

Minutes of the School Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

## **1. Chair Statements**

- Sophie Smith

Tamas reiterated that support is available for both students and staff if they are affected by any of the issues raised by her disappearance. Tamas went to the first Cell Biology lecture of the Spring Semester to talk to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students about what has happened and Student Support Services were also there to assist. Tamas reported that a lot of students were emotional but that he felt that it was better to put a human face to the support available rather than keep sending emails. Tamas has spoken to Jane Amos (Head of Student Support Services) and she reported that they have seen an increase in students seeking help from them. Students are coming in groups (4-6 students) but are requesting 1-1 sessions. Emma Godbold spoke briefly about the national 'Time to Talk' day on February 1<sup>st</sup>, and that BIO would be running some events on this date aimed at staff in supporting staff mental health and how staff can support students. Maria spoke about the BIO advisors Training day on February 20<sup>th</sup> which will cover Student Support Services, disabilities and mental wellbeing of both staff and students.

- BIO Exec Update

The PVC for Teaching Neil Ward will be chairing a panel titled 'Burden Buster' focusing on academic burden (workload).

- Admissions

UCAS deadline has now passed. A new feature for this year is that BIO can send personalised emails to prospective students. This will include news on research, such as published papers. Tamas emphasised that it is important to keep this simple so that prospective students can understand it and appreciate it.

- Building 60

Ground will be broken on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January for the new UG teaching/laboratory building.

- Job updates

Richard Bowater is now Associate Dean for Employability. A 3 year buyout for his vacant BIO position has been agreed and interviews will be taking place shortly. Vince Ellis will be retiring at the end of the academic year (September 2018). 2 jobs will fill this vacancy, an ATS and an ATR. Interviews for these positions hope to be completed in May/June. David Richardson will be stepping down as a theme leader.

The process for electing a theme leader has now altered – theme members will be consulted on potential candidates and BIO Exec will then make the final decision.

## 2. REF Update and SCI Facilities Brief - Director of Research

- Grant News

Diana Bell has received a Global Challengers Research Fund Grant which is the first BIO has received. Tracey Chapman has received a standard research grant from NERC. Andrew congratulated both on their grants.

- Report – REF & Research

[See presentation](#)

Andrew spoke through the latest changes to REF 2021 (Slide 2). He emphasised the importance of the light touch reading exercise in 2018 and encouraged everyone to engage in the process and it will bring several benefits. Andy explained that reviews are REF returnable but that they are considered 'risky' and BIO shouldn't aim to return these. Research planning meetings/appraisals are coming soon so please ensure these are uploaded by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February (Slide 3). The portal pages on research integrity have been updated (Slide 4). BIO & RIN are running Research Ethics Workshops (Slide 5). Andrew strongly encouraged everyone to attend. Graham Riley will be involved in this workshop and he added that he will be providing a general overview for the procedure for applying for ethical approval for animal research. Finally Andrew spoke about the SCI Facilities Brief (Slide 6) which involves outside consultants who will be liaising with Heads of School and Directors of Research and consulting them on their opinions on school refurbishment. Tamas doesn't believe that the issue of windows will be addressed in this consultation.

Tamas finished the meeting by asking if anyone present had any questions. Andrew Hemmings asked about an update on the lift and its general lack of reliability. Charlotte Price/Andrew Gates explained that we are trying to tackle the issue from a Health & Safety perspective (without a lift waste/hazardous materials can't be easily transported) alongside other angles to bring a resolution to this issue. Tamas explained that he has been in communication with Estates and that they are taking the problem seriously. BIO are also in communication with Estates about potentially replacing the lift, due to the problems we have been experiencing with it.

Maria Vardakou asked about an update on the refurbishment on BIO, particular the social spaces as they are no longer allowed to be used for eating drinking. Tamas responded that several options have been explored including the installation of 'pods' which slot into spaces to create a new 'enclosed space'. None of the options are suitable however due to cost or space issues. Tamas also explained that a big refurbishment will be taking place in 10 years' time so there is a reluctance to spend any money currently.