

**WEST AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CELL BIOLOGY OF INFECTIOUS PATHOGENS (WACCBIP)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
27TH JUNE, 2022 IN THE WACCBIP BOARD ROOM AT 12:00 NOON**

Present:

Prof. Gordon Awandare	-	Director, WACCBIP (Chairman)
Dr. Lydia Mosi	-	Deputy Director (Administration)
Dr. Peter Quashie	-	Deputy Director (Research)
Prof. David Dodoo-Arhin	-	Representative of the Vice Chancellor
Prof. Neils Ben Quashie	-	Representative, College of Health Sciences
Rev. Prof. W.S.K Gbewonyo	-	Mentorship Coordinator
Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego	-	Representative of Research Fellows
Mr. Francis K. Boachie	-	Chief Information Technology Officer, UGCS
Dr. Theresa Manful Gwira	-	Head of Research Training
Dr. Yaw Bediako	-	Head of Advancement
Dr. Anastasia R. Aikins	-	Coordinator of Graduate Admissions and Examinations
Dr. Yaw Aniweh	-	Head of Technology
Mrs. Constance Kocke	-	Representative, Logistics Directorate
Ms. Henrietta Ashiabor	-	Assistant Registrar/Secretary

Absent:

Prof. Osbourne Quaye	-	Head, Department of Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology (Apologies)
Prof. Kwadwo Koram	-	Member, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research
Prof. Anderson Mon	-	Representative of the Provost, College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS)
Mr. Anthony Hofe	-	Accountant, ORID

In Attendance

Ms. Sika Menka	-	Grants Manager
Mr. Michael Abogro	-	Procurement Manager
Ms. Marian Nanor	-	Accounts Officer
Mr. Andrew Nantogmah	-	Communications Manager
Mr. Eric Afful	-	Laboratory Technician
Mr. Francis Dzabeng	-	Data Manager
Ms. Kyerewaa A. Boateng	-	Public Engagement Officer
Mr. Theophilus Dugah	-	ICT Officer
Mr. Alfred Kazaasam	-	ICT Technician
Mr. Stephan Danquah	-	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer

1. Opening

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:08p.m. and welcomed all present.

2.0 Confirmation of Minutes

2.1 Minutes CMC2/2021-2022 – April 13, 2022

Subject to corrections indicated in the minutes, Dr. Lydia Mosi moved for the adoption of the Minutes seconded by Prof. Dodoo-Arhin.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

Proposal to Invest in UG Guest Centre

The Chairperson informed the meeting that the UGEL Board had gone ahead to engage in talks with other investors due to some delay on our part. That notwithstanding, the Centre would continue to maintain its interest in the facility and take advantage whenever the opportunity arose again.

He went on to say that other options proposed earlier – including putting up a similar facility close to the Guest Centre, operate a diagnostic laboratory or have annex to the Centre's building to create space for more laboratories, could be explored.

4.0 REPORT ON WACCBIP RESEARCH CONFERENCE (WRC)

4.1 Scientific Committee

Updates from the Scientific Committee by Dr. Peter Quashie were as follows:

A total of 120 abstracts had been received which were categorized into six (6) selected sub-themes and have been distributed among some faculty members to be reviewed and ranked. The top ranked abstracts would be featured as Plenary Talks. There shall be 24 slots for a 15-minute presentation by students/fellows. There would also be Poster presentations.

Douglas Perkins, Nadia Sam-Agudu, Bismarck Dinko have confirmed to be Keynote Speakers.

The underlisted persons were contacted to be panel members for the discussion on Biotech, Innovations and Startups. They have all confirmed their readiness to participate in the Conference.

- Greg Rockson – CEO of M.Pharma, a Pharmaceutical chain and Logistics firm. He operates within the African subregion.
- Dr. Laud Anthony Basing, CEO of Incas Diagnostics/KNUST and UG.
- Ms. Roberta Annan, a Startup Financier with qualifications in Biochemistry and Biotechnology
- Dr. Yaw Bediako of Yemaachi Biotech.

Dr. Quashie also reported that the final review of abstracts was being done and the full programme would be ready soon.

Ms. Sika Menka mentioned that some have enquired about travel grants to enable them to participate in the Conference. This request she explained, was because of how the advert was captured. She therefore suggested that there should be further clarification in subsequent conference advertisements. Prof. Awandare indicated that only WACCBIP collaborators would be supported with travel grants.

The Chairman said abstracts submitted by postdocs/alumni should be listed under plenaries while that of students presented as Posters. He entreated the team to hasten its efforts in compiling information and editing of the brochure in time for printing. He said the setbacks experienced in the previous year should be prevented.

It came to light that there were challenges with the UG email system; emails sent through the system did not get to the recipients, even between the UG emails. Other experiences recounted how long it took for emails sent via UG address to be delivered, while it was not so with other email accounts. Some also got to their destination as spam/junk mail or were completely blocked.

The Chief Information Technology Officer, Mr. Francis Boachie, promised to get the concerns addressed accordingly.

4.2 Logistics Committee

From the Logistics Committee front, Dr. Mosi reported that:

The Conference budget has been finalized and Gh¢600,000 has been allocated with funding expected from sponsors and grants by fellows.

4.2.1 Logistical Arrangements

The Grants Manager, with the support of administrative staff, was working on accommodation and visas for invited attendees. Reservations have been made at the Mensvic Grand Hotel and UG Guest Centre.

Exhibition stands were to be mounted at the foyer of the 1st or 2nd floors of the BCMB area, and booths mounted at the entrances to the laboratories. Meals would also be served at the same venue. It was hoped that this arrangement would cut down costs of renting canopies. It would also increase participants' patronage of the stands and booths, which was not the case in the past. Arrangements for chairs, tables have all been concluded.

- Basement catering services and two other Caterers were being considered to provide packed lunch.
- Coupons would be issued for meals.
- The venue for dinner was being worked on; it would be held off-campus.
- Dinner tickets will be issued to registered attendees. Those who participate for the entire period would be given priority above those who joined at the end.

- Transportation would be provided to and from the venue.
- Painting, plumbing and cleaning arrangements have also been made to give the building a face-lift and the necessary Covid precautionary measures would be fully observed.

4.2.2 ICT Services

Staff of UGCS who assisted with technological support during the previous conference had already been contacted.

The major challenge highlighted was the passcode features to the Zoom account which had been disabled. Consequently, it would be difficult to rejoin the waiting room in case there was a drop in connection. The ICT Officer explained that the Zoom Account for WACCBIP had been unsubscribed. Options proposed were to use the registration link to gain access instead of the passcode and assign a person to re-admit participants into the meeting. A Zoom license for one-time account was to be purchased for use during the conference.

CITO suggested the use of Microsoft Teams which the University subscribes to. His suggestion was noted for future conferences since it was too late to reverse the arrangement.

Dr. Mosi mentioned that a new projector was needed for use at the conference to give a better image quality of presentations. However, the required specifications could not be found on the local market. Moreover, going through the procurement process for its acquisition before the conference was not practicable due to the limited time. It was decided that the procurement process be initiated while other avenues to get a replacement be explored.

4.2.3 Publicity

Highlights of other decisions of the Committee were to:

- Identify persons who would actively engage the public on social media (twitter/ facebook) and post footages and pictures to increase awareness of the conference.
- Major visits to the Centre, workshops, public/community engagement activities etc. were to be placed in the brochure. Also, to be included were updated information on the Centre and the Impact statement sent to the World Bank.
- Design new e-flyers for the website and circulation via social media. The profiles and abstracts of keynote speakers and panel members were received and are being formatted for the brochure.
- Print more pull-up banners: a general one and Conference banner for keynote presenters and for panel discussions members.

4.2.4 Invitees/Sponsorship

Key personalities to be invited to the opening ceremony are the Vice-Chancellor, a representative of Ghana Health Service, an agent of ACE Impact, College Provosts of CBAS, Health Sciences and selected Deans and Directors. The Provost of CBAS would give the Welcome Remarks.

Sponsorship, according to the Communications Manager was not forthcoming as expected. The Chairman said funds for the conference should be from the Centre's resources.

5.0 PRESENTATION OF SECOND QUARTER REPORTS

5.1 GRANTS MANAGEMENT - CMC3(1)/2021-2022

ACE Impact Projects:

The Grants Manager reported that an amount of \$2m was withheld by the Government of Ghana for allocation to Centres that performed well under the ACE Impact projects. WACCBIP among the other Centres did well and therefore qualified for an additional award of 222,222 USD.

A proposal for the re-allocation of underperforming DLIs to well performing ones was presented for midterm review. By that, internship funds were reduced and support for publications increased.

Some members of the Centre participated in a Workshop at Cotonou, Benin.

DELTAS Project

Under the above project for the 2nd quarter, there was a Virtual site visit with fund managers to discuss the project and the way forward.

A Grants Management Portal had been created unto which all applications were to be uploaded. End-of-project report for Deltas1 was due for submission by the end of July, 2022.

A DAAD in-country/in-region programme had also been awarded to support Master's scholarships for students enrolled in the MCBI programme. The final selection of scholarship awardees will be done by the DAAD and applicants will have to apply directly to the scheme. The scholarships will be awarded over 3-year academic years (2023-2025) and the exact fellowship amounts are yet to be disclosed.

General performance for enrolment into Master's programmes and internships was below expectation according to Ms. Menka. The 30% recorded was due to the lack of regional students. Prof. Awandare proposed that those who attended short courses from the region could fill the gap and asked the Grants Manager to enquire about that possibility. It was also anticipated that the beneficiaries of the DAAD scholarship would complement the regional balance thereby giving a better outlook.

DLI7# Institutional Impact

It was earlier decided to procure some items under the DLI7#. In addition to the said items, the meeting agreed to replace the projectors with TV screens in the MPhil lecture room and the undergraduate classroom located at the basement of the building.

It was pointed out that there was mould infestation which damaged the projector in one of the classrooms which needed to be cured before other equipment are installed. The ICT unit was to provide the list of items for procurement. There is the need for an 86" or two 75" screens and a PA system.

Approval had been given for a 4-month no cost extension requests for University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford remaining budgets on DELTAS I. The Project was due to end in June 2024 but was extended to 2025. The DELTAS 2 was to start on 1st August, 2022.

It was reported that one hundred and ten (110) applications were received for graduate internships. 15 would be assigned to the DELTAS programme and the rest assigned to the other projects. A request form was to be circulated among Fellows/faculty members to indicate if they would need interns. Interested faculty must indicate whether they had funds to pay them or not.

The Chairman proposed that part of the 10-15% support to partner institutions under the ACE programme should be directed to C.K. Tedam University since the two research institutions who had been invited to have a Memorandum of Understanding with WACCBIP had not responded. An agreement was to be drafted to that effect.

5.2 GRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND EXAMINATIONS - CMC3(2)/2021-2022

Dr. Anastasia Aikins reported that the Unit monitored and prepared the PhD part 1 students toward the comprehensive exams and would continue doing so into the next quarter.

Applications for graduate entry were still opened and the screening and selection process would begin as soon as applications were closed. As of the reporting date, there were 13 applicants for PhD, out of which 10 were foreigners and 25 for the Master's programme.

Adverts for fellowships for the next academic year would go out when the award letter is received from DELTAS.

The DAAD scholarships will go to those applying for the Master's programmes. That would be after due diligence processes of all institutions are done by July 29, 2022 .

5.3 COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - CMC3(3)/2021-2022

The website was upgraded to include new features. Google analytics had been integrated unto the platform to monitor real-time users. The Communications Manager demonstrated some of the enhanced features to management. It was suggested that all the photographs must have a uniform background. The website would be launched at the upcoming Research Conference.

CITO suggested that the website be hosted by UG instead of being hosted outside. He believed it would be more favourable to UG when it comes to international rankings as WACCBIP enjoyed a lot of patronage worldwide. Prof. Awandare explained that the public could still access the Website via a link on the UG website.

The Unit organized a capacity building workshop on how to use the toolkit for docu-drama in some of the local languages. WACCBIP branded mugs and pins had been procured for the Research Conference.

5.4 TRAINING AND RESEARCH - CMC3(4)/2021-2022

Updates from the previous quarter were given by Dr. Theresa Gwira.

The theses work of 3 MPhil students of the cohorts 4 and 5 have lingered on, with one whose studentship had lapsed and would need to re-register before submitting the thesis.

24 students of the cohort 6 had submitted their theses leaving 2 who were yet to do so. The rest were making good progress.

For the PhD Cohorts 1- 4:

30 students graduated, 12 submitted their theses (which were at various levels of assessments), 3 defended their work, 3 were on extension/yet to submit, with 1 referral.

The rest of the students were at various stages of their coursework. The coordinator reported that two students have discontinued their studies.

The graduate interns have submitted their 1st semester reports and would be working on the projects as time goes on.

For the ensuing quarter follow-ups on proposal development and submission of reports for graduate interns would be pursued.

The Chairman asked that the statistics on those who have completed so far were to be updated for the next Advisory Board meeting.

5.5 DATA MANAGEMENT, SCIENTIFIC COMPUTING AND BIostatISTICS -CMC3(5)/2021-2022

Summary of core activities for the period, as reported by Mr. Francis Dzabeng were:

Routine data management, analytics support and databases maintenance for ongoing projects and provision of technical support as follows:

- HIV cohort study
- Seroprevalence study were done from January to May – Ghana, Burkina Faso and Nigeria
- Breast Cancer genomics
- NIHR Malaria genomics surveillance study

- COVID-19 study at Regional Hospital
- GARH COVID-19 Vaccine study

The team also:

- Provided data analytics support to students and researchers.
- Provided statistical data analyses for the seroprevalence manuscript & Webinar -
- Submitted abstract on performed Analysis on Predictive modelling using SARS-COV-2 seroprevalence.
- Co-facilitated FDCO COVID-19 sequencing and bioinformatics workshops for Ghana Health Service Staff and CHAG staff.
- Uploaded student data on their projects
- Reactivated SSL configurations on the server
- Completed the draft manuscript using data from COVID-19 seroprevalence and acute febrile illness. The multi-site manuscript was co-authored with the scientists.

The Unit would, for the next quarter, continue with the routine maintenance of all project data systems set up on WACCBIP servers at UGCS, provide statistical and data management support to researchers and students.

Prof. Awandare proposed that after having held several workshops successfully, the unit should consider running fee-based workshops to generate some income. He invited Dr. Amenga-Etego to speak to the matter. Dr. Amenga-Etego said that discussions were already underway and certain modalities were being considered including certification and fees. He also hinted that they were in talks with Inqaba Biotech to pilot one workshop and Inqaba would award the certificates to participants.

Dr. Quashie also chipped in that discussions were ongoing to roll out courses that guaranteed continued education in addition to the Bioinformatics training workshops. The training, he said, would be on modular basis to build skills overtime, and would be fashioned after the Canadian bioinformatics model.

A member wanted to know if there were plans to revive ASCV training programme. The Chairman said the break was due to the pandemic and it would be restored when things normalised. Another member also raised the need to make the fees affordable to all, at the same time it must be reasonable enough to absorb some overhead costs.

5.6 MENTORSHIP - CMC3(6)/2021-2022

The 2nd quarter activities centred on evaluating mentorship progress and resolving some mentee challenges. Even though the response for the survey conducted was low, information gathered was that the mentorship programme was doing well. Mentors did not seem to be aware of the Ghs250.00 allocation for mentor-mentee interactions.

One challenge the coordinator reported was a conflict between a Mentor and mentee over a project which the student had no interest in. He indicated that was the essence of such

Workshops to help address those challenges. It was noted that students have a choice to accept or decline working with a particular supervisor. Where there are disagreements between a supervisor and student, the coordinator must be alerted. If the issues cannot be resolved the graduate committee could advise on a change of supervisor.

Prof. (Rev.) Gbewonyo indicated that another mentor suggested provision be made for international students who were homesick and wanted to go home. The response was that foreign students were provided with a one-time ticket for home visit during their period of studies. Anyone student who wanted to undertake such visit must bear the cost of travel from their stipend.

One other student who had mental health challenges had recovered and resumed his studies.

In the next quarter, there would be workshops for faculty, student and staff, as well as mentor-mentee evaluation for the next quarter.

5.7 ACCOUNTS/FINANCE - CMC3(7)/2021-2022

There was a grant disbursement of USD 127,281.00 for the period, internally generated income came up to GH¢94,630,98 mainly from facility access charge and cash at bank was USD 2,318,219.86 (Full details of all financial transaction can be found in the full report).

Reports on NIHR, PAMGEN, H3A-HI-GENES and CAN projects were submitted within the period, with queries received and addressed accordingly.

Both internal and external audit had been carried out.

At the last meeting it was mentioned that the company that won the bid to supply the accounting software had lost its license and so tender will have to be opened again for bidding.

The Chairman sought clarification on the funds at CBAS, wanting to know whether it was money that was already expended. He said such funds could be used for maintenance and renovation works etc. after Ms. Nanor explained that it was for the Centre.

5.8 LOGISTICS AND PROCUREMENT - CMC3(8)/2021-2022

Reagents and consumable will be acquired through the framework agreement.

Items procured were, Forced Air-drying oven, WACCBIP branded lapel pins & Polo T-shirts, 4 laptops, 1 desktop Refrigerator, 2 tyres for the FCDO vehicle and 5 executive swivel chairs. Two (2) 20ft. storage containers were also procured and delivered.

Items approved/awaiting approval are:

- i. 8 units of Class II B2 Biosafety cabinets and 10 units of -80°C freezers
- ii. Service contract for BD LSR Fortessa X20 Flow Cytometer and accessories
- iii. COVID-19 IGM/IGG Antibodies Rapid Test Kits

5.10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Unit undertook the following tasks:

- Designed course evaluation forms for the semester.
- Prepared an Impact evaluation report on boarding team members.
- Contacted the Sanger Institute for training.
- Compiled publications for WACCBIP website.

For the next quarter, there will be a continuation of collecting data and the mapping of the impact of the Centre for discussions.

The Unit was asked to start designing an evaluation form for the Research Conference.

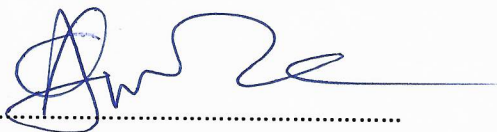
6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Assistant Registrar reported a vacancy of a student representative on the Committee for replacement.

A fellow reported that it was more expensive to procure items in bulk than in the WACCBIP stores which was having a toll on the budgets. Accounts and Procurement Units were to find out what was the cause of the discrepancy.

Mr. Nantogmah proposed that use of name tags/ID cards for staff. Prof. Awandare said UG was making arrangement for its staff and tasked the Assistant Registrar to enquire how WACCBIP staff can also acquire same.

Dr. Lucas Amenga-Etego moved for close of meeting, seconded by Mr. Francis Boachie. The meeting ended at 3:34p.m.



Prof. Gordon Awandare
Chairperson



Ms. Henrietta Ashiabor
Secretary