

# THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

## DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

### Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010

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

AJW said that LJC had contacted him about resigning from this committee and since IJSF is now a member, this was agreed.

Action

**10/18 Minutes of the last meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2010**  
The minutes were agreed.

**10/19 Matters arising from 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2010**

**i) From minute 10/13(ii) EU grants and TF costs**

JBP reported that the EU had changed its stance and it was now possible to claim central charges on EU grants, but an audit is still required. The Research Support Office Manager, Heather Watson, had carried out a mini audit recently and the current TF process seems OK. The only problem could be that given the way TF costs are driven, there is not enough evidence for an audit, particularly with regards to consumables ordered through Agresso. However, Biology's Finance Advisor, Michelle Squires is confident that with a few changes to the current process everything should be fine for the University auditors.

AJW asked JBP to provide TF usage charges for EU grants that are to end soon so that Pls know the costs involved.

**JBP**

**ii) From minute 10/16 UG Biochemistry: practical teaching**

JM said that he had spoken to Dave Smith from Chemistry and their labs are well used every day except Wednesday mornings. He had also spoken to Nicola Charlton, Chief Technician in Biology's Teaching labs, and it might be possible to timetable Biochemistry practicals in Biology labs for the Autumn term 2011. Changes have recently been made to practicals to resolve the fume cupboard problem. During Summer term 2012 these practicals could be moved to Wednesdays, however there is no space or available time in Biology labs in the Spring term 2012. A sustainable plan is required for how to deal with this for the next two years until the new Chemistry labs are hopefully available. Suggestions included reducing practicals to 4 hours, changing the courses for these years, possibly using labs in Physics or Environment for the analysis course, or spreading practicals over 2 terms. More discussion is needed and JM will call a meeting of the Biochemistry Executive Committee to look at the courses and timings and also contact Chemistry staff - Phil Helliwell (Technician in charge of teaching), Nick Wood (Yr 1 practical leader), Jason Lynam (Yr 1 co-ordinator) and Dave Smith (Chair - Chemistry Teaching Committee) for their input.

**JM**

**10/20 Biology strategic developments**

DFS reported that the University Planning Committee had given the go ahead for 3 new Chairs in Biology and two of these posts are being discussed in the Department and will be advertised in the New Year. The third Chair in Molecular Biophysics has been offered to a candidate from Leeds. If accepted, RJKT has agreed that space will be made available in Chemistry's NMR facility for new equipment and it was suggested that Simon Duckett be involved in any negotiations with Bruker for NMR equipment. The University has agreed to provide a loan for this equipment and Biology will pay this back over ten years as part of the MTP process.

A final decision on this appointment is expected by the end of January. If not accepted, then all 3 professorial positions will be advertised at the beginning of February, together with the lectureship in Molecular Biophysics now vacant.

**10/21**

**Policy on working for outside bodies**

JBP said that the University has a new policy on working for outside bodies, e.g. as external examiners or consultants. A working group has been set up in Biology through Enterprise Group to study and feedback on this paper and it would be good to encourage similar responses from all science departments. RJKT said that the draft policy had been discussed at Chemistry's Advisory Group and nothing appeared to be contentious. RJKT said he would be the Chemistry contact for this and assumed that this issue would be discussed at the next Heads of Science Depts meeting.

**10/22**

**Any Other Business**

(i) MTP equipment bids – JBP wondered if the equipment list in the MTP document should be co-ordinated more/shared with other departments. The Group was happy with how this was presented and thought it had been useful for the MTP discussions which had highlighted that the Centre does not appreciate the complexity and random nature of funding priorities of external bodies. FEC income was supposed to help with equipment replacement on a rolling basis. The PVC for Research and the SMG are aware of the issues but other levels of management do not seem to be.

(ii) Wellcome Trust 4-year PhD programme – DFS reported the splendid news that the partnership of Biology/YCCSA, Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Computer Science had been awarded 25 PhD studentships over 5 years under the Wellcome Trust CIDCATS programme. This success illustrates the progress made in interdisciplinary research at York and presents great opportunities but it will be necessary to push hard to advertise early in the New Year since the first students can be recruited in October 2011. Each student will have 2 supervisors and key members of staff will need to engage with this programme due to lack of depth in some areas. DFS is the named Director but thanked Leo Caves, Paul Kaye, Reidun Twarock and Marjan van der Woude who worked on this initiative. RJKT asked for a copy of the application for information.

**DFS**

(iii) Ottoline – DFS said that this would be HMOL's last meeting before leaving York and thanked her for all her contributions to both Departmental and University committees over the years.

**Next Meeting: Friday February 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 in Chemistry A128**

Debbie Smith  
Belinda Wade  
21<sup>st</sup> December 2010