

## MINUTES OF THE WACCBIP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 29, 2021

### **1.0 Background**

The WACCBIP Management Committee meeting for the second quarter of 2021 was held on June 29, 2021 from 1:00 pm. The meeting was organized via Zoom.

### **2.0 Attendance**

#### **Present**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1	Prof. Gordon Awandare	Director / Centre Leader
2	Prof. Dorothy Yeboah-Manu	Deputy Centre Leader
3	Dr. (Rev) W.S.K Gbewonyo	Mentorship Coordinator
4	Prof. Osbourne Quaye	Head, Monitoring and Evaluation
5	Dr Lydia Mosi	Logistics Coordinator
6	Prof. Neils Ben Quashie	Postdoctoral Programme Coordinator
7	Dr Yaw Bediako	Science Ambassador and Head of Advancement
8	Dr Theresa Gwira	Graduate Admissions and Examinations Coordinator
9	Dr Lucas Amenga-Etego	Representative for Research Fellows
10	Dr Winfred-Peck Dorleku	Industrial Liaison
11	Mr Collins Misita Morang'a	Representative for Graduate Students
12	Prof. Daniel B. Sarpong	Representative from College of Basic and Applied Sciences
13	Prof. Kwadwo Koram	Fmr Deputy Director
14	Mr Anthony Hofe	Financial Manager

#### **In Attendance**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
15	Ms Sika Menka	Grants Manager
16	Mr Felix Kyei	Centre Administrator
17	Ms Emefa Adzadu	Senior Accounts Officer
18	Mr Vincent Appiah	HPC Manager
19	Mr Andrew M. Nantogmah	Communications Manager
20	Ms Marian Nanor	Accounts Officer
21	Ms Kyerewaa Akuamoah Boateng	Public Engagement Officer
22	Mr Theophilus Dugah	ICT Officer
23	Ms Sarah Ofori Ntim	Procurement Officer
24	Mr Anthony Gassinu	Assistant Accounts Officer
25	Mr Eric Afful	Logistics Assistant
26	Mr Stefan Danquah	M&E Officer
27	Mr Francis Dzabeng	Data Manager
28	Mr Alfred Kazaresam	ICT Technician
29	Mr Srinivasan Balapangu	Laboratory Technologist

#### **Absent**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1	Mr Francis Boachie	Co-Head, ICT (Physical Resources)
2	Dr Patrick Arthur	Head, Research Training
4	Prof. Isaac Asante *	Representative for Vice Chancellor
5	Mrs. Constance Kocke	Representative from Procurement Unit

\* Absent with apologies.

### **3.0 Opening Remarks, Review and adoption of previous minutes**

The Management Committee meeting commenced at 1:10 with introductory remarks by Prof. Awandare, followed by the review of minutes from the previous meeting. Subject to some corrections, the minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting.

Prof Awandare also introduced Mr Andrew M. Nantogmah, the new Communications Manager to the Committee.

### **4.0 New Business**

#### **Centre Administration**

Mr Kyei informed the committee of the following:

##### **A: Activities during the last quarter**

- The following people were appointed during the last quarter
  - Dr. Aniefiok John Udoakang has been appointed as Project Coordinator on the 'Tracking COVID-19 infection in West Africa to guide public health interventions' project (Rockefeller Project)
  - Mr. Andrew Muniru Nantogmah has been appointed as Communications Manager.
  - Dr. Kwabena Kan-Dapaah has been appointed as Global Health fellow on the Harvard University, Boston University, Northwestern University, and University of New Mexico (HBNU) Fogarty Global Health Training programme
- The following workshops were organized by the Centre
  - The African Advanced Bioinformatics Workshop held from May 10-14, 2021.
  - The W-ASLP/ASI workshop - Career development and Leadership initiative for Early Career African Scientist held from June 16-18, 2021

##### **B: Planned activities for the next quarter**

- The Centre is making final preparations for the 2021 WACCBIP Research Conference themed 'Building sustainable research capacity in Africa - lessons from the pandemic'.
- Organizing the Data Science Workshop sponsored by TIBA

#### **Grants Management**

Ms Menka informed the committee of the following:

##### **A: Activities during the last quarter**

- The 5<sup>th</sup> ACE Impact Regional workshop was organized from May 24-28, 2021 virtually.
- A virtual implementation support meeting was held on June 18, 2021 for the ACE Project. The meeting involved WACCBIP faculty, staff and students as well as the Centre's partners.
- Submission of various results for verification – Short course students, student internships, publications, externally generated revenue.
- The Centre received a notification of award for DELTAS II subject to successful completion of pre-award assessments over the next 4 to 6 weeks. The following changes have been made
  - Implementation period reduced from 5 to 4 years
  - Total grant award reduced from USD 6 million to USD 4.4 million
  - Revised scope of proposed programme
- Completion of DELTAS I programme (no-cost extension) on August 31, 2021

- The Centre has been awarded USD 799,626 for the 'Tracking COVID-19 infection in West Africa to guide public health interventions' project.
- A team from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) are currently at the Centre to complete due diligence for the Centre's grant application to them.
- Two workshops were organised in collaboration with WACCBIP
  - Sequencing and Bioinformatics Workshop from May 17-21, 2021 (in collaboration with the Centre for Health Systems Strengthening)
  - Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System training from May 31 – June 2, 2021 (in collaboration with the Christian Health Association of Ghana)

B: Overall Status of Implementation

- ACE Impact Project

Disbursement Linked Results	Maximum SDR	Total Earnings to date	Balance (SDR)	Percentage Achieved
<b>DLI #1: Institutional Readiness</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>DLI #2: Development Impact</b>	<b>172,560</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>172,560</b>	<b>0%</b>
2.1 Progress to impact	86,280	0	86,280	0%
2.2: Development impact	86,280	0	86,280	0%
<b>DLI #3: Quantity of Students</b>	<b>775,500</b>	<b>367,155</b>	<b>408,345</b>	<b>47%</b>
3.1: New PhD students	446,533	323,520	123,013	72%
3.2: New Masters Students	206,728	35,280	171,448	17%
3.3: New Prof. Short Course	122,239	8,355	113,884	7%
<b>DLI #4: Quality of Education/ Research</b>	<b>1,081,285</b>	<b>575,200</b>	<b>506,085</b>	<b>53%</b>
4.1: Program Accreditation	35,947	0	35,947	0%
4.2: Research Publications	613,974	575,200	38,774	94%
4.3: Teaching & Research Infrastructure	431,364	0	431,364	0%
<b>DLI #5: Relevance of Education /Research</b>	<b>1,253,900</b>	<b>1,060,165</b>	<b>193,735</b>	<b>85%</b>
5.1: External Revenue	1,056,205	1,056,205	0	100%
5.2: Internships	124,475	3,960	120,515	3%
5.3: Entrepreneurship	73,220	0	73,220	0%
<b>DLI #6: Timeliness/quality of FM</b>	<b>316,400</b>	<b>19,775</b>	<b>296,625</b>	<b>6%</b>
6.1: Timely Fiduciary Reporting	79,100	7,910	71,190	10%
6.2: Functioning Internal Audit Unit & Committee	79,100	0	79,100	0%
6.3 Financial Online Transparency	79,100	11,865	67,235	15%
6.4: Procurement Quality	79,100	0	79,100	0%
<b>DLI #7: Institutional Impact</b>	<b>143,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>143,800</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3,743,445</b>	<b>2,022,295</b>	<b>1,721,150</b>	<b>54%</b>

- The verification criteria for DLI #2 and DLI #5 are yet to be communicated to the Centre by the World Bank.

- Wellcome Trust DELTAS Project

Programme	Target	Current Status	Completed
Masters	0	18	11
PhD	15	19	6
Postdoctoral fellows	12	13	13
Graduate Interns	60	103	75
Student Visitor fellows	25	25	25
Bioethics short course	50	57	57

C: Planned activities for the next quarter

- Verification of submitted results for the ACE Project and disbursement of funds
- Feedback on revised scope of work and budget submitted for DELTAS II.
- Closing of DELTAS I programme.
- WACCBIP Research Conference scheduled for July 21-23, 2021. Three hundred and forty-nine (349) participants have registered so far.

*Prof. Awandare also added that AESA have communicated to DELTAS applicants apologising for the delays in the selection process and added there may be further delays.*

Accounts / Finance

Ms Adzadu informed the Committee of the following:

A: Activities during the last quarter

- During the period the Centre received a total of USD 3,062,558.80 from grant disbursements. The table below shows the breakdown.

Amount	Source	Date of Receipt	Purpose of Funds
USD 1,531,114.07	International Development Association/NCTE	4-Mar-2021	To implement the ACE Impact Project
GBP 7,496.47	University of Cambridge	10-Mar-2021	To implement the COVID-19 Cambridge-Africa Alborada Research Project
USD 22,019.04	Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health	10-Mar-2021	To implement the Fogarty Global Health Training project (D43)
GBP 115,000.00	Wellcome Sanger Institute	22-Mar-2021	To implement the NIHR Genomic surveillance project
GBP 2,771.01	University of Edinburgh	30-Mar-2021	Implementation of the "TIBA" project
GBP 39,772.20	University of Edinburgh	9-Apr-2021	To implement the Royal Society project on Epigenetic Processes and Drug Resistance in Plasmodium Falciparum
USD 410,000.00	University of Witwatersrand	20-Apr-2021	To implement ARUA-OSF Project
USD 600,000.00	Rockefeller Foundation	7-May-2021	To implement the SARS- CoV-2 seroprevalence Project in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria

EUR 14,176.68	Institut de Recherche por le Developpement (IRD), France	7-May-2021	Implementation of the "WANIDA" project
GBP 83,274.35	The Francis Crick Institute, UK	14-May-2021	To implement the "Crick African Network" Programme
USD 17,878.27	African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases, KCCR, Kumasi	21-May-2021	To implement the Female Genital Schistosomiasis project (Joshua Adjah)
USD 4,800.00	Organisation for Women in the Developing World (OWSD), Italy	28-May-2021	Support for PhD fellowship
GBP 73,301.93	The Francis Crick Institute, UK	10-Jun-2021	To implement the "Crick African Network" Programme
USD 11,114.00	University of Cape Town, South Africa	10-Jun-2021	To implement the H3Africa Hearing Impairment Project

- Reports for the following projects were submitted within the period, with all associated queries being addressed successfully:
  - DELTAS project
  - Community and Public Engagement project
  - NIHR project
  - PAMGEN project
  - H3A-HI-GENE project
- The 2020 external and internal audits for the ACE-Impact and DELTAS projects are ongoing.

#### B: Overall Status of Implementation

- The Centre's total bank balance as at June 17 was USD 2,842,109.08. The details are as follows:
  - Offshore/Foreign USD account – USD 11,051.09
  - Onshore/Forex USD account – USD 2,435,265.80
  - GBP account – GBP 212,312.56 (1.40742 @ USD)
  - GHS account – GHS 564,128.04 (0.17191 @ USD)
- The full amount of the Centre's investment (GHS 3,261,575.56) has been paid into a GCB account under the government's bailout scheme.
- The financial status of the Centre's projects and administrative account are shown in the table below:

#	Project	Total Grant	Inflows To Date	Expenditure To Date	Fund Balance
1	Academy of Medical Sciences GCRF Networking project (RBV7)	£ 24,630.00	£ 24,630.00	£ -	£ 24,630.00
2	ACE Impact project (RZO6)	\$ 5,500,000.00	\$ 2,219,180.07	\$ 903,573.74	\$ 1,315,606.33
3	CEFAS fellowship (RBY2)	\$ 28,260.00	\$ 9,420.00	\$ 8,071.21	\$ 1,348.79
4	Community & Public Engagement project (RBM5)	\$ 189,130.00	\$ 189,130.00	\$ 118,818.54	\$ 70,311.46
5	Crick African Network project (RBI2)	£ 2,011,087.31	£ 1,032,032.57	£ 925,829.25	£ 106,203.32
6	DELGEME Aspiring Leaders fellowship (RBL2)	£ 30,000.00	£ 18,600.00	£ 8,451.85	£ 10,148.15
7	DELTAS project (RE 53)	\$ 7,185,852.05	\$ 7,185,650.00	\$ 7,204,785.30	\$ (19,135.30)
8	H3A HI-GENE project (RBH4)	\$ 68,971.00	\$ 59,390.00	\$ 50,049.19	\$ 9,340.81
9	Imperial College - DIDA project (RZ50)	£ 50,875.00	£ 50,875.00	£ 10,107.46	£ 40,767.54
10	Imperial College - Malaria Detection and Surveillance project (RBS5)	£ 29,325.00	£ 29,325.00	£ 103.22	£ 29,221.78
11	IRD-WANIDA project (RZ57)	€ 277,284.00	€ 55,648.68	€ 53,342.30	€ 2,306.38

12	Leverhulme Royal Society Post doctoral fellowship (RBN7)	£ 50,000.00	£ 30,000.00	£ 920.68	£ 29,079.32
13	MMV project (RBP4)	\$ 56,130.00	\$ 56,130.00	\$ 52,093.85	\$ 4,036.15
14	NIH HI-GENE project (RBE8)	\$ 111,077.99	\$ 111,077.99	\$ 88,765.16	\$ 22,312.83
15	NIHR project (RBP3)	£ 734,440.00	£ 546,354.02	£ 497,216.22	£ 49,137.80
16	OWSD PhD fellowship (RBG4)	\$ 42,600.00	\$ 33,271.63	\$ 27,682.32	\$ 5,589.31
17	PAMGEN project (RBL1)	\$ 415,800.08	\$ 250,940.66	\$ 234,404.62	\$ 16,536.04
18	SEQCOM project (RZ41)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 38,823.02	\$ 11,176.98
19	TIBA project (RBC5)	£ 659,571.00	£ 659,570.41	£ 670,863.14	-£ 11,292.73
20	Univ of Columbia-Noul project (RBV2)	\$ 64,860.00	\$ 25,350.00	\$ 25,350.00	\$ -
21	ARNTD - MiFeSCHist project (RZ98)	\$ 29,797.10	\$ 17,878.27	\$ 7,379.45	\$ 10,498.82
22	ARUA-OSF project RZ86	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 410,000.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 409,970.00
23	COVID-19 Cambridge Alborada Research project (RZO9)	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 7,496.47	\$ -	\$ 7,496.47
24	Forgarty Global Health Training project (RZ48)	\$ 45,766.00	\$ 22,019.04	\$ 7,869.00	\$ 14,150.04
25	Rockefeller project (RY21)	\$ 799,626.00	\$ 600,000.00	\$ 5,869.85	\$ 594,130.15
26	Royal Society - Epigenetic Processes and Drug Resistance in Plasmodium Falciparum project (RZ54)	£ 220,504.00	£ 39,772.20	£ 7,042.93	£ 32,729.27
27	Admin Account (RE68)	\$ -	\$ 1,731,262.44	\$ 1,163,774.42	\$ 567,488.02

#### C: Planned activities for the next quarter

- Reporting to funders, monitoring compliance with grant conditions, and ensuring smooth funds flow
- Providing the necessary support, including budgeting and financial due diligence, for new grant applications and renewal of existing grants
- Liaising with UG Procurement Unit and ORID to ensure the processing of requests and the release of funds for related payments
- Facilitating project internal and external audits
- Procurement of an accounting system. This has become necessary due to the increasing numbers of grants at the Centre.
- Closing of the DELTAS project

*Prof Awandare added that overheads generated from grants are shared by ORID annually and the share of WACBIP's overheads have been sent to CBAS. Subsequently, a cost centre has been created for WACCBIP under the college following discussions with the Provost. This will allow WACCBIP to have access to these funds.*

#### Mentorship

Dr. (Rev) Gbewonyo informed the Committee of the following

#### A: Activities during the last quarter

- Evaluation of Mentor-Mentee initial contact by administering a questionnaire. Generally, the mentees are benefiting from their interactions with their mentors.
- A mentorship workshop was organized on June 16, 2021, under the theme "Ensuring effective mentorship: the challenges". The workshop aimed at having an interaction between mentors and mentees to identify the challenges associated with our mentorship programme.

Some decisions taken as a result of interactions during the workshop include

- Enabling the students have a say in who they wish to have as a mentor particularly for the PhD students.
- Guidelines should be provided to mentees on our mentorship programme
- The Mentorship Unit Head participated in the virtual HBNU Mentoring Symposium held on 2 June 2021 under the theme, “How to be a successful mentor: review of mentorship competencies and strategies”. Some resource materials made available to the participants of the symposium will be shared with WACCBIP mentors to improve the programme we have at the Centre.

*Prof. Quashie mentioned that he does not believe students choosing their own mentors will be the best for the programme. He added that there should provision made in the programme for students to meet socially with their mentors in person.*

*Mr Morang'a mentioned that he believes students should be allowed to choose their mentors and in the case where a student does not have a preferred mentor, one can be allocated to them.*

*He added that there should be periodic seminars on the mentorship programme to educate the students on the benefits of the programme.*

*It was agreed that mentors and mentees can have a social meeting once a year within a budget of GhC 250. Subsequently, students will be allowed to submit a meal meeting receipt worth GhC 250 with either their supervisor or mentor once a year which will be charged to their fellowships.*

*.It was also agreed that students would be allowed to submit a list of preferred mentors to the Mentorship Unit from which a mentor will be assigned to them.*

### Graduate Admissions and Examinations

Dr Gwira informed the Committee of the following

A: Activities during the last quarter

- Proposed dates for the doctoral qualifying examination have been communicated to the students. The details are as follows
  - Research proposal submission: October 15, 2021 (12 noon)
  - Written examination: October 29, 2021 (9:30 am)
  - Oral examination: December 13 – 17, 2021 (subject to satisfactory review of the written research proposal).

B: Planned activities for the next quarter

- Doctoral Qualifying Examination 2021/2022 academic year
- Graduate admissions for the 2021/2022 academic year.

### Industrial Liaison

Dr Dorleku informed the Committee of the following

A: Activities during the last quarter

- Following the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, students have commenced their internships.

The table below shows the placement for internships since April 2020.

Intern	Training Institution	Commencement Date	Status
Samuel Akwasi Acheampong	Chocomac BD Associates Ghana Ltd	March 2020	Completed
Eric Osei Ntifo	Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital	April 2020	Completed
Karamoko Niaré	Centre d'Infectiologie Charles Merieux de Bamako, Mali	May 2020	Completed
Evelyn Baaba Quansah	Twifo Oil Palm Plantation	May 2020	Completed
Kwabena Owusu-Boateng	Food and Drug Authority	Nov 2020	Completed
Frederick MateTei-Maya	'RUMA Fertility and Specialist Hospital Ltd	April 2021	Completed
Diana Prah (PhD Class)	GeneLab Molecular Laboratory Services, Accra	May 2021	Unknown
Jonas A Kengne- Ouafo	National Malaria Control Program, Yaounde, Cameroon	May 2021	Completed
Nancy Nyakoe	Thermo Fisher Scientific Middle East Holdings Inc., Nairobi, Kenya	June 2021	Pending
Beatrice Muriuki	Kenya Society of Haematology and Oncology (KESHO)	June 2021	Approval to commence

- Visit to Unichem Ghana Ltd

#### B: Planned activities for the next quarter

- Curtesy visits to five Industry partners:
  - Equatorial Healthcare Services
  - Phyto-Riker
  - Entrance Pharmaceutical and Research Centre
  - Ernest Chemist
  - Unichem Ghana Ltd

*Prof. Awandare suggested including Yemaachi Biotech to the list of industrial partners for the student internships.*

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

Prof. Quaye informed the Committee of the following

#### A: Activities during the last quarter

- An M&E mid-year report for 2021 has been prepared.
- An alumni tracker survey has been deployed and analysed. This has been reported in M&E Mid-year report. The number of respondents is still low.
- There have been about 35 publications since the beginning of the year.
- Mr Danquah briefed the committee on the progress of M&E framework. The framework provided a detailed system to identify the relevant outputs and outcomes of the Centre, detail a data collection plan and strategize analysis and reporting of M&E reports. Although significant progress was made, some challenges need to be addressed. These include difficulties in accessing data from some units within the Centre, low priority on M&E at



the Centre and scattered data collection at the Centre. A proposed solution is to automate the M&E system and introduce new indicators to make evaluations easier.

*Prof Awandare commended Mr Danquah for his innovation.*

### Advancement

Dr Bediako informed the Committee of the following

#### A: Activities during the last quarter

- The Head of Advancement, assisted by the past and present Communication managers, Grants manager and Monitoring and Evaluation officer, have prepared a document to be used in the nomination of WACCBIP for the Al-Sumait Prize in Health for 2021. The Pro-VC ORID has agreed to nominate the centre and the nominations are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2021. The Prize carries an award of US\$1,000,000
- The Centre Leader, Head of Advancement and Dr. Peter Quashie continue to make several media appearances to provide expert opinion on the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana. WACCBIP is now recognized as the authority on genomic analysis of the SARS CoV-2 virus in Ghana and regular briefs are sent to the Ghana Health Service providing updates

#### B: Planned activities for the next quarter

- Preparing for the WACCBIP Research Conference is scheduled to be held from 21st – 23rd July 2021. It will be a mixed format of virtual and in-person talks and presentations. Over 65 abstracts have been received and are currently being assessed.

### Logistics

Dr Mosi informed the Committee of the following

#### A: Activities during the last quarter

- The Logistics Unit has written to the Director of PDMSD to allocate land to mount 2 containers (one on top of the other) on the premises of the BCMB building to serve as a solvent store and a storeroom for procured consumables.
- The contracts for the civil works for the renovation of the labs at the Centre were cancelled as a result of inflation on the price of materials (epoxy floors) for the work. However, the contract awarded for the lab benches still remains valid. The contractor has received part payment for the expenses incurred so far and has agreed to purchase the remaining items needed to complete his work at the current market value. The Unit is working on re-awarding the civil works contract subject to the availability of funds.
- Completion of an enclosure in the level 400 lab to serve as a separate Lab for Dr Peter Quashie which will house several equipment for research work. An air conditioner will be installed in the enclosure to make it fully functional for research work.
- The Centre has received the NextSeq 2000 sequencing machine and its calibration reagents. This will be installed in the Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) Lab.

## High Performance Computing

Mr Appiah informed the Committee of the following

- A virtual bioinformatics workshop was organized by Dr Thomas Otto and Dr Saikou Bah with support from WACCBIP from May 10 – 14, 2021.  
A new server was purchased as part of the bioinformatics workshop arrangement to enable participants get access to computing platforms and practice what they learnt from the workshop. The server has been installed at University of Ghana Computing System Data Centre.
- An online bioinformatics resource (YouTube channel) has been created with videos uploaded weekly to supplement the bioinformatics teaching activities. This resource will provide additional tutorials students.

## Data management, Scientific Computing and Biostatistics (DSCB)

Mr Dzabeng informed the Committee of the following

- Installation of Windows server 2019 standard for COVID-19 tracking study to manage the seroprevalence data from the participating countries – Ghana, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.
- Provision of technical support to CHAG field team on COVID-19 seroprevalence data collection study – routine assistance to the field team and provided feedback on data collected from the field
- Routine data management and Analytics support to students and researchers on the following studies:
  - COVID-19 serology study proposal/Manuscript - led by Dr Peter Quashie/Prof Awandare
  - HIV genotyping study – led by Dr Peter Quashie
  - PAMEGEN study - led by Dr Lucas Amenga-Etego

*Prof Awandare enquired on the status of the Centre's data repository.*

*Mr Dzabeng informed the committee that most students have not uploaded their data.*

*It was agreed that students who have not uploaded their data will not be paid their next stipend.*

*A data submission form designed by the DSCB Unit will be signed after students upload their data and serve as the official documentation from the Unit for the processing of stipends.*

## Communications and Public Engagement

Mr Nantogmah and Ms Boateng informed the Committee on the following

A: Activities during the last quarter

- Works on the design of the upgraded WACCBIP website is on-going.
- We have produced two 25-minute docu-drama science communication toolkits titled, 'A Smile of Hope'. One docu-drama uses only sign language which will be used by WACCBIP researchers to engage deaf students in Ghanaian schools for the deaf. We have successfully translated the docu-dramas into five local languages namely Akan, Ga, Ewe, Frafra and Dagbani
- As part of the celebration for World hearing Day, a team from WACCBIP joined students and parents of Tetteh Ocloo School for the Deaf to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care.

B: Planned activities for the next quarter

- Organisation of a training workshop for WACCBIP research scientists on how to use Public Engagement toolkit to engage students (18 years or older) with hearing impairment, their parents, siblings, strengthen hearing impairment genetics research, and to develop and share a best practice.
- Implementation of the Public Engagement plan for 'Public Engagement for Strengthening Genetics Research' project using completed docu-drama.

*Prof Awandare enquired on the status of the website migration.*

*Mr Nantogmah said he was informed by the previous Communications Manager that the website was almost complete and the ICT team will assist with launching the new website.*

### **5.0 Updates from the Strategic Planning Committee**

- Prof. Yeboah-Manu informed the Committee that the Strategic Committee is working on a draft plan. The Strategic Committee faced a few challenges in releasing the first draft however, progress is being made and the draft document will be completed and shared before the next Advisory Board Meeting scheduled for July 2021.

### **6.0 Status of Fellowships**

Prof Awandare informed the Committee that the Centre currently has the ACE Impact project as the source of fellowships. As a result of this the Accounts Unit created a table to show much funds in the budget can be reallocated to support additional students. (all amounts are in USD)

	Grant Budget	Actual Expenditure	Pending Commitments	Budget Balance
MPHil	580,000.00	186,677.22	151,575.00	241,747.78
PhD	2,200,000.00	229,734.56	306,237.50	1,664,027.94
Total	2,780,000.00	416,411.77	457,812.50	1,905,775.73

Ms Adzadu informed the committee that the cost to fund PhD fellowships was USD 67,400.00 and USD 44,600.00 for regional and local students respectively. The cost to fund MPHil fellowships was USD 7,400.00 and USD 6,800.00 for regional and local students respectively. These fellowships cost do not include accommodation costs. She however explained per the DLI achievements of the Centre and funds disbursed, the Centre has USD 1,029, 118.89 available to award new fellowships.

Students who were on DELTAS Fellowships will be given stipend for an additional 2 months due to the change in academic calendar.

It was agreed to offer 3 partial scholarships to students currently in PhD year 1 based on their performance in their comprehensive exams and the remaining funds used to award 8 fellowships to incoming PhD students.

It was also agreed to increase the stipends of MPHil students by USD 100. PhD student stipends will be increased to USD 500 and USD 400 for regional and local students respectively.

## **7.0 Updates on upcoming WACCBIP Events (2021 WAACBIP Research Conference)**

- Mr Nantogmah informed the Committee that as part of preparations for the Conference, the Communications Units has designed a tracker to centralize all the activities being done. The tracker shows the list of activities that have to be completed and the people responsible for those tasks. Also when a task is completed it will be indicated in the tracker. He suggested that other people playing key roles in the conference preparation should include their activities and its status to the tracker.
- Dr Mosi informed the Committee that due to the hybrid nature of the conference, a mail will be sent out to registered participants to indicate if they will be attending virtually or in-person. The Conference Hall, Board room, PhD lecture room and the MPhil lecture room will be used for this year's conference to help observe social distancing protocols. The Conference will be held from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm GMT each day with 10 talks planned for each day. There will be a mini coffee break in the morning, packed lunch in the afternoon and a snack break before the close of day. Due to the social distancing protocols, there will be no dinner at the end of the Conference, there will be a cocktail setup where participants can get something to eat as they leave the premises. There will be virtual and in-person poster presentations during the Conference. The presentations will be pre-recorded with the assistance from UGCS and played during the conference for the virtual participants. MR Appiah is also working on getting platforms for the virtual participants to be able to interact with the presenters and other participants.

*Prof. Quashie enquired on why we are using the multiple rooms for the research conference considering the fact that we want to have less people attending in person due to the social distancing protocols and suggested using only the Conference.*

*Dr Mosi mentioned that we are using multiple rooms to cater for the students who will be on-site during the conference. She added that the Conference Hall will still be the primary room for the research conference.*

## **7.0 AOB**

- Dr Bediako informed the Committee that Yemaachi Biotech's Lab is now fully operational. The COVID testing services of the lab has been certified by Ghana Airports and can be used as official test results to travel internationally.
- Mr Appiah suggested the use of Spatial Chat rooms for the Research Conference. This platform allows virtual participants to interact with each other in rooms. It also has a feature which allows users to have poster presentations, where people can move around the rooms and listen participants present their posters.
- Prof. Awandare informed the Committee that Government of Ghana has released some funds to support COVID-19 sequencing work. The funds (about GhC 740,000.00) have been sent to NMIMR and is to be shared amongst all institutions undertaking sequencing work.

## **8.0 Closing**

Dr Mosi moved for the closure of the meeting and was seconded by Dr Gwira.