

MINUTES OF THE WACCBIP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

1.0 BACKGROUND

WACCBIP had a Management Committee meeting on March 16, 2017 from 2:00 pm to 4:06 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. Osbourne Quaye	Head, Monitoring and Evaluation
4.	Dr. Lydia Mosi	Logistics Coordinator
5.	Prof. Dorothy Yeboah-Manu	Postdoctoral Coordinator
6.	Mr. Collins Amofah	Financial Manager
7.	Mrs. Constance Kocke	Procurement Officer
8.	Mr. Owusu Barfi-Adomako	Co-head ICT (Electronic Resources)

In Attendance

No.	Name	Designation
9.	Mr. Michael Somuah Nkansah	Project Manager
10	Mr. Emmanuel Ghartey	Centre Administrator
11	Ms. Sika Menka	Assistant to the Director
12	Mr. Srinivasan Shankar Balanpangu	Laboratory Technologist
13	Mr. Vincent Appiah	Research Assistant/ ICT Officer

Absent

No.	Name	Designation
14	Prof Kwadwo Koram	Deputy Director
15	Prof. Ben Neils Quashie	BCMB/WACCBIP faculty
16	Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego	Bioinformatics Coordinator
17	Dr. Theresa Manful Gwira	Graduate Students Admissions and Examinations
18	Ms. Ama Dadson	Co-head ICT(Physical Resources)
19	Dr. Anita Ghansah	Genetics Programme Coordinator
20	Ms. Emefa Adzadu	Accounts Officer

3.0 OPENING REMARKS AND REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm with introductory remarks from Prof. Awandare. This was followed by a review of minutes from the previous meeting. Subject to changes and corrections, the minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as true and accurate.

4.0 MATTERS ARISING

- **Turnitin training**

Prof. Awandare in an earlier meeting suggested that faculty members be trained on Turnitin, an online academic plagiarism detection technology. Tentative dates were set for the training, however, the training never materialized. A half-day training session was suggested for both faculty and graduate students.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Programme Management

- **DELTAS Postdocs applications, interviews and selection**

The call for applications was advertised on October 24, 2016 with 22 applications submitted by the deadline on November 30, 2016. Nine candidates were shortlisted and after review by internal and external faculty, 6 were shortlisted for interview. However one applicant opted out of the interview. Interviews were conducted and the panel recommended Dr. Lily Paemka and Dr. Saikou Y Bah for the 3-year fellowship and Dr. Ali Azeko Salifu was awarded a 6-month fellowship during which time his competence will be assessed and a final decision made on whether to offer him the fellowship for the additional two and half years. The interview scores are shown in below.

Table 1. Interview Scores

NO.	CANDIDATE	AVERAGE SCORE	NATIONALITY
1	Lily Paemka	78.12	Ghanaian
2	Saikou Y. Bah	74.18	Gambian
3	Ali Azeko Salifu	71.00	Ghanaian
4	Patrick Williams Narkwa	58.86	Ghanaian
5	Moses Ocan	55.91	Ugandan

The Centre has now fulfilled its mandate of recruiting 12 Postdoctoral Fellows under the DELTAS programme.

- **DELTAS PhD applications**

The call for applications was advertised on January 27, 2017 with 104 applications (17 nationalities) submitted by the deadline on March 6, 2017. A strict selection process with the following criteria was used to shortlist candidates; year of Masters completion, age of applicant, relevance of Master's degree, publications in PubMed, and research experience.

- **DELTAS Graduate Interns**

The call for applications was advertised on January 30, 2017 with 324 applications submitted by the deadline on February 28, 2017. Selection process is yet to begin

- **Training**

WACCBIP and the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) held the seventh workshop on Molecular Cell Biology of Protozoan Parasites from January 16, 2017 to January 27, 2017.

The two-week long workshop was aimed at teaching students strategies for modern biomedical research, focusing on the cell biology, immunology and genetic manipulation of protozoan parasites. In all 31 students participated. Faculty were drawn from University of Oxford, University of Heidelberg, Cornell University, University of Copenhagen and Rigshospitalet, Denmark, Sir William Dunn School of Pathology at the University of Oxford, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, and University of Ghana

- **Corporate Outreach**

Letters have been drafted for sponsorship of students and the WACCBIP Research conference. It is expected that sponsorship will be solicited from corporate Ghana. Brochures for the corporate outreach are expected to be printed on March 23, 2017

- **WACCBIP Building update**

Work on the WACCBIP building, Biochemistry Annex is progressing smoothly though there were initially challenges in the digging of the foundation. These concerns have been addressed and it is expected that the pace of work will be kept unabated.

5.2 Programme Administration

Staffing

Mr. Gharthey informed the house of new appointments and resignations of staff

- **Appointments**

- Prof. Dorothy Yeboah- Manu was officially appointed as Postdoctoral Coordinator under the DELTAS Programme
- Mr. Joshua Mensah has been appointed as Research Assistant at LEKMA

- Mr. Alfred Kazarasem has been appointed as an ICT intern
- Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego's appointment as the Bioinformatics coordinator has been renewed, effective January 3, 2017.
- Mr. Vincent Appiah who was employed as a research assistant has been reassigned as ICT Officer.

- **Staff departures**

- Mr. Solomon Sunu has resigned as ICT Officer
- Mr. Pious Klevor the Research Assistant at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital and Dr. Adwoa Asante Poku has resigned
- Mr. Majeed Bakari, a Research Assistant has gained admission to the University of Wurzburg, Germany to pursue a PhD programme

- **Partnership Agreements**

- WACCBIP is in the process of finalizing a MoU with the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, UDS. Under this arrangement, WACCBIP will commit USD 30,000 for laboratory upgrades and joint research activities.

- **Interview of Director**

As part of the Centre's outreach drive, Prof. Awandare was granted an interview on GCB on March 13, 2017 on the Moomen Tonight Show. The topic for discussion was "Challenges facing Science Research and Training". Prof. Awandare highlighted on funding is a major problem facing science research and training. He took the opportunity to talk about the activities of WACCBIP and some of the accomplishments of faculty, fellows and students of the Centre. He also made a call to corporate organizations to support students of the Centre through award of scholarships. Generally, the interview was a success and GTV agreed to visit the Centre to grant a special feature on activities at the Centre.

5.3 Training and Research

- **World Bank ACE project**

MPhil Cohort 1: Twenty one students have submitted their theses for grading as at the March 16, 2017. Deladem Amekudzi has not submitted his thesis as at March 31, 2017.

MPhil Cohort 2: Eighteen out of the twenty students have presented their progress reports. Three students had to change their topics during the proposal defense stage. Later in the semester two students had to change their topics again. Based on student's presentation, four students were deemed to have made excellent progress.

MPhil Cohort 3: All fifteen students have submitted their project summaries which were thoroughly discussed and fine-tuned during the ASCB workshop in January, 2017

PhD Cohort 1: Ten out of the twelve students successfully were scheduled to present their progress report.

PhD Cohort 2: All the students have revised their proposals based on comments made during last semester's seminars. Students are expected to present their progress report during week 10-13 of this semester.

PhD Cohort 3: All sixteen students have submitted their project summaries. Based on the project summaries, six students were advised to go for more substantial research topics.

Prof. Awandare suggested a supervisory committee be constituted so that deficiencies in proposal are resolved earlier. The committee could meet once in a semester to present their results

- **DELTAS**

- **Graduate Interns**

- All 12 graduate interns are currently working on their respective project works

- **Accreditation**

- The award ceremony for the the Royal Society of Biology Accreditation received by WACCBIP will take place on 27th April, 2017 in the House of Commons, Westminster-UK.

Prof. Awandare informed the house that Dr. Patrick Arthur and Mr. Wilson Ademolue have been nominated to represent WACCBIP at the award ceremony.

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

- **World Bank**

- **M&E Report**

Dr. Quaye informed the house that the M&E report has been submitted to AAU. He indicated that the report was a "make-up" report representing January to December, 2016

- **Student verification**

The World Bank verification to assess the teaching and learning experiences of students will be conducted soon. All students have been notified via emails of the upcoming verification for their active participation.

- Course Evaluations

Course evaluations for first semester have been completed. Generally, the evaluation results of courses and lecturers were impressive. Additionally, the evaluated results from the bioethics workshop and ASCB workshops were overwhelming positive.

• DELTAS

The M&E report for the DELTAS programme has been submitted to AESA via the online Ishango platform.

5.5 Logistics

Dr. Mosi informed the house that some laboratory equipment are currently being procured. These include:

IT NO	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	STATUS
1.	Refrigerated Microcentrifuge Heraeus Fresco, Thermo Fisher	1	Delivered and installed at Molecular biology laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd
2.	Thermocycler Proflex PCR system, Thermo Fisher	1	Delivered and installed at Infectious Diseases laboratory Arcoa Gh Ltd
3.	Weigh Scale Ohaus	1	Delivered and installed at Parkers laboratory Servaco Gh Ltd
4.	Washing Machine Ecobubble, Samsung	1	Delivered and installed at Infectious Diseases laboratory Arcoa Gh Ltd
5.	Digital Sonicator Q-500 Sonicator	1	Delivered by Arcoa Gh Ltd Awaiting accessories: 1/8"(3mm), 1/4"(6mm) microelectrode, sound enclosure
6.	PCR Cabinet ClearView, Scientific Ltd	2	Delivered by Arcoa and installed at Infectious Diseases laboratory Arcoa Gh Ltd
7.	Centrifuge Heraeus Pico 17, Thermo Fisher	1	Delivered by Arcoa and installed at Protein Expression laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd
8.	Thermomixer C, Eppendorf	1	Delivered by chances and opportunity and installed at Protein Expression laboratory by Arcoa Gh Ltd

5.6 ICT (Electronic Resources)

- **Video, photo equipment and surveillance equipment**

Mr. Barfi informed the house that technical and financial evaluation for the procurement of video, photo production equipment and surveillance equipment has been completed. The draft report is ready pending some clarifications from the selected supplier.

- **Next steps**

Mr. Barfi proposed the training of WACCBIP Administrative staff on University of Ghana Intranet Portal. Under this arrangement, a virtual WACCBIP office will be set up to:

- Manage files, create, assign, update, delete permissions on the folders and give commands all in a virtual setting.

5.7 Postdoctoral Programme

Prof. Yeboah-Manu informed the house that the second cohorts of postdoctoral fellows have all received their appointment letters. However, Dr. Saikou Bah wanted a review of his official ten working days leave. His request for an increment of his leave days is being negotiated.

5.8 Financial Management

- **Audit**

The annual audits for both projects are on-going. The auditors are PricewaterhouseCoopers.

5.9 Procurement

- **World Bank**
 - **Equipment**

Mrs. Kocke informed the house that the letter for approval for the procurement of the confocal microscope has been signed and submitted to the Public Procurement Authority. Procurement of the confocal microscope is pending.

Equipment procured from Chances and Opportunities have arrived at the port and will be delivered in the coming weeks. DCL will also deliver the Upright Ultra-low freezer in a few weeks.

- **Procurement Audit**

The terms of reference for the services of a procurement auditor for both WACCI and WACCBIP have been submitted to perspective bidders. The bids will be evaluated both

technically and financially. The auditor with the requisite expertise will be selected and a contract signed for the commencement of the procurement audit.

6.0 Updates on grants won by faculty

All faculty members who had recently won grants gave updates on the status of their respective grants in the table below:

Table 2. Updates on grants won by faculty

Title of proposal	Name of PI	Funder	Amount	Duration of award	Comments/Status
Pocket-i-nucleic acid diagnostic (pi-NAD)	Prof. Gordon Awandare	The Royal Society-UK (The Royal Society International Collaboration Awards for Research Professors, 2016) The aim of this award is to foster and promote international collaboration between outstanding research groups in the UK and overseas, with a view to supporting work on global challenges and problems facing developing countries.	£319,384.80	5 years (2years first and subsequently 3 years)	This is collaborative with Prof. Lisa Hall as a co-applicant. The grant has been activated. The plan is to send Francis Krampa, Year 2 PhD to work in Prof. Hall's laboratory as part of his experiential learning. Also, Felix Ansah will be sent to Cambridge University since this project is relevant to Felix's work.
Identification of specific metabolites in mycolactone producing mycobacteria and Buruli	Dr. Lydia Mosi	A Medical Research Council (MRC) grant as part of the Global Challenge Research Fund	£ 220,603.51	2 years	The second half of the project will be undertaken by Elizabeth Laryea-Akrong at Cambridge University as a

ulcer infection: diagnostic biomarkers through metabolomics		(GCRF) awarded to researchers in the UK in collaboration with researchers in developing countries to address a global problem			research assistant. This grant is also meant for the purchase of three pieces of equipment. Currently, the PI is working on official ethical clearance. The grant is expected to be activated on April 1, 2017
Transcriptomics of African Fruit Bats in response to Ebola virus antigens	Dr. Osbourne Quaye	A Royal Society Challenge grant as part of the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) awarded to researchers in the UK in collaboration with researchers in developing countries to address a global problem	£ 123,000.00	1 year	The grant contract has been forwarded to ORID for review and signature. This grant is only for equipment
The Dynamics of Filovirus infections in bats in Ghana	Dr. Osbourne Quaye and Prof. James Wood	A Medical Research Council (MRC) grant as part of the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) awarded to researchers in the UK in collaboration with researchers in developing countries to address a global problem	£ 742,297.62	2 years (April, 2017-March, 2019)	This grant is mainly for equipment and reagents. The grant contract with UG has been finalized. Grant is expected to be activated on April 1, 2017

6.1 Upcoming Events

Prof. Awandare asked members to take note of the following upcoming events and sought their full assistance and active participation:

- Malaria Experimental Genetics Course - April 30-May 5, 2017
- DELTAS meeting – July 3-5, 2017- Ghana will host the 2nd Annual DELTAS Grantees meeting at Fiesta Royale-Accra. The VC will host Peter Agre, a Noble Laureate for the VC's occasional lecture to be delivered at ISSER. Other prominent Ghanaians have been contacted for this lecture. Prof. Awandare informed the house that he has contacted Prof. Frimpong Boateng to participate in the programme and the response was positive.
- Second WACCBIP Annual Research Conference - July 6-7, 2017
The second WACCBIP Research conference will feature two keynote speakers for both 6th and 7th July, 2017, who are yet to be identified.
- WACCBIP International Advisory Board meeting-July 8, 2017

7.0 CLOSING

The meeting came to a close at 4:06 pm.