

## HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES (HUCBMS) 2014

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1 September 2014 at the University of East London (Docklands Campus).

**1. Introduction.** The President, Professor Yvonne Barnett, thanked the University of East London and, in particular, Professor Neville Punchard and Dr Joanne Tocher, for hosting and organising HUCBMS 2014. She noted the excellent work of Dr Claudio Scotti and Tina Ryan in dealing with the various logistics. She welcomed new HUCBMS members: University of Kufa, Iraq and Cork Institute of Technology. Professor Barnett expressed, on behalf of all delegates, warmest wishes to Professor Kevan Gartland for a successful recovery from illness.

**2. President's Report.** The following items were highlighted:

- The membership had agreed the change of title of the organisation to 'Heads of University Centres of Biomedical Sciences'.
- the Executive Committee had met 3 times during the year – November (at IBMS), January (University of East London), May (IBMS).

Items taken forward/discussed included:

- the Strategic Plan for the Council for Health Sciences in HE
- the production of a HUCBMS paper outlining the need for the existence of a biomedical sciences research base within the relevant institutions to underpin biomedical sciences degree programmes accredited by IBMS. These recommendations were accepted by IBMS.
- Concerns over HCPC requirements for external examiners for approved degree programmes to be HCPC-registered, and a lack of strong academic input to some HCPC approval events. The HUCBMS Executive will take these matters up with HCPC.
- The President, Professor Barnett led a European Biomedical Sciences marketing campaign which would help to promote closer collaboration between UK and mainland European institutions.
- There were two meetings during the year between HUCBMS officers and the President, Nick Kirk and Chief Executive, Jill Rodney, of IBMS.

The officers discussed issues of common interest and the importance of maintaining close and supportive working relationships.

- The HUCBMS Executive Committee made submissions to the House of Commons BIS Committee Inquiry into 'Business-University Collaboration' and the HEFCE Inquiry into the 'Use of Metrics in Research Assessment'.

### **3. REF 2014.**

The President reported that the REF 2014 sub-panels were close to completing their programme of assessment and that the results would be published on 18 December. It was noted that while a similar methodology and scoring system applied across the UK, the funding outcomes would vary between member countries. The HUCBMS Executive Committee will be analysing the results including the performance of BMS relative to other life sciences.

### **4. Review of QAA Benchmarks.**

The President reported that a review of QAA Benchmark Statements for Biomedical Science and Biosciences was underway. The purpose of the exercise is to update and revise the statements of 2007 in the light of developments in the disciplines involved. Professor Barnett is chair of the Biomedical Science review group and Professor David Coates (University of Dundee) chair of the Biosciences group. A number of HUCBMS colleagues, including IBMS representatives, are members of the BMS group. In order to ensure complementarity and comprehensive coverage of all relevant biology-based subjects, Professor Gerry McKenna, Hon Executive Secretary of HUCBMS has been appointed a member of both groups. The President noted that the Biomedical Science benchmark will be amended to 'Biomedical Sciences' and will include coverage of all subjects focussing on the biology of health and disease. It is intended that the Biomedical Sciences review group will also develop benchmark guidelines for Masters programmes. It is expected that draft benchmark statements will be issued for consultation before the end of 2014. Members were urged to examine and comment on the statements. It was noted that this is an extremely important exercise in the future development of biomedical sciences.

## **5. HUCBMS Travel Fellowship Award.**

The Hon Executive Secretary updated members on the Fellowship Award Scheme which has been developed to encourage collaboration in teaching and research between university centres of biomedical sciences (EU and non-EU) with UK-based HUCBMS member institutions. Details of the scheme will be circulated widely in October.

## **6. External Examiners List.**

Professor Jacqueline McCormack updated members on the list of potential external examiners published online. This will be updated during October. Members were reminded of the importance of supporting teaching quality assurance in biomedical sciences through encouraging relevant colleagues to volunteer for inclusion on the list.

## **7. IBMS Update.**

Alan Wainwright, Executive Head of Education at IBMS updated members on relevant developments at IBMS including accreditations, and membership routes. He indicated that IBMS is looking into the potential of widening its accreditation criteria to include degree programmes that are not traditional biomedical science degrees but are nevertheless relevant to careers in the biomedical science sector.

## **8. British Journal of Biomedical Science.**

Professor McKenna informed the meeting that, at the request of IBMS, he had recently chaired a working group to review the British Journal of Biomedical Science. Professor Val Randall had also been a member of the Working Group which agreed that a priority should be to increase the international standing of the journal. Various recommendations were made to help achieve this aim. It was noted that a precondition of enhancing the journal's status would be to make it available through 'open access'.

## **9. Society of Biology Degree Accreditation.**

Professor McKenna informed the meeting that the Society of Biology (SB) is planning to extend degree programme accreditation to include 3-year bioscience programmes. It was noted that a number of existing IBMS-accredited biomedical sciences may meet the SB's criteria and, if so, should be eligible for dual (IBMS and SB accreditation). This was welcomed.

## **10. Reports from HUCBMS Representatives on Other Bodies.**

Brief reports were received from HUCBMS' representatives on other bodies:

- Council for Healthcare Science in Higher Education (Drs Ian Locke and Craig Donaldson)
- IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee (Professor Val Randall and Dr Ian Locke)
- HUBS (Professor Gerry McKenna and Professor Janey Henderson, Hon Secretary, HUBS)
- Foundation for Science and Technology (Professor Gerry McKenna)

## **11. Webpages.**

Dr Locke and Professor McKenna updated members on revisions to the HUCBMS webpages which included *inter alia* amendments to reflect the HUCBMS name change and the growth in overseas members.

## **12. Treasurer's Report.**

The Hon Treasurer, Dr Locke, presented a financial update to members. The overall financial position remains healthy with no increase in membership fee being necessary for 2014-15.

## **13. Elections to Executive Committee.**

The Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, reported that he had received two valid nominations (for Professor Jacqueline McCormack and Dr Linda Walsh) by the stated closing date for election to the Executive Committee. As there were potentially three vacancies, Professor McCormack and Dr Walsh were deemed elected for 3 years (2014-15 to 2017-18 inclusive).

## **14. HUCBMS 2015.**

Professor Randall extended a warm invitation to all HUCBMS members and their colleagues to attend the HUCBMS 2015 conference which will take place at the University of Bradford on 8-10 September, 2015. (HUCBMS 2016 will take place at the University of Plymouth).

## **15. Thanks.**

The President thanked the Executive Committee members for their work on behalf of HUCBMS and its members throughout the year. There being no other business, the meeting was declared closed.