

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 2nd March 2012

Present: Debbie Smith (DFS-Chair), Richard Taylor (RJKT), Jennifer Potts (JP), Tony Wilkinson (AJW), James Moir (JM), Gavin Thomas (GHT)
In attendance: Belinda Wade (BJW)
Apologies: Christoph Baumann (CB), Rod Hubbard (REHu), Keith Wilson (KSW), John Pillmoor (JBP), Ian Fairlamb (IJSF), Neil Bruce (NCB)

Action

DFS noted that this was the last meeting for JM as GHT takes over as Chair of the BCH Executive Committee in April.

12/01 **Minutes of the last meeting: 16th December 2011**
The minutes were agreed.

12/02 **Matters arising:**

i) From minute 11/23(ii) TF Review

In JBP's absence DFS said that the TF review was currently going through various Biology committees but would be brought to the next BCPG meeting.

JBP

ii) From minute 11/25 WT ISSF/C2D2

AJW said that the post supporting chemical libraries was on hold and REHu would be the best person to follow this up with Paul Kaye and Rachel Curwen. DFS informed BCPG that the first tranche of pump-priming grants had been assessed and there was a lot of interest across disciplines. The decisions would be communicated early next week.

REHu

iii) From minute 11/26(iii) Joint Symposium

JP said that the afternoon of March 30th had been earmarked as a suitable date for a joint research symposium focussing on more engagement with Chemistry. It was suggested that Rob Edwards be invited.

iv) From minute 11/26(iv) Atomic Absorption Spectrometer

This loss of this capability is still an issue and should be followed up with IJSF.

JBP/IJSF

12/03 **Costs associated with access to the TF**

An email from Jason Lynam of Chemistry had highlighted the difficulty for YSBL/Chemistry students in accessing the TF compared to their Biology counterparts. Biology PhD students are allowed up to £1200 per annum to spend in the TF; YSBL/Chemistry students do not receive this sum. JP is in discussions with YSBL as to how to resolve this issue. There needs to be a change in perception about the TF since all departments do pay the same costs. The development of a credit system was suggested. DFS said that many of these issues had been raised in the recent TF Review and should be discussed in depth at the next BCPG when JBP was present. RJKT asked that David Smith, Chair of Chemistry BoS, also be invited to the next meeting.

BJW

As regards the bottleneck of UG projects next year, JM said this would not be as bad as feared since the take up of the year in industry had been better than expected.

12/04

MRes in Computational Biology

RJKT expressed concern about the finances for the CB Masters course, especially in the light of the BBSRC quota studentships coming to end. GHT pointed out that the numbers for the PGB course had held up despite the studentships being withdrawn. DFS said that the courses were regarded as prestigious and that Biology was planning to streamline the administration of its Masters courses, while the Management Accountant, Michelle Squires, was looking at their cost effectiveness. Once this process is completed, a meeting should be arranged between Biology, Chemistry and Computer Science to discuss further.

DFS/RJKT

Computational courses are very important in modern Biology, as witnessed by the success of YCCSA and the CIDCATS PhD course. DFS also said that Physics was interested in joint Masters courses and a MILE-type course could be reinstated with Maths. AJW pointed out that the naming of such courses should be considered carefully to make them attractive to students.

12/05

Any Other Business

(i) *New standing items* – To help build the interface between the two departments, DFS suggested that YSBL and Green Chemistry should become standing items on the agenda for BCPG (also CHyM at a later date); this was agreed. This would possibly involve changes in the composition of the Group and RJKT said he would alert James Clark of Green Chemistry.

RJKT

(ii) *Biochemistry Chair* – JP is setting up a meeting to discuss the job description for the vacant Biochemistry Chair. This provides a good opportunity to further integrate the two departments. RJKT said that the University has given Chemistry two extra lectureships, one of which could be in Chemical Biology, and taken together with the recent announcement about Anniversary Research Lectureships, there could be some overlap.

JP

(iii) *Biochemistry student recruitment* – JM said that 525 applications have been received and 405 Home/EU offers made, plus 55 overseas. It appears that numbers should not overshoot this year.

(iv) *Chemistry fire* – RJKT informed BCPG that students were now back in the Chemistry labs after the recent fire and he extended his grateful thanks to Biology lab staff for all their offers of assistance. Rebuilding will start soon and fume cupboards will be repaired. Unfortunately many instruments, including the 300 NMR, were completely wiped out. The University had acted very quickly but compliance with Health & Safety regulations had slowed progress.

Next Meeting: Monday May 21st at 10:00 in Chemistry A107

Debbie Smith
Richard Taylor
14th March 2012