

Minutes from the 70th meeting of the GARNet Advisory Committee

Date: Tuesday December 17th 2019.

Location: Parkinson SR 4.20, Woodhouse Avenue. Parkinson Building, Leeds LS2 9JT

Host: Yoselin Benitez-Alfonso

1.30pm: GARNet Meeting, Parkinson SR 4.20

4.00pm: Tour of Astbury facility (<https://www.astbury.leeds.ac.uk/research/facilities.php>)

Thanks to Dr Rebecca Thompson for the very interesting tour.

Papers and URLs:

- > 1. Minutes of 69th AB Meeting
- > 2. Abstract book from SEB-INDEPTH meeting on 'Impact of Chromatin Domains on Plant Phenotypes'
- > 3. Survey Responses from 3D-RNAseq workshop
- > 4. <http://ics.hutton.ac.uk/3drnaseq/>
- > 5. GARNet2025 grant submission
- > 6-8. GARNet2025 Reviews
- > 9. UKRI inquiry into EDI
- > 10. <http://blog.garnetcommunity.org.uk/garnet-bursary-for-embo-workshop-on-intercellular-communication-and-plasmodesmata-in-plant-development-and-disease/>
- > 11. Anthony Dodd proposal for GARNet support for SEB Session
- > 12. <http://icar2021.arabidopsisresearch.org/>
- > 13. Sadanandom sLola Proposal
- > 14. <http://www.sebiology.org/grants-and-funding/funding-for-events-and-meetings/seb-symposia-funding>

Attendees: Yoselin Benitez-Alfonso (YBA), Daniel Gibbs (DG), Andrea Harper (AH), Sabina Leonelli (SL), Sean May (SM), Sarah McKim (SMc), Jim Murray (JM), Geraint Parry (GP), Steven Spoel (SS).

1. Welcome

- Meeting chaired by SS.

2. Apologies

- Murray Grant (MG), Jill Harrison (JH), Eirini Kaiserli (EK), Colin Turnbull (CT), Renier Van Der Hoorn (RVDH).

3. Matters arising from minutes of last meetings

- > Minutes of the 69th meeting
- > Update on current GARNet funding
 - We have secured a no cost extension until July 2020. This will allow GARNet to support a number of additional events as outlined below.
- > Feedback from SEB-INDEPTH meeting on Chromatin domains (GP, JM, SS)
 - GARNet awarded a travel studentship of £400 to Jamie Orr from the James Hutton Institute. SS and JM enjoyed the meeting and were impressed with the INDEPTH Cost Action (<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/indepth/>). JM suggests that GARNet could further

advertise the opportunities provided through COST Actions that have a focus on plant-science.

ACTION: GP to promote these Cost Actions in a blogpost or GARNish article

> Feedback from 3D-RNAseq Workshop at University of Leeds (GP, YBA)

- 35 delegates attended this workshop. Overall this workshop will cost £1600.

The post-workshop survey showed that it was well received by delegates. A pre-event survey would have been useful to assess the level of expertise of delegates. There was a clear disconnect about what is needed prior to data submission to the 3D App.

The extended literature from the workshop is on the GARNet website, alongside a link to a YouTube description of the tool: <https://www.garnetcommunity.org.uk/reports>

Based on delegate survey JM suggested that GARNet should be more aware of colour-blindness when arranging their slides.

ACTION: GP to think about colour blindness when advising speakers in future events. We will also ensure that appropriate microphones are available to speakers as that was an issue in this workshop.

> Feedback from Alan Turing Institute (ATI): AI between Plant and Agricultural Science: Green Paths towards Environmental Intelligence (SL, GP)

- SL provided a summary of this meeting that brought together UK-leaders in plant science. Unfortunately no member of the ATI was able to attend so the maximum benefit of promoting interactions between plant scientists and the ATI was missed.

Research at the ATI is split into ten research programmes (<https://www.turing.ac.uk/>). SL is hoping to help develop a research programme on 'Environment', which could include multiple aspects of plant science. GP thinks that it is possible that GARNet could interact with the ATI to promote training opportunities in developing AI strategies aligned to plant science. This fits with part of the submitted GARNet2025 proposal. GP proposed that GARNet could attempt to link AI-experts with plant science in a manner similar to the Mathematics-Plant Science Study Groups.

Note: Since the GARNet meeting an 'Artificial Intelligence for Wheat' workshop has been advertised:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvrbaVxUFsMkS3hTRpCCpCKC2nx_TjwUOjDmviKcf0b7tZQ/viewform

ACTION: SL to keep GARNet updated with her interactions with the ATI. SS suggests that members of GARNet committee interact with local ATI-fellows to ensure that the 'Environment' programme is a priority area. GP to investigate the options for co-organisation of training workshops. JM proposed that GARNet should look into producing a report on the state-of-the-art and the future opportunities for plant scientists to interact with AI.

4. Discussion of feedback from GARNet2025: Promoting Technological Innovations in Plant Science

At time of writing the GARNet2025 proposal has received three reviews, rated Exceptional x2 and Excellent. GP, SS and JM prepared a response to these comments. This focused on the processes by which GARNet decides which training opportunities we will support as well as how GARNet might interact with the ELIXIR project.

ACTION: GP to keep the committee updated with the progress of the GARNet2025 grant.

5. Discussion on UKRI report on Equality and Inclusion

YBA introduced the UKRI document that looked at Equality and Inclusion across all RCs. <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/response-to-science-and-technology-committee/>

We are awaiting an updated document from the BBSRC on the EDI distribution of their grant holders. The committee engaged in a lively discussion about what can be done to improve grant success rates amongst minority groups, with a possible focus on providing cohort-appropriate mentoring on grant writing. It will also be important to promote what is needed to write successful proposals that are aimed at different funding bodies.

ACTION: YBA to ask Rocio Gaudio-Pedraza at UKRI about updated BBSRC documents. Rocio circulated this document: <https://www.ukri.org/files/final-edi-review-uk/> (PDF)

GARNet activities could be more explicit in promoting equal opportunities on the basis of ethnicity as well as gender. During proposed GARNet2025 grant period we could look into organizing workshops on grant writing and a mock grant panel. GARNet will also look at the possibility of sharing successful UKRI-BBSRC grants.

6. Update from upcoming GARNet supported events

> EMBO Workshop on 'Intercellular communication and plasmodesmata in plant development and disease': St Andrews 12th-17th 2020.

Through GARNet's interaction with YBA we are providing 5x registrations (each £300) and support for a training workshop on computational modelling with Eva Deinum. The GARNet contribution will be to £3000.

ACTION: GP to administer the applications for the GARNet-provided registrations for this workshop.

> Proposal to support GenSoc meeting through involvement with a workshop to promote research in rice.

- GARNet will provide funding for this workshop, led by Ari Sadanandom and Peter Etchells. This fits well with our support for translation of research from model to crops. The GARNet contribution will be £2000.

ACTION: GP to provide input toward the organisation of this workshop.

> Proposal from Anthony Dodd and Alex Webb to support a session of the SEB-meeting in Prague

- The committee did not think this proposal was appropriate for GARNet to support as it does not support ECRs or have a training component.

> Proposal to support Monogram meeting from Malcolm Macaulay (JHI)

- GARNet will continue to support the Monogram meeting through provision of travel grants for ECRs who work at the interface of model and crop plants. In addition GARNet will support the meeting attendance of Professor Julie Gray. The Gray group works on stomatal development in Arabidopsis, wheat and rice.

ACTION: GP will advertise and administer the GARNet travel grants.

<http://blog.garnetcommunity.org.uk/garnet-grants-for-monogram2020/>

5. ICAR2021

> Discussion of proposed Keynote speakers and Plenary sessions

GARNet committee discussed possible speakers for this meeting.

ACTION: Scientific Advisory Board members to complete google excel form. GP to generate a short-list of candidates for discussion by the core organizational group (SS, DG, JM and Smita Kurup).

6. AOB

> Update on GARNet Letters of Support

GARNet provided a letter for these BBR proposals:

- Andrew Cuming: 'Transformation of the moss *Physcomitrella patens*'
- Wendy Harwood: 'Targeted Gene Knockouts for UK Plant Sciences'

- Letters requested for sLoLa grants from Ari Sadanandom and SS/RVDH.

GARNet were happy to provide a letter for the SS/RvdH proposal but returned to Ari with a request for more information about his grant.

ACTION: In early January GP provided letters for both these proposals, highlighting the community-facing aspects of each grant.

> UK Plant Science Federation (UKPSF) Update

- GP gave an update on UKPSF activities, which are focusing on activities linked to the International Year of Plant Health #IYPH. This will include 1, Co-support for an early career symposium on the Grand Challenges in Plant Health and 2, Support for a public-facing IYPH event. JM asked if RSB/UKPSF are developing a position statement on gene-editing, considering upcoming Brexit and its associated policy implications.

ACTION: GP asked RSB their gene-editing position statement. This is currently under discussion and in the interim they have a 'Position statement on plant

biotechnology': <https://www.rsb.org.uk/policy/groups-and-committees/ukpsf/about-ukpsf/plant-biotechnology>

GP will continue to provide updates on UKPSF activities.

> SEB Cell/Plant Symposium Application: March 1st 2020.

- GP would be happy to work with any members of the Advisory Committee to apply to organise a 2021 SEB Plant Symposium.

> BBSRC Grant opportunities

- Bacterial Plant Diseases – Coordination Team

- <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/2019-bacterial-plant-diseases-coordination-team/>

> JM thanked DG, MG and JH for their time on the GARNet committee. In the upcoming transition period they have kindly agreed to still offer input where appropriate.

7. Date of Upcoming Committee Meeting:

- If GARNet2025 proposal is successful the next meeting will be in June 2020 in Cardiff.

JM, SS and GP will meet prior to that meeting to decide how the advisory committee will function over the coming years. This will include interaction with members of industry as well as other UK plant science networks.