

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 12th October 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), Keith Wilson (KSW)
In attendance: Belinda Wade (BJW)
Apologies: Rod Hubbard (REHu), Lucy Carpenter (LJC)

Action

09/14 Minutes of the last meeting: 28th April 2009
The minutes were agreed.

09/15 Matters arising from the Biology-Chemistry Planning Group: 28th April 2009

i) From minute 09/07(i) Biology-Chemistry research collaborations

HMOL said that she has sent out letters highlighting the results of the survey back in June but that there was already quite a lot of collaboration happening anyway. However it had been a positive exercise and had raised awareness in both Departments. PHW asked what should be done now and suggested that more strategic use could be made of EPSRC DTAs, and also that research collaborations should be included in the LTP proforma documents of both Departments.

DS/PHW

ii) From minute 09/08 Wellcome/Wolfson bid

PHW informed BCPG that the Wellcome/Wolfson bid had got through to Stage 2 and the representative for Biology was Paul Kaye.

iii) From minute 09/09 Chemical Biology research initiative

DS said that since the idea of bringing two eminent scientists to the Department on Wellcome Trust fellowships was no longer going ahead there was now a great opportunity to move the Chemical Biology initiative on with the visit of Melanie Lee (see item 09/19).

iv) From minute 09/12 HiTEL update

DS said that matters were in hand until the HiTEL Review meeting on November 27th at which decisions would be made based on current and projected activity. In the meantime Ralph Hyde is trying to encourage further business.

v) From minute 09/13 YESI

PHW asked about progress with the YESI initiative and DS said that it seemed to have stalled but he was sure the PVC for Research would move it forward before stepping down in April.

09/16 Membership of BCPG

Back in June PHW had suggested that Lucy Carpenter be invited to join BCPG and she was now included in the circulation list, although unable to attend this meeting. AJW had recently suggested that Ian Fairlamb also be invited to join to provide further connection at the Chemistry/Biology interface and this was agreed. PHW will invite him.

PHW

09/17 FG course replacement

The FG Masters course will be discontinued after 2010/11. CB went over the ideas he had put forward at the recent Biology Away Day: (i) modify FG and rebadge, which would be relatively easy, (ii) set up a biology/medical imaging course with assistance from Psychology and Chemistry, although JBP was apprehensive about the amount of extra work this would entail for the TF, and (iii) develop a course with HYMS, along biomedical health science/tropical medicine lines, which could appeal to overseas students. KSW pointed out that similar MRes courses in Leicester attract 100s of students, particularly from China and India. PHW said that Chemistry is actually reducing its number of Masters courses and would not wish to run a joint degree with Biology but would be happy to contribute to teaching/projects on a replacement course, particularly if this involved imaging. AJW said that the previous Biomolecular Sciences Masters course had been popular and very good across the Biology/Chemistry interface.

JM mentioned that he had put forward the idea of a 4-year undergraduate course, resulting in an MBiolChem degree, at the Away Day and this had been well received. He is putting together a proposal for the Biology Undergraduate Studies Board and University Teaching Committee. Chemistry already have such a degree, MChem, and PHW, KSW and AJW all thought that this was an excellent step forward.

09/18

AMS proposals

JBP said that he had been approached about establishing a National Centre for Accelerator Mass Spectrometry with old equipment that is based at FERA. Both DS and PHW said that this would be little used in either Department and therefore JBP will make a formal response to this effect.

JBP

09/19

Any Other Business

DS tabled a programme that Anne Tate from DARO had created (with input from both DS and PHW) for Melanie Lee's visit on November 11th. Melanie Lee is on the University Development Board and it is hoped she will head up fundraising for Phase III of UoY biomedical development. It was thought that as the programme stood it appeared too disjointed between Biology and Chemistry. PHW said that Chemistry was very supportive of pushing a joint initiative for Phase III and it was agreed that AJW should also attend the sessions in Biology in the afternoon. CK said that it would be good to show exemplar projects of research already happening, and which could be incorporated into Phase III, but he was concerned that there may not be enough of these. Debbie Smith and AJW will get together to address chemical biology and the biomedical agenda and develop coherent ideas in advance of the visit.

AJW

DS said that Debbie was writing a document to address biomedical strategy and a copy will be sent to PHW. PHW stressed that he was very committed to the chemical biology initiative. It was agreed that the visit must showcase both Departments and emphasise where Phase III fits in strategically.

Next Meeting: Monday December 7th at 15:00 in Chemistry A130

Dale Sanders
Belinda Wade
22nd October 2009