

**Unconfirmed minutes of a meeting of the Part IB Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Consultative Committee held on Friday, 14 March 2008 at 11.00 am in Meeting Room B, Sanger Building**

**Present:** Professor K M Brindle and Dr G C Brown

**Student Representatives:** S Gardner  
D Itzhak  
N Krall  
B T Romero  
V Thacker

**Course Convenor  
(Chairman):** Dr T R Hesketh

**1. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies for absence were received from Dr C O'Kane and Dr H R Mott.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on Friday, 30 November 2007 were approved as a correct record.

**3. Matters arising from the last meeting**

**Card access.** The Chairman reported that he had made some progress regarding access to the Sanger Building for Part IB students by arranging for the door to be opened 15 minutes before the IB lectures. He personally would like to see swipe cards programmed so that IB students had access to the building at all times, but this had not yet been agreed by the Department.

**Lectures.** At the last meeting, it had been brought to Chairman's attention that some IB lectures were still not finishing on time despite his efforts to ensure that this did not happen. He reported that he had taken the step of reminding this term's lecturers that it was important that lectures finished on time. The student representatives said they had not received any complaints that lectures had overrun this term.

**4. Lent Term Lectures (Dr G C Brown, Professor K M Brindle, Dr R W Farndale and Dr T R Hesketh)**

The Chairman asked the student representatives for their comments and feedback on the lectures this term.

The student representatives agreed that all the lectures this term had been very good. Comments had been received regarding lecture material not being made available on the CamTools site early enough. The Chairman said that lecturers had different opinions about when the material should be made available to the students. He said it was not possible for him to pressurise lecturers to put their material on the site at the beginning of their lectures. The student representatives stressed that they would like to see the material on the site before the start of a lecture series. It was agreed that the Chairman would suggest to lecturers that unless they had any objections, putting their lecture material on the CamTools site at the beginning of their lecture series would be very helpful to the students. **ACTION: TRH**

The students commented that it would be very helpful to have more space on handouts to make notes and annotate slides. It was agreed that the Chairman should remind lecturers to give some thought to providing more space for this purpose. **ACTION: TRH**

The student representatives reported that it had been suggested that lectures should be recorded and made available on the CamTools site. The Chairman said he envisaged that some lecturers in the Department would object to this and that there would almost

certainly be copyright issues. It was suggested that recording a podcast rather than a video might be a solution. The Chairman said that almost certainly one of the objections would be that students should be encouraged to read beyond the strict remit of the lecture rather than to listen to the lecture again. It was agreed that the student representatives would carry out a poll to obtain the students' views on this matter and the Chairman would ask the course lecturers for their opinions. **ACTION: STUDENT REPS/TRH**

The student representatives reported that there had been some complaints regarding the lighting in the lecture theatre and the failure of some lecturers to turn up the lights making it difficult to make notes. The Chairman would circulate a reminder to the lecturers. Complaints had also been received regarding the audio system involving interference caused by the microphone. The Chairman said that this could easily be avoided by changing where the microphone was mounted and he would bring this to the lecturers' attention. **ACTION: TRH**

## 5. **Practicals**

The student representatives said that they would like to have more opportunity to put their own ideas into the experiments. In the CDB practicals they were forced to think experiments through. The Chairman explained that the reason this was not done in the Biochemistry practicals was that usually a lot of steps were involved and if they were not followed correctly the experiment would not work. He felt that relaxing this process would be a recipe for disaster. However, he entirely understood the point the students were making. Many of the Part IB practicals were in the process of being redesigned and he would try and introduce an element of initiative into the new practicals. He informed the students that the bioinformatics practical was being redesigned and it was hoped to integrate it with Part II. The students felt that they should be pushed to ask more questions during the talk before the practicals, which would encourage them to do more preparation for the practical itself. **ACTION: TRH**

The students commented that they had found the metabolism practical very interesting, but that two hours had not been long enough. KMB said that he had designed the practical and unless it had changed radically he did not see any reason why it could not be extended and that the demonstrators should have made it clear that there was room for some flexibility. The students said that the demonstrators had been very poor. The students also commented that they had learnt very little from the western blot practical. The Chairman would relay these points to the Practical Organiser. **ACTION: TRH**

The student representatives reported that some of the students taking pathology were unhappy with the practical timetable, but they did not personally see this as a major problem. The Chairman said that this situation was not ideal, but there was some flexibility in that on most days the BMB practical class was not absolutely full and that, taking advantage of this, most students managed perfectly well.

## 6. **Journal Club**

The student representatives reported that there had been very positive comments regarding this term's Journal Club. A few students had said that they would have preferred it to be held earlier in the term, but did not see this as a major problem. The Chairman said that as this term's topic had been cell signalling, it had been more appropriate to have it later in the term, but he would bear this point in mind when covering different topics.

## 7. **Any Other Business**

There was no further business. The Chairman thanked the student representatives and the teaching staff for their input to the meeting.

## 8. **Date of next meeting**

There would be no meeting in the Easter Term.