QUI BUI RETIRES

Qui Bui retired on 24 April after a 27-year career at UC. A few of the guests at his retirement function this month were caught on camera: (left) Phillipa Williams, John Hannah, Qui Bui and Gunter Steinke; (middle) MC Rick Beatson; and (right) Allen Witt, Steve Gourdie and Bob Broughton. Qui recalls that Rick Laugesen (University of Illinois), his long-time collaborator and frequent visitor, was a student in his Honours Analysis class in his first year of teaching. Amongst the postgraduate students Qui has supervised is his current collaborator Tim Candy (Imperial College London), who was also a recent visitor. Qui will continue to be seen around the School in his capacity as a Senior Adjunct Fellow.

NEW CENTRE of RESEARCH EXCELLENCE (CoRE)

Congratulations to Alex James (Deputy Director), Jeanette McLeod and Mike Plank, UC Principal Investigators with Te Punaha Matatini – The Centre for Complex Systems and Networks, hosted by the University of Auckland, which has been selected by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) as one of 6 new Centres of Research Excellence (CoREs) for 2015-2020. The Royal Society of New Zealand ran the selection process with the final decisions being made by the TEC. TEC Chief Executive Tim Fowler, when making the announcement, said that the CoREs will be conducting world-leading research in areas that are fundamental to the interests of New Zealand. Te Punaha Matatini - The Centre for Complex Systems will focus on harnessing and understanding complex big data sets for economic, social and environmental benefit. Funding of nearly $210 million over 6 years for the CoREs begins on 1 January 2015.

NSF-FUNDED PROJECT

Congratulations to Mike Steel, one of four Principal Investigators in a successful three-year research project, Terraces, Large Trees and Trait Evolution, funded by the US-based National Science Foundation (NSF).

This project, led by Michael Sanderson at the University of Arizona, will develop and apply new mathematical and computational methods to phylogenetics. It provides three years of funding totalling US$695,000, which includes support for a postdoc, graduate students, and computing and exchanges amongst the three groups based at the University of Arizona, University of Canterbury, and Heidelberg, Germany.

MIKE STEEL INTERVIEW

Check out the following link to a Canta interview with Mike Steel re UC’s supercomputer BlueFern, which is based over at Dovedale: http://canta.co.nz/features/back-to-the-beginning-with-bluefern/
A FAMILIAR FACE RETURNS TO THE TEACHING STAFF

Welcome back to Hannes Diener, who commenced a five-year fixed-term lecturing position with us this month. Hannes graduated PhD in Mathematics here in 2008 before returning to Germany in May 2009 to take up a postdoctoral position at the University of Siegen. Sarah Kerr, also a former student here, joined him shortly after that and they married in 2010. In 2011, Hannes spent a semester as a visiting assistant research professor at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton before returning to a substitute (full) professor position at the University of Siegen. The young lady performing for the camera is their daughter Elizabeth, who was born in 2012.

SCHOOL VISITORS

This month we farewelled Simone Linz, who has been here for the first two years of her three-year Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowship working on questions relating to phylogenetic trees and networks. These fellowships enable scientists to pursue independent research programmes for up to three years, with the last year being spent at a European university. Similar programmes are available for New Zealand-based researchers who have completed their PhDs and want to work in Europe for an extended period. Simone has now returned to the University of Tübingen, Germany. She thanks the School for hosting her for the past two years and hopes to see us again in the future.

PAPER SUBMITTED


PAPERS ACCEPTED


PAPERS PUBLISHED


CONFERENCES AND VISITS

Alex James and Raaz Sainudiin were invited to participate in Perspectives on New Zealand’s Data Future, presented by the New Zealand Data Futures Forum on 30 May in Christchurch and described as “an exclusive opportunity to be part of a crucial discussion about the opportunities, risks and potential way forward for data sharing.” The New Zealand Data Futures Forum is a group of private and public sector individuals brought together by the Minister of Finance and Statistics to spark an informed discussion and debate on the future of data.

QUIZ NIGHTS

They say old age and cunning will usually triumph over youth and enthusiasm, and our staff quiz team is doing its best to live up to that motto! After their recent success against a student team, the staff came second equal in this month’s Golden Key quiz and have gone on to further success at their usual Fox and Ferret quiz night. Well done, team – Miguel, Elena, Penny, Helen, Hannes and Penny’s friend Tim!
From the Library


From the Web

- Big Data: Are We Making a Big Mistake? (FT Magazine) [http://on.ft.com/1FyRMxz]
- Statistical Flaw Punctuates Brain Research in Elite Journals (Scientific American) [http://bit.ly/1qdrQVx]
- Equations Are Art inside a Mathematician’s Brain (Scientific American) [http://bit.ly/1mDskVI]
- Academics Write Papers Arguing over How Many People Read (And Cite) Their Papers (Smithsonian Mag) [http://bit.ly/1jKRNIj]
- Metrics’ Role in Assessing Research Reviewed (Chemistry World) [http://rsc.li/1qjiMD]
- Introduction to Traditional Peer Review (Scientific American) [http://bit.ly/InniOTj]
- Nature Publishing Group Requires Faculty Authors to Waive ‘Moral Rights’ (Chronicle of Higher Education) [http://bit.ly/1dIItXk]
- CC-BY, Copyright, and Stolen Advocacy (Scholarly Kitchen) [http://bit.ly/1hcyLXK]
- Serious Reading Takes a Hit from Online Scanning and Skimming, Researchers Say (Washington Post) [http://wapo.st/R3uNfp]
- Take Notes by Hand for Better Long-Term Comprehension (APS) [http://bit.ly/1h4GLeH]
- I Sold My Undergraduate Thesis to a Print Content Farm [Academic Book Mills] (Slate) [http://slate.me/1o22cp7]
- As Researchers Turn to Google, Libraries Navigate the Messy World of Discovery Tools (Chronicle of Higher Education) [http://bit.ly/1iaiBVo]
- UC Library’s “MultiSearch” is the “Summon” search system
- What Will Become of the Library? (Slate) [http://slate.me/1fflZ0m]

And on the lighter side ...

- Dancing Stick Figures Graph Mathematical Functions with Their Arms (io9) [http://bit.ly/1IPJS1X]
- A Mathematician is a Machine for Turning Coffee into Theorems (Math with Bad Drawings) [http://bit.ly/1Ey8i8L]