



HEADS OF UNIVERSITY CENTRES OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

(HUCBMS)

2019

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 3 September, 2019 at Technological University Dublin.

- 1. Introduction.** The President, Professor Yvonne Barnett, chaired the meeting and thanked the University and, in particular, Dr Claire Wynne, Frank Clarke, Mary Hunt and their colleagues for hosting and organising HUCBMS 2019.
Professor Barnett expressed the sadness of HUCBMS members at the deaths during the year of the HUCBMS President, Professor Kevan Gartland, and former President, Professor David Rogers. Their outstanding contributions to HUCBMS and to biomedical sciences generally were noted. Sympathy and condolences had been extended to the families of the deceased.
- 2.** Apologies were received from Jill Rodney, Andrew Usher, Julie McLeod, Merfyn Williams. Hilary MacQueen and Val Randall.
- 3.** It was noted that the minutes of the 2018 AGM had been approved by the Executive Committee and published on the HUCBMS webpages.
- 4. President's Report.** The following items were highlighted:
 - a. The Executive Committee had met 3 times during the year – November, February and May. All meetings took place at IBMS, London.
 - b. **REF 2021.** Professor Barnett and the Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna informed the meeting of correspondence between HUCBMS and the REF2021 Team regarding the disallowance of multiple submissions to UOA 3 and options for submissions to UOA 5.

- c. **TEF.** The continued uncertainty regarding the next phase of the Teaching Excellence Framework was noted.
- d. **KEF.** Professor Barnett informed members of the HUCBMS submission to the consultation on the proposed Knowledge Exchange Framework..
- e. **Smith Review.** Professor McKenna informed the meeting of the Adrian Smith review of future frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation. It was noted that HUCBMS had contributed to the review and that its outcomes were due to be published later in the year.
- f. **QAA Benchmark Statement.** Professor Barnett outlined the recent updating of the QAA Benchmarking Statement for Biomedical Sciences. The updated Statement, which will involve only minor modifications, will be published shortly.
- g. **Brexit.** Professor McKenna updated members on Brexit developments and their implications for teaching and research.
- h. **Apprenticeships.** The meeting discussed briefly the HCS apprenticeship scheme offered currently by 7 universities in the UK. The Executive Committee will continue to monitor developments.
- i. **Irish, Welsh, Scottish matters.** Professor Jacqueline McCormack and Dr Linda Walsh gave an update on Irish and Scottish matters respectively. It was agreed that given the strong membership of HUCBMS by institutions in the Republic of Ireland, it would be appropriate for the HUCBMS Executive Committee to include issues relating to the Republic within its future remit.
- j. **HUBS/HUCBMS Joint Workshop.** Dr Walsh updated members on the recent HUBS/HUCBMS Joint Workshop at the University of Bradford on 'Overcoming barriers in chemistry teaching within the Biosciences. A future joint workshop on final year honours degree projects is planned.
- k. It was noted that recruitment to BMS programmes remains healthy as does employment of BMS graduates.

5. Equality and Diversity. Dr Sue Jones reported on Equality and Diversity issues. HUCBMS has taken steps to promote a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes having appointed an Executive Committee diversity champion (Dr Jones) who will advocate on the importance of the following:

- i. Planning and implementing a programme of work to embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into HUCBMS' organisational practices and behaviours;
- ii. Measuring, assessing and reflecting on progress annually;
- iii. Sharing outcomes with the HUCBMS membership and supporting collective progress through joint learning and sharing good practice.

Dr Jones also represents HUCBMS at the RSB Member Organisation Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) and receives EDIS updates (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health).

- 6. HUCBMS Social Media Strategy.** Professor McCormack outlined a proposed social media strategy for HUCBMS including the use of Twitter and Facebook. Following discussion the strategy was adopted and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee as it progresses.
- 7. Representation on other Bodies.** Members received verbal reports from HUCBMS representatives on other bodies:
 - HUBS (Professor Janey Henderson)
 - Royal Society of Biology Education Policy Advisory Committee (Dr Claire Pike).
 - Stormont STEM All-Party Group (Professor McKenna)
 - IBMS Education and Professional Standards Committee (Alan Wainwright in the absence of Professor Val Randall)
 - Foundation for Science and Technology (Professor McKenna).
- 8. National School of Healthcare Science and Council for Healthcare Science.** In the absence of Dr Craig Donaldson, who has recently retired, Mr Wainwright provided a brief update on recent developments. It was noted that the Executive Committee would wish to nominate a member to assume responsibility for providing regular updates on developments in this area.
- 9. External Examiners List.** Professor McCormack updated members on the External Examiners List and encouraged them and their colleagues to participate.
- 10. IBMS Issues.** Mr Alan Wainwright updated members on IBMS developments including accreditations. Twenty accreditation events had taken place during the year. Currently 53 undergraduate programmes (19 integrated, 6 with apprenticeships), 29 MSc programmes, and 18 overseas programmes are accredited.
- 11. Finances.** The Hon Treasurer, Dr Ian Locke, updated members on HUCBMS finances. The late and outstanding payments by some member institutions was noted. Generally the finances remain healthy.
- 12. Elections to Executive Committee.** The Hon Executive Secretary, Professor McKenna, reported that he had received two valid nominations (for Professor Victor Gault, Ulster and Dr Simon Fox, Plymouth) by the stated closing date for election to the Executive Committee. Both were deemed elected for 3 years (2019-20 to 2021-22, inclusive). It was noted that the Committee may wish to co-opt additional members (for one year) to ensure appropriate geographical and institutional-mission representation.
- 13. HUCBMS 2020.** A warm invitation was extended to all HUCBMS members and their colleagues to attend the HUCBMS 2020 conference which will take place at York St John University on 2-3 September.

(HUCBMS 2021 is scheduled to take place at Coventry University).

14. Professor Barnett 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.