

# THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

## DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

### Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010

**Present:** Dale Sanders (DS - Chair), Paul Walton (PHW), John Pillmoor (JBP), James Moir (JM), Tony Wilkinson (AJW), Ottoline Leyser (HMOL), Christoph Baumann (CB), Colin Kleanthous (CK), Keith Wilson (KSW), Ian Fairlamb (IJSF)

**In attendance:** Belinda Wade (BJW)

**Apologies:** Rod Hubbard (REHu), Lucy Carpenter (LJC), Jennifer Potts (JP)

DS welcomed Ian Fairlamb to his first BCPG meeting.

#### Action

**10/01 Minutes of the last meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

The minutes were agreed.

**10/02 Matters arising from the Biology-Chemistry Planning Group: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**i) From minute 09/15(ii) Wellcome/Wolfson bid**

PHW said that the Wellcome/Wolfson bid had been submitted before the deadline with Paul Kaye as co-applicant and the result should be known in June.

**ii) From minute 09/15(iv) HiTEL update**

JBP informed BCPG that HiTEL had been terminated in December and staff redeployed in the short-term with any residual demands being met by TF PP. Staff implications and future resource requirements will be kept under review. It had been agreed to distribute the equipment equally between the Departments and PHW asked for a copy of the list. Biology is taking the robot but nothing will change as regards access. PHW raised the issue of future service contracts.

JBP

**10/03 York Centre for Chemical Biology**

REHu had sent BCPG members an email which updated Enc 2. DS said that he and PHW had received an email from the VC before Christmas stating that the University was willing to support a bid to Wolfson for the YCCB but there were certain conditions to be met. The most important among these being (i) a description of which activities the YCCB would replace, (ii) a commitment to deliver or improve on existing contribution targets, and (iii) the identification of a new professor to lead the project. Regarding (i) Chemistry is unwilling to give up any areas but for Biology HMOL had suggested pointing out that SEIY was moving to Environment, and also the Dept will not pursue the area of mammalian embryo research after the retirement of Henry Leese. After a meeting between interested parties from both Depts on January 22<sup>nd</sup> the issue of contribution targets had been parked. As for (iii) it was thought unlikely to be able to attract an eminent chemical biologist to a non-existent Centre and the timescale means this person would need to be in place by September. On a scientific front it is necessary to set up a Steering Group as soon as possible and REHu had offered to be convenor for this. There needs to be more consultation in both Depts and CK agreed to canvas within Biology. On the fundraising front DS would liaise with the Director for External Relations. Due to the timescale the Steering Group should meet before the end of February and the division of responsibilities must be clarified.

CK

**10/04 Biochemistry admissions numbers**

JM tabled a document showing the latest BCH admission statistics which are up 40% on this time last year. There is a cap of 50 on BCH numbers but due to dropouts this number is always less by the December census and therefore it may be possible to overshoot slightly. The limiting factor is the size of the Chemistry lecture theatre for initial lectures but PHW thought it would be fine to aim for a maximum intake of 50 (following PAWDs); thereby making 52 offers post A-level results. Thanks go to Gideon Grogan and Set Chong for increasing the number of applicants.

**10/05**

**EU grants and TF costs**

JBP said that it had now been accepted that TF staff costs were ineligible on EU FP6 grants but an appeal had been launched with respect to the £108K on AJW's BaSysBio grant. JBP suggested that a deadline should be set for a decision by the end of March but it was generally felt that getting an EU decision in this time frame was unlikely. Michelle Squires, Biology Finance Advisor, had suggested recalculating the staff component based on an average for each lab for each year which the internal auditors had agreed, although full confirmation of the proposed figures is awaited. Once this is agreed, the money due on the 15 closed grants will be repaid to the EU (approximately £40k). For the 11 open grants (approximately £50k), the money will be repaid to the grant and JBP will be contacting the PIs involved. For FP7 grants, TF staff charges are eligible, but only through filling in timesheets, including holiday and sickness, for every month of the grant, irrespective if a claim is to be made for that month. This will be difficult for TF staff to do when working on so many different grants. JBP said he felt that the only option is that in future TF charges will be split into eligible costs, which will be charged to the grant with the difference due to the staff component charged to 'M' codes.

**JBP**

**10/06**

**New equipment wish list**

PHW said that the new contact for this information in Chemistry was Roy Noakes and that Chemistry already has a joint equipment wish list with Physics. PHW said he will take the Biology list to the next meeting of the Chemistry Research Committee and bring back any additions to BCPG.

**PHW**

**10/07**

**Any Other Business**

PHW informed BCPG that he would be stepping down as HoD of Chemistry in September and would invite the incoming HoD, Richard Taylor, to one of the next BCPG meetings.

**Next Meeting: Monday April 26<sup>th</sup> at 15:00 in Chemistry (TBA)**

Dale Sanders  
Belinda Wade  
12<sup>th</sup> February 2010