

MINUTES OF THE WACCBIP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

1.0 BACKGROUND

WACCBIP had a Management Committee meeting on Thursday, January 12, 2017, from 2:00 pm to 4:33 pm at the Science Conference 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.	Prof. Kwadwo Koram	Deputy Director
3.	Dr. Patrick Arthur	Head, Training and Research
4.	Dr. Theresa Manful Gwira	Graduate Students Admissions and Examinations
5.	Dr. Osbourne Quaye	Head, Monitoring and Evaluation
6.	Dr. Lydia Mosi	Logistics Coordinator
7.	Prof. Ben Neils Quashie	NMIMR/WACCBIP faculty
8.	Mr. Collins Amofah	Financial Manager

In Attendance

9.	Ms. Emefa Adzadu	Accounts Officer
10.	Mr. Michael Somuah Nkansah	Project Manager
11.	Mr. Emmanuel Ghartey	Research Development Officer & Centre Administrator
12.	Ms. Ama Dadson	Co-head ICT(Physical Resources)
13.	Ms. Sika Menka	Assistant to the Director
14.	Mr. Solomon Sunu	ICT Officer
15.	Mr. Srinivasan Shankar Balanpangu	Laboratory Technologist
16.	Mrs. Constance Kocke	Procurement Officer

Absent

No.	Name	Designation
17	Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego	Bioinformatics Coordinator
18	Mr. Owusu Barfi-Adomako	Co-head ICT (Electronic Resources)
19	Prof. Dorothy Yeboah Manu	Postdoctoral Programme 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

World Bank ACE Project

- Student Enrolment

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

PhD

- 15 students (7 females, 8 males, 6 regional)
- PhD Molecular Cell Biology of Infectious Diseases (MCBI) - 12 students
- PhD Biochemistry - 2 students

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

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

Prof. Awandare informed the house that during the last management meeting it was announced that a new Project Manager will be employed. He introduced Mr. Michael Nkansah as the new project manager. The house in turn warmly welcomed him.

5.1 Programme Administration and Management

World Bank

- Accreditation

Mr. Ghartey informed the house that WACCBIP had received a 5-year accreditation from the Royal Society of Biology, UK for the MPhil and PhD MCBI programmes.

Prior to that the Centre had received a 3-year accreditation (from September 15, 2015-September 14, 2018) from the National Accreditation Board. In the cover letter that came with the accreditation, it was indicated that a request for renewal must be submitted a year before the expiration date. We are therefore planning to do that in the second quarter of this year.

- **Partnership Agreements**

WACCBIP is in the process of finalizing a Partnership Agreement with National Catholic Health Service (NCHS). This collaboration seeks to build the capacity of health care professionals within the NCHS networks in laboratory diagnostics and also conduct joint research into infectious diseases. The Centre has committed \$30,000 for this purpose.

Last year, WACCBIP signed a Partnership Agreement with LEKMA to upgrade their research laboratory. The first phase of works which includes installation of working benches and sinks have been completed. Other outstanding jobs to be completed include: electrical works, painting and provision of furniture.

- **Employment**

The Centre has employed 2 security personnel to provide security. The Centre has also recruited 10 research assistants to assist with research projects at the various laboratories in the Centre.

5.2 Training and Research

- World Bank

MPhil Cohort 1: All 24 students have defended their thesis; however only 21 students were able to submit their thesis by the 31st July, 2016 deadline. Student who submitted are currently doing their corrections for final submission to the Graduate School. The remaining 3 students (Victor Letsa, Deladem Amekudzi and Sandra Adelaide King) are set to submit by the March, 2017 deadline.

MPhil Cohort 2: All 14 students are currently working on their research projects, out of which 3 of the students changed the topics they initially presented on.

Prof. Quashie was of the view that once a student had presented and defended his/her research project proposal, he/she should not be allowed to change the project.

Prof. Awandare indicated that due to the nature of research, students who may not obtain relevant data for publication may be allowed to change their research projects.

MPhil Cohort 3: All 15 students have submitted and presented their project summaries which have been duly discussed. All 15 research projects were good and will be further discussed during the ASCB workshop.

PhD Cohort 1: Eleven (11) of the 12 students have presented their first progress report, which is also their experiential learning report. One student in the person of Iddrisu Alabira has not

presented and has not been seen at the Department. It was suggested that he must have withdrawn from the programme and the necessary steps be taken.

Prof. Koram wanted to know the processes for withdrawal. Prof. Awandare explained that the student is first contacted, after which an official withdrawal letter is written and a copy sent to the Graduate School.

Currently, 4 students have submitted their progress reports for year one, 4 of them did not make any progress, so their fees were withheld (Stephen Laryea Quaye, Reuben Ayivor-Djanie, Abdul Rahman Ahmed Rufai and Iddrisu Alabira). Abdul Rahman Ahmed Rufai later made some significant progress so his tuition fees were paid. It is expected that by May-June, 2017 upon satisfactory progress, Stephen Laryea Quaye, and Reuben Ayivor-Djanie's fees could be restored.

PhD Cohort 2: All students have defended their projects and were supposed to revise their proposals based on the seminar comments. 11 students have done that with the exception of one, Samuel Ahorhulu

PhD Cohort 3: All 16 students have submitted their project summaries. Based on their project summaries 6 students were asked to go for comprehensive research topics, which they have done. Based on lessons learnt, it was decided that all projects will have to be approved and signed by the student's supervisors.

- **DELTAS**
- **Graduate Interns**

All 12 graduate interns submitted proposals which were presented and discussed. The interns are also planning an outreach program sometime in February, 2017.

Dr. Quaye wanted to know if there was some kind of support in terms of funding for the project work of interns. Prof. Awandare indicated that if the projects were of good quality they will be funded.

- **Accreditation**

On Health & Safety, two modules were designed and included in BCMB 630. Dr. Arthur indicated that two training sessions were held in the course of the semester, with the first session on Health and Safety delivered by him and the second on Biosafety delivered by Dr. Ofori.

Prof. Awandare suggested that the health and safety course should also be included in the PhD BCMB 701, qualitative methods course.

Plans are underway for the development of an instructional manual on Health & Safety and the postdocs have been tasked to prepare the manual.

5.3 Graduate Admissions and Examinations

- **Comprehensive Examination**

Sheriffo Jagne, who joined the PhD programme in the second semester of the 2015/2016 academic year, was expected to finish his first semester course work before his comprehensive examination. He has written his exams and has submitted his proposal, the proposal has been reviewed but had to be sent back for corrections. A date will be set for his oral examination.

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

World Bank

- **Course Evaluation**

Dr. Quaye indicated that MPhil and PhD courses taken in the first semester of the 2016/2017 academic year were evaluated. 8 courses were evaluated in total (5 MPhil and 3 PhD). The responses from the PhD's was enormous but not all the MPhil students evaluated all the courses since it is done online using Google forms and anonymously.

Prof. Awandare advised that a system should be put in place where all students are gathered at a centralized location and asked to evaluate courses online.

- **M&E Report**

- Dr. Quaye further informed the house that the M&E report was submitted to the AAU in October last year. After the workshop in Cote D'Ivoire, it came to light that an M&E update that runs to the end of the 2016 should be submitted to speed up the verification process.

DELTAS

The Centre has prepared a detailed M&E template for submission online on the Ishango platform but the system has not been rolled out by AESA.

Grants won by faculty

Title of proposal	Name of PI	Funder	Amount	Duration of award
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Pocket-i-nucleic acid diagnostic (pi-NAD)	Prof. Gordon Awandare	The Royal Society-UK (The Royal Society International Collaboration Awards for Research Professors, 2016)	£319,384.80	5 years (2years first and subsequently 3 years)
Identification of specific metabolites in mycolactone producing mycobacteria and Buruli ulcer infection: diagnostic biomarkers through metabolomics	Dr. Lydia Mosi	Medical Research Council-GCRF Infections Foundation Awards, 2016: Global Infections	£ 250,000	2 years
Transcriptomics of African Fruit Bats in response to Ebola virus antigens	Dr. Osbourne Quaye	The Royal Society-UK	£ 200,000	1 year
The Dynamics of Filovirus infections in bats in Ghana	Dr. Osbourne Quaye and Prof. James Wood	MRC-UK	£ 600,000	2 years (April, 2017-March, 2019)

Prof. Awandare advised that the M&E team develop a reporting template that captures information on manuscripts and grants submitted and their statuses.

5.5 Postdoctoral Programme Coordinator

In the absence of Prof. Yeboah-Manu, Prof. Awandare gave updates on the postdoctoral programme. He informed the house that calls for applications was advertised in September, 2016 with a deadline of November 30, 2016.

Three priority research areas were advertised;

- Bioinformatics/pathogen genomics
- Cancers
- HIV/AIDS

A total of 22 applications were received after the deadline. The postdoctoral committee consisting of Dr. Arthur, Prof. Koram, Prof. Yeboah-Manu and Prof Awandare reviewed all applications received.

After the review, 9 proposals were deemed competitive; 3 per priority research area. The 9 proposals were then sent out for external review; 3 reviewers per proposal.

Face-to-face interviews will be scheduled for 8-9 February, 2017. Three (3) applicants will be selected and this will be the last batch of DELTAS postdoc fellows. The other 9 initially recruited postdocs were in Accra for the Bioethics workshop in November 2016.

5.6 Bioinformatics Coordinator

In the absence of Dr. Amenga-Etego, Prof. Koram gave updates on the bioinformatics infrastructure of the Centre. He informed the house that a data section room has been allocated for bioinformatics at Noguchi with tables and servers. It is expected that the internet bandwidth will be expanded for bioinformatics work.

5.7 Logistics Coordinator

- **Outreach**

Dr. Mosi informed the house that on November 18, 2016 an outreach event took place at KNUST. The purpose of the outreach was to present general information about WACCBIP to increase awareness of the Centre and to present undergraduate and post graduate students with existing opportunities for graduate and postdoctoral work. The team included the Public Engagement Specialist, Graduate Interns, 2 students and laboratory technologist. The team was hosted by Dr. Mutocheluh, a faculty from KNUST.

- **Equipment**

By way of equipment, there were 16 items to be procured. Below is the status of the laboratory equipment:

No.	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	STATUS
1.	Refrigerated Microcentrifuge	1	Delivered and installed at Molecular Biology laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd

2.	Thermocycler	1	Delivered and installed at Infectious Diseases Research laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd
3.	Weigh Scale	1	Awarded to Servaco Ltd
4.	Washing Machine	1	Delivered and yet to installed at Infectious Diseases Research laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd
5.	Semi-Automated RNA Extractor	1	To be procured from Manufacturer
6.	Digital Sonicator	1	Awarded to Arcoa Ltd
7.	Bench Orbital Shaker	1	To be procured from Manufacturer
8.	Class II Biosafety Cabinet	1	Awarded to Chances and Opportunities Ltd
9.	Thermomixer C	1	Awarded to Chances and Opportunities Ltd
10.	SDS PAGE Fullset	1	To be directly sourced from Biorad Company
11.	Protein Electroporesis	1	To be directly sourced from Biorad Company
12.	Upright Microscope	2	To be procured from Manufacturer
13.	PCR Cabinet	2	Manufacturers supplied through Arcoa Gh Ltd
14.	Inspissator	1	Awarded to Chances and Opportunities Ltd
15.	Compact Labroller Rotator	1	Awarded to Chances and Opportunities Ltd
16.	Centrifuge	1	Delivered and installed at Protein Expression laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd

- **ASCB Workshop**

On the upcoming ASCB workshop, all logistical needs such food, stationery, accommodation, flights have been arranged.

Procurement

Mrs. Kocke informed the house that of the 16 items, 12 contracts have been signed and four items have been delivered.

5.8 Financial Management

World Bank

- **Disbursement**

The Centre received \$ 1.4 million in November last year.

- **Audit**

Ms. Adzadu informed the house that the Centre is currently preparing for external audit.

The internal audit for January –September, 2016 period has been completed. The internal auditors are yet to complete the audit for the last quarter of 2016. A couple of issues raised in the audit reports are currently being discussed. The final report will therefore be uploaded on the website when it is ready.

DELTAS

- **Disbursement**

WACCBIP received \$ 271,667 as disbursement for Year 2 Quarter 1

- **Audit**

The internal audit is yet to be done

- **Reporting**

The DELTAS Year 2 Quarter 1 report is still being prepared.

Prof. Awandare suggested that in subsequent meetings, the financial balances for both projects must be communicated to the committee.

5.9 ICT (Physical Resources)

Ms. Dadson indicated that there were some challenges with the UG email system during the migration to the cloud system, Office 365 but is being resolved. There were also delays in installation of switches and networks at the bioinformatics laboratory but have been recently resolved.

6.0 ICT (Electronic Resources)

In the absence of Mr. Adomako-Barfi's absence, Ms Dadson indicated that the technical specifications for the CCTV and multimedia devices have been submitted. She also stated that ICT unit was waiting for confirmation from the WACCBIP Director for the follow-up e-learning training for WACCBIP faculty and staff.

6.1 Review of January-June, 2017 work plan

Mr. Nkansah informed the committee that he has developed a combined work plan for both projects from January-June, 2017. In the work plan, specific tasks have been assigned to every team member with checked timelines. He shared copies of the work plan with the house and asked that members who had not yet checked the timelines for the completion of their work for the period do so.

7.0 AOB

Prof. Awandare gave a brief update on the acquisition of High Performance Computing Unit for genomics and bioinformatics. IBM has been engaging with the Centre to know our needs and the packages they could offer. Initially, UGCS contacted an International Centre for Theoretical Physics, an Italian firm for this service. The Centre has contacted three (3) major competing suppliers, namely: IBM, DELL and HP to supply these items through restricted tender.

8.0 CLOSING

The meeting came to a close at 4:33 pm.