

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 15th January 2013

Present: Richard Taylor (RJKT-Chair), Debbie Smith (DFS), Jennifer Potts (JP), Gavin Thomas (GHT), Christoph Baumann (CB), John Pillmoor (JBP), Neil Bruce (NCB), Keith Wilson (KSW), Tony Wilkinson (AJW)
In attendance: Belinda Wade (BJW); James Clark (for item 13/03a(i))
Apologies: Ian Fairlamb (IJSF), Rod Hubbard (REHu)

RJKT asked that the news of the sad death of Guy Dodson before Christmas should be minuted. Professor Dodson was a pioneer in Biological Chemistry and obtained the first ever research grant awarded to the Chemistry Department.

Action

13/01 **Minutes of the last meeting: 17th October 2012**
The minutes were agreed with a minor change.

13/02 **Matters arising:**

i) From minute 12/12(i) Joint Symposium

JP said that the date for this symposium still had to be decided.

JP/IJSF

ii) From minute 12/12(ii) Biochemistry Chair

DFS reported that the short-listing for the Biochemistry Chair had taken place earlier in the day. Four candidates had been selected and would be visiting the Biology Department for presentations and interviews on February 20th. BJW will ensure information about the presentations is publicised in the Chemistry Dept and AJW will publicise to YSBL staff.

AJW/BJW

iii) From minute 12/12(iii) PhD support

JP tabled a document setting out the pertinent points. Different charging models are used in the two departments meaning that YSBL PhD students do not receive the same subsidy as Biology students doing similar projects. This restricts access to TF equipment. To help with this, costs in the Biomolecular lab have been dropped to pump prime projects.

YSBL talks have been rebranded YSBL/Biophysics to encourage more Biology staff and students to attend. DFS suggested looking at equipment overlap/space constraints in YSBL and the TF. RJKT said that, with Mike Clark Chemistry's Management Accountant, the department would be considering PhD subsidies at the upcoming MTP meeting. JP will liaise with relevant staff and take this issue forward.

JP

iv) From minute 12/13(a)(i) Biochemistry course

GHT tabled a preliminary document about progress with changes to the Biochemistry course and said he would be calling the next meeting of the working group in February. It was thought that Gideon Davies or the new appointment in Chemical Biology should be invited to join this group. It is important to revise Biochemistry teaching in anticipation of an increase in students once the cap on numbers is removed and to take into consideration the new Natural Sciences course. RJKT asked that this information be sent

to the Chemistry Teaching Committee and that Biochemistry teaching be raised at both MTP meetings. Any further progress will be reported at the next BCPG.

GHT

13/03

Standing items

(a) Reports from joint activities

(i) Green Chemistry

James Clark outlined the interactions between Green Chemistry and CNAP. The main one is the Biorenewables Development Centre (BDC) which is now up and running with 95% of equipment operational. There are also good connections with the TF. BDC staff come from both departments with the ERDF funding salaries for 3 years. The BDC Board comprises James Clark, Ian Graham, Joe Ross (Director), Simon McQueen-Mason and Graham Gilbert and meets monthly. An external advisory board will be set up in due course. It is necessary to attract industry and the industrial liaison team is working with regional SMEs. Ian Graham has been successful in obtaining a Flexible Interchange Programme (FLIP) award from the BBSRC, which will allow Tim Bowser from GSK to be based part-time in the BDC/CNAP for 18 months. James said that any staff can try out BDC equipment and it was agreed to ask Joe Ross to arrange tours for any interested Biology or Chemistry staff.

Joe Ross

Other interactions include the FP7 project SUNLIBB, EPSRC funding through the G8 with partners Yale and UBC, and BBSRC funding with Vietnam.

(ii) YSBL

KSW drew attention to a recent document he had circulated about space issues in YSBL. This is a long running problem but has become more pressing due to two recently awarded grants to Marek Brzozowski and Gideon Davies which require mammalian cell culture access. Marek and Gideon will be encouraged to talk with DFS and JBP about this issue. Chemistry's new lecturer, Alison Parkin, also requires space for anaerobic culture and it was suggested that she should talk to James Chong.

RJKT/DFS/JBP

(iii) TFRC/TF update

JP reported that the TF Research Committee had met before Christmas and the main issue was one of better communication. Feedback about projects would be circulated in due course. Alison Parkin has agreed to join this Committee.

TF update - JBP reported that (i) the SEC-MALLS system was down and had been taken away for repair, (ii) a new phosphorimager was now available, (iii) Peter O'Toole had been awarded a prestigious imaging grant which would enable the purchase of the Clairscope, and (iv) that the TF had been awarded some external engagement funding to help develop new contacts within biomedical companies, including placements. It was suggested that Lorna Warnock and Brian Grievson, industrial liaison staff for Biology and Chemistry respectively, should meet to discuss possible shared interests. JBP also informed BCPG about N8 equipment access to develop infrastructure and assist with sharing. JBP is leading on departmental health and safety aspects for this initiative and Simon Duckett (Chemistry) is the N8 representative.

JBP

(b) Strategic issues

(i) Strategic Equipment investment

JBP tabled a document of suggested investment ideas for equipment which will be discussed at Biology Research Committee. He said that prioritising was very difficult but that it would be useful to obtain ideas from Chemistry about joint areas/synergy before the MTP meeting. AJW has prepared a similar document for Chemistry and will send a copy to JBP.

AJW

RJKT reported that Chemistry had been awarded c £1M in a recent EPSRC initiative to upgrade departments and this would be used to update the solid state NMR, mass spectrometry and X-ray diffraction facilities. Another bid has also been submitted to the N8. There is a good flow of information about equipment requirements between the departments, with mass spectrometry being a good example.

The meeting had to close at this point so no specific reports were made on the following topics:

- Research activities
- Teaching
- Infrastructure

13/04 Any Other Business - None

Next Meeting: Tuesday February 26th at 13:30 in Biology K126

Richard Taylor
Debbie Smith
24th January 2013