

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
WEST AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CELL BIOLOGY OF INFECTIOUS PATHOGENS

MINUTES OF THE CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021 IN THE WACCBIP BOARDROOM

**Present**

Prof. Gordon Awandare	Director/Chairperson
Prof. Anderson Mon	Representative of the Provost, CBAS
Prof. David Dodoo-Arhin	Representative of the Vice Chancellor
Prof. Osbourne Quaye	Head of Department of Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology
Dr. Lily Paemka	Representative of Head of Research Training Unit
Dr. Lydia Mosi	Head, Logistics and Technology
Dr. Yaw Bediako	Science Ambassador and Head of Advancement
Dr. Theresa Manful Gwira	Graduate Admissions and Exams Coordinator ( <b>via zoom</b> )
Rev. Prof. W.S.K Gbewonyo	Mentorship Coordinator, BCMB
Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego	Representative of Research Fellows
Mr. Collins Misita Morang'a	Representative of Graduate Students
Ms. Henrietta Ashiabor	Assistant Registrar/Secretary

**Absent**

Prof. Dorothy Yeboah-Manu	Director, NMIMR / Deputy Centre Leader
Prof. Neils Ben Quashie	Representative of College of Health Sciences ( <b>Apologies</b> )
Dr. Winfred-Peck Dorleku	Industrial Liaison
Mr. Francis Boachie	CITO, UGCS
Mr. Anthony Hofe	Accountant, ORID
Mrs. Constance Kocke	Representative of Logistics Directorate
Prof. Kwadwo Koram	Member
Dr. Mamadou Cisse	Rep. of Regional Partners (Centre Muraz, Burkina Faso)

**In Attendance**

Ms. Sika Menka	Grants Manager
Mr. Felix Kyei	Senior Administrative Assistant
Ms. Emefa Adzadu	Senior Accounts Officer
Mr. Vincent Appiah	HPC Manager
Mr. Andrew Nantogmah	Communications Manager
Ms. Marian Namle Nanor	Accounts Officer
Ms. Sarah Ofori Ntim	Procurement Officer
Mr. Anthony Gassinu	Accounts Officer
Mr. Stefan Danquah	Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Mr. Francis Dzabeng	Data Manager
Mr. Alfred Kazeresam	ICT Technician
Mr. Srinivasan Balapangu	Laboratory Technologist

**1.0 Opening**

The Chairperson welcomed all and invited members to introduce themselves. He informed the meeting that there has been changes in membership.

**Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 was confirmed subject to amendments/corrections. Prof. Osbourne moved for its adoption, seconded by Rev. Prof. W.S.K. Gbewonyo.

**1. NEW BUSINESS**

**1.0 Presentation of Reports**

The various Unit Heads reported on their activities over the last quarter (October to December, 2021). Highlights are noted below. Complete details are in the various Units' reports.

**1.1 Grants Management - CMC4(2i)/2020-2021**

**1.1.1 ACE Impact Project**

- Verification of first milestone for DLR 4.3 (Improved teaching and research environment) for verification - Purchase and installation of an Illumina NextSeq 2000 sequencer.
- Submission of milestones for DLR 5.3 (Entrepreneurship).
- 6th ACE Impact regional workshop (November 9-10, 2021).

**1.1.2. Wellcome Trust DELTAS Project**

- Submission of a 4-month no cost extension requests for University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford remaining budgets.
- Submission of the end of project report (December 31, 2021)

**1.1.3. The overall status of implementation of the ACE Impact Project was as follows:**

Maximum SDR per DLR was	3,743,445
Total Earnings of SDR to date	2,385.025
Balance SDR	1,358,420

**1.1.4. On the enrolment of students, the Grants Manager reported that:**

- i. There has been a decrease in the regional enrolment of students due to limited scholarship slots available.
- ii. Some students admitted did not enroll, possibly, due to the covid-19 pandemic.

- iii. Placements for Internships have been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iv. There was limited funding, making it difficult to grant more fellowships to those who applied.
- v. Prof. Anderson Mon proposed University management be engaged to grant waivers in fees to international students to enable more foreign applicants access the fellowship.

It was noted that the University's financial position would not permit that. Rather, the Centre should explore other means of funding to support more applicants for fellowship awards.

1.1.5. Grants and Workshops

Three (3) new Grants were won by Prof. Awandare, Dr. Peter Quarshie and Dr. Theresa Gwira. Two (2) additional grants were awarded to Dr. Lydia Mosi and Dr. Yaw Bediako.

Three (3) workshops were held in November, 2021.

**1.2 Data Management and HPC - CMC4(2ii)/2020-2021**

The team gave an update on their activities, which involved:

- i. Routine data management and analytics support to students and researchers on the following studies.
- ii. Management of the HPC System.
- iii. Running Data Science and Bioinformatics Courses

For the coming quarter the Unit intended to:

- i. Conduct routine maintenance of all project data systems set up on WACCBIP servers at UGCS, and
- ii. generate data from ongoing COVID-19 sero-prevalence study for manuscript write up and reporting and continue to provide data management and analysis support to researchers and students

**1.3 Accounts/Finance - CMC4(2iii)/2020-2021**

Ms. Emefa Adzadu, the Senior Accounts Officer reported on the state of the various project finances.

Project Disbursements:	
Total disbursements received from grants	USD 369,989.94
Internally generated funds received into the Centre's Administrative Accounts	USD 51,372.66
Total bank balance as at 2 <sup>nd</sup> December, 2021	<b>USD 1,824,031.78</b>

She gave the following comments on the accounts:

- i. There were salary recoveries over the period.
- ii. Requests for ORID to pay the salary recoveries into the administrative account have been discontinued because they refused to process such requests.
- iii. No update on investments
- iv. Status on Accounting Software: The technical and financial evaluations have been completed awaiting final action from the Logistics Directorate to issue and sign off the agreement for the award of the contract.
- v. Some refund was expected from MRTC, Mali, to clear the deficit of the DELTAS amount.
- vi. TIBA Grant had been fully spent.
- vii. She also reported that ORID declined to refund the cost of reagents which were pre-financed reagents that were bought for other projects from TIBA. The debt to TIBA has, however, been settled internally.

The following steps were to be taken:

- i. To reconcile the TC 36 accounts with CBAS, to ensure that both records tally.
- ii. Create a budget line for the usage of the Centre's facility to enable projects that use WACCBIP facilities contribute to running/maintaining the facilities.

#### **1.4 Advancement - CMC4(2iv)/2020-2021**

Giving his report over the period, Dr. Yaw Bediako informed the meeting that the Centre had increased visibility due to the emergence of the new COVID-19 variant (termed Omicron virus). This has led to some opportunities to engage with the media.

The Unit plans to concentrate on investigative research as part of its collaboration with Yemaachi Biotechnology.

All activities planned for the quarter have had to be called off due to the pandemic.

#### **1.5 Communications and Public Engagement - CMC4(2v)/2020-2021**

The Communications Manager, Mr. Andrew Nantogmah made a presentation to demonstrate the updated WACCBIP website and highlighted the new features, which included:

- i. Links to various social media platforms.
- ii. Allows for multiple user access
- iii. Contents can be assessed in 6 other international languages in addition to the English language. (French, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, German, Russian)
- iv. LinkedIn and Youtube were the latest additions to the social media handles.

He also reported that the Centre's docu-drama on the genetics of hearing impairment was selected as one of 20 finalists for the 2021 *Falling Walls Engage* that took place in Berlin, Germany. The Public Engagement Officer, Ms. Kyerewaa Boateng had travelled to Germany for the award.

#### **Comments/suggestions received**

Need to enhance profile of faculty members on the Website

Provide more information on the research activities at the Centre.  
Update the reports of Advisory Board.

**1.6 Admissions/Examinations - CMC4(2vi)/2020-2021**

Dr. Theresa Gwira, the Coordinator reported on the application and selection process for the WACCBIP ACE Ph.D Fellowships. At the end of the process 9 fellowships were awarded out of the 148 applications received. The breakdown along gender, regional and programme lines are in the main report.

In all, she indicated that the admission/examinations process had been a very challenging one, especially conducting examinations virtually. One (1) student failed the written examinations component of the Ph.D comprehensive examinations but has one (1) more chance to qualify or be withdrawn from the programme.

The School of Graduate Studies has not provided admissions letters to the students.

**1.7 Logistics and Technology - CMC4(2vii)/2020-2021**

Dr. Lydia Mosi enumerated the state of various laboratory equipment and work done i.e., servicing, replacement of faulty parts and installation of new ones.

**Pending activities are:**

- i. Refurbishment works in the laboratories
- ii. PDMSD has not responded to the request to mount the containers for storage purposes. She informed the meeting of her intention to look at what some units have done and do same.
- iii. Rules and regulations developed for the laboratories were to be circulated among the lab users.
- iv. Follow through with work on the carport which had stalled because the supplier demanded 30% payment upfront, which was declined by the Logistics Directorate.
- v. Employment of a Procurement Manager for the Centre.

**1.8 Monitoring and Evaluation - CMC4(2viii)/2020-2021**

**1.8.1 Training**

A total of thirty-two (32) students enrolled during the 2020/2021 academic year originating from fifteen (15) African countries; Ghanaians were in the majority. It emerged that the covid-19 pandemic gave the students opportunities to participate in Covid-19 symposia, conferences, in-lab Covid research, etc. and some were able to publish more papers out of the many Covid-19 research activities. Furthermore, majority of the masters' students after graduation enrolled to pursue a PhD.

**1.8.2 Research**

During the period, there was a total of sixty-eight (68) publications out of which fifty-eight (58) were captured in SCIVAL Database. It was noted that WACCBIP publications

were below the global performance of publications in terms of views and citations. It was thus recommended that the Centre tweets and retweets its publications to increase its reach, views, and citations.

### **1.8.3 Communication and Public Engagement**

The Centre had the highest number of new followers on Twitter in July 2021, which was attributed to the organization of WACCBIP's annual research conference and other public engagement activities organized by the Centre. In the area of public engagements, forty-eight (48) activities/events were undertaken.

### **1.8.4 Sustainability**

The Centre performed marvelously well in its financial sustainability in 2021 as compared to the previous years, that is, from 2015 to 2020. The Centre secured USD 2,110,198.05 in 2021.

## **1.9 Administration - CMC4(2ix)/2020-2021**

Mr. Felix Kyei, reported on appointments made to the positions of Research Assistants, Research Associates, Security Guard and Web Content Developer. An Assistant Registrar was also posted by the University to the Centre.

## **1.10 Mentorship - CMC4(2x)/2020-2021**

The Unit administered questionnaires to WACCBIP Graduate Mentees (students who had submitted their thesis and graduated since 2019), to assess the impact of the programme over the years and to resolve mentee challenges.

The areas evaluated include:

- i. the means of communication,
- ii. initiation of contact,
- iii. how often the mentor and mentee met,
- iv. the form of help mentor gave,
- v. feedback given and whether expectations were met
- vi. challenge(s) faced by mentee and
- vii. how beneficial the mentorship programme was to mentees.

Overall, the response rate was low.

He noted that the concerns raised by mentors that mentees were not keeping pace with their programme were being addressed.

Going forward, the following activities were listed for action:

- i. Organize mentors' interaction, to address issues raised during the workshop 2021
- ii. Mentee assignment to mentors for 2022/2023
- iii. Evaluation of initial contact with mentors
- iv. Organize mentorship workshop 2022

The recommendation by a mentee for a comprehensive mentorship programme which involved the mental, emotional, physical, and overall well-being of students was discussed.

Reacting to the suggestion that the Centre creates a counselling unit, the Mentorship coordinator, Rev. Prof. Gbewonyo stated that the Careers and Counselling Unit of the University already catered for such needs and setting up a Unit will therefore not be feasible.

**2.0 Final Review and Adoption of Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan was considered, and some amendments made. The document was to be finalized after which a meeting would be called for its adoption.

**3.0 Any Other Business**

The Chairperson commended Sika Menka, Stefan Danquah and Simon Donkoh for the initiative to write for a DAAD scholarship.

Mr. Collins Morang'a, the student representative on the Committee informed the meeting that he had completed his studies, thus bringing his tenure on the management Committee to an end.

**4.0 Closing**

The meeting ended at 6:15p.m. on a motion by Prof. Osbourne Quaye seconded by Dr. Lydia Mosi.



Prof. Gordon Awandare  
Chairman



Ms. Henrietta Ashiabor  
Secretary