

## CDBS Executive Committee Meeting - Minutes

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Members of Executive Committee (apologies):

**Head of Centre: David Wyllie** (Sabbatical/apologies)

**Acting HoC: Catherina Becker** (Lead for Research Opportunities)

**Acting HoC: Tara Spires-Jones** (Lead for Career Development)

**Finance Lead: Sutherland Maciver**

**Equality and Diversity Lead: Norah Spears**

**Post-graduate Lead (PI): Paula Brunton** (apologies)

**Post-graduate Lead (current student): Constantinos Eleftheriou**

**Post-doctoral Lead (PI): Emily Osterweil**

**Post-doctoral Lead (current post-doc): Dorothy Tse**

**Professional Support Services Leads: Carol Wollaston** (technical, apologies), **Beverly Roberts** (administration)

**Seminar Leads: Karen Smillie** (Central), **HongYan Zhang** (BioQuarter)

### Remit:

*The Centre for Discovery Brain Sciences Executive Committee (EC) will discuss Centre research strategy, career development, best practice in research across the centre, and needed improvements. The EC will meet (approximately) every three months, alternating between Central and BioQuarter campuses. Meeting dates will be announced in advance to allow Agenda items to be submitted for discussion. EC will consult with Centre members to ensure we are meeting the needs of everyone in the centre as best we can. We will circulate the minutes of our meetings to CDBS members to ensure transparency in the running of the centre. The EC is a resource for all members of the centre and we encourage people to get in touch with any EC members about any CDBS related issues.*

### Agenda:

#### Research strategy

- Updates on upcoming grant applications – We should ask CDBS PIs for notice of upcoming grant applications. Highlight to staff the ‘[Research Professional](#)’ website as a resource for funding sources in addition to Edinburgh neuroscience emails.
- Internal peer review of grants – We want to encourage all PIs to have grants peer reviewed internally by at least one person (and note this on IRG forms). This is particularly important for fellowships. There are many people who are current or former board members on grant panels or who have held grants that others are applying for. This is a fantastic resource for getting advice on grants to increase funding chances. The committee will generate a list of experienced reviewers that Laura Thomas will hold. We encourage staff to send grants to: [Head.CDBS@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Head.CDBS@ed.ac.uk) for advice on who to read if they do not have a colleague/mentor in mind.
- Research themes/budgets – Some of the research themes did not spend their budget last year. We encourage themes to think of activities to promote research across groups (seminars, symposia, etc). All new members of CDBS are asked which ‘primary’ theme they are associated with. They can be added to whichever theme ‘mailing lists’ they choose. BMS admin add them to the theme listings on the CDBS webpages: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/discovery-brain-sciences/our-research> and add them to ‘sympa mailing lists’ accordingly.
- MRC/RCUK panel membership – EC encourages CDBS staff to consider applying to be on the grant review panels for RCUK. Two of the EC are considering applying, and it would be beneficial to the department to have at least one panel member.

## Career development

- PhD student presentations – We need to have second year students present in a symposium for feedback. Paula could not make the EC meeting, we will follow up with her.
- There are new initiatives/consultations to improve postdoc experience: Postdoc welcome pack for new hires and PandDR focus group being led by Peter Kind. As these progress, we will share details with CDBS members.
- Any PhD or postdoc updates/issues – PhD students report a desire for more support for learning statistical analyses. Looking for workshop on biostats, perhaps get a group of consultants (not just Crispin Jordan) – check with IAD – encourage attendance at courses on experimental design and stats, online stats course (Catherina will follow up).

## Equality and diversity updates/issues

- Let people know: Staff pride (rainbow) lanyards are available in Tara's office. We encourage staff to participate in Athena Swan survey when they are sent out. We will organise a CDBS meeting at each building to fill in surveys with food or other incentive. Put sign on disabled toilets to make clear they are "all gender/all disability". Carol will print and display sign (as below). Letting people know that adding pronouns to email is inclusive.
- We can reinforce that flexible working is available at all grades and we will do our best to keep meetings within core hours to accommodate people who are on flexible hours. PandDR and mentoring systems (and training) are under review to make the system better for career development of all staff. Centre will push for the new Senior Appraiser's (SAPC) committee minutes to be shared with the department. Ask everyone at CDBS if they have ideas for promoting inclusivity and encourage staff to contact anyone on the exec committee if there are issues that are making people uncomfortable. We will be happy to anonymously feed these up the chain.



*Sample sign for toilets*

## Centre finances – needed improvements/changes

- Centre finances come from trickle back from FEC that comes with research council and European grant overhead. Parts of this are then reserved for Chancellors, 1 George Square, and HRB for building specific issues. The funds are used for the seminar series, theme budgets, and Centre events.
- A copy of the CDBS budgets have been requested and sent to Sutherland as finance lead.
- There is budget left for this year in CDBS (amount TBC) and EC is asking for input on what would benefit the department most. Committee is considering how to determine best way to spend any excess yearly budget for example shared equipment, service contracts, computing infrastructure, holiday parties, student travel grants, emergency bridging funding. Sutherland (EC finance lead) and EC will take input from CDBS members and decide how best to spend the budget that is left beyond existing commitments.

### Professional services updates

- The mentoring and PandDR review process has started with academic staff, postdocs and professional services staff. We hope this will help improve career development and mentoring for support staff. EC would like to make technical staff aware that the Science Council has a mechanism for registering scientists and science technicians on a professional register, which could be beneficial for career progression. If anyone would like to talk to people who recently successfully registered, get in touch with Tara Spires-Jones (<https://sciencecouncil.org/>)

### Seminar updates

- Due to increase in number of seminars, CDBS is now weekly one in central area, one at Little France. This is around 40 seminars per academic year. Presently, seminar speakers are a 50/50 balance of men and women and a good balance of junior and senior speakers, all themes are represented. Seminar streaming continues. Some slots are hosted by postdocs. We have CDBS and PhysSoc funding for this. A current list of seminars can be found on the CDBS website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/discovery-brain-sciences/seminars>. SIDB will liaise with seminar organisers to avoid overlap.
- For one-off mini-symposium with an external speaker, the host should discuss arrangements with the relevant seminar series organisers to avoid clashes with the seminar series where possible, the costs of the external speaker would be covered by the seminar series funding/CDBS. It was agreed that it was not always possible to have mini-symposia on a Thursday due to teaching constraints and so for ad hoc events, it would be possible, to deviate from the Thursday in order to encourage networking and collaboration events.

### Questions and Close

- No other business raised.
- The date of the next Executive Committee Meeting will be on **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 9.30am**. The next meeting will be held at Little France/BioQuarter.
- If you would like anything added to the next agenda, please contact Laura Thomas: [laura.thomas@ed.ac.uk](mailto:laura.thomas@ed.ac.uk)