

## Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience

### PDN Researchers Committee

Minutes of meeting held by Zoom on Friday 1 December 2023, at 11am

Present: Bénédicte Sanson (Chair) Erica Watson (Deputy Chair), Marta Urbanska, Rachael Crew, Georgia Lee, Emily Rigby, Tracey Flack (Secretary)

08/23

#### **Apologies**

Courtney Hanna, Milka Sarris, Susnata Karmakar

09/23

#### **Minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2023**

The minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2023 were approved.

10/23

#### **Matters arising (not covered elsewhere on the Agenda)**

Bénédicte would like to formally thank Erica for taking on the chair role whilst she was on sabbatical and overseeing the symposium that went well. She also thanked Courtney for her role as Deputy chair and her work with the Chalk and Talks last year.

11/23

#### **Updates**

##### **HR Transformation Programme**

Tracey updated the Committee on the HR transformation programme, which will see a new 'MyHR' system implemented. The system will improve the HR systems for the University and enable colleagues to use the system themselves to check their records and, for example, request holiday to be approved and booked directly onto the system. The new system was due to be launched in July 2024, but has been postponed, new launch date to be confirmed.

##### **Research Culture in SBS**

Bénédicte reminded everyone of the Research Culture Network within the School (<https://www.bio.cam.ac.uk/people-and-culture/research-culture-champions>), currently led by Milka Sarris and Klaus Okkenhaug (<https://www.bio.cam.ac.uk/culture-and-inclusion/research-culture>).

One of the recent focus of the RC network meetings has been mental health and posed the question 'what support is there for researchers' given that there are a lot of initiatives at student level. The committee discussed the staff counselling service, collaborating with the Well Being Committee and possibly trying to arrange an internal session for post docs, to make people aware of the support available.

Notes added after the meeting:

1- BS will resume her role as PDN Champion for the SBS Research Culture Network in January

2- the PDN graduate committee will be organising in March a "Student Mental Health Essentials" training course for PDN PIs who supervise postgraduate students.

This course has been developed by the University's student Wellbeing Services, and BS will look into whether a workshop for PDN Researchers could be crafted.

### **PDN symposium**

There are two people who have agreed to co-chair for this year – Hanne Hakkinen and Claire Riegis. They are currently in the process of setting up the first meeting before Christmas to identify if more people are needed. They have received a handover from the previous co-chairs.

Andrew Murray is happy to continue as faculty advisor and Aileen is happy to offer continued support too. Emily will be involved and will attend the first meeting once the date is confirmed.

Note added after the meeting: We will need a date as soon as possible in the new year for the Symposium, that people can reserve the date in their diaries.

### **Chalks and Talks**

The Michaelmas talks have finished, Rachael had enough speakers and the Chalk and Talks were well attended. The only issue has been the removal of group Zoom accounts, for hybrid meetings, Tracey will look into what can be done going forward.

Rachael will be moving on next year, so we need to find a new organiser for the Chalk and talks.

Action: Courtney, Rachael and Emily to recruit new leads for the Chalks and Talks organising group.

### **Communications and Engagement with PDN Researchers**

The committee discussed the setting up of an on-boarding/MoU document for post docs when they join the Department. This would give information about the department, but also let them know that they need to get involved and participate in events whilst here.

The Committee will investigate the creation of a post-doc community to organise events and get people engaged. It was agreed that the committee would use the team channel to drop ideas into of what could be done.

A discussion was also had around the setting up of a 'eating' area in the Anatomy building – the anatomy seminar room was noted as being the area for this, but Bénédicte will talk to the management committee about potential funds to make the space more inviting.

Action: BS and TF to review PDN's induction process for Researchers and draft an on-boarding document for approval to Management Committee

12/23

### **Any other Business**

Nothing to Report

13/23

### **Dates of Future meetings**

Next meeting to be held at the start of March 2024.

Note added after the meeting: Items to consider at some point:

- Teaching opportunities for PDN Researchers
- Visibility of PDN Researchers on PDN website
- Mentoring opportunities for PDN Researchers
- Representation of PDN Researchers on various departmental committees  
(Including this one)