THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Life Sciences Institute

Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, September 5, 2024

Time: 12:30 p.m.
Location: LSC # 2.510, & Zoom

Chair: Dr. Leonard Foster

Attendees: Leonard Foster, Sharda Muni, Michael Murphy, Jeff Richards, Joerg Gsponer, Pierre Tanguay, Sophia Wang, Hilla Weidberg, Reinhild Kappelhoff, Vanessa Auld, Ania Bogoslowski, Andrew Johnson, Elitza Tocheva, Elizabeth Rideout, Hannah Shariati, John Nomellini, Joy Richman, Edward Conway, Matthew Lorincz, Tim O'Connor (attending on behalf of Edwin Moore)

Regrets: Edwin Moore

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1. **Approval of agenda**

Agenda was approved as circulated.

2. **Welcoming remarks (Leonard)**

Dr. Leonard Foster (Leonard) welcomed the Committee Members to the first LSI Executive Committee meeting under his leadership. Each member introduced themselves and shared a fun activity they enjoyed over the summer.

3. **General discussion about the Executive Committee's purpose (all)**

Leonard opened the discussion by stating that the primary purpose of the Executive Committee is to enhance transparency in the governance of LSI. He emphasized that part of this effort will include publishing meeting minutes on the website, ensuring that all members are informed about the reasons behind the decision making.

Leonard further explained that there is no formal requirement for the Terms of Reference (TOR) to be approved by higher authorities such as the Deans of Medicine and Science or Senate. As a result, the TOR may not be binding on to the next director of LSI.

Leonard requested feedback from the committee members who have been on previous LSI Committee (s) before and had knowledge of any past practices. Dr. Vanessa Auld (Vanessa) mentioned that previous committees were more focused on providing information and guidance, with limited decision-making or consultation. She stressed the importance of having a clear mandate for the committee's meetings. Dr. Joy Richman (Joy) agreed, noting that consultation had been insufficient in the past. Dr. Reini Kappelhoff (Reini) added that the committee's purpose should be to ensure democratic representation of various groups within LSI, and determine what strategies and decisions are effective. Leonard acknowledged and appreciated these insights.

4. Feedback on Terms of Reference (all)

Leonard mentioned that the TOR could be revised to change the meeting frequency from monthly to every two months. Joy suggested adding to the TOR that LSI should have the authority to decide which faculty members are placed in the building. Leonard agreed but noted that this would still be subject to the core department's right to bring people into the building.

Leonard added that the only way to formalize the contents of the TOR is through a member vote. He proposed that for the next meeting, they gather feedback on the TOR, make updates, circulate the revised document, and then hold a formal vote.

Action Item# 1: TOR will be circulated to the committee members for additional feedback/edits.

Some of the feedback that was shared during the meeting was as follows:

- **Change the meeting frequency from monthly to every two months.**
- **LSI should have the authority to decide which faculty members will be housed in the building.**

5. LSI governance
  a. Space

Leonard inquired if the committee members supported the creation of a space committee and sought recommendations on its responsibilities. Dr. Matthew Lorincz (Matt) expressed support for the idea.

Based on the current space policy, the space is allocated to individuals by the LSI. Neither Faculties nor Departments nor other types of Groups nor individuals are entitled to a fixed allotment of space. The Centre for Blood Research manages their own space allocation. Space allocations are historically based on available space. Liz noted that establishing a space committee would be beneficial in addressing potential hidden power dynamics and reviewing any contentious decisions related to space allocation. It was decided that any contentious space request applications can be brought forward and reviewed by this committee in future meetings.

b. **Core Facilities**

Leonard suggested forming one advisory committee for all the LSI Core Facilities, which could include major users, academic directors, and external members. The committee would advise LSI on topics such as core facility operations, the need for new cores, and other operational needs. Leonard asked if forming an additional committee is useful?

Dr. Jeff Richards (Jeff) supported the idea of the present committee advising on core facilities but cautioned that the workload of the present committee could become substantial.

The Executive Committee will revisit the idea of forming an advisory committee for core facilities in the near future.

Dr. Elitza Tocheva (Elitza) and Leonard agreed to include the topic of formation of new core facilities at LSI on the next meeting's agenda.

c. **Advisory Board**

Leonard mentioned that a portion of LSI's funding comes from the GREx program via the Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation (VPRI). One key requirement of this program is the establishment of an external Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for LSI, which has yet to be formed. He noted that future Senate approval of the budget will depend on having an advisory board in place. Leonard emphasized that a meeting regarding this advisory board must take place by March 2025, and there should be a report ready to address any issues/ questions re; this board. He added that such boards typically consist of around ~four members.

Leonard requested input from the Executive Committee Members on the composition and role of the SAB, particularly regarding potential candidates. In response to an inquiry from Dr. Joerg Gsponer (Joerg), Leonard confirmed that the advisory board does not need to be entirely international and can include Canadian members. Travel and honorariums will come from the GREx budget.

Leonard requested committee members to share recommendations for individuals to serve on the advisory board. Given the GREx theme of Biological Resilience, potential members should preferably have expertise in related research, experience in managing core facilities, or a solid understanding of what is involved in running and supporting such facilities.

In response to Joy's question, Leonard clarified that the advisory board will primarily consist of scientists, although they do not necessarily need to be academicians. Candidates could come from research institutes or industry.

Leonard concluded by asking the committee to compile a list of names and prioritize them, aiming to finalize the selection of 3-4 members. He projected that the first meeting to finalize the board would likely take place early in the new year (2025).

Action Item# 2: Leonard will gather suggestions from the Committee Members regarding potential nominees for the SAB before the next meeting.

6. **LSI IT Project Update (Leonard)**

Leonard updated the committee on his negotiations with the two deans (Science and Medicine) regarding IT support within LSI. The deans have offered a total of $150,000 for LSI IT, which will be provided through the Faculty of Medicine (FOM) instead of the Faculty of Science (FOS). Gurm Dhugga is leading the project from FOM.

Leonard mentioned that the FOM MEDIT team has begun by conducting a survey of the current systems at LSI to determine who supports them, noting that many systems lack support. The allocated funds will be directed to FOM MEDIT, and in return, LSI will have access to MEDIT's assistance, whether through individual staff members or a team, depending on the need. MEDIT has already started working with the core facilities, and Leonard expressed hope that the collaboration will soon be fully operational. This initiative will not affect existing support teams, such as those in Microbiology and Immunology (M & I) or Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB), but rather replicate a similar support structure.

Leonard added that, in one of the upcoming meetings, he will invite a representative from MEDIT to provide an update, answer questions, and discuss any ongoing matters regarding this collaboration.

The ultimate goal, according to Leonard, is to secure research computing support from IT in the future. In response to a query from Elitza, Leonard confirmed that the funds will not be used for infrastructure upgrades, such as Wi-Fi or phone systems.

Action Item# 3: Sharda will invite the MEDIT team to provide an update in the next meeting.

7. **Miscellaneous topics**

i. **Input pathway on LSI website:** Dr. Elizabeth Rideout (Liz) proposed creating a section on the website where LSI members can offer suggestions for improving LSI operations or submit questions. Sharda and Olivia (Web Developer and IT liaison at LSI) will have a discussion on how to proceed with this. Either a new section can be created on the new LSI website for feedback or, alternatively, a Qualtrics survey can be developed to gather feedback.

ii. **Dishwashing facility:** Dr. Hilla Weidberg (Hilla) raised concerns about the high costs and labor involved in dishwashing for labs. Leonard agreed, noting that previous efforts by Jim Johnson and Josef Penninger to secure financial support for dishwashing from the Faculty of Medicine and Science were unsuccessful. Hilla emphasized that addressing this basic research need would allow students to focus more on their work. She suggested starting a pay-for-service model and conducting surveys to determine which labs would benefit, beginning with fewer staff. This will be discussed more in detail in the near future.

iii.   John Nomellini (Nomo) raised a query from some LSI graduate students about whether the large, underutilized space next to Perugia Café, currently designated as a medical undergraduate recreation room, could be made available to LSI students. Sophia Wang clarified that the room is funded by donation and is reserved exclusively for medical students. She also noted that, in fairness, medical students have been asked not to use the upper-floor lounges reserved for LSI students.

iv.   A question was raised regarding the process for booking Case-Based Learning (CBL) rooms from the Faculty of Medicine (FOM). It was clarified that these rooms must be booked through FOM's MedNet system, and are not bookable through LSI. Leonard suggested adding this booking information to the LSI website so that people are aware who to book these rooms through. This information is posted on the LSI website: https://lsi.ubc.ca/resources/room-booking/

v.   Pierre Tanguay inquired if the committee members would be interested in receiving updates on LSC operations and safety, noting that these updates would be kept minimal. He proposed adding this as a recurring agenda item.
Leonard agreed and suggested that the updates re; LSC operations be included as bullet points in the next agenda, allowing members to review the information beforehand. Any questions regarding the updates could then be addressed during the meeting.

8.   Next meeting

Leonard suggested that the Terms of Reference (TOR) could be finalized, and the committee could meet again in approximately 2 months.

Next meeting: November 8th, 2024