

# THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

## DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

### Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**Present:** Dale Sanders (DS - Chair), Paul Walton (PHW), John Pillmoor (JBP), James Moir (JM), Tony Wilkinson (AJW), Ottoline Leyser (HMOL), Christoph Baumann (CB), Jennifer Potts (JP), Colin Kleanthous (CK)  
**In attendance:** Belinda Wade (BJW)  
**Apologies:** Keith Wilson (KSW), Rod Hubbard (REHu)

#### Action

**09/06**      **Minutes of the last meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009**  
The minutes were agreed.

**09/07**      **Matters arising from the Biology-Chemistry Planning Group: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

**i) From minute 09/02(ii) Biology-Chemistry research collaborations**

HMOL and AJW have composed a letter to send to the various categories of staff they originally identified. However, although some are straightforward, those in environmental and biomedical areas are more difficult because there are activities already ongoing in these fields. DS said that the Wellcome/Wolfson and YESI initiatives should firm up over the next few months hence strengthening collaborative possibilities. It was agreed that HMOL should send out the letters and this item should be kept on the agenda for the next BCPG.

**HMOL**

**09/08**      **Wellcome/Wolfson bid**

PHW informed BCPG that negotiations regarding the Wellcome/Wolfson bid had centered around a third leg of CII with this being a three storey building: top floor chemical biology, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor half HYMS and Psychology and half a PRF or new appointment and the bottom floor microbiology staff decanted from L1. The relocation of M0 groups would then allow YSBL staff to move into the vacated space. It is also necessary to house the animal scanner either by F/G wing or associated with this third building. This scanner is being provided by Bruker. It is very important for the bid to be cohesive and DS and PHW will co-ordinate the group of departments to sort out who will lead and what the bid will say. The total cost will probably be £8-9M which includes a University contribution of £2M and equipment costs. DS and PHW will lobby the PVC for Research to say that until the University agrees to guarantee to underwrite this £2M no further discussions about the bid can take place.

**DS/PHW**

**09/09**      **Chemical Biology/Cellular Microbiology research initiative**

The research initiative was discussed in the context of two CVs from eminent scientists who were interested in relocating to York.

**09/10**      **Biochemistry new modular scheme**

JM tabled a document describing the new Biochemistry modular scheme. JM chairs the curriculum review set up by the BCPG since the University Teaching Committee (UTC) wanted to ensure that both departments worked closely together on this. There were three reasons for the new scheme: (i) biochemistry students struggle with maths, (ii) a lack of integration for biochemists, and (iii) the feedback from undergraduates indicated that they find the physical chemistry in First Year very difficult. Therefore the new modules provide physical fundamentals for biochemistry, maths elements, quantitative skills, NMR/mass spectrometry, an analysis course and separation science. PHW said

that thermodynamics was often removed from biochemistry courses but should not be – JM will check into this. Chemistry owns one third of the course, i.e. 80 credits, delivered in the first two years. The Final Year core Biochemistry module is taught by YSBL and Biology. PHW was satisfied with the new modular scheme and JM will now take this to the Biochemistry Board of Studies. The new scheme has outline approval from the UTC and the final version must be submitted by the beginning of June.

JM

**09/11 Future Masters in Chemical Biology**

CB informed BCPG that the BBSRC are organising a Masters future strategy meeting in London on May 18<sup>th</sup> and he wanted to check that Chemistry would be interested in setting up a Masters programme in Chemical Biology. At present there are only two other such courses (at Leeds and Sussex) with a third awaiting approval at Cardiff. There is going to be a departmental meeting in Biology on May 5<sup>th</sup> to discuss this and PHW said that Chemistry would be interested and suggested that a member of staff from YSBL and Chemistry should attend this meeting. CB will arrange this.

CB

**09/12 HiTEL update**

DS said that he had written to REHu in April (copied to PHW) to say that detailed plans/finances for HiTEL were urgently required and asking for minutes from the HiTEL Management Group. REHu had now promised to produce something by early May.

REHu

BJW to arrange a meeting in the near future at which correct financial figures are provided.

BJW

**09/13 Any Other Business**

YESI – DS informed DSG that a business plan has been put together for YESI but as there was no commentary it was difficult to see the underlying assumptions. There are two Chairs/positions included: one for an atmospheric chemist and the other the Directorship of the Institute. The latter would require a top flight academic and could be equated to an Anniversary Chair. There would need to be input from all three departments Chemistry, Biology and Environment. PHW said that Chemistry's Planning Group had given the approval for this to go ahead even if an ecologist should obtain the Directorship. PHW also said that Chemistry was prepared to help fund the various positions. DS said that he would put this item on the next Biology Strategy Group agenda.

DS

**Next Meeting: Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 15:00 in Chemistry A107**

Dale Sanders/Belinda Wade  
8<sup>th</sup> May 2009