

BioMedEng19

Minutes from the Scientific Committee Conference Call

Date: 15th March 2019, 16:00 – 17:00

Attendees: Anthony Bull, AB (Chair-Imperial), Alicia El Haj, AEH (Birmingham), Antonio Fratini, AF (Aston), Ashraf Khir, AK (Brunel), Claudia Mazza, CM (Sheffield), Constantin Coussios, CC (Oxford for the final items), Daniel Abásolo, DA (Surrey), David Williams, DW (Loughborough), Ed Chadwick, EC (Keele), Hazel Screen, HS (QMUL), Hywel Morgan, HM (Southampton), Jem Hebden, JH (UCL), Martin Knight, MK (QMUL), Michael Sutcliffe, MS (Cambridge), Perumal Nithiarasu, PN (Swansea), Rachel Williams, RW (Liverpool), Sebastien Ourselin, SO (KCL), Stephen O'Connor, SOC (IPEM), Yiannis Ventikos, YV (UCL), Gifty Tetteh, GT (Imperial)

Apologies: Declan Bates (Warwick), Malcolm Granat (Salford), Terry Gourlay (Strathclyde)

1. Introduction – AB confirmed attendance on the call and updated the scientific committee, on progress to date and activities of the local organising committee. Conference preparation activities were running at a pace and all was on course for a successful meeting similar to BioMedEng18.

2. Establishing a separate organization for the conference – Prior to opening the forum for discussions on this topic, AB updated the committee on how the conference has been run to date. Following the inaugural 'Bioengineering08' meeting at Imperial College London in 2008, the meeting has been held annually at various institutions across the UK, and at times in partnership with IPEM and the Medical Engineering Centres. Recent meetings were supported with funding from the EPSRC/Wellcome Trust Medical Engineering initiative, however the last funding cycle supported the 2018 conference, so there is no more external funding for BioMedEng19 and future meetings.

AB enquired about the need to set up a small charity or separate organization to coalesce the Bioengineering community in the UK, organize the annual meeting and coordinate funding across meetings. HS supported the idea of setting up the charity and enquired about the risks associated with having a separate organization. RW and DA asked for clarification on how the new charity will compare with existing groups and organizations like UKSB, TCES, IPEM, IET, etc. AF discussed merging with other small groups and PN wanted to know if any work had been done in the past on setting up the charity and how the charity will be funded.

AEH updated the committee on the challenges encountered by the Bioengineering Society when they attempted to merge with other organisations including IPEM and set up a separate organization in the past. Following the successful BioMedEng18 conference at Imperial College in 2018, AEH suggested to keep the meetings running for a couple of years to build momentum before establishing a separate organization. MK supported and suggested hosting the meeting at Imperial College for a few years until the community is firmly established.

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DW elaborated on why having a separate organization will be advantageous for managing surplus funds from meetings. Having been involved in setting up a similar charity, DW supported establishing a separate charity with the objective of running a conference on behalf of the UK Bioengineering Community. JH enquired if any of the scientific committee members was a member of the Biomedical Engineering Society, and if the new charity could be a subsidiary of the [Biomedical Engineering Society](#).

The committee discussed the various suggestions in detail and agreed to establish the charity for the UK Bioengineering community with the aim of partnering with other local and international organisations in the future. In summarising the discussion, AB solicited examples of such charities and added that, having a separate charity will facilitate fund management, underwrite local meetings and mitigate risks faced by host institutions, as the affiliate centres of the EPSRC/Wellcome Trust Medical Engineering Initiative were no longer committing resources to the meeting.

Actions:

- **Committee members to send examples of similar charities to GT**
- **Committee members with experience in setting up similar charities to contact GT**

- 3. Institutions interested in hosting BioMedEng20** – AB informed the committee that 4 institutions were currently interested in hosting BioMedEng20. Without naming institutions, he enquired of a process for selecting one of the four institutions to host BioMedEng20. PN suggested asking all interested institutions to submit a proposal on how they plan to host the conference, so the scientific committee can review and select the best institution. HS supported and enquired about the scientific committee's role in the decision making process since the current committee members were handpicked.

MS, PN, AK and YV discussed options for selecting future committee members. The committee agreed to keep the current scientific committee members as interim until the charity is firmly established and a voting system is in place. The committee also decided to make meeting minutes available online, so that all bioengineering academics who are not currently on the scientific committee can contribute and propose ideas.

In order to keep momentum and prevent significant dips in attendance at future meetings, AB suggested an alternative pattern for ICL to host the conference in 2021, 2023 etc. The committee also discussed hosting the conference in other parts of the UK.

Actions –

- **GT/AB to draft a template proposal/questionnaire for institutions interested in hosting BioMedEng20 and circulate to the scientific committee for input**
- **All scientific committee members to review and agree on the 15.03.19 meeting minutes prior to wider circulation**
- **Current scientific committee members to serve on future conferences until the BioMedEng charity is firmly established**

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- 4. After Dinner Speaker suggestions** – AB updated the committee on the 2018 dinner which had Prof Sophie Scott from UCL as the After Dinner Speaker. He also updated the committee on the local organising committee's activities to date in securing an after dinner speaker and industrial sponsorship for the 2019 dinner.

The aim is to find an excellent speaker from the academic community to deliver an engaging speech without having to pay high performance rates. JH suggested contacting Prof Mark Miodownik from UCL as a possible speaker, or as a point of contact for other speakers. SOC suggested inviting Prof John Tyrer from Loughborough. The committee discussed both suggestions and agreed to contact both speakers, in order of nomination.

Actions-

- **YV to contact Prof Mark Miodownik from UCL**
- **If Prof Miodownik is not available, then SOC to contact Prof John Tyrer from Loughborough**

- 5. Plenary Speaker suggestions** – The committee discussed the current outline of hosting four plenary sessions – Industrial/Biotech speaker, Government/Strategy speaker, International Bioengineer, UK Bioengineer. AB updated the committee on invitations that have been sent to speakers proposed by the scientific committee. Ilse Jonkers from the Human Movement Biomechanics group at KU Leuven, Belgium has accepted to give a plenary talk at the conference in September.

He also informed the committee about the local organising committee's collaboration with the Imperial Cancer Engineering Technology network to apply for a CRUK grant to fund a plenary session. AB asked for more UK speaker suggestions whilst the local organising committee was waiting on responses to earlier invitations. The committee asked to see a list the previous suggested speakers to avoid duplicates.

Actions –

- **GT to circulate the initial plenary speaker suggestion list to the scientific committee**
- **Scientific committee to suggest other plenary speakers**

- 6. Programme Committee suggestions** – Similar to the BioMedEng18 arrangements, AB asked the scientific committee to propose names of colleagues who will like to join the Programme Committee and help with reviewing submitted abstracts.

Actions –

- **AB to circulate programme committee nomination email**
- **GT to contact programme committee nominees and coordinate the abstract review process**

- 7. Offering support with childcare costs** – The committee supported the idea of providing a subsidy to support delegates with childcare responsibilities, although some institutions offer this support as part of their Athena SWAN Award. The committee discussed options

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of arranging onsite childcare and GT updated the committee on ongoing discussions with the Imperial Early Years Education Centre.

Actions –

- **Local organising committee to decide on amount and award criteria for childcare subsidy**
- **GT to update on childcare options around Imperial**
- **Scientific committee to suggest funding opportunities/grants to help with childcare subsidy**

8. **Lay Poster session/Outreach event** – The committee discussed the advantages and challenges associated with organising a lay poster session or outreach event as part of the conference. The committee decided to get other organisations like the Royal Academy of Engineering or IPEM to organise the session as part of BioMedEng19.

The committee also discussed the possibility of organising a bioengineering session for school teachers but decided to reschedule it since this year's conference dates coincide with the first week of school term.

Action – AEH to discuss outreach event with Royal Academy of Engineering

9. **Complimentary Registration for Research Councils** – The committee discussed offering complimentary registration to leaders of research councils and funding bodies and decided that this was appropriate, but to do so by organising a session for funders to engage with early career researchers.

Action – GT to organise a research funders session for ECRs

10. **AOB –**

Industrial Sponsor - PN enquired about contacting industrial companies for funding and GT provided an update on the local organising committee's sponsorship drive. AB added that scientific committee members with industrial contacts should liaise with GT in approaching companies for sponsorship.

Abstract Deadline Extension – GT updated the committee on a two week extension to the abstract submission deadline and asked scientific committee members to encourage more submissions from their institutions. The new abstract submission deadline is **midnight of 29.03.19**.

Early Career Session – The committee discussed organising an informal networking session for ECR. Similar to last year's programme, the local organising committee plans to organise a drinks reception after the conference awards which will be an excellent opportunity the community to get together and exchange ideas.

Prepared by: **Dr Gifty Tetteh**
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19th March 2019