Welcome to our newsletter which is for everyone thinking of studying Life Sciences at Warwick. Full course details are on our web pages (warwick.ac.uk/uglifesci) but the aim here is to give a little extra insight into our School and highlight current student and graduate activities. In this edition find out about speaking live to the International Space Station, mass spectrometry and how your third year research project could lead to a publication. If you would like to visit the School then come along to an Open Day (warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/lifesci/study/ug/events/) or why not attend one of our Public Science Evenings (warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/lifesci/outreach/publicsciencevents/). If you have any questions about studying with us then please do get in touch via ug.lifesciences@warwick.ac.uk.

The International Biology Olympiad
The International Biology Olympiad (IBO) is a competition to test the abilities of young biologists. It takes place every year in a different country and in summer 2017 it came to the UK and was hosted by the School of Life Sciences. It was a huge undertaking in which University staff and students worked together to make the event a real success. 264 competitors, aged between 14 and 18, from 65 different countries competed in a series of practical and theoretical exams. Congratulations to all the medal winners. It was an honour for the School to host this hectic and inspiring week.

“I initiated the organisation and delivery of the IBO with my colleague Dr Leanne Williams. I really enjoyed being involved with my team and delivering a successful practical on the day. The collegiality it brought to the School was almost humbling and I am more proud than I have ever been - well done SLS.”

Professor Kevin Moffat
Director of Outreach

“I was a team guide which means being a friendly face and being there if the competitors have any questions. We went on excursions to places like Warwick Castle and Coventry Cathedral. I really enjoyed the cultural night and the thing that stands out for me most was all the wonderful people I met. It was really nice to meet people from all over the world.”

Abi Parsons
Biochemistry Student

December 2017
Study Life Sciences
**Third year Undergraduate Research Project has Impact**

Oliver Warren, one of our 2016 graduates, has recently published a paper in the international scientific journal *Health Expectations* based on his Year 3 research project. It questioned whether the general population want either a prenatal or preconception genetic screen for spinal muscular atrophy. A co-author Dr Felicity Boardman (Warwick Medical School) is sitting on the Nuffield Ethics review panel which is deciding whether to include spinal muscular atrophy in the UK prenatal screening panel.

This is a really good example of how our UG projects can have real impact.

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**Welcome to new blogger Emma**

Joining our current blogger Emily, Emma will blog about her experiences as a 2nd year student. Catch up with their blogs at studentblogs.warwick.ac.uk/lifesciences4. Blogs include ‘Applying for Internships’ and ‘Choosing your modules’.

**Don’t understand time-of-flight mass spec sequencing?**

Watch academic Dr Alex Jones explain all, using ping pong balls to represent amino acids, at our recent Open Day. [youtu.be/illYqJ3GcX4](youtu.be/illYqJ3GcX4)

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**Professor Nicholas Dale** is one of our academic researchers in neuroscience. He studies chemical signalling in the brain using a combination of electrophysical, imaging and biosensing methods. One area of his research has established that brain cells detect amino acids in our food and send signals that we should be feeling full and stop eating. Listen to an interview with Professor Dale on this research at [http://bit.ly/2k5DlWV](http://bit.ly/2k5DlWV).

Professor Dale’s spin out company Sarissa Biomedical Ltd is developing and commercialising a range of novel biosensors for clinical conditions. They have developed a portable point-of-care finger prick blood test for stroke which detects purines, a biomarker released at the very onset of a stroke, within minutes.

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**What happens to an astronaut’s senses in space?**

During New Scientist Live 2017, Eleni Daniels, third from the left in the photo, entered a competition to put a question to Paolo Nespoli, an astronaut currently working on the International Space Station (ISS). Her question was ‘aboard the ISS, what happens to your senses and how does this affect your life?’. On hearing the question Paolo immediately started floating upside down and said “You don’t need to work on a vertical established by gravity and this makes a strong change to your mind. In the artificial surroundings of space smell, touch and the skin are different. Fluids in your body and your internal organs move differently. It feels incredible.”

“It felt amazing, I still actually cannot process that it happened. I want to get into the Space Physiology field so it was a dream come true. However, I was so nervous I cannot remember asking the question and am very relieved it actually came out OK!”

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Watch the event on YouTube [youtu.be/MoqO2wz3UBU](youtu.be/MoqO2wz3UBU)