

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

DEPARTMENTS OF BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY

Biology – Chemistry Planning Group Minutes of Meeting held on 26th February 2013

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

DFS welcomed Alison Parkin (Chem) who replaces Ian Fairlamb on this Group.

Action

13/05 **Minutes of the last meeting: 15th January 2013**
The minutes were agreed with minor changes.

13/06 **Matters arising:**

i) From minute 13/02(i) Joint Symposium

The date for a joint symposium is still pending and AP (Chem) will liaise with JP (Biol) to find a convenient date. CB offered to help as he organised the last joint symposium.

AP/JP

ii) From minute 13/02(ii) Biochemistry Chair

DFS reported that the discussions about this post were ongoing.

iii) From minute 13/02(iii) PhD support

The issue of similar support for PhD students across both departments, particularly in relation to use of the TF, needs to be resolved if possible, given current Departmental financial models. RJKT said that Chemistry has now increased its consumables budget in the MTP.

iv) From minute 13/03(a)(i) Green Chemistry

Joe Ross, Director of the BDC, has agreed to give tours of this facility to interested staff and will also make a presentation to Biology's Academic Staff meeting at the end of April. BJW will help with tour arrangements.

v) From minute 13/03(b)(i) Strategic equipment investment

AJW to send Chemistry's list of investment ideas for future equipment to JBP.

AJW

13/07 **Standing items**
(a) Strategic issues

(i) Biochemistry teaching think tank II

Enc 2 contained the latest ideas for changes to the Biochemistry (BCH) programme which came out of a meeting held in mid February. The first suggestion was the addition of lectures on biomolecular spectroscopy to Stage 2 which could be taught by Alison Parkin. Dave Smith, BoS Chair (Chem), agreed that this would be fine from a Chemistry teaching perspective - AP would replace Fred Anston in this module.

The second suggestion was for a Chemical Biology Stage 2 or 3 module along the lines of the new Chemistry Masters level course to be run in 2013-14. However it was thought best to teach this latter course first and see how it goes before adapting to suit BCH students. Also there may be a new Chemical Biology appointment in place later in the year who could be involved in teaching and have input into any new module.

The third idea was for additional Stage 2 content in inorganic and synthetic chemistry (10 credits) since about a third of BCH students would probably like more Chemistry in the second year and this would also help them be better qualified for projects. This module could also be made suitable for the Natural Sciences programme. A survey of current BCH students was suggested to gain insight into whether this should be core or optional. This should be undertaken soon in order to rewrite the prospectus in time for next year. The information gathered will be brought back to the next BCPG.

GHT

DFS thanked GHT for his work on this. RJKT said he was still pushing to get Biochemistry listed as a separate entry in University figures/tables.

(b) Reports from joint activities

(i) YSBL

KSW reported that a constructive meeting had been held with the PVC-Research, John Local, the PVC-Estates, Elizabeth Heaps, and both HoDs. Chemical Biology activities are expanding and the current space is not appropriate. A long-term solution would be for YSBL to become part of either the new build near the Biology Department or that beside Chemistry. Elizabeth Heaps had agreed to set up a meeting with Dawn Cartwright, Rod Hubbard and the architect. RJKT will send an email to ensure this meeting is arranged.

RJKT

In the meantime short-term solutions must be found for the mammalian cell work of Marek Brzozowski and Gideon Davies and the anaerobic digestion research of AP. AP had spoken to James Chong about possible assistance but their research areas were different. JBP was meeting with Marek and Gideon in the near future.

KSW informed BCPG about the memorial meeting for Guy Dodson taking place over the weekend of June 15th-16th. This would comprise talks on the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning with a dinner at the National Railway Museum.

(ii) TF update

JBP reported that the SEC-MALLS system had been returned and he would email staff when this was working again.

JBP

Regarding the external engagement funding award, JBP said that Rod Westrop had been selected as the consultant to work with us to develop new contacts within biomedical companies.

JBP informed BCPG that a RAM incubator for high oxygen experiments would be arriving soon and that this information had been circulated to YSBL staff.

(c) Research activities

Regarding the joint symposium mentioned in 13/06(i) it was suggested this could take the form of a couple of success stories plus staff discussing problems and asking for possible solutions. There should also be some free time for mixing. A date and advertising should be arranged as soon as possible. Some time in late June on a Wednesday afternoon was suggested.

(d) Teaching

DFS reported that the allocation of BBSRC DTP studentships was ongoing. GHT asked about the allocation for Chemistry-Biology projects and DFS said that at least one was prioritised for Chemistry and that AJW was on the decision panel.

(e) Infrastructure

Facilities for Synthetic Chemistry are interlinked with the YSBL space issue and could be factored into the new building if necessary. RJKT said that some free standing fume hoods would be available once the Chemistry build was completed.

13/08

Any Other Business – None

Next Meeting: 29th April at 10:00 in Chemistry A122

Debbie Smith
Richard Taylor
5th March 2013