



# FISTULA

GÜMS Newsletter

June

2009

Welcome to FISTULA;  
your brief quarterly  
GÜMS update.



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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Hollie Casey

If I had to do a mini mental state exam right now I would probably fail... I'm not sure what day it is, Queensland seems to only have two seasons so I'm never sure which season it's supposed to be, I can't spell and my maths is atrocious. In addition to that, whenever I'm asked a question (any question 'common causes of RIF pain?', 'coffee before clinic?', 'what's your name?') by someone even remotely medical, my mind goes blank and I can't do anything but mumble unintelligible nonsense.

Welcome to the middle of the year. It's peak stress time for everyone. First years are facing their first ever med exams, second years are facing MSK and Neuro, third years, like myself have just realised that June has passed and very limited quality study has been done and fourth years, well, they have final exams and decisions (real decisions, not just Aviva or BMW) about the future to make. Personally, I'm in a strange place, somewhere between motivated and deer stuck in headlights.

Enough about me... what's been happening around Griffith Med since the last time we spoke? The answer is lots! On the academic side of life, a lot of hard work surveying students and amending the old Attendance Policy by several of the Hope4Health exec has resulted in a more lenient 'Participation Policy' being released. On behalf of all of the students, a big thank you to everyone that was involved. Don't forget that, you still have student reps in all of the academic committee meetings (Year 1/2 Meeting, Year 3/4 Meeting, Education Committee Meeting and School of Medicine Meeting) that take your feedback to the academic staff. Check out the GÜMS website to see

who your reps are (you can find this information under the 'academic' link). The more feedback you give your reps, the better the course can be made. So when they ask for feedback, please take 5 minutes to tell them how you feel. Remember - the more constructive the better. Make sure you check out Ben's report for more info on what is happening academically. If you want any more details about the committees, where your feedback goes or how you can become involved feel free to send me an email ([president@gums.org.au](mailto:president@gums.org.au)).

Speaking of the website, Esh has been working hard designing a new GÜMS site that will be filled with all kinds of useful information and links. We'll be in touch when it's up and running (hopefully mid July). Keep your eyes peeled and your ears open (how do you keep your ears open? Do I have this saying all wrong? Have I just published something as bad as saying 'for all intensive purposes?').

Our social team is looking forward to the Annual Four-Play event on July 17<sup>th</sup>. This year, we're also hoping to join forces with GÜNS and some of the allied health societies to have one big battle of the health degrees Trivia Night. Don't forget about GHC and AMSA Convention starting in just under a week. If you wanted to support Griffith come along to Brissie on Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> to cheer your team along on sports day. For more information on up and coming social events, keep reading for the social report.

Bonnie, our fearless Community Liaison Officer (you may have seen her at events such as the second-hand book sale, cake stall, selling red noses or making you take guesses on jars filled with lollies) has been working hard collecting donations for a mega



raffle-a-thon. Funds will be used to purchase another fridge for the common room (which you'll all keep clean and tidy). So, when you see us around, trying to make you buy things, give generously. On a serious note though, if you've got food in that fridge and it's rotten, for the love of God (or just the love of your fellow students - love being that feeling you feel on a Friday night after a few amber beverages), throw that crap away. It's nasty!

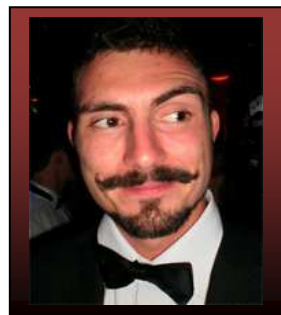


Wherever you are in your four year journey through the wilderness that is Griffith Med, hang in there, keep studying, relax when we throw you a party, and before you know it Christmas will be upon us. Good luck everyone!

If you have any suggestions about how we can help you more, any comments or questions, send me an email.

Cheers,

Hollie Casey  
(Your slightly delirious GUMS President)



## ACADEMIC REPORT - Ben Gerhardy

When you are studying post-grad medicine time doesn't just fly - it cracks along faster than Superman on methamphetamine. As I write this the first year students are about to enter study week for homeostasis and IMD, second year students have finished Brain + Behaviour and getting prepped for MSK, third year students have just had their mid-year break and our budding interns in fourth year are trying to not think about their final exams at the start of August.

Meanwhile the GUMS Academic portfolio has been growing. Over the last couple of months there has been a series of events for all years of Griffith medical students. In April GUMS ran Electives and Selectives Evening, which was open for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students and had a range of speakers (DFAT, Travel Doctor, the School of Medicine, Peregrine Adventures and Student Flights to name a few) providing ideas and guidelines for the 8 weeks of selectives and 10 weeks of electives that students are able to undertake in 4<sup>th</sup> year.

The 2009 GUMS Professional Speaker Series also kicked off with a bang, with the (now ex)

Dean, Professor Judy Searle, giving an informal talk about her life and career in medicine, and where she thinks the future of medicine and medical education lies. It was incredible to hear her speak and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her once more for giving up her time to speak with us.

On the speaker front there are some big plans set for Semester 2 - keep an eye out for those posters people.

This year the GUMS Peer Tutorial Scheme has gotten bigger and better than anyone could have expected. With numerous tutes for 1<sup>st</sup> year students and an incredible neuro tute for 2<sup>nd</sup> year (imagine 9 weeks of horribly complex material summed up beautifully in a 90minute presentation) it has been great to have so many senior students volunteer their time to help us all out. Maybe they just realise that if one day in the future they get sick then there is a good chance it will be one of us that will be treating them...

Looking to the future: I've got some exciting new plans that are nearing completion. GUMS is expanding the Peer Tutorial Scheme into some non-curricular practical skills (cannulation anyone?) and I'm reworking the GUMS Conference Subsidy Program to get more of you out of the lecture theatre and into the professional conferences. For those of you who haven't been to any conferences yet let me just say that it is like Christmas for a med student - you will walk away with more free stuff from various reps than you ever thought possible. Well worth it.

I'm also looking for any interested 1<sup>st</sup> year students who want to get together and help me/GUMS organise some relevant tutorials and events. After all, it is you guys who know what you want or need so the more of you that I can communicate with regularly the better it will work out for everyone. Thanks to those who have already emailed me: I'll be in contact with you after your well-earned break. For those of you who are interested shoot me an email at [academic@gums.org.au](mailto:academic@gums.org.au)

Finally I want to give a quick call out for anyone who has a competitive nature (I'm assuming all of you!) and wants to be involved in beating the sh\*t out of Bond in a medical debate that will be going on in semester 2. We absolutely killed them last year (I was adjudicating so I know) and this year we've even got some people from the Parklands campus debating society lined up to help out. So anyone keen to be involved email me at [academic@gums.org.au](mailto:academic@gums.org.au) and let me know.

Cheers,

Ben Gerhardy  
(Academic Rep)



## AMSA REPORT - Katie Buzacott

Hi everyone, hope you are enjoying being back after precious days of holidays (3rd+4th years), revving up for exams (1st years) or feeling brain-y (2nd years)! This is just a quick note to let you know the major things going on with AMSA in June/July:

1. Global Health Conference. For those who have already registered, you can find heaps of information about logistics at <http://amsa.org.au/ghc09>. I'll also send out an email shortly so all you delegates can find one another and organise carpooling etc.

2. Convention 2009. It's coming!! For those lucky people selected to attend this 50th anniversary convention, you'll find more information hitting your inboxes from the convention team all the time. Keep an eye out for one coming soon so all of us Griffidors can coordinate our costumes! Remember to join the Facebook group.

3. Convention 2009. It's worth mentioning again - because if you didn't get a full place, or you couldn't justify tearing yourself away from the books for a whole week, you're in luck - partial tickets are NOW AVAILABLE!!! Academic sessions are available for \$29 per afternoon (meet Kumar and get your Robbins and Cotran signed, hear John Taske's tale of Everest survival, attend suture or plastering workshops, or marvell at Charlie Teo's resilience) or let your hair down at the social parties for \$49 per night! These are first in, best dressed, so get in quickly!  
[http://amsa.org.au/convention09/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=1](http://amsa.org.au/convention09/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=1)

4. Vampire Cup. Each year, med students from around the country compete for a noble cause - which university cohort can donate the most blood? Exact dates are yet to be announced, but are thought to be within August - so get prepared! Scared of needles? Start desensitising yourself. Anaemic? Grab a steak (or suitable iron-filled vegetarian equivalent). Soft? Harden up! Griffith hasn't won the cup for 2 years, so let's make 2009 the Griffith year!

5. AMSA Life in the Real World event - 11th July 2009 in Brisbane. 60 extra places are now available! For more information and to register, go to <http://www.amsa.org.au/events-lrw.php> - but PLEASE make sure you abide by the dress code to avoid disappointment! Attendance at Convention is NOT required.

6. AMSA July Council. Soon, representatives from all Australian and New Zealand will be

converging on Brisbane to discuss our past, present and future as medical students and professionals. Do you have any questions or concerns about your course, your future training, your future career? Drop me a line at [amsa@gums.org.au](mailto:amsa@gums.org.au). AMSA works hard to tackle the big issues, so to do that, we need to know what they are! I also regularly attend AMAQ and other organisational meetings, so they're able to help out where they can too.

Cheers,

Katie Buzacott  
Liaison officer (AMSA, AMAQ, QMSC)

## COMMUNITY PROJECTS - Bonnie McRae

Well the new Community Portfolio is now definitely alive and kicking! It's been a busy few months for us at GUMS.

May produced a sweet treat with Jelly Baby month. The GUMS crew (and housemates who were blackmailed into assisting) were busy in the kitchen and baked up a storm for our cake stall. What with the cake stall and the merchandise sales we made over \$330 for Juvenile Diabetes Research (and produced extra practice for the dental students downstairs!)

June 26<sup>th</sup> saw GUMS supporting Red Nose Day and helping to raise funds to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. The GUMS crew are selling merchandise and hosting a competition to see who can guess the correct number of lollies in the jar. The winner this year is Nick Cairns with his guess of 134! So far we've raised over \$200 and hope to raise some more on the day.

Don't forget to keep an eye out for those crazy fitness fans of the GUMS GC Marathon team! The marathon will be on the 5<sup>th</sup> July and we've got 33 participants ready to hit the road. A big thank you is sent out to all those businesses who have donated product to help make our race kits awesome!

Keep an eye out for more community events in the coming months - it's Lifeline's Stress Down day on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, so get ready to kick back and relax!

Don't forget to contact us if you have any ideas for events or other charity ideas - [community@gums.org.au](mailto:community@gums.org.au).

Until next time,

Bonnie  
(Community Liaison Officer)





## SOCIAL REPORT - Matt Marino and Nick Aroney

What a few fun months it has been at Uni with the social events that have been organised. The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Med Ball was a grand success, with almost 400 people attending. It was a good night for everyone to get a bit dressed up, test their luck on the roulette table and test their luck on the dance floor. Thanks again to the girls of the Med Ball committee - Kathryn Jennings, Gabrielle Edney, Liz Harrison and Paige Lanyon-Roberts for all their help - it wouldn't have been the success it was without their tireless commitment.

There are a few exciting events coming up very shortly which everyone should come too. The after exam party for the first years will be held at Shooters on Wed July 1<sup>st</sup> - everyone is welcome to come; as history has shown us, it promises to be a spectacularly outrageous night. It will be a great opportunity to let your hair down and get to know some first years.

The traditional GUMS 4-Play launch party will be held on July 17 at CD's in Surfers - this is an event where all four years of Griffith University medical students get together, get to know each other and get to party hard together; a proverbial bonding session. All 4 years and their friends, partners, spouses, families (well, probably not the kiddies; we could get into a bit of trouble there), acquaintances, colleagues etc. are encouraged to come dressed in your finest winter attire and prepare to "Romp in the Snow". Check the posters around uni and your emails for further details.

There is only a few short months left of the Uni year which means you have to make the most of the functions being held. In September there will be a Sunday afternoon Barefoot Bowls session, we will keep you posted. Hope your all having/had a good holidays, and good luck with your exams first years!

Cheers,

Matt and Nick  
(Social representatives)



## INTERN REPORT - Alicia Smith

I started my internship at the Royal Brisbane Hospital in January. Filled with apprehension and anxiety, I will never forget my first shift in the Emergency Department. It was quite surreal to introduce myself as the doctor to the patient and his family - a title which felt quite undeserved. After all, I was just a medical student two months ago!

I'd been working as an intern for 3 days when my worst fears were realised. An elderly chap who I was seeing in the Emergency Department for renal colic asked 'how long have you been a doctor for, love?'. I thought hard and fast about all the possible answers to hide my youthful inexperience, worried that he would request a more experienced doctor if he really knew! In the end I told him honestly 'I've been a doctor for 3 days sir' to which he replied 'I always tell my wife that you know you're getting old when everyone else looks so young. Good luck to you love.' Patients such as that particular one make the transition quite easy!

Of course there are many other benefits... I magically get paid once a fortnight which makes a lovely incentive to go to work each day, and I was able to buy my dream car this year. I am not expected to have any medical knowledge whatsoever as I am 'just an intern' and I simply fill in forms or order tests while the consultant grills the poor medical students on obscure causes of a widened pulse pressure or Dupuytren's contractures. For that same reason, I have probably only studied for one hour in the entire year to date which feels like a well-deserved break after 9 long years at uni.

On the downside, some things aren't so great. I can't leave early for the day when there's nothing interesting going on, like I could as a student. In fact, I can't leave until the work is done and that has resulted in many 70-75 hour working weeks in recent times. My medicine consultant believes that all I can contribute to medicine is clerical work with regular DREs for a bit of 'hands on' when no one else wants to get their hands dirty. My pager was a novelty for the first day and now a beeping object that I resent wholeheartedly.

Most recently I did my first CPR on a real live (albeit pulseless) patient. I had been working late on the ward when the arrest buzzer went off and I suddenly realised that I was the first doctor on the scene with five nurses looking at me for direction. I successfully resuscitated an aggressive demented nursing home patient whose NFR status hadn't yet been clarified by the treating team... oops! It's a 100% success



rate so far, however in retrospect he was perhaps not the best candidate.

Internship has had its ups and downs but overall it wonderful to be finally working. For everyone who feels like graduation is too far away in the distance, remember how quickly the time goes.

It won't be long until you, too, are introducing yourself as the doctor to your very first patient!

Alicia Smith

Griffith University Graduate of 2008,  
Intern - Royal Brisbane Hospital,  
GUMS 2007 President



### You might be interested to know...

- Studies have been performed to determine whether the 'cool' placement of the stethoscope when not in use (circumcervical) is as efficacious as the traditional placement. (Hanley & Hanley 2000. *CAMJ*. 163(12), 1562-1563.

Seriously.



Fig. 1: Traditional (left) and "cool" (right) placements of the stethoscope when not in use.

- Julian Buck Syndrome, or JBS as it is commonly referred to as, is a syndrome comprised of the following symptoms:
  - Immense discomfort in the crotchula region
  - Awkward stance/walk
  - Temporary scrotal adhesion to the medial aspect of the thigh, often requiring manual adjustment

*Note: This one may or may not be true*



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Would you like to contribute an article for the next Fistula (on literally anything - from a year level update to inside jokes from your year) or photos from an event? If so, please contact [publications@gums.org.au](mailto:publications@gums.org.au).