

MINUTES OF THE WACCBIP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

1.0 BACKGROUND

WACCBIP had a Management Committee meeting on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, from 11:00 am to 1:15 pm at the Level 600 Lecture Room, Ground floor-Biochemistry Building. The purpose of the meeting was for all unit heads to provide updates on their respective operational areas.

2.0 ATTENDANCE

Present

No.	Name	Designation
1.	Prof. Gordon Awandare	Director
2.	Dr. Patrick Arthur	Head, Training and Research
3.	Dr. Theresa Manful Gwira	Graduate Students Admissions and Examinations
4.	Dr. Osbourne Quaye	Head, Monitoring and Evaluation
5.	Dr. Lydia Mosi	Logistics Coordinator
6.	Prof. Ben Neils Quashie	BCMB/WACCBIP faculty
7.	Mrs. Constance Kocke	Procurement Officer
8.	Mr. Owusu Barfi-Adomako	Co-head ICT (Electronic Resources)
9.	Ms. Emeфа Adzadu	Accounts Officer
10	Mr. Emmanuel Ghartey	Centre Administrator
11	Ms. Sika Menka	Assistant to the Director
12	Mr. Solomon Sunu	ICT Officer
13	Mr. Srinivasan Shankar Balanpangu	Laboratory Technologist

Absent

No.	Name	Designation
14	Prof Kwadwo Koram	Deputy Director
15	Dr. Nana Yaw Yeboah	Private Sector Liasion Officer
16	Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego	Bioinformatics Coordinator
17	Mr. Collins Amofah	Financial Manager
18	Ms. Ama Dadson	Co-head ICT(Physical Resources)
19	Prof. Dorothy Yeboah Manu	Postdoctoral Coordinator
20	Dr. Anita Ghansah	Genetics Programme Coordinator

3.0 OPENING REMARKS AND REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 11:00am with introductory remarks from Prof. Awandare. This was followed by a review of minutes from the previous meeting. Subject to minor changes and corrections, the minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as true and accurate.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Scholarships

In fulfillment of awarding scholarships to needy but brilliant students, four MPhil students, namey: Felix Ansah, Isaac Carilo, Rebecca Yeboah and Daniel Kwadwo Awudu Aquah were awarded scholarships for the 2016/2017 academic year based on the above mentioned criteria.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Programme Administration and Management

World Bank ACE Project

- Student Enrolment

The third (3rd) cohorts of students for the 2016/2017 academic year have been admitted. The student numbers are as follows:

Masters

- 15 students (7 females, 8 males, 0 regional)
- MPhil Molecular Cell Biology of Infectious Diseases (MCBI) - 15 students

Based on excellent performance, one MPhil student was upgraded to the PhD level

PhD

- 14 students (7 females, 7 males, 6 regional)
- PhD Molecular Cell Biology of Infectious Diseases (MCBI) - 12 students
- PhD Biochemistry - 2 students

- Partnership Agreements

WACCBIP has signed a partnership agreement with the Department of Clinical Microbiology at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. Under this agreement WACCBIP has committed \$ 27,000.00 for the training and research for Masters and PhD students as well as travel cost for faculty and students.

WACCBIP has also signed a partnership agreement with the Ledzokuku Krowor Municipal Assembly (LEKMA) Hospital at Teshie. Under this agreement, WACCBIP has committed \$30,000 for laboratory upgrade, collaborative research and training of laboratory personnel.

DELTAS Project

- Student Enrolment

Under the DELTAS project, WACCBIP has awarded scholarships to 8 students at the PhD level. This comprise of 4 females and 4 males drawn from Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, The Gambia, Cameroon and Kenya.

The Centre has recruited 12 graduate interns who have been assigned to the secretariat and to various laboratories to assist with research and other administrative work.

5.2 Training and Research

Masters Programme

- Cohort 1:

24 students have fully defended their theses with 16 students having submitted their theses.

- Cohort 2:

All 16 students have successfully defended their thesis proposals. However, 2 students changed their topics, their new topics are yet to be discussed.

- Cohort 3:

All students are at the course work phase of their training. To set their project proposals in perspective, all students have been asked to submit project summaries. A one-day workshop has been scheduled to discuss these project summaries.

PhD Programme

- Cohort 1:

All 12 students have defended their proposals, 6 have presented progress reports on their experiential learning, the other 6 are yet to make their presentations.

- Cohort 2:

Of the 13 students that took the comprehensive exams, 12 students passed whilst 1 student failed.

- Cohort 3:

All 16 students submitted their research summaries on September 18, 2016 and made their presentations on September 23, 2016

DELTAS

- International Accreditation by the Royal Society of Biology (RSoB), UK

The Centre is 91% compliant based on the RSoB assessment report for stage one of the accreditation process. Also, the assessment panel had agreed to receive outstanding documents such as CV's of all faculty members and the Centre's Health and Safety manual during their site visit from October 13-14, 2016.

Dr. Ofori, who has expertise in research ethics been contacted to develop curriculum on health and safety which will be integrated into research methodology under BCMB 630.

5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Dr. Quaye gave the house a brief overview on the evaluation report for the maiden WACCBIP Research Conference held from July 14-15, 2016. Generally, the conference was a huge

success. In all, 116 participants filled the evaluation forms with the following as recommendations:

- Allocation of more time for poster presentations
- Venue for the conference was small and obscure in terms of its location
- Plenary sessions should have more time with a reduction in the number of sessions

In view of these recommendations, Prof. Awandare suggested the following:

- More talk time should be allocated to younger investigators with strict adherence to time
- More talk time should be allocated to networking
- Adverts for the conference should be done early to create more awareness

In terms of course evaluation for the 2015/2016 academic year, Dr. Quaye said all courses and instructors have been evaluated.

5.4 Logistics

Dr. Mosi informed the house that a gel documentation system with UV functionality has been procured and installed.

The new list of equipment to be procured includes:

- Refrigerated microcentrifuge
- Thermocycler
- Weigh scale
- Digital sonicator
- Bench orbital shaker
- Semi-Automated RNA Extractor
- SDS PAGE Full set
- Protein electrophoresis
- PCR cabinet
- Centrifuge
- Compact labroller rotator
- Washing machines
- Class II biosafety cabinet
- Thermomixer C
- Upright microscopes with cameras

She indicated that price quotations have been requested from prospective suppliers to enable her compare cost and initiate procurement.

Recently, the centre procured a shaking incubator, table top incubator and -80° refrigerator. All these equipment are housed in the molecular biology laboratory. Also, plans are underway to create shelves and other platforms for storage of small equipment and reagents and supplies.

5.5 Financial Management

World Bank

- External audit report

Ms. Adzadu informed the house that external audit reports for both the World Bank and the DELTAS projects are ready and have been duly uploaded on the WACCBIP website.

- Scholarships

Award of scholarships for Masters and PhD students for the 2016/2017 academic year has been completed.

- Verification of results by AAU

Following results verification by independent verification agencies for April 2015-June, 2016 representing DLI 2.1-2.6 on student enrolment and research publications, the AAU has recommended a disbursement of SDR 784,890.

DELTAS

Ms. Adzadu informed the house that the centre had received the last disbursement for the 2015/2016 academic year. She went further to make some recommendations:

- Equipment: A detailed list of all equipment to be procured must be provided to her for re-budgeting since some new equipment being procured were not initially captured in the original budget.

Prof. Awandare suggested that some funds earmarked for the University could be converted to other budget lines to free up some depleted ones.

5.6 ICT (Electronic Resources)

- **Turnitin training**

A training on Turnitin, an online academic plagiarism detection technology has been organized for PhD students.

Prof. Awandare indicated that faculty members should also be trained on Turnitin and further suggested that the tentative date for this training could be during the revision week. For Masters students, he suggested that the training could be held after the end of the first semester exams.

- **Acquisition of e-learning equipment and installation of CCTV cameras**

Mr. Barfi-Adomako indicated that invoices have been requested from suppliers for the acquisition of e-learning equipment and have been sent to Prof. Awandare for approval and subsequent procurement.

An initial survey has been conducted to ascertain the security surveillance needs of the centre. This request was premised on the fact that the centre has very expensive equipment which had to be secured against possible theft.

Based on the initial survey, 6 vantage points were identified for the installation of close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras. Each floor will have dedicated CCTV's at the stair cases and the laboratories.

Prof. Awandare on his part suggested that the security surveillance should be rolled out in two phases; installation of CCTV first followed by the access control. Prof Awandare also suggested that facilities for video-conferencing should also be included in the list of items to be procured.

Prof. Quashie recommended that the type of CCTVs to be procured should be the rotational and motion sensitive types for wider capture coverage.

5.7 Procurement

World Bank

- Procurement Plan

Mrs. Kocke informed the house that the procurement plan for year 1 has been completed with year 2 in progress. Progress report on items procured has been sent to Ms. Adzadu for accounting and record keeping purposes.

She indicated that during one of the Implementation Plan (IP) meetings with the World Bank, it was agreed that quantities of items to be procured must be consistent with those contained in the original IP submitted as the quantities keep changing.

Prof. Awandare indicated that the issue of variation in the quantities of items was based on: the nature of the business of science and delays in inflows from the World Bank hence things had to be shifted around to accommodate these delays

- Procurement Audit

She indicated that the centre did not meet the deadline for the submission of procurement audit to the World Bank. She further explained that the World Bank had earlier agreed that they will advertise and recruit a certified procurement auditor for this purpose but later resolved that all ACE's should do that themselves. Due to this delay, her unit received only one tender instead of three tenders required for bidding.

- WACCBIP Building

The contract for the construction of the new WACCBIP building has been signed by MY TURN, a construction firm valued at GHC1.4 million.

DELTAS

Bids for the procurement of 16 items under the DELTAS project had been received awaiting evaluation.

6.0 AOB

6.1 According to Prof. Awandare, the new WACCBIP building will be situated behind the biochemistry building. He further indicated that there had been some modifications to the original building plan hence the structural engineer is working on those modifications.

6.2 Prof. Awandare indicated that it has been communicated to all WACCBIP fellows to indicate WACCBIP's funding statement in all their publications (manuscripts and conference presentations). He also noted that all manuscripts and conference abstracts must be approved by him before submission.

6.3 Appointments

6.4 Background

Based on approval from the WACCBIP International Advisory Board for the recruitment of a Project Manager to assist the Director in the management of projects. A call for applications for the position of project manager was advertised in the Daily Graphic on Tuesday, 26th July, 2016 and on the WACCBIP website (www.waccbip.org). Candidates were asked to submit cover letters and CVs to applications@waccbip.org latest by 31st August 2016.

6.5 Shortlisting Process

- 234 applications were received by the deadline.
- 70 applicants were disqualified because they did not submit cover letters as part of their application documents as required.
- Cover letters submitted by the remaining 164 applicants were reviewed for their writing skills and English proficiency, after which 61 were selected for further review.
- After thorough assessment of the CVs for academic and professional qualifications, as well as past work experience and references presented, 20 applicants were invited for interview, with an additional 9 on waiting list.

6.6 Selection Process (The interview)

The interview was scheduled for September 8-9, 2016 at the Graduate Lecture Room in the Biochemistry building. Of the 20 candidates shortlisted for interview, 2 candidates did not respond to the interview request and 3 candidates were unable to attend the interview on the specified dates as they were abroad. The remaining 15 candidates were to prepare and present a 10 minute presentation on why they should be appointed as Project Manager at WACCBIP.

Each candidate was interviewed for approximately 30 minutes. Candidates spent 10 minutes presenting on why they should be appointed as project manager at WACCBIP, after which they answered various questions asked by the panel.

6.7 Recommendations

After all interviews were concluded, the scores were collated and the top three candidates were all deemed qualified for the position. The interview panel then had thorough discussions on the strengths and weakness of each of the top three candidates. Mr. Michael Somuah Nkansah was deemed to be the best candidate for the position as he displayed the best blend of skills and qualifications sought after. Mr. Nkansah had experience working on projects in the health sector which the other two candidates lacked.

However, due to Ms. Hadassah Odotei's outstanding communication skills, her French proficiency and her experience working in the West African region, the panel recommended that she is engaged on a part-time basis for public engagement specialist.

6.8 Upcoming Events

Prof. Awandare informed the house to diarize the following upcoming events and sought their full assistance and participation:

- International Accreditation by the Royal Society of Biology, UK - Prof. Awandare apprised the house on the pending site visit by the assessment panel from the Royal Society from 13-14 October, 2016 for the accreditation of our Masters and PhD programmes.
- Bioethics Workshop-This will be held in Ghana at the end of November, 2016, All Wellcome Trust DELTAS Postdocs will be invited to take part in this workshop. Dr. Attindana and Prof. Diakite were named as resource persons for the workshop.
- WACCIP-ASCB Workshop-(January 16-27, 2017)-In order to diversify the course content of this workshop, Prof. Awandare indicated that the first week will be dedicated to topics on *Plasmodium*/Malaria and the second week will focus on *Trypanosomiasis*
- Malaria Experimental Genetics Course - April 30-May 5, 2017
- DELTAS meeting – July 3-5, 2017- Ghana will host the 2nd Annual DELTAS Grantees meeting. This was based on recommendations made during the 1st Annual DELTAS meeting in Nairobi in July, 2016 on the need to rotate meeting venues among participating institutions.
- WACCBIP Annual Research Conference - July 6-7, 2017
- WACCBIP International Advisory Board meeting-July 8, 2017

7.0 CLOSING

The meeting came to a close at 1:15 pm.