

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 16th December 2011

Present: Richard Taylor (RJKT-Chair), Debbie Smith (DFS), Christoph Baumann (CB), Jennifer Potts (JP), Tony Wilkinson (AJW), John Pillmoor (JBP), James Moir (JM), Ian Fairlamb (IJSF)

Apologies: Colin Kleanthous (CK), Rod Hubbard (REHu), Gavin Thomas (GHT), Keith Wilson (KSW)

Action

11/22 Minutes of the last meeting: 10th October 2011
The minutes were agreed.

11/23 Matters arising:

i) From minute 11/20 Anniversary Chairs/Readers

DFS said that Biology had nominated two candidates to the University for anniversary positions, plus another jointly with Physics. For Chemistry, RJKT reported that no nominations had been made.

ii) From minute 11/21(ii) TF Review

JBP said that the formal report from the TF Review had been received and was very positive, clearly recognising the importance and value of the TF. The report also highlighted some areas for further consideration and these will be considered by the Biology Research Committee, with further details brought to BCPG in due course.

JBP

11/24 Undergraduate recruitment

JM reported that Biochemistry numbers were essentially as last year. RJKT reported that Chemistry numbers are also remaining firm, with similar application numbers compared to last year.

DFS requested that Chemistry consider an increase in the number of Biochemistry admissions from the current quota of 47 to 65. The current first year BCH cohort is 67, and this seems not to be causing significant problems, helped by the re-organised practical content in Foundation Chemistry for Biochemists. The main issue with increased numbers of biochemists relates to the capacity of the Chemistry lecture theatre. Options for handling this were discussed, including increasing the capacity of C/A101 or running lectures twice. RJKT agreed to discuss the proposal to increase the biochemistry quota target with Andy Parsons, and then AP will meet with JM and GJG to discuss further.

Subsequent to the meeting: Discussions within Chemistry confirmed that for 2012 entry the major problem is laboratory space. Under the current arrangements, the absolute maximum number of biochemists that can be accommodated (home plus overseas plus over-quota) is 58. Chemistry would support an increase in biochemistry numbers providing this absolute maximum was observed.

11/25 Update on WT ISSF

DFS reported that the first meeting of the WT ISSF Steering Committee was to be held in the afternoon of 16th December. A meeting for all interested parties to find out more about the award and research funding opportunities was scheduled for 20th December. Appointment of the bioinformaticians supported by this award was in progress; they would

be based in the TF but operate across campus. AJW reported that appointment to the post supporting chemical libraries had been deferred while interest in this area was investigated.

11/26

Any Other Business

(i) *Biology academic recruitment* – DFS informed the Group that two Chair appointments had been made and there was one pending.

(ii) *Biochemistry teaching* – JM said that it was proposed to review the Biochemistry teaching programme in 2012, bearing in mind possible future developments.

(iii) *Joint research* – IJSF said that there should be more focus on research activity between the two departments and suggested planning a joint research meeting.

IJSF

(iv) *Atomic Absorption Spectrometer* – JBP requested an update on the Atomic Absorption Spectrometer (AAS) in Chemistry as the Molecular Interactions lab sometimes refer potential users to Chemistry. IJSF confirmed that the instrument is currently out of commission. He also noted that the X-ray Fluorescence system (XRF), which would be an alternative approach, is also out of commission. Discussions are ongoing regarding how best to resolve this problem.

Next Meeting: Friday February 24th at 10:00 in Biology K126

Richard Taylor
Debbie Smith
22nd December 2011