

# Institute of Medical Molecular Biotechnology Newsletter



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**IMMB VISITING SCIENTIST.** IMMB is proud to receive **DR. JEFFREY D. WELLS**, Associate Professor from the **FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, USA** as our first **IMMB VISITING SCIENTIST** for around two weeks. AP. Dr. Jeffrey D. Wells took a 20-hour flight from Florida, USA and arrived at KLIA on 7 Sept 2022. He was greeted at KLIA by the **IMMB Director, AP. Dr. Heo Chong Chin** and IMMB Visiting Scientist Program Director, **Mr. Azhar Ahmad**. His first official activity was to visit the research facilities at the Faculty of Medicine, including IMMB, followed by a meeting with IMMB researchers led by AP. Dr. Heo Chong Chin on 8 Sept 2022.



On 9 Sept 2022, **IMMB INTERNATIONAL WEBINAR 2022** was conducted with AP. Dr Jeffrey D Wells as the speaker. He shared his experience with the title of **The Logic of Forensic Entomology Analysis and Associating a Probability with an Estimate of Postmortem Interval**. This is a very interesting and important topic in solving forensic cases by narrowing the list of suspects. This hybrid webinar, moderated by AP. Dr. Heo Chong Chin was successfully attended by 59 participants. After the talk, AP. Dr. Well attended a meeting with the **Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, AP. Dr. Fazah Akhtar Hanapiah** to discuss the forms of collaboration that will be established in the future. This meeting was also attended by **AP. Dr. Thuhairah Hasrah Abdul Rahman**, the **Deputy Dean of Research and Innovation**, Faculty of Medicine. At this meeting, research collaboration were discussed for improvement, including the internationalization of the institution.

On 12 Sept 2022, **IMMB VISITING SCIENTIST TALK** was successfully conducted. In this talk, AP. Dr. Wells shared about **Molecular Biology Applications in Forensic Entomology, Death Investigation and Research**. It was followed by a discussion with the **IMMB Internal Advisors**, as well as a student research presentation session. All these activities were conducted in Meeting Room 1, IMMB.



**FORENSIC ENTOMOLOGY WORKSHOP** was successfully organized on 13 and 15 Sept 2022. In this workshop, AP. Dr. Wells shared his knowledge through the lecture topics: **Introduction to Forensic Entomology, Applications of Forensic Entomology and Introduction to Molecular Investigation in Diptera Species Identification**. He also shared his skills through fieldwork and analysis: **Field Observation of Carcass Decomposition, DNA Extraction and Genetic Data Analysis for Species Identification**. This workshop was successfully attended by a total of 30 participants, including 3 participants from **Chiang Mai University, Thailand**.

On 14 Sept 2022, AP. Dr. Wells and the other 15 researchers went to the **Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)** for fieldwork. This fieldwork session was guided by **FRIM Research Officer, Puan Nur Zati Akma Mustafa**. This fieldwork allowed AP. Dr. Wells to share his fieldwork skills and tips with the participants. He also shared the differences between species commonly caught in the USA and those caught during this fieldwork. The fieldwork ended with a visit to the **FRIM Insectarium** led by Puan Nur Zati Akma. In the afternoon, AP. Dr. Wells shared his skills through **The Demonstration of Fly Dissection** using flies that had been caught during the previous session.



On 19 Sept 2022, the last day in IMMB, AP. Dr. Jeffrey D Wells attended two separate **Discussion Session** with postgraduate students and supervisors in the Faculty of Medicine. In these session, he reviewed research proposals and discussed the improvements that could be made to improve the quality and outcome of the research works. Apart from being involved in research activities, he had also spent time exploring interesting places around Kuala Lumpur, Kajang and Putrajaya during the weekend. He left for Florida on 20 Sept 2022.

# ACTIVITIES, INITIATIVES & INVOLVEMENT

**MEET THE UiTM VICE-CHANCELLOR.** On 7 Sept 2022, Ms. Moriah Espanola Jackson, an AMERICAN FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR currently under the supervision of AP. Dr. Heo Chong Chin had the opportunity to meet the VC, Professor Datuk Ts. Dr Hajah Roziah Mohd Janor and shared her experience working at UiTM. This meeting was a part of the COURTESY VISIT from the Executive Director of MACEE, Mr. Curtis Johnson, to further strengthen the current and future cooperation with UiTM. It is hoped that this meeting will lead to more American Fulbright Scholars to collaborate with UiTM.



**BENCHMARKING VISIT FROM MANAGEMENT & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY (MSU) & UKM MEDICAL MOLECULAR BIOLOGY INSTITUTE (UMBI, UKM) TO FACULTY OF MEDICINE.** The delegates from MSU led by the lab officer from the Lab Science Department of MSU, Mr. Sharihin Mustafa on 14 Sept 22, while the delegates from UMBI was led by AP. Dr. Nor Azian Abdul Murad, the Director of UMBI on 23 Sept 2022. During this visit, the delegates were presented and exposed to the activities, facilities and research environment at IMMB. Various approaches related to daily operations and facility management have also been shared to improve the efficiency of laboratory services. The collaboration potential was also discussed to increase the visibility and achievements of the institution.



**VISIT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG AND SAMARKAND STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY, UKZBEKISTAN.** On 2 Sept 2022, IMMB received a visit from Dr. Félix Yuan and Ms. Taneisha Barrett from University of Hong Kong. Many research ideas were shared during the visit, including the potential for future collaboration.

On 28 Sept 2022, IMMB received delegates from Samarkand State Medical University, Uzbekistan. These delegates were led by the Dean of International Education, Dr. Mamarajabov Sobirjon. During the visit, they were exposed to the facilities and research activities at IMMB. This visit was also attended by the Deputy Dean of Academic, Faculty of Medicine, AP. Dr. Hazlyna Baharuddin.



**YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARD.** Congratulations to our current PhD students, Iman Nabilah Abd. Rahim and Siti Suhana Abdullah Soheimi, who were awarded the YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARD at 32<sup>nd</sup> MACB Conference 2022 - Integrated Approach In Medical Laboratory: Challenges And Opportunities. The conference was conducted on 12 & 13 Sept 2022.

**Congratulation to Dr. Noor Masyitah Jumahat & Dr. Zatilfarihiyah Rasdi,** who have successfully completed and awarded their PhD in the 94<sup>th</sup> UiTM Convocation Ceremony. Dr. Noor Masyitah was awarded the Excellence Doctoral Award, while the story of Dr. Zatilfarihiyah's study journey was mentioned in the UTUSAN MALAYSIA as an example of persistence in seeking knowledge. She had to divide and manage her time as a wife, mother of 8 and as a student throughout the three years of her PhD journey.



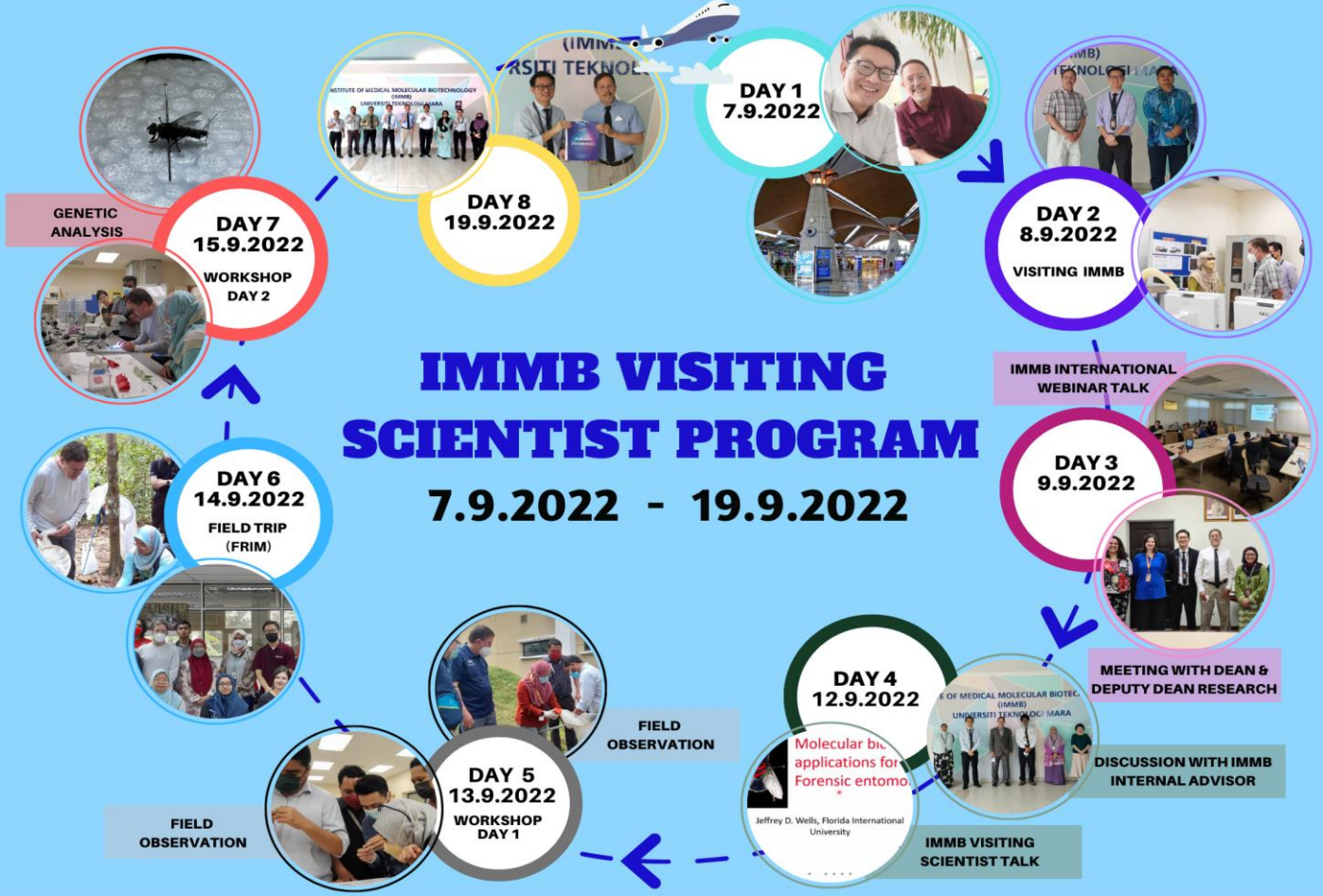
**SPRING CLEANING DAY - COLD ROOM.** This bi-annual event was conducted on 6 Sept 2022. The cleaning process involved removing unnecessary reagents or samples to ensure optimized use of space in the cold room. This allows more reagents and samples to be stored orderly and accessible. This event was conducted and supervised by IMMB staff, Mr. Mohd Ameer Azezy Abdul Wahab.

**WEBINAR ON SAFETY AWARENESS ON BIOSAFETY & FUME HOOD** was conducted on 8 Sept 2022 with Ms Rabiatul Adawiati and Ms. Shameela Syazwani from ESCO (M) Sdn. Bhd. as the invited speakers. They shared their expertise on the safety and principle of BSC and fume hood, the different between both of them, the best installation location in the lab, decontamination of BSC and the routine maintenance of BSC and fume hood. This sharing was successfully attended by 50 participants.



**CONTINUOUS TRAINING.** IMMB had organized a demonstration and hands-on training on basic laboratory skills. These activities were done to improve participants' skills and expose participants to the latest technologies. **Microplate Reader Demonstration** was conducted on 8 Sept 2022, with an invited facilitator from Thermo Scientific Sdn Bhd. **Pipette training** was held on 30 Sept 2022, in collaboration with Next Gene Sdn. Bhd.

The prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler."



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Dr. Abby Jones attended Texas A&M University in the United States (2014 to 2018), where she received her bachelor's degree with a double major in Forensic & Investigative Sciences and Entomology. For three of those years, she worked in the FLIES (Forensic Laboratory for Investigative Entomological Sciences) laboratory under Dr. Jeff Tomberlin, as an undergraduate researcher. She worked with several graduate students and aided in their research from identifying and measuring of necrophagous fly larvae to identifying adult insect.



The latter was taken from a mock mass mortality event experiment conducted in conjunction with Mississippi State University. During this time, she completed an Undergraduate Honors Thesis and won second place presenting her research at the Ecological Integration Symposium. Through her work at the FLIES laboratory, she garnered an interest in forensic entomology and obtained a second major in entomology. After graduating, she contacted Dr. Brandon Barton at Mississippi State University, whom she had worked with prior. She joined his lab in the Fall of 2018 as a Ph.D. student, with her research focused on the ecological effects of mass mortality. She was awarded several departmental and college grants and presented at multiple research conferences on the subject. She obtained her Ph.D. in Biological Sciences in 2022 and is now at UiTM as a postdoctoral scholar under AP. Dr. Heo Chong Chin. For the next two years, she will be working on several projects, with her primary focus on black soldier flies and landfill waste management research.

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