

**Blizard Research Committee (BRC)**

**Monday 09 October 2023, 2.00 pm, Large Cloud and MS Teams**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Prof William Alazawi (WA)	Prof Mary Collins (MC)
Rachael Parker (RP)	Prof Denise Sheer (DS)
Prof Cleo Bishop (CB)	Prof Kenny Linton (KL)
Prof Neil McCarthy (NM)	Prof Silvia Marino (SM)
Prof Xavier Griffin (XG)	Carlos De Oliveira (CDO)
Molly Ramalhoso (MR)	

**Part 1: Preliminary items**

**1. Apologies for absence**

N/A

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The BRC fed back amendments to the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September, pending approval by chair.

**3. Matters Arising**

- Honorary appointments: WA proposed that anybody who has an integrated academic training contract (i.e., special foundation programme or academic clinical fellow post) does not need to be considered at BRC. As they are employed and it is a condition of their employment that they have an honorary contract, they do not need to be referred to BRC for approval, centres can issue these. Pre-clinical academic fellow (PCAF), also to be automatically approved. All agreed.
- BRC agreed 'visitor' definition as someone who is leaving their organisation and coming to spend a period of time with institute.

**Part 2: Standing Items**

**1. Equipment List Ranking**

- Re. upcoming MRC equipment call (£100,000 > £800,000 bid value), CB informed committee that Professor Amrita Ahluwalia has requested undertaking an EOI process as university is only allowed to put in one application to the MRC, meaning there will likely be a faculty MRC EOI ranking meeting soon.

- Further to last meeting, NM informed committee he is working to get a costing for running EMULATE system at the Blizzard, many have indicated support for having system at the Blizzard. MC advised speaking with John to cost this, how many staff would be required to run facility, maintenance contracts and where we could put it.
- CB informed committee of main piece of equipment for Blizzard, IVIS In Vivo Imaging System (£602,000). All agreed in putting this forward.
- MC informed committee at that there will inevitably be a decant of equipment to Mile End while refurbishing or replacing current animal house, and so bought equipment should ideally be moveable to Mile End and back.
- CB confirmed confocals will be going into RCIF bid.

## **2. Blizzard Institute External Advisory Board**

- MC proposed having thematic talks, as per draft timetable. Suggested Karim Brohi in place of Xavier Griffin to talk about surgery in its entirety.
- WA to give talk on metabolism.
- MC informed committee there will be early careers talks (this can be up to senior lecturers) and posters from postdocs and students as an opportunity for all centres to exhibit all that we do.
- MC informed of intention to gain more insight on work to be done, gap in what we are not doing and general opinion on five-year strategy.
- All agreed in giving tour 30 minutes before start of day, CB to join tour.

## **Part 3: Standing Items**

### **3. PGR Report**

- KL presented PhD proposal to BRC. Committee in agreement that CV and more detailed proposal required before decision. To include day to day supervision, data training programme and mitigation if ethics does not come through. Elaine and Chris Uff
- KL informed committee we may start receiving queries regarding GEMS/ Gulf students, please direct these to KL and MR. Students will need to receive offers MySiS, which can be conditional on funding.
- Graduate Studies Day tentatively booked for Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December, pending confirmation from timetabling. MR chasing and RP chasing.
- KL informed committee we are on target, possibly above target for PGR students in September intake – as per 2022 figures.

#### **4. Grant September 2023**

- CDO informed committee of continued positive trend as in July. 27 submitted applications in September totalling £10.8 million in terms of value. 9 applications awarded totalling just over £1 million.
- Compared with last year at the same period in financial year, submitted + 10.3 million in terms of value and 22 more applications than last year. In terms of awards, around + 5 million more and 13 awards more by the end of September.
- 89 bids in the pipeline awaiting response, totalling 42 million.
- 46 bids in development representing 16 million, of which four are over 1 million in terms of value. 30% of these bids represent 30% of whole value in development.
- More strategy bids (bids over 1 million requiring peer review).
- WA informed committee of positive response to workshops, and that those who have not prepared to put in for September or January are on track for April.

#### **5. Honorary Staff Appointments**

- Meskin, McLachlan and Evora approved. Hilton is a PCAF, automatically approved – PCAFs are equivalent to ACF for people who are not doctors, i.e., nurses, midwives, paramedics.
- Queries to be sent to the rest.
- MC suggested sub-committee for honorary staff appointments with clear guidelines of parameters. All agreed.

#### **6. Recruitments in progress**

- MC informed committee of recruitment of Graham Meintjes as Professor in TB, starting Part- Time in November to relocate in a year and a half. Setting up a joint centre between here and in Cape Town and already has Wellcome Links.
- Awaiting senior lecturer who has been offered post.
- MC informed committee of recruitment of Nazma as lecturer working on AMP kinase in skin disease.
- Two lecturers to teach immunology course.

#### **7. Fellowships / Major Grant Initiatives**

- WA reminded that all people thinking of fellowships and major initiatives to let committee know, either by whiteboard or major initiatives forum.
- MRC Centres of Excellence – any ideas to be discussed at Trauma and Neurosurgery each with Dentistry.
- Bids to Barts Charity – Faculty involved in two bids going to the charity – presented at the RSB.
- Epigenetic bid about to be interviewed.
- CBCR spoke with charity and Amrita about expanding clinical academics in centre, all in support. David Kellsell speaking with potential recruits.
- CDO informed committee about ERC – one project in development with Paul Vulliamy who will be submitting to ERC starting rounds. Two applications submitted to Marie Curie Action in September.

## Part 4: Other business

### 8. Any other business

- DS queried lower limit for grant size that had to be peer reviewed, CDO confirmed Sabari Vallath is aware of this and it was raised at RSB as this has been raised at other institutes.
- NM queried clinical research training fellowships at Barts, how to approach these. MC and WA confirmed these should be presented at whiteboard.
- FRF – CB confirmed nobody in CBCR has received their budget and for those that have, the budget is incorrect. RP agreed to circulate list of all that have been done for this year.
- MC confirmed each centre has been asked to allocate benches for ongoing lab audit, next meeting will be in January.
- CB raised matter of social media presence and how the Blizzard could do better. WA suggested asking Queen Mary Press Office to explain to us what we do. Additionally, once Blizzard club recommences, one of those slots can be something about a workshop or publicising research.
- WA has confirmed Vardhman Rakyan as the new Deputy Director of Research.
- WA queried lab archives, CDO confirmed ITS are still conducting checks to ensure infrastructure exists. Hopefully within the next two weeks academics will receive further instructions.

Date of the next meeting: 13 November 2023

### Outstanding action list

Meeting date	Action	Person Responsible	Deadline	Outcome
09/10/2023	WA to take matter of honorary appointments and their parameters to RSB.	WA	13/11/2023	Completed
09/10/2023	NM to continue discussions with EMULATE, colleagues at SEMS and CREATE Labs in order to get costings.	NM	13/11/2023	Outstanding
09/10/2023	Blizard Institute External Advisory Board: CDO to assist Maria Caballero-Blaya in getting suggestions for ECRs and subsequently decide who gets balance of talks with WA. CDO to ask centres to find six posters.	CDO	13/11/2023	Completed
09/10/2023	KL to circulate CV to committee members along with more detailed proposal via email.	KL	13/11/2023	Completed
09/10/2023	KL to inform PIs that they are to email KL and MR if they are expecting any students from Gulf states regarding GEMS partnership.	KL	13/11/2023	Outstanding
09/10/2023	WA to raise honorary appointments subcommittee for Blizard at RSTLA.	WA	13/11/2023	Completed
09/10/2023	CDO to organise Blizard focused seminar workshop on European bids (especially ERC) with Vicky Byers.	CDO	13/11/2023	Ongoing
09/10/2023	RP to provide CB with list of CBCR FRF for this year.	RP	13/11/2023	RP asked all centres to send lists of FRF queries which finance have now responded to

09/10/2023	RP to ask Francesca where we can have our weekly seminars	RP	13/11/2023	Resolved - seminars to resume in January
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