

67th meeting of the GARNet Advisory Board

Date: Thursday 21st March 2019. Meeting 1.00pm-4.00pm, lunch at 12.30pm.

Location: Room E/3.32, School of Biosciences, Sir Martin Evans Building, Cardiff University, Cardiff, CF10 3AX

Host: Jim Murray

Papers and URLs:

- > 1. Brendan Davies letter to BBSRC
- > 2. Minutes of 66th AB Meeting
- > 3. Complete 2025 GARNet Responsive Mode Grant Application
- > 4. Information on GARNet Travel Grants: <https://www.garnetcommunity.org.uk/node/980>
- > 5. Imaging Workshop Schedule.doc
- > 6. <https://garnetimaging19.weebly.com/>
- > 7. SEB-COST_Chromatin_Schedule_060319.doc
- > 8. <http://www.sebiology.org/events/event/impact-of-chromatin-domains-on-plant-phenotypes>
- > 9. RSB 'Growing the Future' document
- > 10. Draft Agenda Genome Editing Workshop.doc
- > 11. ICAR2021 logo
- > 12. ICAR2021 Science Advisory Board

Attendees: Yoselin Bentinez-Alfonso (YBA), Helen Cooper-White (HCW), Daniel Gibbs (DG), Andrea Harper (AH), Jill Harrison (JH), Eirini Kaiserli (EK), Sean May (SM), Sarah McKim (SMc), Jim Murray (JM), Geraint Parry (GP), Steven Spoel (SS), Colin Turnbull (CT), Renier Van Der Hoorn (RVDH).

1. Welcome

- Meeting chaired by Steven Spoel
- Welcome Helen Cooper-White (Cardiff University)

2. Apologies

- Murray Grant, Sabina Leonelli, Rocio Gaudioso-Pedraza (RGP, UKRI-BBSRC),

3. Discussion on UKRI-BBSRC policy on reassignment of responsive mode grants between Research Committees.

- *HCW joined the meeting later than planned but her input is integrated here into the discussion amongst committee members*

- Leading on from Brendan Davies query, committee members discussed their experiences of having grants moved between research committees. This is seemingly a common occurrence both individually and amongst colleagues. Members thought it is important to understand the extent of this activity and whether the BBSRC retains this information.

- HCW explained that movement of grants likely occurs at the level of BBSRC Peer review officers and that research committee members do not have any influence on that process. Committees C+D routinely have more applications than B so HCW suspects that part of the motivation behind moving grants is for workload management.

- HCW could recall no occurrence in which a plant grant was unable to be assessed by Committee C. On occasions, non-core panel members with expertise in plant science are drafted into committee B to help with assessing certain grants. This is no different to when other areas of expertise are needed.

- The last two announced responsive grant rounds (2018 Rd1,Rd2) each include two successful plant grants yet HCW could not recall any differences in procedure to assess these grants.

- HCW confirmed that the primary determinant of grant success **is scientific excellence**. Discussions regarding BBSRC 'strategic priorities' might only occur when grants are ranked equally. It is unclear whether the importance of strategic priorities in grant decisions is similar across all research committees.

- HCW reminded the committee that grants submitted to committee C should be written in a style that is appropriate for that committee, which includes the focus of the title and mandatory sections. Anecdotally HCW thought that in order to even workloads, grants that have a title and abstracts that have a focus on plants would have a better chance of being moved to committee B.

- It is important that grants that are proposing to answer a fundamental question in developmental or cell biology through use of a plant model system should be reviewed by a committee that has appropriate expertise. The committee thought that the core membership of committee C could include people with plant science expertise. In addition there is space for more core members of committee B that have expertise in fundamental plant science. This fits with previous a GARNet recommendation for plant scientists to **apply to join these committees**. JH reports that the Gatsby plant science committee has put together a list of potential candidates for panel membership. The plant science community awaits the opportunity to apply for these positions.

- Committee members discussed whether one solution would be to change the descriptions of research committees B and C in order to make it clear where fundamental plant science grants should be submitted.

ACTION: GP to contact RGP to enquire whether BBSRC has data on the number of grants that are moved between research committees.

- This data will be important for GARNet to then follow up with BBSRC. Ultimately GARNet hopes to ensure that grants that focus on fundamental plant science are assessed by the most appropriate research committee.

- GP to enquire as to whether will be an imminent call for research committee panel membership.

4. Matters arising from minutes of last meetings

- *Minutes of the 66th meeting*

- *GARNet2025 BBSRC submission*

- YBA mentioned a query from a colleague regarding the differences between GARNet and UKPSF. In this case the committee thinks this is a clear misunderstanding of the role of both organisations. Through its many activities GARNet is focused on supporting the BBSRC-funded basic plant science community whilst UKPSF represents the group of plant science organisations that are members of the Royal Society of Biology (RSB). UKPSF has a broad remit to represent a wide range of organisations at RSB. It does not organise meetings or workshops and has little direct interaction with individual researchers.

ACTION: GP to write a blogpost on this topic:

<http://blog.garnetcommunity.org.uk/reintroducing-the-uk-plant-science-federation/>

- GARNet will provide support for European Plant Science PhD Retreat: Networking session: <https://epsr2019.wordpress.com/> GP will introduce GARNet activities at this meeting.

- GARNet administered Gatsby travel grants to ICAR2019. Two successful applications for £650 awards are Hannah Rees (Earlham) and Gina Garzon (Aberystwyth).

5. Update from upcoming GARNet organised events

- *GARNet administered Travel grants*

> RMS Botanical Microscopy 2019: April 14th-18th

<https://www.rms.org.uk/discover-engage/event-calendar/botanical-microscopy-2019.html>. 4 applications for £150 travel grants. Providing £500 to generally support the meeting and in addition will support Sarah Robinson (Bern) to attend the meeting in the New Technologies Session. GP to introduce GARNet activities in this session.

> Monogram 2019: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/future-food/future-food-beacon-events/> 5x £200 travel grants for UK-based students who work at the interface between model and crops.

> Cell Walls 2019: <http://cellwall2019.org/> 5x £200 travel grants for UK-based students who work in this area. £700 support for Research Ethics session hosted by Jenny Mortimer (Berkeley). Paul Dupree is organising this meeting and contacted GARNet about providing support..

> FASEB meeting on Plant Development. 1x £500 travel award. JH is organising this meeting and contacted GARNet about providing support.

GP reported that some travel grants have received less applications than money available. Therefore GP has the ability to move financing to grants where there is more need. JM advises that GP verifies amount of remaining GARNet2020 funding in order to ensure that there is finance available for upcoming activities.

ACTION: GP to review GARNet2020 grant finance

- *Advances in Plant Imaging Workshop. University of Warwick, September 9th-10th.*

Introduction to plant imaging. Sessions on 'Imaging across scales', 'Imaging with Novel Genetically encoded Reporters', 'High Resolution Microscopy for Plant Cell Biology'. Extended poster session and short talks. Designed for ECRs to learn about new technologies, £50 to attend.

- GP reported that we have obtained £1000 from the Society of Experimental Biology to support this meeting. The meeting will not be advertised until after the RMS Botanical Microscopy meeting. The committee is happy with the set of invited speakers.

ACTION: GP to produce a poster and advertise the meeting after Easter.

- GP to organize a workshop at ICAR2019 on opportunities for China-UK collaborations.

GP is collaborating with Mike Holdsworth (MH), Robert Sablowski (RS) and Xiaofeng Cao (XC) to present UK-based opportunities for Chinese researchers. The workshop plan is for GP to give a general description of UK plant science, MH to introduce plant science at Nottingham, RS to introduce the JIC and Newton Fund, XC to discuss CEPAMS, which is the JIC-Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology.

DG mentioned that George Bassel is also attending ICAR2019 so GP will contact him about participating in the workshop. JH suggested that GP should prepare a document that outlines the opportunities that exist across the UK for Chinese researchers interested in plant science.

ACTION: GP will contact plant science departments asking them to supply this information. This information will be posted on the GARNet website.

- SEB Plant Cell Symposium with INDEPTH COST Action on '*Impact of Chromatin Domains on Plant Phenotypes*'.

<https://www.sebiology.org/events/event/impact-of-chromatin-domains-on-plant-phenotypes>

- GP reports that the schedule is almost finalised. The cost of attendance will be £200/£140. GP has arranged a JXBot special issue and ten proposed review titles have been submitted. EK, JM and SS are invited speakers for the meeting.

6. UKPSF Update:

- 'Growing the Future' was published by RSB in January 2019.

<http://blog.garnetcommunity.org.uk/what-has-uk-plant-science-ever-done-for-us/>

- Discussion about the future of UKPSF. GP was elected as UKPSF chairman in February. GP reports that the committee will attempt to ensure that plant science remains an integral part of the activities of the Royal Society of Biology. The committee will ensure that available plant science resources are promoted across learned societies that have an interest in plant science. GP and MG will attend a RSB-hosted 'Workshop on Genetic Technologies' on May 10th.

7. ICAR2021

- GP confirmed that ICC Belfast (meeting location), Belfast City Hall (opening reception) and Titanic Museum (conference dinner) have been booked.

- Committee commented on draft meeting logo designed by GP and advised that GP obtains full cooperation with possible local academics. GP will release ICAR2021 meeting holding page URL in June to coincide with ICAR2019.

- Selection of Science Advisory Board.

- All members of GARNet committee agree to participate in the ICAR2021 SAB and will suggest possible International members. SAB members will be involved in suggesting invited speakers for keynote, plenary and concurrent sessions.

ACTION: Committee members to suggest non-UK members of SAB. GP will contact the SAB over the coming months about initial session planning.

8. AOB

- GP presents new Cost Action of interest to GARNet members: Gene Editing in Plants. <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18111>

- GP relays correspondence from Peter Etchells about leadership of Genetics Society Arabidopsis Sectional Interest Group (<http://www.genetics.org.uk/events/garnet/>). GARNet has not interacted with GenSoc over the past few years so we are happy to allow someone else to take on leadership of this SIG. GARNet will work with Peter to support any future meetings that he will organise with GenSoc.

9. Dates of Upcoming Committee Meetings:

- June 13th: Birmingham, hosted by DG. SS is unable to attend so DG will chair the meeting.

- September 19th 2019: Dundee, hosted by SMc

- December 17th 2019, Leeds hosted by YBA