

MINUTES OF WACCBIP INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

VENUE: WACCBIP Board Room

DATE: Saturday, July 21, 2018

1.0 BACKGROUND

The third WACCBIP International Advisory Board meeting was held on Saturday, July 21, 2018 from 11:10 am to 2:47 pm in the WACCBIP Board Room, University of Ghana. There were 23 attendees, comprising Advisory Board members, the WACCBIP Director, members of the WACCBIP Management Committee and WACCBIP Secretarial Staff.

2.0 ATTENDANCE

Members Present

NO.	NAME	INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
1.	Keith Gull	University of Oxford	keith.gull@path.ox.ac.uk
2.	Kirk Deitsch	Cornell University	Kwd2001@med.cornell.edu
3.	Kwadwo A. Koram	WACCBIP/NMIMR, UG	kkoram@noguchi.ug.edu.gh
4.	Abraham Hodgson	Ghana Health Service	abraham.hodgson@ghsmai.org
5.	Francis Dodoo	ORID, UG	fdodoo@ug.edu.gh
6.	Alex Asiedu	STANLIB	emmanuel.asiedu@gmail.com
7.	Mawuse Agyemfra	First Insurance	danyidoho@hotmail.com
8.	Mahamadou Diakite	MRTC	mdiakite@icermali.org
9.	Mark Carrington	University of Cambridge	mc115@cam.ac.uk
10.	Ama de-Graft Aikins	University of Ghana	adaikins@ug.edu.gh
11.	Ben Botwe	Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana	benbotwe@gmail.com
12.	Matilda Steiner-Asiedu	University of Ghana	tillysteiner@gmail.com
13.	Douglas J. Perkins	University of New Mexico	dperkins@salvd.unm.edu
14.	Lydia Mosi	WACCBIP	lmosi@ug.edu.gh
15.	Dorothy Yeboah-Manu	WACCBIP/NMIMR	Dyeboah-manu@noguchi.ug.edu.gh

In Attendance:

NO.	NAME	INSTITUTION	E-MAIL
16.	Gordon Awandare	WACCBIP	gawandare@ug.edu.gh
17.	Patrick Kobina Arthur	WACCBIP	parthur14@gmail.com
18.	Osbourne Quaye	WACCBIP	oquaye@ug.edu.gh
19.	Theresa Manful Gwira	WACCBIP	tmanful@ug.edu.gh
20.	Sika Menka	WACCBIP	smenka@ug.edu.gh
21.	Marian Nanor	WACCBIP	accountassist@waccbip.org
22.	Vincent Appiah	WACCBIP	vincentappiah@ug.edu.gh
23.	Kyerewaa Boateng	WACCBIP	kaboateng99@gmail.com

Absent

NO.	NAME	INSTITUTION
1.	Daniel K. Asiedu	University of Ghana
2.	Abraham Kwame Anang	University of Ghana
3.	Martha Gyansa-Lutterodt	Ministry of Health
4.	Kwaku Tano-Debrah*	University of Ghana

*Absent with apologies

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3.0 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND OPENING REMARKS

The board Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 11.10 am and made his introductory remarks. This was followed by a formal introduction of all board members, management committee members, and secretariat staff present. The Chair welcomed all new members to the board and congratulated Prof. Dorothy Yeboah-Manu on her 2018 Royal Society Africa Prize. The Chair stated that the progress WACCBIP had made over the past year was evident through the annual reports submitted by various unit heads and the fellows presentations at just ended 3-day research conference. He mentioned that the board needed to move from being a prospective to a retrospective advisory board. He also stated that the Centre needed a written long-term strategic plan.

4.0 REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE WACCBIP ANNUAL REPORT

The Director gave an overview of the annual report and mentioned that based on feedback from the board chair, all major unit heads submitted and will present their respective reports to the board to ensure the meeting was participatory. He stated that the Centre had made progress towards achieving its vision but the sustainability of the Centre needed to be ensured particularly, through new partnerships. In line with this, Pharm. Ben Botwe, the President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana, and Dr. Martha Gyansa-Lutterodt, the Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Ministry of Health, had been invited to join the advisory board to enable the Centre engage with the private and government sectors. The Director mentioned that the Centre was proud to have graduated two cohorts of masters students and the first batch of PhD students will submit their theses in July 2018 and graduate during the next congregation in July 2019. He also mentioned that the Centre had developed new international collaborations which had increased the number of grant applications. Prof Awandare stated that the Centre had successfully integrated 4 postdocs into the university's system. He also mentioned that the Centre had also gained a lot of interest from Africans in the diaspora who wished to return home.

The Chair requested that all unit heads take the board through important aspects of the submitted reports as all members received reports to review prior to the meeting.

I. Grants Management

- Ms. Menka informed the board that two (2) ACE project meetings were held during the past year in Ghana from November 7-9, 2017 and in Burkina Faso from May 8-9, 2018. The Centre had awarded scholarships totaling \$251,136.00 to both Masters and PhD students under the project. The WACCBIP building which was funded by the ACE project was completed and commissioned on June 22, 2018. She informed the board that the ACE project which was due to end in December 2018 has received a one-year extension until December 2019. However, the Centre will be unable to offer fellowships to new students who enroll during the 2018/19 academic year. The table below which shows the overall status of the ACE project was presented to the board.

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Programme	Target	Current Status	Percentage female	Percentage regional
Masters	80	90	39 %	10%
PhD	40	50	36%	26%

The overview of results achieved for each Disbursement Linked Indicator (DLI) was highlighted to the board. The results showed that the Centre was underperforming on specific DLIs including new short-term students, new masters students, number of outreach periods, financial management and, timely and audited procurement. The Director explained that the amount earned for enrolling short term students was very low compared to the cost of running scientific workshops. He also explained that the relatively low amount earned for the recruitment of master students was due to the low enrolment of regional students because of the high cost of tuition fees at the University of Ghana. Several fellowships were awarded to regional master students during the 2017/18 academic year to increase the regional enrolment. The board expressed concern over the number of outreach periods ‘internships’ by students. The Director explained to the board that the stated internships must be in private or public facilities in Africa and for a minimum of 4 weeks. He stated that there were no biotech companies in Ghana with R&D units where students could intern therefore, the centre needed to partner with industries who could offer student internships. Board members suggested the Centre could liaise with the national control programmes to provide internship opportunities for students. On the subject of financial management and timely and audited procurement, the Director informed the board that the centre was unable to achieve these results due to University’s bureaucratic processes. The Pro-VC of ORID stated that various directorates in the university including Finance and Internal Audit were being restructured to ensure maximum efficiency.

- On the Wellcome Trust DELTAS project, Ms. Menka informed the board that WACCBIP hosted the second annual DELTAS grantees project meeting at the Fiesta Royale Hotel in Accra from July 4-5, 2017. The Centre has completed recruitment of all 12 postdoctoral fellows and 15 PhD fellows. Additionally, four (4) master fellowships totalling \$15,200 were awarded for students to work with postdoctoral fellows. A total of eleven (11) fellows have been awarded student visitor fellowship for short research visits to the laboratories of their co-supervisors in the UK or USA. The Centre has now recruited a total of 60 graduate interns in 3 batches. The table below which shows the overall status of the DELTAS project was highlighted to the board.

Programme	Target	Current Status	Percentage female	Percentage regional
PhD	15	15	47%	60%
Postdoctoral fellows	12	12	33%	58%
Graduate Interns	60	48	44%	0%
Student Visitor fellows	25	11	18%	9%
Bioethics short course	50	23	22%	61%

- Under the Tackling Infections to Benefit Africa (TIBA) project, a grant of £100,000 for the Rapid Impact project titled “The effects of Artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) on the dynamics of *Plasmodium falciparum*, *P. malariae* and *P. ovale* infection in Ghana”

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has been awarded to WACCBIP, and one PhD fellowship of £75,000 awarded to Mr Felix Ansah. The Centre is currently collaborating with the Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kilifi, Kenya to obtaining funding of £500,000 for a 'Making A Difference' project.

- The first disbursement of £87,200 has been received for the MRC project titled 'Identification of Specific Metabolites in Mycolactone Producing Mycobacteria and Buruli Ulcer Infection: Diagnostic Biomarkers through Metabolomics' and a sub-award contract signed with Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques (CSRS), Cote d'Ivoire
- WACCBIP hosted the first Crick African Network Scientific symposium and research methods workshop from December 14-16, 2017. Applications for the career accelerator fellowships are yet to be received.
- The list of new faculty grants, training programmes attended by staff, and workshops hosted throughout the year were presented to the board.

Upcoming activities outlined for the next year include:

- Organization of the fourth WACCBIP International Advisory Board meeting in July 2019 and quarterly WACCBIP Management Committee meetings throughout the year.
- Student enrolment in graduate programmes at the Centre for the 2018/2019 academic year in August 2018
- Organization of the fourth annual research conference in July 2019.
- Submission of an application for the ACE for development impact project to the World Bank.
- Participation in the tenth ACE project workshop in February 2019.
- Participation in the fourth DELTAS Africa Annual Grantees Meeting in July 2019
- Completion of the first cohort of postdoctoral fellows recruited under the DELTAS programme.
- Recruitment of the fourth cohort of graduate interns and award of additional student visitor fellowships.
- Organization of an Insect Neuroscience and drosophila Neurogenetics course in collaboration with the Francis Crick Institute and Teaching and Research in Natural Sciences for Development in Africa (TReND) in November 2018
- Organization of the third WACCBIP-DELTAS bioethics workshop led by Prof Diakite in Mali in November 2018
- Organization of the WACCBIP-Oxford-ASCB workshop for graduate students at the Centre in January 2018

II. ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

- Ms. Nanor informed the board that the Centre received a total disbursement of USD1,979,060.46 and GBP157,200.00 from funders during the year under review. The Centre invested GHS 7,782,500.00 in fixed deposits with Ideal Capital Partners and the total interest of GHS 974,049 earned from the investments will be deposited into Centre's administrative account as internally generated funds. Board members expressed concern over the risk associated with the investment due to the entity with

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which the investment was made. The Director informed the board that the financial entity was chosen by the University on behalf of the Centre.

Action point: Minimize risk associated with investing Centre's funds by exploring other investment opportunities with a credible financial entity such as the purchase of sovereign bonds, treasury bills and unit trusts.

- An overview of the major assets acquired by the Centre over the period which include the new building, furniture, and major pieces of equipment was presented to the board. It was emphasized that the highest expenditure on both DELTAS and ACE projects were on student fellowships (achieving excellence in training) and equipment (improving learning experience).
- Prof Awandare informed the board that WACCBIP had completed the Good Financial Grant Practices (GFGP) assessment as required by AESA. This is part of the efforts of AESA to create a global community for grantors and grantees. The initiative will enable the standardization, simplification and strengthening of the governance of grant funding. The Centre's GFGP compliance was low as the university does not have several written down grant management policies.

Action point: The Centre will work with ORID to organize a workshop to draft a grants management manual

- The Director informed the board that both the World Bank and DELTAS projects did not allow for institutional charges, however, the Centre could make direct eligible expenses for the University. The list of expenses WACCBIP had made on behalf the University was shared with the board. This included employment of personnel, contribution towards utility bills, staff training, etc.

Upcoming activities outlined for the next year

- Completion of the GFGP assessment by the DELTAS partners
- Budgeting and financial review for the "ACE for development Impact and other grant Applications.
- Completion of risk management, anti-fraud and antibribery policies, and training for staff in August 2018.
- Organization of grant financial management training for finance staff.

III. TRAINING AND RESEARCH

- Dr Arthur highlighted the summary of research areas by WACCBIP students in terms of pathogens/host themes and their respective lead supervisors. It was observed that most of the studies were on protozoan pathogen/parasite studies. The board suggested diversity in research areas to include more neglected tropical diseases could be explored by involving other local and international faculty with expertise in fungi/helminth research.

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- Regarding student progress, Dr Arthur commented that progress has been good so far, particularly due to the good student supervision and WACCBIP-OXFORD ASCB workshop where students are able to interact with faculty to fine tune their research projects.

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Dr. Quaye informed the board that the monitoring and evaluation team had collated responses from course evaluations administered at the end of every semester. Generally, all courses had received good responses from students,
- The Centre has also seen an increase in the number of publications from fellows. The board requested that a cumulative list of publications is presented each year and the annual list of publications should be shared with faculty.
- The list of the current placement of MPhil graduates were shared with the board and it was highlighted that most graduates were currently enrolled in PhD programmes or had secured jobs.

V. GRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

- Dr. Gwira informed the board that the PhD qualifying exams was organized for the first years and all 15 students passed all components of the examination and were now conducting their experiential learning.
- The admission process for the 2018/19 academic year had been completed and all applicants were informed that there would be no funding from WACCBIP to support their studies. Four PhD applicants who were admitted will be enrolling in the programme with funding from other projects.
- The Graduate Students handbook has been drafted and feedback from faculty was being received before submission for printing.

VI. POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAMME

- Prof Yeboah-Manu informed the board that all 12 postdoctoral fellows under the DELTAS project had been recruited and were at their various institutions working on their research projects.
- All fellows in the first cohorts have either published or have prepared manuscripts for publication and fellows have attended various scientific conferences to present their work.
- Some of the fellows are involved in public engagement activities as part of their research projects and have organized community education and health screening programmes.
- One fellow was having challenges obtaining a visa to conduct part of her research at the University of Cape Town and the possibility of changing the site for her study will be explored.

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- A total of ten grant applications by different fellows have been submitted and one has been successful. One fellow Dr. Jewelna Akorli was also appointed as an Affiliate Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences.
- During the last fellows progress meeting on July 17, 2018, fellows indicated the need for a Leadership Training Workshop which will be organized at WACCBIP.

Action point: Organize leadership workshop together with the WACCBIP-Oxford-ASCB workshop in January to save cost and draw on expertise of faculty present.

VII. LOGISTICS

- Dr. Mosi informed the board that all 17 equipment procured for various laboratories in May 2017 had been received and a new set of 18 equipment had been requested through the Procurement Unit. She lamented over the University's bureaucratic procurement procedure which caused long delays in purchasing items. She also stated that due to the high prices quoted by various local suppliers during national competitive tender, some equipment will be purchased directly from suppliers.
- All damaged equipment have been repaired and currently no obsolete equipment were in the laboratories. During the last meeting, board members expressed concern over the monitoring of equipment use. Dr Mosi informed the board that this issue had been addressed by enforcing the use of log-in sheets for equipment in each laboratory.
- The WACCBIP Laboratory Technologist and Department's Chief Technician participated in a foundation course on ISO/IEC 17025:2005 laboratory quality management. This is in line with WACCBIP plan to obtain ISO certification and accreditation for all research and teaching laboratories in BCMB/WACCBIP during the coming year.
- Power fluctuation in the building had damaged several equipment particularly biosafety cabinets and centrifuges despite most equipment having individual stabilizers. The Centre was therefore consulting companies to provide a 150KVA stabilizer for the entire building.
- The Centre plans to set up an animal housing facility for animal studies during the coming year.
- Due to inconsistent water supply in the building, a bore hole was sunk using department funds to ensure constant water supply. The water quality has been tested and has been found to be good.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Prof Awandare informed the board that during the last year a full-time Communications Manager and a Public Engagement Officer were recruited by the Centre following recommendations from AESA.

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- Ms Boateng informed the board that the old WACCBIP website had been restructured and social media activity on the Centre's Facebook and Twitter pages had increased.
- The Centre also organized a number of public engagement activities including TB outreach programmes, senior high school outreach programmes, and visits to TV and radio stations to discuss research at WACCBIP. WACCBIP supported the 2018 National Science and Maths Quiz by providing internship opportunities to the winners of the competition. All public engagements programmes were a massive success.
- Board members suggested the Centre should actively involve fellows and social scientists in outreach activities. They also requested that communication to government and policy makers are captured as part of public engagement activities.
- Prof Awandare informed the board that WACCBIP has submitted a public engagement grant to the Wellcome Trust.

6.0 PLAN OF ACTION FOR 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Director outlined his action plan for the upcoming academic year which included:

1. Increase scientific quality productivity by ensuring quality publication from fellows in high impact journals
2. Enroll fifth cohort of students with funding from various sources including TIBA, DANIDA, etc.
3. Recruit fourth batch of Graduate Interns
4. Select Crick African Network fellows
5. Scale-up student visitor fellowships
6. Run WACCBIP-Oxford-ASCB workshops from January 14-25, 2018
7. Work with Noguchi to operationalize and commercialize MiSeq next generation sequencer
8. Encourage students to apply for fellowships
9. Encourage faculty to submit grants
10. Upgrade the flow cytometer to 18 colours (add one laser)
11. Work on ISO accreditation for laboratories
12. Continue to pursue diasporan scientists by assisting them to apply for fellowships
13. Submit renewal application for Work Bank ACE grant titled WACCBIP + NCDs together with private sector partners. Proposal must include entrepreneurship training.

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14. Continue engaging industry including the Pharmaceutical Society for Ghana, Inqaba biotec who will provide internships for students, Novartis for workshop training and the Centre for Proteomic and Genomic research
15. Manage risk involved in investing Centre's funds.

7.0 NEXT MEETING

With no further business, the Chair congratulated WACCBIP on a great year and adjourned the meeting at 14.47 pm. Information about the next Advisory Board Meeting will be disseminated in due course.