

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY

Chemical Biology Interface Forum Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Chemistry Biology Interface Forum Executive Committee held on 10 October 2008 at Burlington House, London.

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| Present: | Professor H Bayley |
| | Dr A Merritt |
| | Dr W Chan |
| | Dr A Merry |
| In attendance: | Dr F Bhatti |
| | Dr S McWhinnie |
| | Dr N Morgan |
| | Dr E Thompson |

1.0 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted for F Hollfelder, E Raven, and N Westwood.

2.0 Welcome from the Chair

H Bayley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting on 28/05/08 were noted from H Bayley.

Action points from the meeting held on 28/05/08 were reviewed:

Action 1: Any ideas for activities with NESTA that would help support interdisciplinarity should be sent to F Bhatti. H Bayley suggested asking NESTA to support a joint Organic Division-CBiF event (see 7.2). **Ongoing**

Action 2: RSC to explore the possibility of conducting a deeper review of interdisciplinary science, focusing on cultural distinctions between the UK and US research in universities. **Ongoing**
S McWhinnie noted that £30,000 of the CBiF 2009 budget has been earmarked for follow-up work on the interface report. H Bayley agreed this would be a timely exercise in light of the upcoming Review of Chemistry.

[ACTION: H Bayley to identify a few academics working at the chemistry-biology interface with experience of working in the US, and begin a scoping exercise via email to review cultural differences between UK and US interdisciplinary research in universities]

Action 3: RSC to explore a number of options to support interdisciplinary training, for example provide core grant (£10,000) plus 10 travel fellowships to a small number of courses each year.

Included in CBiF Budget 2009

The committee agreed that the travel grants should be for students attending summer schools only (not for attending conferences).

[ACTION: F Bhatti to explore whether or not any summer schools are scheduled for 2009 that support interdisciplinary training and would be suitable for CBiF travel fellowships]

Action 4: Support for regional workshops to be made available in 2009. **Included in CBiF Budget 2009**

Action 5: H Bayley to identify additional delegates for the Tissue Engineering workshop on the 10/11 July. **Completed**

4.0 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not covered in the agenda elsewhere.

5.0 Chair Business

5.1 CBiF Executive Committee membership

The committee discussed the proposal to co-opt a member of the Biochemical Society.

[ACTION: S McWhinnie to contact P Bell to clarify whether or not a co-opted member of the Executive Committee has been nominated from the Biochemical Society]

5.2 CBiF Strategy

The committee noted the CBiF strategy for the period 2007-2012.

H Bayley proposed putting together a list of suggestions for activities (conferences, events, lecture courses) that the committee would like to carry out over the next three years.

[ACTION: Any ideas of concrete activities for CBiF (in line with CBiF strategy) to run over the next three years should be sent to H Bayley]

6.0 Matters for Discussion

6.1 CBiF Meeting Sponsorship

The committee noted CBiF sponsorship of the following meetings:

- Natural Products, University of Nottingham 12/11/2008 (Organiser: John Moses, Amount: £1000)
- Advancing Biocatalysis, UCL 21/04/2009 (Organiser Dr Paul Dalby, Amount £600)

6.2 Chemistry Biology Interface Regional Meeting Strategy

The CBiF Budget 2009 allocated £6,000 to support regional workshops that identify opportunities and challenges, promote discussion and collaboration in key areas of the chemistry biology interface, whilst aiming to enhance local research communities. £2000 maximum per meeting.

The Committee noted objectives of workshops:

- Showcase current leading-edge research at the interface
- Brings together biologists and chemists, as well as engineers and physicists from a region.
- No more than 50% of the delegates can be from the same institution.
- Create new opportunities for learning, exchange of ideas and partnerships.
- Ensure titles for joint events are welcoming for those from both disciplines
- Rep's from funding bodies and learned societies invited by RSC to co-badge
- Provide opportunity for a communication programme between funding bodies and research community to disseminate information on funding schemes.

Comprehensive advertising strategy to identify organisers and themes for 2009.

S McWhinnie recommended a proactive approach involving central organisation of regional meetings. W Chan Suggested looking at the model used by Nottingham University (with Cancer Research) whereby the incentive for local researchers to attend is money for the most successful research proposal at the workshop.

[ACTION: RSC to determine best model for organising regional workshops and identify locations]

6.3 CBiF Annual Meeting

The committee noted that a proposal has been sent to Bill Crosson (IFST) for a joint meeting in April 2009. The proposed title for the meeting is 'Food Production and Sustainability'; it will be held in Cardiff.

[ACTION: F Bhatti to contact Bill Crosson with regards to the date and timing of the proposed join IFST/CBiF meeting, specifically whether the IFST closed meeting is taking place in the morning or afternoon]

7.0 Reports on Current CBiF Activities

7.1 Current Portfolio of Meetings Associated with the CBiF

The committee noted that details of current meetings being organised by Interest Groups associated with CBiF can be found at

<http://www.rsc.org/Membership/Networking/InterestGroups/ChemicalBiologyInterfaceForum/CBiFConferences.asp>

7.2 Joint Organic Division-CBiF Initiative

The committee noted that funding is available in the CBiF budget for a joint Organic Division-CBiF initiative, possibly on synthetic biology.

[ACTION: H Bayley to coordinate with Sue Gibson on putting together a proposal for a joint Organic Division – CbiF initiative]

[ACTION: S McWhinnie to contact Rachel Brazil to investigate the potential for NESTA to fund such an initiative]

7.3 Tissue Engineering

F Bhatti informed the committee that the MCF/CBiF Tissue Engineering workshop took place on 10-11 July 2008. A follow-up report has been drafted and will be made available in due course.

7.4 Analytical Tools for the Life Sciences (ATLS)

I Spence, RSC Manager of Physical Sciences, updated the committee on the latest ATLS workshop. The workshop title is 'The integration of drug discovery and systems biology' and it is due to be held on 28 November 2008.

Suggested topics for meetings in 2009 include monitoring food/water safety and quality, biophysics, and spectrometry on proteins.

8.0 Reports from RSC Council, Boards and Committees**8.1 Science Policy Board (SPB)**

The committee noted the summary report from the SPB meeting held on 05/03/08

[ACTION: H Bayley to email the committee to identify a 'deputy' to attend these meetings in his absence]

8.2 RSC Roadmap

Alison Eldridge, RSC Roadmap Project Manager, gave a short presentation on the RSC Roadmap project. The presentation ended with a request that members of the CBiF executive committee get involved in commenting on the Roadmap timelines.

[ACTION: S McWhinnie and A Eldridge to send Roadmap timelines to CBiF executive committee for comment. Note that comments from CBiF Executive Committee must be returned to A Eldridge by 27 October 2008]

8.3 RSC Conferences/Awards

N Morgan informed the committee of the newly launched 'Prizes and Awards' brochure. The biennial prize for outstanding achievement for research at the chemistry and life science interface has been named the 'Khorana Prize'. The committee agreed that while it would be nice to associate names with the annual CBiF 'early award', 'mid-career award', and 'team award', this would be difficult to do. The committee noted that the closing date for award nominations is 31 January 2009.

N Morgan reported that the conference in Oxford on 'Chemistry in the New World of Bioengineering and Synthetic Biology' (22-24 September 2008) attracted 100 delegates, lower than expected. Initial delegate feedback was that the format of the conference was not ideal but that the programme was of a very high standard.

The committee noted that the IUPAC meeting next year will be held in Glasgow (2-7 August 2009), and agreed to encourage colleagues to submit abstracts.

9.0 Any Other Business**1. The second international report on chemistry**

S McWhinnie informed the committee that Professor Michael Klein (University of Pennsylvania) will be chairing the committee that will prepare the report. The committee visits will probably be in April 2009. The CBiF should scrutinise the committee membership to ensure that the chemistry-biology interface is represented, and therefore appropriately reviewed during this process.

[ACTION: S McWhinnie to identify members of the International Review Committee and disseminate this information so that the CBiF Executive Committee can ensure that work at the interface is looked at in the review process]

- 10. Date of Next Meeting**
4 February 2009 (10:30-13:00)