

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 21st June 2010

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

In attendance: Belinda Wade (BJW)

Apologies: Rod Hubbard (REHu), Richard Taylor (RJKT), (Lucy Carpenter (LJC))

Action

10/08 Minutes of the last meeting: 8th February 2010
The minutes were agreed.

10/09 Matters arising from the Biology-Chemistry Planning Group: 8th February 2010

i) From minute 10/02(i) Wellcome/Wolfson bid

PHW thanked Biology for support with this bid and said that £4.3M had been obtained for a building next to YNiC. There would be a HYMS appointment associated with this probably now in pre-clinical imaging. Paul Kaye, Director of the CII, is a co-applicant on this bid and therefore can keep Biology informed of progress, together with updates to BCPG.

ii) From minute 10/02(ii) HiTEL equipment

JBP said that Enc 2 was for information to show how all the HiTEL equipment had been shared out. PHW asked about the records of how the SRIF funding had been used in case of future audits and JBP keeps the records for Biology. Since the equipment was absorbed into labs Sally Lewis of YSBL will do the same for Chemistry.

iii) From minute 10/03 York Centre for Chemical Biology

CK said that two things had arisen from this initiative. The negative one was that since it would be very difficult to meet the VC's criteria for the bid, namely obtaining an eminent external scientist to head the Centre, it had been decided that a competitive bid was not possible in the current climate. However it remains part of Biology's long-term vision and DS said that he had spoken to the Director for External Relations, Joan Concannon, about this and she was sympathetic to the notion that the bid was not optimal at the moment and that alumni funds could be used for smaller projects. However on the positive side, and to keep up the momentum, CK said that all the information gathered about chemical biology research across both departments would still be put on to a website to promote this to the outside world. Before this goes live CK will send the pages to any relevant staff to check. PHW said that this website would be discussed at the next Chemistry Research Committee and AJW said that he sensed there was now convergence between the departments regarding chemical biology. BCPG thanked CK for all his work on this initiative.

CK

iv) From minute 10/05 EU grants and TF costs

JBP said that Enc 3 showed the Biology proposal for TF charging on EU grants since staff costs are not eligible. He said that for current grants Biology and Chemistry needed to pay the EU back c. £40K and £14K respectively; AJW's large BaSysBio grant has been appealed to Brussels. For any future grants it has been agreed, where possible,

that the PI will cover the staff costs through another 'M' code. PHW said that this would be handled in Chemistry in the same way and that Rebekah Desport and Michelle Squires, the accountants in each department, would continue to work through this together. Discussion followed about what goes into the TF charge and it was agreed that if equipment depreciation and estates costs were factored in, as they are on fEC grants, it could make a large difference. JBP confirmed that the TF used an 'internal' rate for charging Chemistry and Biology users. This internal rate was not at fEC. DFS said that ways must be found of supporting EU grant bids since if RCUK funding drops people will need to turn to the EU. HMOL asked whether anyone from the University RSO had written to Brussels to question the rules and DFS suggested contacting larger universities to see how their Research Offices are dealing with this. PHW said he would check with the RSO that the fundamental questions had been asked of the EU.

PHW

10/10

Progress on new MRes in Post-Genomic Biology course

CB said that Enc 4 was a synopsis of the new PGB Masters course showing the main differences to the old Functional Genomics course. It was aimed at the same number of students but would no longer be run jointly by Biology and Chemistry, although Chemistry would continue to make significant contributions to the teaching. There would be new modules on eukaryotic model systems and advanced bioimaging techniques, the bioinformatics module had been re-modelled and the "-omics" technology had been combined. There may also be a workshop and lectures on NMR, while transferable skills and projects remained the same with possible external placements. Students will write a rationale in the Autumn term ready for their project in the Spring term. CB asked about Chemistry membership of the PEC and PHW was happy for CB to continue to update BCPG. DS said the new programme was lacking the application of network theory to gene networks and YCCSA could be asked to contribute - BCPG agreed that this was a good idea. PHW apologised for the confusion about charging and CB said that there was now agreement between departments about the budget. It was also agreed that any future changes to the course should be brought to BCPG well in advance so that Chemistry was kept informed.

10/11

Any Other Business

(i) *Biochemistry projects* – CK said that when Jenny White put out the call for projects it would be helpful if there was someone in Chemistry who could collate all the responses and just send all 15-16 titles back together. PHW said that Angelika Sebald looks after projects in Chemistry. It was also suggested that Biology could bring project allocation earlier to harmonise with the MChem at the end of the summer term.

(ii) *Dale Sanders* – PHW said this would be DS' last meeting and thanked him on behalf of the BCPG for all his contributions to the Group.

Next Meeting: to be scheduled [in Chemistry]

Paul Walton
Belinda Wade
29th June 2010