

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd October 2010

Present: Richard Taylor (RJKT - Chair), Debbie Smith (DFS), John Pillmoor (JBP), James Moir (JM), Tony Wilkinson (AJW), Christoph Baumann (CB), Colin Kleanthous (CK), Keith Wilson (KSW), Ian Fairlamb (IJSF), Rod Hubbard (REHu)
In attendance: Belinda Wade (BJW)
Apologies: Ottoline Leyser (HMOL), Lucy Carpenter (LJC), Jennifer Potts (JP)

Action

10/12 Minutes of the last meeting: 21st June 2010

The minutes were agreed.

10/13 Matters arising from the Biology-Chemistry Planning Group: 21st June 2010

i) From minute 10/09(iii) Chemical Biology

CK said that he had reworked the biology information for the website but there was too much text and not enough pictures. A more interdisciplinary chemical biology presence was required and CB and IJSF agreed to prepare material.

CB/IJSF

ii) From minute 10/09(iv) EU grants and TF costs

AJW informed BCPG that the appeal to the EU regarding the TF charges on his BaSysBio grant had been turned down. It was thought that the £100K already spent has been dealt with centrally under last year's finance but JBP will ask Michelle Squires and Rebekah Desport for a statement to that effect.

JBP

It is likely that more EU grants will be applied for in future so staff will need guidance on charging and the importance of the audit trail. There is a problem with keeping timesheets in the TF since they have to be completed for the whole period of the grant even if only 2 months worth of work is carried out. DFS and RJKT agreed to write to the Research Support Office and ask what they are doing and if the EU can be challenged.

DFS/RJKT

Added after the meeting: RJKT spoke with Rebekah Desport and she indicated that the view of central finances is that the time-sheet option should be adopted by the TF.

iii) From minute 10/10 MRes in Post-Genomic Biology

CB said that this new course was now official and had already received an application. CB tabled a document showing the staff contributing to this course. It has been agreed with Chemistry that their contribution would equal 10 credits and, assuming 10 students applied, this had been factored into Chemistry's budget. There are no implications for Chemistry with regard to demonstrating or projects.

10/14 Chemical biology applications: interdisciplinary discussion meetings

CK informed BCPG that Biology's Research Committee had instigated a peer review college based round research foci to oversee grant applications in the light of lack of funding success in 2009. A Dragon's Den type pitch should be made about 3-4 months before the application deadline, followed by the grant being written and reviewed. The only resistance had been over the timing but more forward planning is necessary to achieve success. CB suggested the same be done for the area of chemical biology and

he and IJSF could be the organisers. AJW was interested in developing the idea for Chemistry and CK will send details about the process to AJW for him to raise at Chemistry Research Committee.

CK/AJW

10/15

Biology strategic developments/NMR developments

DFS said that a strategic review had been initiated in Biology over the summer due to all the staff changes and permission to appoint 3 Chairs was being sought from the VC in the areas of plant biology, cell biology and biophysics. DFS said she had met with the PVC for Research, John Local, who would now consult with the VC. A strong candidate from Leeds is interested in the biophysics post but would require increased NMR capacity. There were 3 scenarios for this potential appointment: (i) as a joint appointment with Chemistry, (ii) solely Biology or (iii) a Biology appointment with Chemistry support in making space available in the NMR facility for a new biology machine. RJKT had agreed to (iii). Enc 2 was a document prepared by Jen Potts describing the advantages of expansion of the bioNMR capability at York with the purchase of a 600 MHz machine with a cryoprobe.

RJKT

This specific appointment would be an excellent opportunity to bridge the disciplines of Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Medicine but if unsuccessful, there would be no commitment to this NMR expansion and the business plan for obtaining such a machine would need to be reviewed. CK thanked the members of Chemistry for all their input into discussions.

10/16

UG Biochemistry: practical teaching

RJKT wished to forewarn BCPG about the implications for Biochemistry practical teaching next year due to the huge Chemistry first year intake this year. The chemistry element in labs has been slimmed down this year but that is not possible in second year due to accreditation requirements. It was thought that biochemistry students would be able to work in biology labs without re-circulating fume hoods but duplication of materials and equipment could be an issue. This is a short-term problem until Chemistry get new teaching labs in 2012. JM and IJSF will discuss.

JM/IJSF

10/17

Any Other Business - None

Next Meeting: Friday December 17th at 10:00 in Biology K126

Richard Taylor
Belinda Wade
26th October 2010