to the direct contributions to University teaching, research and/or service, a person must have been employed with St George Hospital or Sutherland Hospital, and not solely in alternative hospitals or private practice. Where the direct relationship with the hospital ends, the conjoint appointment will also be terminated. Conjoint appointments are not available to full time postgraduate students.

Duration of Appointment

- **Associate Lecturer** - 1 year (mostly junior hospital staff or medical staff in training who generally hold annual appointments). Either renewed or terminated as of 1 March each year. Renewal can be indicated by Head of School and does not require a new application
- **Lecturer/Senior Lecturer** - indefinite, subject to annual approval by Head of School (no requirement to submit renewal application) - lists are sent prior to October
- **Associate Professor/Professor** - 4 years (renewal application required as of 1 July of the calendar year 4 years from the year of appointment).

Lists of conjoint staff are provided to the School every 3 months for review.

In instances where the appointee's (external or internal) employment situation changes or ceases, the conjoint appointment will be reviewed by the Head of School or DVC(A) as appropriate to determine whether the Conjoint appointment should also be terminated. This will be undertaken with appropriate reference to the contribution of the appointee to UNSW and the appointee advised accordingly.

New Conjoint Appointments

The following staff have been appointed as new conjoints with the School since July:

**Promotions**
- Andrej Bece (Lecturer)
- Sam Adie (Senior Lecturer)

Research in Progress Meetings 2017

As 2017 begins to draw to a close, we are proudly reflecting back on the high calibre and exciting research presented this year at our clinical school.

The tremendous line-up of distinguished invited guests continued into the second half of the year, beginning with **Dr Cristan Herbert** and his PhD student **Dr Yifan Chen**, who gave an excellent insight into the causes and mechanism behind chronic inflammatory pulmonary conditions. **Associate Professor Sheila Donnelly** followed, proposing parasitic worms as a surprising and slightly confronting potential therapeutic for autoimmune disease. Cellular replication was the focus of our next speakers, **Dr Anthony Cesare** and **Dr Noa Lamm-Shalem**, who informed us about replication stress and mitotic arrest and their potential implications in cancer therapeutics.

**Oliver Fisher** brought us from cells to code by giving an insight into his experience with programming, statistical modelling and bioinformatics as an integral component of precision medicine and cancer prognostics. **Dr Rohit Jain** and his post-doc **Dr Shweta Tikoo** provided a stunning view of our immune systems, with vivid images of T cell migration during inflammation and the role of macrophages in tumour development.

Next were **Associate Professor Patrick Bertolino** and **Dr Frederic Sierro**, who demonstrated the role of hepatic cells in T cell function and interaction in the liver and described a newly discovered population of hepatic macrophage. Finally, **Professor Roland Stocker** and **Dr Ghassan Maghzal** highlighted the biological functions of singlet molecular oxygen and other reactive species in the regulation of blood pressure and heart health. As usual, refreshments in our meetings were catered by our local Kogarah café Kaimaki.

Plans for the 2018 Research in Progress Meetings are already underway. We would like to welcome two new committee members **Dr Halina Leung** and **Mr Andrew Gia**. If you would like to present or you would like to nominate a speaker please contact Dr Fatima El-Assaad.

You can [subscribe here](#) to keep up-to-date the program.

The RIPvM committee wish you all a Happy Holidays and New Year. We hope to see you in 2018!

**Fatima El-Assaad, Freda Passam, Meera Esvaran, Andrew Gia, Halina Leung & Howard Yim**

Research In Progress Committee Members

**Conjoint Lecturers**
- Luke Chen, Danielle Field, Murtaza Jammagenalla,
- Ajantha Raguparan, Siew-Piau (SP) Tan

**Conjoint Associate Lecturers**
- Lap Cheng, Heidi Cheung, James Doherty, Jianna He,
- Ravin Hettiarachchi, Jeremy Knott, Fiona Lau, Blake Nield,
- Sophie Roome, William Wang, Madeleine Wilkinson,
- James Zhang
Welcome new CEO

Jacquie Stratford took over the role of chief Peter Christopher in July this year.

Ms Stratford has a long history both in fund raising and medical research. As GM of the Melanoma Foundation she helped raise millions of dollars. Other senior roles include COO, Bosch Institute, MD, Dymocks Childrens Charities and EO, St Luke’s Hospital Foundation.

Jacquie has set herself a personal challenge to double the fundraising over the next 2 years.

SSMRF Celebrates 10 Years!

The SSMRF celebrated its 10th birthday in style hosting an anniversary dinner at NSW Parliament House on 27 September.

The 267 guests include doctors, researchers and medical teams from St George Hospital and the Sutherland Hospital as well as government officials, local dignitaries, business people, former patients and friends and supporters of SSMRF.

Guest speakers included Federal Treasurer Scott Morrison, David Gonski, Chancellor of UNSW, Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim, Australian of the Year 2017, Professor Emad El-Omar, Director MRC and Professor John Edmonds, Chair SSMRF.

The event showcased the achievements of SSMRF over the past decade, thanked and acknowledged the SSMRF Board and supporters and created excitement for SSMRF’s plans for the next decade.

Inaugural MRC Grant Announcement

On 6 October 2017, the SSMRF officially announced the Inaugural Microbiome Research Centre (MRC) Research Grants at a morning tea held in the Research & Education Centre.

Members of SSMRF Board, local dignitaries joined researchers and medical staff for the important announcements.

SSMRF has recently been awarded $4million from the Federal Government to establish the Microbiome Research Centre (MRC) at St George Hospital. Improved understanding of the microbiome is the most exciting development in medicine over the past decade and it impacts on all aspects of health and disease. The research agenda of the MRC will focus on the role of the microbiome in clinically relevant health problems that affect the Australian population.

The following MRC Grants were announced:
- Dr Amanda Henry & team - The Microbiome in Pregnancy and Infancy
- Professor Michael Grimm & team - The longitudinal course of inflammatory bowel disease
- Dr Peter Wu & team - Oro-Pharyngeal dysbiosis in head and neck cancer
- Dr Bill Giannakopoulous & team - Murine and human studies SLE APS
- Professor Beng Chong & team - Role of microbiota dysbiosis in immune thrombocytopenia and thrombosis
- Dr Winston Liauw & team and team - Anti-cancer therapy on the gut microbiome in gastrointestinal cancer

Jacquie Stratford, Chief Executive Officer/
Virginia Venckus, Executive Director
St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation
Operational Excellence Update

Operational Excellence is well underway and with the implementation of Workplace Change effective from 12th September 2017 new structures have been confirmed.

The staffing structure for the Clinical School is changing and this has affected some of our staff. Both Javed Akhter, Technical Officer and Sinead O’Reilly, Senior Technical Officer will be leaving their appointments from the university. The research laboratories will now be managed by a central support structure namely ‘Faculty Research Support’. This will consist of the recruitment of a new Laboratory Manager and Technical Assistant who will now manage both levels 2 and 3 of the Research and Education Centre, reporting directly to the Research Infrastructure Manager at the Faculty.

Javed Akhter officially finished up on Friday 10 November from the university and Sinead O’Reilly will finish up in mid-February 2018. I would personally like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and contributions over the many years they have been with the Clinical School.

The implemented changes to the Clinical Teaching Unit will have two Education Support Administrators, one at St George and another at Sutherland report to the Education Support Officer at the Clinical School. Joanna Tjoatmodjo is in the role of Education Support Officer with Michael Davidson, Education Support Administrator. The new structure has changed the role at the Sutherland Clinical Teaching Unit which has affected the position Justin Joynes, Student Administrative Officer held. Justin will be leaving the role at the end of the year and recruited for the appointment of a new Education Support Administrator is underway.

Again I would like to express our thanks to Justin for his hard work and dedication not only to the Clinical School but the university for all his years of service. We wish Javed, Sinead and Justin success in their future endeavours.

The main office of the Clinical School will continue to be supported by myself as School Manager but will be eventually be supported by the role of an Administrative Officer, Administrator and Administrative Assistant.

Whilst recruitment for all the roles at the Clinical School proceed I urge you to be patient with the various changes to the service delivery and be mindful of the impact on colleagues around you. Thank you.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Hemaxi Ghelani
School Manager

Work Health & Safety

The Clinical School L3 WHS committee is involved in stimulating a culture of safety within all areas of the school and ensures that any health and safety issues and concerns are raised and addressed.

Minutes of the last committee meeting held in August 2017 are on the School’s website WHS page.

The L3 laboratory has recently purchased a state of the art Leica confocal microscope. Key users have been trained over 4 days.

Lan Gong
WH&S Chairperson

Committee Members

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<td>Chairperson</td>
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<td>Laboratory and research areas</td>
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Next Edition

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and will be back with our next Newsletter in March 2018.